THE AGRICULTURAL HISTORY REVIEW



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Essay Competition: The *Agricultural History Review* at Sixty

To celebrate the publication of the sixtieth volume of *Agricultural History Review* in 2012, the *Review* announces an prize essay competition open to rural historians in Britain, Europe and internationally. Three prizes will be offered, one of £500 and two of £250. One prize will be reserved for an essay in the rural history of the world outside Britain and Ireland. It is intended that if arrangements can be made, the prize-winning essays will be read at the Society's Spring Conference in 2013. The winning essays will be published in volume 60 of *Agricultural History Review*. It is a condition of entry that the essay has not been published elsewhere, is not under consideration by another journal, nor forms part of a forthcoming book.

There is no restriction on the subject matter of the essays except that they should fall within the remit of the *Review*. Discussions of contemporary issues in agriculture or rural economies are acceptable provided they are strongly rooted in an historical perspective. Essays employing new methodologies, or exploring new areas of interest, will be especially welcomed.

The competition is open to rural historians at the beginning of their careers, defined as those who on 30 September 2011 have had no more than five years post-doctoral academic employment in one or more posts in a university, research institute, museum or NGO. Submissions from rural historians who do not hold (and have not held) an academic or professional post as a rural historian are also welcome. Such people may or may not have a higher qualification, but no age or time limit applies in these cases

The essays will be judged by a panel appointed by the Executive Committee of the British Agricultural History Society and chaired by the editor of the *Review*, Professor Richard Hoyle, who will take specialist advice as appropriate. Queries about eligibility of applicants should be directed to him.

Essays should be no longer than 12,000 words including footnotes and any appendices. All submissions should be in English.

Three copies of each essay should be sent to the Editor of the *Review* at the Department of History, University of Reading, Reading, RG6 6AA, UK. Submissions by email attachment are also acceptable (to r.w.hoyle@reading.ac.uk) but the accompanying email should make it clear that the submission is intended for the essay competition.

The author's name should not be given on the essay but on a detachable cover sheet which should also include a short biographical paragraph (100 words)[1] and a statement confirming that the author meets the criteria laid down above. The latest date for the submission of essays is 30 September 2011. The winning candidates will be notified in January 2012.

[1] See the 'Notes on Contributors' on page iv for examples.

Forthcoming Conferences

Tawney's *Agrarian Problem* 100 years on

A symposium on *Tawney's* Agrarian Problem *100 Years On: Landlords and Tenants in Rural England* c.*1400*–c.*1750* will be held at Exeter University on 11–12 July 2011, with the aim of revisiting and updating R. H. Tawney's classic work, *The Agrarian Problem in Sixteenth Century England*, first published in 1912. A full programme and booking form are available at http://www.bahs.org.uk/.

Bursaries for PhD students are available.

For further information and enquiries, please contact the organiser: Jane Whittle at j.c.whittle@ex.ac.uk

Winter Conference 2011
Saturday 3 December 2011

Food security in historical perspective

Senate House, Malet St, London

(Please note that the premises of the Institute of Historical Research will be closed for refurbishment at this time)

Full details will be published on the Society's website and circulated in July.

The *Agricultural History Review* on the Web

This issue is a landmark in the publication of the *Agricultural History Review*. For the first time it will be published in print and online simultaneously. Electronic editions are fast becoming the preferred method of receiving journals as far as universities and research institutes are concerned and in future institutional subscriptions will include both print and online access. All individual members of the Society will continue to receive the print edition and also be eligible for access to the electronic version.

The Society has collaborated with Ingenta to make available electronic versions of not just the current issue, but of the past five years' issues, and this is the pattern of electronic publication that we envisage for the future. If you wish to view the online edition, this will be possible by registering on the Ingenta website: **http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/bahs/agrev**. On the right hand side of the page you will see a brown box with the word 'Register'. Once you have obtained a username and password you should return to Ingenta's *Agricultural History Review* page, where you will see a link on the right-hand side to **Activate personal subscription** and you should follow that link.

For this you will need your Subscription Number. If you are a continuing subscriber, you will have received a letter from the Treasurer, which, amongst other things, includes your Subscription Number. It also appears on the address label of the envelope in which you were sent your copy of the Review. If you have lost your envelope, or have any problems with accessing your subscription, please email **bahs@ex.ac.uk** for assistance.

This new facility is in addition to the online availability of older editions of the *Review*. These have been freely available on the web to the general public for more than five years. You can find them on the Society's website **http://www.bahs.org.uk** under the link **Search Backnumbers**. We have also made these older volumes available through JSTOR, but these will only be available if you have access to JSTOR through a university or research institution. On the Society's website you will also find digital copies of *Rural History Today*, our twice-yearly newsletter.

Waste management and peri-urban agriculture in the early modern Scottish burgh

by Richard D. Oram

Abstract

The anthropogenic deepening of soil for agriculture is a widely-recognised northern European phenomenon. In Scotland, geoarchaeological investigation has identified such anthropogenically-deepened soils in urban and rural contexts and interpreted them in terms of this more general experience, but has not explored the processes behind their formation. While it is well known that Scotland's medieval town-dwellers grew their dietary staples, their agricultural practices and impact on peri-urban fields has lacked detailed investigation. This paper reviews the geoarchaeological evidence and analyses documentary records from 17 Scottish burghs, illustrating a central component of burgess agriculture, the management of urban waste for use as manure. Burgh regulations reveal changing cultural attitudes towards waste in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as fewer townsmen engaged directly in cultivation, but urban waste nevertheless remained in demand as fertiliser in the hinterland of many Scottish towns into the later nineteenth century.

From the time of their first formal establishment in the twelfth century, Scotland's burghs were closely integrated with the countryside around them. Not only did the burgesses enjoy a monopoly over the trade of an extensive prescribed hinterland, but a substantial tranche of territory immediately adjacent to the towns themselves was controlled directly by them in common. Out of this they received an equal share of arable ground, pasture and fuel-cutting rights.[1] As a result, whilst the burgesses were primarily craftsmen and traders, they were also cultivators who produced the bulk of their dietary staples on their share of the burgh's common lands, supplementing this with purchases in the burgh market. In the larger Scottish burghs – Edinburgh and Dundee particularly – by the fifteenth century rising population relative to the available common-land resources had reduced the level of direct involvement in cultivation and increased dependence on market supplies, but even in these few truly substantial communities there was still no sharp separation of 'urban' from 'rural' activities and many leading burgesses remained active as cultivators.

The separation of townspeople from the soil emerged over the sixteenth century and resulted in the progressive disconnection of most Scottish town-dwellers from the process of

[1] For discussion of burgh foundation and burgess rights, see R. D. Oram, *Domination and Lordship: Scotland, 1070–1230* (2011), ch. 8. Burgesses are those who had full membership of and representation in the burgh community, as opposed to those simply designated as 'indwellers', who had no rights in the common resources of the burgh.

primary food-production, a disconnection which was considered by social theorists, such as the Edinburgh-based philosopher Adam Ferguson (1723–1816), to be an essential component in the social evolution from chaotic tribal primitivism to order and civility. For Ferguson and others of his time, it represented a decisive cultural shift towards the 'polite' urban society of the nation in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[2] In many Scottish towns, growth in population numbers played a significant part in this severance of the direct link between food production and consumption, but the break occurred at different times and to varying extents around the country depending on the rate of physical expansion and economic development in a given community. Down to the sixteenth century, most of Scotland's urban centres had been very small in scale compared with those in England and mainland Europe, with only Edinburgh's population exceeding an estimated 12,500 by 1560 and with its nearest competitor, Dundee, standing at around half that figure.[3] Indeed, as the engravings of the Dutch military engineer Johannes Slezer illustrate, the majority of Scotland's burghs remained small in scale even at the end of the seventeenth century, often with populations below 2000 and with some only in the high hundreds.[4] As late as *c.*1750, fewer than nine per cent of Scots lived in urban centres but within a century that percentage had nearly quadrupled.[5]

As the rate of urbanisation in Scotland accelerated in the sixteenth century and subsequently, and the percentage of 'indwellers' – mainly landless, waged employees – in the urban populations grew, the numbers of town-dwellers directly involved in the growth of their dietary staples declined sharply. This social trend had many consequences for Scottish burgh life, but one of the least considered is the fundamental shift in public attitudes towards waste and refuse of all types, with materials previously conserved by their producers for use as agricultural or horticultural manures losing their value to them and becoming simply a nuisance to be disposed of as rapidly as possible. Such a shift in attitude towards the problem of waste disposal has been the subject of detailed study for the post-Chadwickian era of public health and sanitary reform in the later nineteenth century, principally with regard to major British, European and North American cities such as Glasgow, Manchester, London, Paris, Milwaukee

[2] For the emergence of 'polite' ideas, see D. Allan, *Scotland in the eighteenth century* (2002), pp. 130–2, 146–7. For Ferguson's social vision and philosophy, see A. Ferguson, *Essay on the history of civil society*, ed. F. Oz-Salzberger (1995); A. Broadie, *A history of Scottish philosophy* (2009), pp. 286–7.

[3] For a general overview of urban development in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Scotland, see M. Lynch, 'Introduction: Scottish Towns, 1500–1700' in M. Lynch (ed.), *The early modern town in Scotland* (1987), pp. 1–35, and the particular case of Edinburgh by W. Makey, 'Edinburgh in the mid-seventeenth century' in the same volume, pp. 192–218. For the estimate of Edinburgh's population, see M. Lynch, *Edinburgh and the Reformation* (1981), p. 10.

[4] J. Slezer, *Theatrum Scotiae: Containing the prospects of their Majesties castles and palaces: together with those of the most considerable towns and colleges; the ruins of many ancient abbeys, churches, monasteries and convents, within the said kingdom. All curiously engraven on copper plates. With a short description of each place* (1693). See especially the 'prospects' of Fortrose (Chanonry), Inverness, Elgin, Aberdeen, Arbroath, Brechin, Dundee, St Andrews, Dunfermline, Perth, Dunblane, Stirling, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley and Ayr.

[5] The changing occupational structure of populations in Scotland's larger late medieval and early renaissance burghs is explored in M. Lynch, 'The social and economic structure of the larger Scottish towns, 1450–1600', in M. Lynch, M. Spearman and G. Stell (eds), *The Scottish medieval town* (1988), pp. 261–86. For an overview of urbanisation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see T. Devine, *The Scottish nation, 1700–2000* (1999), ch. 8.

and Chicago, albeit with a primary focus on the process of removal of waste from within the urban area rather than on the means and effects of its final disposal.[6] This transition, however, was more than a simple switch of perception from a public 'good' to a public 'ill', for historical records reveal a striking ambivalence in attitude towards materials which were at one and the same time a valued resource and an object of disgust.

The inconvenience caused by accumulation of domestic waste in public thoroughfares was already a well-recognised cause of neighbourly disputes and official anxiety by the late middle ages, but despite repeated efforts to regulate the malodorous middens on the private forelands between house-fronts and the public highway, they remained an ill that exercised Scottish urban governments into the mid-nineteenth century. The regular repetition from the sixteenth century onwards of burgh legislation concerning private dung-hills and middens, however, also reveals the economic value attached by many Scottish town-dwellers to their household waste and the anxiety to ensure that the wealth it represented was expended to the benefit of the individual or community.[7] By the late eighteenth century, however, what had previously been a commodity garnered and guarded for its value as fertiliser by its producers, tolerated or even treasured despite its often foul odour and unsightly form, came to be perceived by most observers as simply inconvenient, noisome 'waste'. By the 1840s it was viewed by social reformers like Edwin Chadwick as a hazard to public health.[8] Nevertheless, although a growing number of townsfolk simply wished to be freed from dealing with their own refuse and waste, the material remained in demand by agriculturalists as manure and continued to be attributed a significant economic value. This paper explores that dichotomy through discussion of the geoarchaeological evidence from the anthrosols ('soils that have been modified profoundly through human activities'[9]) created by manuring processes from the late medieval period to

[6] For late nineteenth-century attitudes and technological responses, see E. C. S. Moore, *Sanitary Engineering* (1898); J. H. Maxwell, *The removal and disposal of town refuse* (1898); W. F. Goodrich, *The economic disposal of town's refuse* (1901). For modern discussion of case studies, see, for example, L. P. Cain, 'Unfouling the public's nest: Chicago's sanitary diversion of Lake Michigan water', *Technology and Culture* 15 (1974), pp. 594–613; J. A. Tarr, 'From city to farm: urban wastes and the American farmer', *Agricultural Hist.*, 49 (1975), pp. 598–612; id., 'Out of sight, out of mind: a brief history of sewage disposal in the United States', *American History Illustrated*, 10 (1976), pp. 40–7; W. Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (1991); J. Sheail, 'Town wastes, agricultural sustainability and Victorian sewage', *Urban Hist.*, 23 (1996), pp. 189–209; B. Luckin, 'Pollution in the city', in M. Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, III, *1840–1950* (2000), pp. 207–28; I. Douglas, R. Hodgson and N. Lawson, 'Industry, environment and health through 200 years in Manchester', *Ecological Economics* 41 (2002), pp. 235–55; S. Barles, 'A metabolic approach to the city: nineteenth- and twentieth-century Paris', in D. Schott, B. Luckin and G. Massard-Gilbaud (eds), *Resources of the City: contributions to an environmental history of modern Europe* (2005), pp. 28–47; J. F. M. Clark, '"The incineration of refuse is beautiful": Torquay and the introduction of municipal refuse incinerators', *Urban Hist.*, 34 (2007), pp. 255–77.

[7] See, for example, Anon (ed.), *Extracts from the records of the Royal Burgh of Stirling, AD 1519–1666* (1887) (hereafter *Stirling records*), p. 130, ordinance prohibiting the sale of 'muck or failyie' to anyone other than indwellers of the burgh; or Haddington Burgh Records, National Archives of Scotland (hereafter NAS), B30/13/3, fo. 60r, 3 Mar. 1609, prohibiting sale of 'muk & fuilyie' to men dwelling to landward.

[8] The background to mid-nineteenth century sanitary reform is discussed in E. Chadwick, *Report on the sanitary condition of the labouring population of Great Britain*, ed. M. W. Flinn (1965), pp. 3–26.

[9] *World reference base for soil resources 2006: A framework for international classification,correlation and communication* (FAO, 2006), p. 71.

the nineteenth century, and the historical evidence for the socio-economic context of that manuring practice.

Except for passionate composters who recycle their organic domestic refuse to enrich their vegetable gardens, the insulation of most modern city-dwellers from the physical processes of primary food-production and waste-management has removed awareness of what for their ancestors would have been inextricably linked activities. Disposal of the by-products and wastes of community living has been a problem that has confronted humans since the earliest communal settlements in the Neolithic Middle East. Evidence from around the world indicates that one common response to that problem was to use refuse as agricultural fertiliser.[10] It is widely acknowledged that all types of waste associated with human settlement form one of the principal agents in modification of soils in urban and peri-urban contexts. Five main mechanisms for production of the waste have been identified: human habitation, stalled animals, use of fires and hearths, metalworking, and other processing activities.[11] The human habitation contribution can be further broken down into enrichment through inputs of faeces and urine, re-deposition of cesspit contents, domestic food-processing waste and household rubbish, spoiled store products, and the debris of the inhabited structures themselves. Modern Western cultural aversion to the use of much of these types of material – especially human bodily waste – as fertiliser in the cultivation of foodstuffs arose principally from later nineteenth-century developments in medical science which linked such waste with the spread of disease and other health issues, principally the consequences of ingestion of concentrations of heavy metals from food grown in soil modified by significant inputs of organic waste.[12] This aversion has perhaps limited past discussion of pre-modern urban waste disposal in Britain, and has helped to embed deep in the public consciousness a vision of our ancestors wallowing in their own filth. As evidence from both past societies and current practice in much of Asia demonstrates, however, such waste was until recently – and in some cultures still is – seen as a valuable source of soil enrichment for agriculture.[13]

[10] T. Hardy-Smith and P. C. Edwards, 'The garbage crisis in prehistory: artefact discard patterns at the early Natufian site of Wadi Hammeh 27 and the origins of household refuse disposal strategies', *J. Anthropological Archaeology* 23 (2004), pp. 253–89; I. D. Bull, P. P. Betancourt and R. P. Evershed, 'An organic geochemical investigation of the practices of manuring at a Minoan Site on Pseira Island, Crete, *Geoarchaeology* 16 (2001), pp. 223–42; C. E. Wells, R. E. Terry, J. J. Parnell, P. J. Hardin, M. W. Jackson and S. D. Houston, 'Chemical analysis of ancient anthrosols in residential areas at Piedras Negras, Guatemala', *J. Archaeological Science* 27 (2001), pp. 449–62; K. A. Golding and D. A. Davidson, 'The effect of past waste disposal on soils near to Scottish burghs', SEESOIL 16 (2005), pp. 28–36.

[11] Golding and Davidson, 'Effect of past waste disposal'.

[12] See, for example, A. S. Manta, M. Angelone, A. Bellanca, R. Neri and M. Sprovieri, 'Heavy metals in urban soils: a case study from the City of Palermo (Sicily) Italy', *Science of the total environment* 300 (2002), pp. 229–43; X. Li, S. I. Lee, S. C. Wong, W. Shi and I. Thornton, 'The study of metal contamination of urban soils of Hong Kong using a GIS-based approach', *Environmental Pollution* 192 (2004), pp. 113–24. Public health and sanitary reform in Britain aroused considerable debate from the 1840s and the intensity sharpened after the 1875 Public Health Act in England and Wales, with much of the argument revolving around the economic costs of waste-water disposal as opposed to the use of sewage in agriculture. See, for example, N. Goddard, 'Nineteenth-century recycling: the Victorians and the agricultural utilization of sewage', *History Today* 31 (1981), 32–6; id., '"A mine of wealth"? The Victorians and the agricultural value of sewage', *J. Historical Geography* 22 (1996), pp. 274–90; Sheail, 'Town wastes'.

[13] P. Montague, 'Excrement happens', www.theecologist.info/page11.html [accessed 21 Jan. 2011];

Until at least the late 1600s, and in many smaller Scottish provincial burghs until well into the nineteenth century, agriculture was as much a part of the socio-economic life of the community as crafts and trade.[14] It was not just vegetable gardens and orchards in the backlands of the tenements that were being cultivated, but burgesses had a share in the surrounding arable and pastureland. On these fields, burgesses produced the bulk of their dietary staples – principally barley, oats and pulses – and grazed their livestock. While many burgesses may not have personally dirtied their hands in cultivating their portion of the common fields, most retained their share – and in some cases actively sought to expand their access to arable and pasture beyond the burgh lands – but others chose either to lease it out or employ labourers to cultivate it on their behalf.[15] Consequently, burgesses had an interest in maintaining the fertility of peri-urban land and, amongst other resources, employed the most readily-available form of natural fertiliser for use on garden plots or for replenishing soil nutrients in the burgh fields: their own waste in all its forms.

I

Research at the University of Stirling over the last decade, stimulated by Professor Christopher Smout's question, first posed in 1998, of whether archaeologists or soil scientists could date and explain the processes behind agricultural soil formation in Scotland, has built on earlier studies of the history of soils and field systems and sponsored further research.[16] These projects have explored aspects of the interlinked issue of urban waste and peri-urban agriculture, and have used a range of historical and geoarchaeological techniques. Research has focused on the processes of waste-management and on identification of the inputs to the fields, principally recognised in the anthrosols, the anthropogenically deepened topsoils that can still be found around some smaller Scottish burghs. What has been revealed is a subtly detailed but hitherto neglected record of one dimension of the large-scale environmental change effected by past human action, and evidence for wider environmental impacts triggered by the demand for both more agricultural land and fertilisers. It has, moreover, exposed a further aspect of local political interactions, as burgh administrations sought to balance internal social

Note 13 continued
M. Strauss, *Wastewater and excreta use in India* (Dübendorf, International Centre for Waste Disposal, 1986); P. Cross, *Health aspects of nightsoil and sludge use in agriculture and aquaculture,* I, *Existing practices and beliefs in the utilisation of human excreta* (Dübendorf, International Centre for Waste Disposal, 1985); C. Polprasert, P. Edwards, C. Pacharaprakiti, V. S. Rajput and S. Suthirawut, *Recycling rural and urban nightsoil in Thailand* (1982); *China: recycling of organic wastes in agriculture* (FWO, Soils Bulletin 40, Rome, 1977).

[14] E. Ewan, *Townlife in fourteenth-century Scotland* (1990), pp. 108–10, 118–9.

[15] W. Coutts, 'Provincial merchants and society: a study of Dumfries based on the Registers of Testaments, 1600–1665', in Lynch (ed.), *Early modern town*, pp. 148–50; I. D. Whyte, 'The occupation structure of Scottish burghs in the late seventeenth century', in ibid., pp. 228–9 (for seasonal employment as harvest labourers and for unskilled labourers); Lynch, 'Introduction: Scottish Towns, 1500–1700', pp. 2–3.

[16] T. C. Smout, 'Thinking about the environmental history of Scotland and Denmark since 1600', in G. Fellows-Jensen (ed.), *Denmark and Scotland: the cultural and environmental resources of small nations* (2001), pp. 140–2; D. A. Davidson, 'Soils as cultural resources' in ibid., pp. 171–80. For earlier work see, for example, S. Foster and T. C. Smout (eds), *The history of soils and field systems* (1994).

tensions concerning the accumulation and disposal of waste; manage external pressure on burgh resources; and regulate access to them while still maintaining stable relations with neighbouring landowners. A broad exploration of these issues has required a multi- and inter-disciplinary environmental history methodology, bringing together a range of scholars from across the Humanities and Natural Sciences. The result is a richly textured synthetic overview that extends far beyond what any single discipline could achieve.

First, what are the records? They fall into two broad categories: first the anthrosols created through inputs of waste and other materials into the soil of the cultivated areas in and around the burghs; and second the documentation which records the various aspects of that process, from descriptions of the waste being produced through to legislation governing its use or disposal. Neither dataset alone can provide all the answers to the mechanisms at work; the anthrosols preserve a record of the constituents of the waste and of some of the processes of its introduction into the soil, the documents generally provide us with a record of how the waste was produced, gathered and transported to its place of use but rarely provide detail beyond broad labels defining composition and generalised statements regarding where and how it was used. The documentary records, too, reveal some of the implications of other methods employed to deepen and enrich the soil, principally through the digging in of turf stripped from other areas, which resulted in extensive land degradation, the breakdown of the structural integrity of areas of peat-moss which provided the burgh communities with their principal fuel supply, and, in coastal communities, recurrent episodes of severe erosion and wind-blow of dune systems and links. Instances of the latter will be referred to but are tangential to the principal theme of the present discussion; the use of domestic waste in all its forms as fertiliser in agricultural activities.

It is the soil itself that constitutes our principal record of past manuring practices. The following discussion will use the terms anthropogenic soils and anthrosols to label the distinctive soils created by human induced topsoil changes and which form a potential sub-category of the recently recognised soil classification of *technosols* (soils 'whose properties and pedogenesis are dominated by their technical origin').[17] Modification, however, is not solely a consequence of anthropogenic inputs of material, for extractive processes such as stone-clearance and drainage have played an equally significant role in anthrosol formation, enhancing the cultivable properties of soils or affecting Ph levels through accelerating or inhibiting leaching. Such anthrosols have been recognised as a geoarchaeological feature in Scotland since at least the early 1980s.[18] In an urban context in Scotland, down to the early 2000s they were discussed mainly with reference to the so-called 'garden soils' identified in excavations in St Andrews from the early 1980s onwards, which were themselves being interpreted in the context of a wider European debate over the formation of 'black' or 'dark earth' in towns.[19]

[17] *World reference base for soil resources 2006*, p. 95. This classification is formulated around modified soils created in contemporary urban/industrial environments.

[18] J. W. Barber, 'Excavations on Iona, 1979', *PSAS*, 111 (1981), pp. 359–60; D. A. Davidson and I. A. Simpson, 'The formation of deep topsoils in Orkney', *Earth Surface Processes and Landforms*, 9 (1984), pp. 75–81; D. A. Davidson, G. Dercon, M. Stewart and F. Watson, 'The legacy of past urban waste disposal on local soils', *J. Archaeological Science* 33 (2006), pp. 778–83.

[19] M. J. Rains and D. W. Hall (eds), *Excavations in St Andrews, 1980–89* (1997), pp. 21, 25–6, 28, 30, 33, 142; S. Carter, 'A reassessment of the origins of the

These deep, homogenous *hortosols* (soils created through horticultural activity) have been interpreted mainly as the product of material introduced from outside the burgh to provide soils for horticulture. Their widespread occurrence across the footprint of the post-medieval settled area of St Andrews has been interpreted as evidence for a dramatic change in property ownership and land use patterns.[20] This 'imported garden soil model' is predicated on a breakdown and abandonment of the medieval property divisions, withdrawal from other activities on the former backlands of individual tenements, and the turning over of the whole of the newly open zone to cultivation. A suggested context for such a radical reconfiguration has been a collapse of the economic condition of St Andrews in the post-Reformation period, with the burgh suffering progressive contraction in its inhabited area and general economic stagnation from the mid-sixteenth to early nineteenth centuries.

The 'imported garden soil' model gained general acceptance amongst archaeologists and was regularly advanced to explain the deepened soil layer, but by the later 1990s there was gathering uncertainty over the processes by which it had been formed. In 1997, Peter Clark articulated that uncertainty in his summary discussion of a decade of excavations in St Andrews and pointed to the English examples of Lincoln, London and Worcester – mainly of late Roman and Anglo-Saxon date – as evidence for a number of different deposition processes which could produce similar layers.[21] In 2001 Stephen Carter proposed an alternative model for deepened soils formation, which still views them primarily as the consequence of the import of material from outside the burgh. Thin-section micromorphological analysis (the study at microscopic level of soil composition, structure, form, organisation, colour etc., using fine-ground, slide-mounted slices of resein-impregnated dried soil) of the 'garden soil' from one St Andrews site revealed significant differences between two horizons visible in the deepened layer. Both horizons contained quantities of fuel residues, food debris and building materials, but, while in the upper soil layer this amounted to a substantial 20 per cent of the soil profile, in the lower horizon these materials were identified in only insignificant quantities. The bulk of the deposited material was scarcely distinguishable from the *in situ* topsoil, which led him to propose that it was 'most likely to have been introduced simply as turf/topsoil or as a topsoil derived sediment', probably obtained from somewhere on the raised beach area immediately adjacent to the burgh.[22] Carter's conclusion from this was that it was impossible to differentiate

Note 19 continued
St Andrews "garden soil"', *Tayside and Fife Archaeological J. 7* (2001), pp. 87–92. For the 'black' or 'dark earth' debate see P. Norman and F. W. Reader, 'Further discoveries relating to Roman London, 1906–1912', *Archaeologia* 63 (1912), pp. 257–344; E. J. Siddell, 'Dark Earth and obscured stratigraphy', in P. J. Huntley (ed.), *Taphonomy and Interpretation* (2000), pp. 35–42; R. I. Macphail, H. Galinié and F. Verhaege, 'A future for Dark Earth?', *Antiquity* 77 (2003), pp. 349–58; J. Heimdahl, *Urbanised nature in the past: site formation and environmental development in two Swedish towns, AD 1200–1800* (Thesis in Quaternary Geology, 5, University of Stockholm, 2005), pp. 16–18.

[20] Carter, 'St Andrews "garden soil"', p. 87.

[21] P. R. Clark, 'Discussion', in Rains and Hall (eds), *Excavations in St Andrews*, p. 142. M. A. Courty, P. Goldberg and R. Macphail, *Soils and micromorphology in archaeology* (1989); B. Yule, 'The "dark earth" and late Roman London', *Antiquity*, 64 (1990), pp. 620–8; R. I. Macphail, *Soil report on the Deansway Archaeology Project Worcester* (English Heritage Ancient Monuments Laboratory report, 82/91, 1991); H. Dalwood, 'The use of soil micromorphology for investigating site formation processes', in K. Steane (ed.), *Interpretation of stratigraphy: a review of the art* (City of Lincoln Archaeological Report, 31, 1992), pp. 3–6.

[22] Carter, 'St Andrews "garden soil"', p. 89.

between topsoil introduced for cultivation purposes and identical material possibly resulting from the decay of turf used as roofing and walling in the burgh. His interpretation of the two distinct horizons was that lower layer was the disturbed natural topsoil of the burgh area, slightly contaminated with twelfth-century and later debris resulting from the development of the town, while the upper layer was an 'occupation' deposit consisting of some material derived from disposal of refuse of various forms but largely of the residues of 400 to 500 years of turf-, clay- and timber-built structures.[23] Rather than being evidence for the creation of a new cultivated zone encompassing the supposedly shrunken remains of a declining burgh, Carter has proposed that the 'garden soils' are evidence instead of a vibrant pre- and post-Reformation community involved in the sediment-generating business of building and rebuilding on intensely exploited urban backlands.

Parallels with mainland European practices have been seen in the rural agricultural phenomenon referred to as 'plaggen' soil. The anthropogenic character of these soils has long been recognised and the mechanisms behind their formation have been the subject of detailed research in, for example, Germany and the Netherlands.[24] 'Plaggen' is a label for a specific type of anthrosol formed by the long-term digging in of high volumes of organically rich material, principally turf, peat, animal dung and midden material, but including also coarser materials such as sand or crushed brick, resulting in a deep and highly enriched topsoil layer.[25] It is a technique that has been employed in parts of north-western Europe for over 3000 years, but its main period of formation in parts of Germany and the Netherlands dates from the seventh to thirteenth centuries AD. In Shetland, study of the best-known example of anthropogenic soil-deepening on the island of Papa Stour, where the turf and peat of the western two-thirds of the island was systematically stripped to form enriched, deepened topsoil in the townlands on the eastern third, has shown that it was a practice of the post-1200 period.[26] Most mainland Scottish studies of the phenomenon have been on rural sites, mainly in the Highlands and Islands, but deepened soil has also been identified recently at the deserted medieval village of Eldbotle in East Lothian, suggesting that it was a practice with currency throughout the country.[27]

[23] Ibid., pp. 91, 92.

[24] H-P. Blume, 'History and landscape impact of plaggen soils in Europe', at http://natres.psu.ac.th/Link/SoilCongress/bdd/symp45/64-r.pdf contains an extensive bibliography of past, largely German research on this topic; H-P. Blume and P. Leinweber, 'Plaggen soils: landscape history, properties and classification', *J. Plant nutrition and soil science* 167 (2004), pp. 319–27; C. C. Bakels, 'The beginnings of manuring in western Europe', *Antiquity* 71 (1997), pp. 442–5; D. Elwert and J. Finnern, 'Landschaften und Böden Nordfrieslands', *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Bodenkundlichen Gesellschaft* 70 (1993), pp. 127–50; W. van der Westeringhe, 'Man-made soils in the Netherlands, especially in sandy areas ("plaggen soils")', in W. Groenman-van Waateringe and M. Robinson (eds), *Man-Made Soils* (1988), pp. 5–20; H. de Bakker, *Major soils and soil regions in the Netherlands* (1979); M. J. Conry, 'Plaggen soils. A review of man-made raised soils', *Soil and Fertilisers* 37 (1974), pp. 319–26; J. C. Pape, 'Plaggen soils in the Netherlands', *Geoderma*, 4 (1970), pp. 229–55; F. de Coninck, 'Formation of deep humiferous soils in the Antwerp Campine', *Pédologie* 7 (1957), 102–6.

[25] Davidson, 'Soils as cultural resources', pp. 175–8.

[26] D. A. Davidson and I. A. Simpson, 'Soils and landscape history: case studies from the Northern Isles of Scotland', in Foster and Smout (eds), *History of soils and field systems*, pp. 66–74; D. A. Davidson and S. P. Carter, 'Micromorphological evidence of past agricultural practices in cultivated soils: the impact of traditional systems on soils in Papa Stour, Shetland', *J. Archaeological Science* 25 (1998), pp. 827–38.

[27] E. Hindmarch, *Renaissance Golf Club at Archerfield, evaluation and excavation data structure report* (unpublished report by AOC Archaeology Group, Edinburgh, 2006).

Similar organically rich, deepened topsoil has long been known to exist around Scotland's post-twelfth-century burghs, and it was suggested that it is a Scottish manifestation of some form of plaggen-forming practice.[28] This possibility was one consideration explored through a programme of joint historical and geoarchaeological investigation at a number of Scottish burghs.

Given the loss of most areas of medieval and early modern peri-urban cultivated land below modern suburbs, research has focused on smaller communities where significant areas of unbuilt-up tenement backlands and portions of former burgh fields survive. Trials for topsoil depth determination were made using auguring, permitting the production of depth-gradient maps at several burghs. Investigations at Nairn, Pittenweem, Lauder and Wigtown revealed that while the deepest anthrosols were, as suspected, in the backlands of properties in the historic burgh cores, significantly deepened or anthropogenically enriched soils extended beyond the built-up area into former town fields. Samples were obtained using either test-pitting or coring on selected sites in the backlands (the long strips of garden ground behind street-front properties) and fields, then subjected to a range of analytical laboratory tests to determine soil structures and content.[29] In these four burghs, the deepened soils from both tenement backlands and peri-urban fields were found to have been significantly enhanced by addition of various materials. As at St Andrews, much of this material appears to be the result of the digging in of turf or peat and the disposal of waste, while inputs of seaweed are known to have continued into the twentieth century at Pittenweem, but both backland and field samples also contained substantial quantities of material probably obtained from dung-heaps and middens. These included fuel residues/hearth-sweepings, pot-sherds, shell material, animal bones and significant traces of lipids, which indicate that human excrement and slaughterhouse waste was added to the mixture. One project, which focused on the former common fields to the south-west of Nairn, has revealed evidence for the artificial deepening and enriching of the soils there through the input of midden material from the burgh as well as turf and divot brought from the lower ground around the River Nairn. Raised phosphorus levels supported the notion that the burgh's waste had been used to enrich these fields, while finer material in the deepened soil horizon was attributed to the mineral components of sand and ashes used to soak up cattle urine and semi-liquid faeces in byres, and of turf.[30] The presence of substantial quantities of material derived from decayed turf could indicate the transporting from the burgh of debris from building demolition or repair – and substantial turf construction remained a local tradition well into the 1800s[31] – which would support Carter's thesis for accumulation

[28] Davidson, Dercon, Stewart and Watson, 'Legacy of past urban waste disposal on local soils', p. 778.

[29] The principal tests were: Loss on Ignition, Phosphorus mg/Kg, Magnetic Susceptibility, and Frequency Dependent Magnetic Susceptibility.

[30] G. Dercon, D. A. Davidson, K. Dalsgaard, I. Simpson, T. Spek and J. Thomas, 'Formation of sandy anthropogenic soils in north-west Europe: identification of inputs based on particle size distribution', *Catena* 59 (2005), pp. 341–56; Davidson and Simpson, 'Soils and landscape history', p. 68.

[31] For a photograph and description of a turf-built house at Howfordbridge, Nairnshire, *c.*1870, see http://www.scran.ac.uk/database/record.php?usi=000-000-137-526-C&scache=21hiz3mooz&searchdb=scran. Turf-built houses remained common in rural parts of Nairnshire in the 1840s, e.g. in Ardclach parish, see H. McBean, 'Parish of Ardclach', *New Statistical Account of Scotland*, 13 (15 vols, 1834–45), pp. 37–8 (see http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1834–45/Elgin/Ardclach/13/26/). The tradition is discussed in B. Walker, 'The vernacular buildings of north-east Scotland: an exploration', *Scottish Geographical J.*, 95 (1979), esp. at 46–50.

of the 'garden soils' at St Andrews, but documentary evidence from Nairn discussed below and several other burghs suggests that turf was also cut and transported specifically for use in soil-deepening operations.[32]

Marked variation in soil depths over relatively short distances within the backlands of the medieval and early modern burghs at Nairn, Pittenweem and Lauder was noted.[33] This, it has been argued, was probably a consequence of individual owners pursuing different manuring strategies and, perhaps, making inputs of varying volumes and types of material. Marked differences in soil colour were also noted between the backlands and land adjacent to the old burgh core, further emphasising the degree of modification of *in situ* topsoil. This colour difference, it is argued, signified the high level of organic material from domestic refuse within the backland garden soils and, along with the depth of homogenous soils, underscored the scale of the inputs and the length of time over which they had been added.[34]

At Nairn, Pittenweem and Lauder, similar areas of deepened soils were also identified in the former burgh fields. These, it is proposed, resulted from identical soil-enhancement strategies. As has already been mentioned, the Nairn anthrosols have been shown to contain significant quantities of domestic refuse, hearth waste, lipids, and mineral remains of decayed turf. While no comparable sampling has yet been undertaken at Elgin, field-walking in a surviving area of undeveloped former common field west of the medieval burgh core has produced strong circumstantial evidence for the transporting of household refuse and street-sweepings to the cultivated ground in the form of substantial quantities of medieval pottery, coins and other artefacts.[35] A similar practice may account for the random scatters of medieval coins and small items of non-ferrous metalwork found by metal-detectorists in areas of former burgh fields round several Scottish towns.[36]

Together, these geoarchaeological studies indicate the complexity of the formation of these deepened soils, revealing the use of domestic refuse and, probably, trade waste in the form of shambles refuse (the portions of animal carcasses from slaughtering activity which have no use in any craft process) and also the digging in of significant volumes of organically-rich soil materials. At Nairn, this process has been described as 'an early form of urban composting', the legacy of which was a general improvement in peri-urban agricultural land soil-quality.[37] The scale of the anthropogenic intervention in the peri-urban environment over the best part of a millennium which these analyses indicate is staggering and highlights the inherent fallacy

[32] Davidson, Dercon, Stewart and Watson, 'Legacy of past urban waste disposal on local soils', p. 782.

[33] Golding and Davidson, 'Effect of past waste disposal on soils', p. 3. K. A. Golding, 'The effect of waste disposal on soils in and around historic small towns' (PhD thesis, University of Stirling, 2008).

[34] Golding and Davidson, 'Effect of past waste disposal on soils', pp. 3, 5.

[35] Pers. Comm. Susan Bennett, former curator of Elgin Museum.

[36] J. D. Bateson and N. M. McQ Holmes, 'Roman and medieval coins found in Scotland, 1988–95', *Proc. Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 127 (1997), pp. 527–61: metal-detector finds on areas of former cultivated land associated with burghs occurred in this period at Aberlady, Cupar, Dornoch, Elgin and Rattray. For discussion of metal finds from medieval cultivated ground at Dornoch, http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/123446/details/dornoch+meadows+business+park/ or A. Cox, R. Coleman and C. Miller, 'Meadows Business Park, Dornoch (Dornoch parish), medieval occupation and post-medieval finds', *Discovery and excavation in Scotland* (1997), p. 46.

[37] Davidson, Dercon, Stewart and Watson, 'Legacy of past urban waste disposal on local soils', p. 782.

in the current belief that landscape-scale environmental change was a product of eighteenth-century and later Improvement agriculture. The modification of soil structures evident in the medieval anthrosols reflects a transformative episode in Scottish landscape history as significant as Neolithic and Bronze Age woodland clearance or the systemic reconfigurations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

II

What can the documentary records reveal of the processes by which these deepened soils were created and of the materials being deposited? Embedded within the historical record is a substantial body of incidental data that illustrates aspects of daily life and routine which were too commonplace to merit otherwise documenting. This material provides the historical context for the processes of soil formation identified in the geoarchaeological record. The documentary research has examined the records of sixteen burghs of varying size and wealth in the main survey period, 1450–1850, and distributed widely across the country.[38] This wide distribution and cross-section of community size has allowed a national picture to emerge.

In all burghs for which detailed records survive, the accumulation of waste in streets, lanes and against walls was regarded as a public nuisance and general inconvenience, but the value of waste material to individuals and to the community was also recognised. The processes whereby all household refuse and human waste (referred to as 'fuilzie' or 'failyie') was garnered into mounds that would be carted when needed to their owner's cultivated ground were also documented in some detail. Each household maintained its own midden, usually located on the foreland (the space belonging to the property-holder between the public highway and the front wall of the house); essentially this was private property gathered on privately held ground.[39] The waste that accumulated in these private middens had an altogether different status as property from waste dropped or dumped in the public spaces of the community. From at least as early as the 1520s some burgh councils enacted by-laws for the regular cleansing of street-waste, the 'gait syeppens' (street-oozings/seepings) of horse- and cattle-dung and other materials – such as waste grain, meal or malt – dropped or dumped in the common ways, and of the waste from flesh- and fish-markets and its disposal as a public resource.[40] Rights to remove and sell on this public waste were then already being 'set' (let by contract to an individual for a stated period for an agreed price). This waste might be gathered into a single midden in a designated location, an arrangement common

[38] The burghs are, from north to south, Tain, Nairn, Elgin, Banff, Fraserburgh, Old Aberdeen and Aberdeen, Perth, Pittenweem, Stirling, Edinburgh, Haddington, Lauder, Peebles, Selkirk, Wigtown and Whithorn.

[39] This position contrasts with that in contemporary England, where only waste deposited on the private ground at the rear of a property was secure from removal by town authorities. See, for example, W. King, 'How high is too high? Disposing of dung in seventeenth-century Prescot', *Sixteenth-Century J.* 23 (1992), pp. 443–5.

[40] *Stirling records*, p. 6, 9 Nov. 1520, the set of the street sweepings to Robert Arnot; Haddington Burgh Registers, NAS, B30/9/2 (Court Book, 1530–55), fo. 79r, burgh court 6 Mar. 1536/7, for the delivery to Cristell Thomson of the muck of the fish-market gathered by John Hume; ibid., fo. 178r, 15 Feb 1542/3 for the 'dichting' of the flesh-market, the muck of which had been set (let by contract) to the same John Hume.

under licensed waste-collection mechanisms from the later 1600s onwards.[41] Household refuse including human faeces and urine, however, was private property and the responsibility of the householder. This view of midden waste as private property, with some intrinsic monetary value, led to the emergence of a trade in the commodity. How old that traffic was is unknown, but it surely long predates the surviving records of contracts for delivery of agreed quantities in the 1530s, which reveal an already developed market for midden waste unwanted by some producers but heavily in demand from those with significant agricultural interests. At Haddington, for example, as early as March 1537 the burgh council registers record settlement of breaches of contract for failure to deliver the agreed quantities of 'muck', with cash values assigned per 'lade' (cart-load) to be paid for non-delivery.[42]

Seasonal demand for fertiliser meant that private dung heaps accumulated over several months and became obstacles to be navigated around in the streets and closes of the burghs. Such long-term build-up of waste in street-side middens did not mean that it was unwanted by its producers. The threat of uncompensated seizure and disposal of the material, in addition to money-fines, was used by many burgh councils to force better management and regular clearing of dung-hills and indicates how important this resource was to the burgesses. Despite their economic value to the townsfolk, however, middens were regarded as a noisome nuisance where they spilled from forelands into the public way, stimulating measures aimed at management of a public problem rather than disposal of the private commodity. In some burghs, the authorities waged losing battles through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to control these private middens. At Nairn, the earliest surviving records of waste disposal within the burgh takes the form of prosecutions dating from as late as July 1658 for the construction of folds which impeded traffic in the streets, but the records refer to sixteenth-century legislation forbidding the townsfolk from making middens and dunghills on public roads. Nearly a century later, the councillors were still attempting to enforce this clearly ineffective legislation.[43]

In larger communities, surviving records of burgh council enactments indicate that midden-waste and street-dung were matters of public concern from at least the second quarter of the sixteenth century. Council ordinances concerning the removal of dung and the cleansing of dunghills from the public ways are first recorded in 1529 at Stirling and at Elgin and Haddington from the 1540s onwards, but the late fifteenth-century poet William Dunbar's tirade against the merchant-burgesses of Edinburgh suggests that it was already an old problem.[44] The first surviving Elgin council act relating to waste disposal dates from 1541, when it was ordained that those who had deposited 'gudding' (the generic term for waste used as manure in the fields) at the eastern edge of the burgh were to remove it by an appointed time or anyone would be allowed to take it for their own uses.[45] An almost contemporary enactment of Haddington burgh council from January 1542 ordained the removal of all middens from the streets within

[41] As set out, for example, in the 1738 arrangements in Perth (Perth and Kinross Archives, B59/25/3/39) where four sites for the temporary gathering of the material removed by the cleansers were designated.

[42] NAS, Haddington Burgh Registers, B30/9/2, fo. 79r, 6 Mar. 1536/7.

[43] Davidson, Dercon, Stewart and Watson, 'Legacy of past urban waste disposal on urban soils', p. 779.

[44] H. Harvey-Wood (ed.), *William Dunbar: Selected Poems* (2003), pp. 64–6.

[45] *Stirling Records*, pp. 37–8; W. Cramond (ed.), *The records of Elgin* (2 vols, 1903–08) (hereafter *Elgin records*), I, pp. 65–66.

eight days and any remaining after that time were to be 'led away and confiscated to the town's use'.[46] In 1550, the problem of dunghills being left as obstructions for long periods was tackled by an Elgin ordinance requiring none to be left in the street for longer than three days, with a fine of 8*s*. for any breach, and a further stipulation that each burgess had to keep the drainage channels around his property clear of blockages to prevent noisome effluents from spilling into other men's ground.[47] The accumulation of middens in the back lane between the burgages and the cultivated crofts (which provided access to backlands and linked them with the fields around the town) remained an issue. Burgesses were depositing waste in this lane behind their property for ease of carrying it to their land, blocking through access for others. Accordingly, in 1584 the council ordered the clearance of all such middens and fined defaulters.[48] There was, too, a growing feeling that such public accumulations of refuse were injurious to perceptions of the burgh in the eyes of outsiders and an affront to the local elites who were confronted with reeking middens whenever they visited their townhouses or attended church. At Banff in 1638 it was the 'prejudice of the inhabitantis … and dishonour of the burghe' that were the stated imperatives behind a statute requiring the regular cleansing of middens from the main street.[49]

The scale of the trade in street-sweepings and midden material is impressive. As the 1537 court decreet and 1542 cleansing ordinance from Haddington referred to earlier reveal, all forms of dung and midden-waste were bought and sold as a marketable commodity and dealers gathered the materials for bulk sale and delivery. The Haddington decreet dealt with 40 cartloads of muck, but at Elgin in 1581 one Anthony Cowie was ordered to pay £3 Scots for 200 'leidis of muk' he had promised to deliver to another burgess.[50] In 1647, Jean Bonnyman, a burgess's widow, pursued John Hardie, a member of a prominent Elgin trading and property-owning family, for non-payment to her for 260 loads of dung delivered to his land and a further 53 loads for which he had made his own carriage arrangements.[51] Demand for good-quality manure was such that in 1685 a heap of street-dung and seized midden material intended by the council for roup (sale by public auction) mysteriously vanished overnight, supposedly stolen by a tenant farmer from outside the burgh.[52] From this year, records show the tack (the lease or tenancy) of this dunghill being obtained by private individuals who either sold its contents on at a profit to cultivators or used it on their own ground.[53]

By the eighteenth century, fewer burgesses were actively cultivating their own ground and their middens were no longer necessary as fertiliser for their own use; dunghills were coming to be regarded as a nuisance. An Elgin statute of 1715 required burgesses to make

[46] NAS, Haddington Burgh Registers, B30/9/2, fo. 162r, 26 Jan 1541/2.

[47] Cramond (ed.), *Elgin records*, I, p. 105.

[48] Ibid., I, p. 173.

[49] W. Cramond (ed.), *The Annals of Banff* (2 vols, New Spalding Club, 1891–3), I, p. 82.

[50] Cramond, *Elgin records*, I, p. 159.

[51] Ibid., I, p. 182.

[52] Ibid., I, p. 338. The 'gutter' referred to in the council minute may be represented by the substantial water-course found in excavations in Lossie Wynd in 1977: D. W. Hall, A. D. S. MacDonald, D. R. Perry and J. Terry, 'The archaeology of Elgin: excavations on Ladyhill and in the High Street, with an overview of the archaeology of the Burgh', *Proc. Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 128 (1998), p. 822.

[53] *Elgin records*, I, p. 338. The first tack, for three years, was to Thomas Watson, a maltman, who paid 33*s*. 4*d*. Scots for the period.

weekly clearances of middens from outside their doorways and prohibited dumping outside the slaughterhouse or at vennel and wynd heads,[54] while the council made arrangements for the removal of dung from the streets. To cover the costs of cleansing, the council intended to sell the refuse,[55] for there was continuing demand for such manure by those who were still cultivating the land and the dung accordingly had a commercial value. In common with other Scottish burghs, Elgin auctioned the right to clear dung and dunghills, not just street-sweepings, which the successful bidder then sold on for profit. Such a method was in use at Perth by 1738, where the successful bidder had to clean all the main streets daily by 10 am in winter and 8 am in summer, and all back lanes fortnightly, the cleared material being gathered in dumps on the periphery of the town from where it had to be removed weekly, mainly by on-sale to farmers.[56] Some burgh officials and businessmen clearly saw a commercial opportunity and ran the operation as part of a portfolio of activities, while in other cases it was farmers from neighbouring districts who sought the tack, intending to use the product on their own fields. Thus, for example, the tack of the street dung and midden material from the closes of the fishing community of Newhaven beside Edinburgh was secured in 1771 by John Cleghorn, a tenant farmer from nearby Granton.[57] At Banff in 1764 it was the burgh's provost who secured the contract, while in 1781 at Elgin it was Robert Smith, a lawyer in the burgh, who paid £1 0*s*. 3*d*. for the rights to the dung from the burgh's streets.[58] Elgin's council attempted to reorganise the cleansing operations in 1791, dividing the streets into four lots to be let at 5*s*. each, but no one bid for any of them.[59] At Edinburgh, by way of contrast, the public roup of the dung and fuilzie of the city was of huge commercial interest and was managed as a significant contributor to its revenues by the council into the nineteenth century.[60]

The apparent decline in demand for Elgin's dung coincided with the steady spread of improved agriculture in lowland Moray. While this might be expected to have stimulated demand for fertilisers, and the *Statistical Accounts* and records from other burghs with arable hinterlands – such as Dunbar, Edinburgh, Inverkeithing and Perth[61] – reveal buoyant demand well into the 1840s, increased numbers of livestock and the keeping of properly maintained dung-heaps on consolidated farms perhaps already provided more convenient sources of material. At Perth, however, farms up to 10 miles away in the Carse of Gowrie still found it profitable to obtain midden-waste from the town, while by the early 1790s farmers in Dumbartonshire were obtaining dung in bulk from Glasgow and Greenock, it being recorded that up to 50 cartloads of town dung could be applied to one acre of land,[62] and in Stirlingshire town dung was sought by farmers within a radius of three miles of the main towns.[63] The rapid expansion of Glasgow

[54] Ibid., I, p. 390.

[55] Ibid., I, p. 469.

[56] NAS, B59/25/3/39 (Perth), tack for one year.

[57] NAS, GD265/4/1/13, Tack, inhabitants of Newhaven and John Cleghorn, tenant in Granton, anent lease of street dung (25 Jan. 1771).

[58] Cramond (ed.), *Annals of Banff,* I, p. 312; Cramond (ed.), *Elgin Records*, I, p. 205.

[59] Ibid., I, p. 207.

[60] See, for example, NAS, JC65/18, articles of public roup of the dung and fuilzie of the Extended Royalty of the City of Edinburgh, 1809.

[61] NAS, B18/32/18 (Dunbar); B34/20/232 (Inverkeithing); B59/25/3/140, B59/25/3/150 (Perth); JC45/29, JC65/18–22 (Edinburgh).

[62] D. Ure, *General View of the agriculture in the County of Dumbarton* (1794), p. 32.

[63] R. Belsches, *General View of the agriculture in the County of Stirling* (1796), p. 38.

met growing demand from improving farmers in eastern Dumbartonshire in the early 1800s, although tolls and carriage costs were driving up prices.[64] Further west, Greenock and Port Glasgow were key suppliers. Fish-market waste had been in high demand as a component of manure from at least the early 1500s, as recorded at Haddington, but the rapid growth of the commercial fisheries around the Clyde estuary after 1750 saw great expansion in the availability of processing waste at a time when demand for organic fertilisers for agricultural improvement was growing with equal rapidity. The dung of the Clyde fishing ports had been considered superior to other town dungs, its quality being described as greatly improved on account of the waste materials from the herring-gutting yards, listed as 'refuse salt, putrid fish, blood, and other animal substances'.[65] The same consideration explains the demand for waste from Newhaven on the Forth in the 1770s, mentioned earlier. At the Clyde ports, demand declined in the early nineteenth century as the fishery contracted, it being commented that the quantity of animal matter in the dung had declined in proportion to the 'earthy sweepings of the streets'.[66]

In Nairn and Inverness, and probably other small burghs in the north of Scotland, the unaesthetic appearance and health hazards of dunghills and middens continued to cause disquiet amongst the emerging middle classes and health professionals into the mid-nineteenth century. It was recognised, however, that middens provided the poorer inhabitants of the burghs with a source of fertiliser for their potato patches; George Anderson in Inverness reported in the early 1840s that:

> the drainage [in the poorer housing areas], naturally bad enough, is often purposely obstructed by the people, for the purpose of adding to their dunghill heaps of middens, which, as manure for their potatoe-grounds, form the chief treasures of the poorer cottagers and labourers.[67]

Anderson also commented that the back courts of the labourers' accommodation could be used as small vegetable patches, 'but their principal value is as stances for pig-houses and dunghills'. This continuation of ancient practice, however, was a mere shadow of the former importance of midden material to Scotland's townspeople and, as fewer and fewer townsfolk pursued any active involvement in agriculture, the input of their waste to neighbouring fields had declined sharply by the mid-nineteenth century and in most cases ceased before about 1900.

One further issue that sheds light on the process of soil deepening and enrichment around Scotland's post-medieval burghs is the rearguard defence fought from the sixteenth century by the council of Elgin to protect its common peat mosses from which the burgesses obtained their main supply of domestic fuel. Their action was a reflection of a crisis in the fuel supply for many burghs away from the coal-rich region around the Firth of Forth, which was exacerbated by inroads made by agriculturalists in search of materials to enrich their topsoil.[68] Legislation

[64] A. Whyte and D. Macfarlan, *General View of the agriculture of the County of Dumbarton* (1811), p. 197.

[65] Ibid, pp. 197–8.

[66] Ibid, pp. 198.

[67] George Anderson, 'Sanitary Report on the Town of Inverness, North Britain', cited in Chadwick, *Report on the sanitary condition of the labouring population*, p. 115.

[68] R. D. Oram, 'Abondance inépuisable? Crise de l'approvisionnement en combustible et réactions en Ecosse du Nord entre environ 1500 et environ 1800,' in J-M. Derex and F. Grégoire (eds) *Histoire économique et sociale de la tourbe et des tourbières* (2009), pp. 31–44.

in 1580 and 1581 restricting casting of fuel to only a licensed group of burgesses, also ordained that no one was to cast '*faill* (turf used for building), fuel or divot', or '*hoik*' (dig out) or '*fla*' (take off the grass layer) of the moss.[69] At the same date at Aberdeen, the council prohibited further removal of turf from the coastal links, where the burgesses' actions had resulted in episodes of sand-blow and shortages of materials for other uses, especially building of dykes and for roofing. The prohibition on 'hoik'-ing and 'fla'-ing reveals a further concern; that the removal of turf to deepen cultivated topsoil was exposing the underlying peat to erosion, further depleting fuel reserves. The use of turf and peat in this manner was a north-eastern Scottish tradition, illustrated in 1685 when the Scottish Parliament passed an Act directed specifically at Aberdeenshire, prohibiting the 'Custom of delving, teiling and casting up great quantities of corn ground, meadow ground and Suarded ground which they lay in heaps to rott, for making fuilzie or maner to their land …'.[70] By the late eighteenth century the practice was widespread in sub-Highland Scotland. Legislative efforts were in vain, however, as a series of court actions at Elgin in 1762 reveal. There, individuals charged with illegal cutting of peat confessed to removing moss-earth and turf to mix with material from their dunghills to form a richer soil for cultivation.[71] In following decades, it was the mosses themselves that were being taken into cultivation, not materials being removed from them for use elsewhere. That issue introduces another factor: conflicting pressures on land for fuel or for agricultural development, but that lies beyond the scope of this paper.[72]

III

In conclusion, the processes revealed by these geoarchaeological and historical records illuminate the techniques by which agricultural soil around many Scottish burghs was deepened and improved. More importantly, they provide insights into human actions evident in the geoarchaeological record. At Nairn, for example, references to the use of byre refuse, midden waste, shambles waste and turf and divot cut specifically for the purpose illustrate how the phosphorus, mineral traces, lipids and other distinctive signatures were introduced into garden and field soils.[73] The sources of material used for manuring and the fact that it was delivered from the urban area to the adjoining fields are recorded at almost every burgh where accounts were examined. Other than in small burghs where there has been little physical expansion until recently, however, the soil evidence to match the documentary record is

[69] Cramond (ed.), *Elgin Records*, I, pp. 158, 163. This prohibition was repeated in 1581 (p. 167).

[70] *Acts of the Parliament of Scotland*, VIII, pp. 494–5 (1685).

[71] Mitchell Library, Glasgow, Ms 246130, extracts from the records of the burgh of Elgin. '1 Sept. 1762 in court haldin by Provost Brodee, Bailies Laing and Leslie. James Allan, procurator fiscal of court, complained upon the persons after named for their casting & winning peats & firr in the moss of Mostowie and selling the same through the country, as also for their taking in and improving the land and sole of the said moss and converting the same into corn land, and for their casting and carrying away the moss or turff and/or surface of the said moss and mixing the same with their dunghills or burning of the samyn & craved that as the persons after named had been guilty of the foresaid offences repeated times within these 7 years past […] each fined £50 Scots'; Cramond (ed.), *Elgin Records*, I, pp. 199, 475, 477, 478.

[72] Discussed in Oram, 'Abondance inépuisable?', pp. 31–44.

[73] Davidson, Dercon, Stewart and Watson, 'Legacy of past urban waste disposal on local soils', p. 779.

currently lacking. In larger towns, further geoarchaeological research is needed to locate areas of surviving anthrosols. Overall, much remains to be done to determine the composition of the materials being introduced, from which it may be possible to identify local or regional diversity of practice. What is also clear is that all organic refuse was valued as fertiliser and some types were hugely in demand on account of perceptions of particular richness. This point raises the question of the growth of the trade in urban waste and how supplies of especially favoured materials were procured. There is more to be discovered about the individuals controlling the waste-disposal operations in the burghs, especially to identify any networks of landed and agricultural interests of which they were part. The record sources also provide some indication of the volumes of material being introduced to the fields, and here future geoarchaeological analysis may enable determination of rates of accumulation. The long, steady process of accumulation that the historical record illustrates appears to fit Carter's hypothesis of soil deepening being largely the result of the long-term deposition of organic debris of all forms but principally derived from buildings of turf, timber, clay and divot. However, the north-east Scottish sources reveal that the turf- and divot-derived component of the deepened soils, which he argued was the result of the steady dissolution over centuries of structures built largely from those materials, were also the result of the deliberate introduction of those materials with the intention of improving the soil quality.

Documentary and geoarchaeological records demonstrate the significance of the input of urban midden material into surrounding agricultural land. They reveal also the longevity of the practice and provide insight into the factors that had contributed to its decline in the century before the formal parliamentary legislation controlling the disposal of household waste of all forms. Even after the nineteenth-century Public Health Acts the direct application of untreated human waste and other midden material to agricultural land continued, and not only at small communities which lacked the resources to introduce piped water-borne sewerage systems and regular street scavenging operations. At Edinburgh, the home of the eighteenth-century essayist, Adam Ferguson whose views on civil society were so influential in shaping attitudes towards sanitation and in framing the philosophy of modern civic life, it was only in 1922 that the disposal of much of the city's sewage via the uncovered Craigentinny Burn and its use as fertiliser on the notorious Craigentinny Meadows was discontinued.[74] To members of 'polite society' in late eighteenth-century Edinburgh, urbane, refined and scholarly, who had little involvement in agriculture – and indeed for the populations of most Scottish towns and cities which continued to discharge their waste direct into rivers and landfill sites into the early twenty-first century – for what they regarded as noisome matter of no use and much inconvenience to them, out of sight was very much out of mind.

[74] P. J. Smith, 'The foul burns of Edinburgh: Public health attitudes and environmental change', *Scottish Geographical J.* 91 (1975), pp. 25–37.

The regulation of cottage building in seventeenth-century Sussex

by Danae Tankard

Abstract

In 1589 a statute was passed entitled 'An act against erecting and maintaining cottages' which sought to regulate cottage building and the multiple occupation of cottages. This article examines the context of the act's passage and its relationship to other legislation of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. It then offers a detailed exploration of the way the act's cottage clauses were enforced in seventeenth-century Sussex. It also considers the legal status of cottages that were 'continued' and looks at evidence for methods of cottage construction and the range of cottage types.

In 1589 a statute was passed entitled 'An act against erecting and maintaining cottages' which sought to regulate cottage building and the multiple occupation of cottages. The preamble to the act set out its purpose:

> For the avoiding of the great inconveniencies which are found by experience to grow by the erecting and building of great numbers and multitude of cottages, which are daily more and more increased in many parts of the realm.

The act made it illegal to build a cottage without four acres of land, to convert a building into a cottage without four acres of land, or to 'willingly uphold, maintain and continue' a cottage without four acres of land. The penalty for the first two offences was a fine of £10; the penalty for the third was a fine of 40*s*. for every month that the cottage was continued. There were a number of exemptions: cottages in towns or cities; within one mile of industrial areas or the sea or navigable rivers; in forests, chases, warrens or parks inhabited by under-keepers, warreners, herdsmen or shepherds; or inhabited by any 'poor, lame, sick, aged or impotent person'. Prosecution of these clauses was vested in any of three authorities: the manorial lord at his court leet, the justices of assize and the justices of the peace. The justices of assize and the justices of the peace were permitted to make decrees allowing the continued habitation of cottages built without four acres of land for a set period of time 'upon complaint' made to them.[1] The act also made it illegal for cottages to be occupied by more than one family or lodgers (called 'inmates'). Owners or occupiers who allowed multiple occupation were liable

[1] 31 Eliz. c. 7 (1589), cl. 1–5 (*Statutes of the Realm* (10 vols, 1810–28) [hereafter *SR*] IV (i), pp. 804–5).

to a fine of 10*s*. for each month that the offence continued. Prosecution of this clause was the responsibility of the manorial lord at his court leet.[2]

Writing more than 40 years ago about the circumstances that prompted the 1589 act, Joan Thirsk observed that it was 'designed to preserve the principle that all countrymen should have some land for their essential support'.[3] More recently John Broad has commented that the act 'enshrined the concept of the independent labouring man, able to raise a subsistence from his four acres, but likely to sell his skills to farmers and tradesmen for part of the year to supplement his income'.[4] In other words, both authors see the motivation for the act arising out of a desire to protect the smallholder and to preserve his independence. However, the wording of the preamble, describing the 'great inconveniencies' caused by the unregulated growth of cottages, suggests that from its inception it was intended to be punitive, whilst offering protection to the most vulnerable. In this article I will examine the context of the act's passage and its inter-relation with other legislation of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, before moving on to an examination of the way in which the cottages clauses of the act were being enforced in seventeenth-century Sussex.

I

The enclosure of manorial waste – on commons or wayside verges – for the erection of cottages was not a new phenomenon in the sixteenth century. Like other types of enclosure by encroachment, it was regulated through the manorial court. In a period when population was stagnant and land plentiful, such small-scale encroachment was not contentious. From the second decade of the sixteenth century, however, population began to grow, making land a more valuable, and highly regulated, commodity. At the same time, the economy entered a period of long-term inflation that saw prices rising, benefiting farmers able to produce a large surplus for the market but impoverishing smallholders. Large-scale enclosure of wasteland and common fields, the engrossing of farms and the conversion of arable land to pasture became increasingly divisive issues, forcing the government to promulgate a number of anti-enclosure and anti-engrossment statutes. These included 'An act concerning the improvement of commons and waste grounds', which was passed in 1550, in the wake of the anti-enclosure disturbances of summer 1549. The primary purpose of that act was to reaffirm the principles set out in the statutes of Merton and Westminster of 1235 and 1285 that lords might improve their commons so long as they left enough for their tenants. However, it also offered protection to the occupants of existing wasteland cottages, observing that

> in diverse countries of this realm there have been built upon commons or waste grounds certain necessary houses under the quantity of three acres and not above three acres, enclosed to and with the same, and in some place there is enclosed a garden, orchard or pond out

[2] 31 Eliz. c. 7 (1589), cl. 6 (*SR* IV (i) p. 805). For a discussion of the inmates clauses, see P. Styles, 'The evolution of the law of settlement', in P. Styles (ed.), *Studies in seventeenth-century West Midlands history* (1978), pp. 175–204.

[3] J. Thirsk, 'Enclosing and Engrossing', in J. Thirsk (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales,* IV, *1500–1640* (1967), pp. 227–8.

[4] J. Broad, 'Housing the rural poor in southern England, 1650–1850', *AgHR* 48 (2000), p. 157.

> of or in such wastes or grounds which exceed not the quantity of two acres or thereabouts, which does no hurt and yet is much commodity to the owner thereof and to others.

The act then went on to stipulate that such enclosures were protected by law and the cottager entitled to occupation without penalty. Where the enclosure amounted to more than three acres, however, the manorial lord was entitled to lay open the excess. In 1550, therefore, the Edwardian government sought to protect cottagers.[5]

As the sixteenth century progressed, population growth accelerated, reaching a peak in the 1570s and 1580s. The surge in population was widely commented upon: in 1577 William Harrison noted, 'some also do grudge at the great increase in people in these days, thinking a necessary brood of cattle far better than a superfluous augmentation of mankind'.[6] It was not only that there were more people than ever before but that too many of them were poor. The ranks of what Harrison describes as the 'true poor', that is, those who were poor by 'impotency' or 'casualty', were swelled by an increasing number of vagrants perceived as both a public nuisance and a threat to social order.[7] Both these groups were recognised in the developing poor law legislation of the sixteenth century, culminating in the 1572 act, which introduced a mandatory system of poor rates for the relief of the 'poor and impotent' whilst imposing a range of punitive measures on the vagrant.[8] However, the last quarter of the sixteenth century also saw a rapid growth in the numbers of the 'labouring poor' – those who were partly or wholly wage-dependent – who scraped by most of the time provided they did not fall ill or have too many children. In the countryside, an increasing proportion of the population was landless or land-impoverished, eking out a living through a mixture of paid labour, small-scale craft or trade activities and the exploitation of common land.[9] The needs of this group were not specifically recognised in the 1572 act, and their entitlement to relief would remain ambivalent and contested as the poor law developed.

The proliferation of cottages and the subdivision of buildings had become a matter of public concern by the 1570s, leading to calls for statutory controls. During the reading of the bill against vagabonds and for the relief of the poor in May 1572, Nicholas St John, then member for Marlborough, argued that the rapid increase in new cottages on commons encouraged vagabondage and demanded that 'henceforth no cottage be built unless it have three or four acres of ground belonging to it'.[10] This proposal was not, however, incorporated in the statute as enacted.

As Philip Styles showed long ago, in the absence of any statutory mechanism, rural and urban communities were taking matters into their own hands by issuing fines or demanding sureties from those providing accommodation to poor migrants.[11] In this respect, the 1589 act was long overdue, and merely gave a statutory basis to existing local practice. Our knowledge of the parliamentary background to the passage of the legislation is incomplete. Styles

[5] 3 & 4 Edward VI c. 3 (1550), cl. 3–4 (*SR* IV (i) pp. 102–3); Thirsk, 'Enclosing and Engrossing', pp. 200–38; K. Wrightson, *Earthly necessities: economic lives in early modern Britain, 1470–1750* (2000), pp. 115–31.

[6] W. Harrison, *The description of England,* ed. G. Edelen (1994), p. 182.

[7] Ibid., pp. 180–1.

[8] P. Slack, *The English poor law, 1531–1782* (1995), p. 52.

[9] Wrightson, *Earthly necessities*, pp. 194–8.

[10] P. W. Hasler (ed.), *History of Parliament: the Commons, 1558–1603* (3 vols, 1982), III, pp. 322–3. I would like to thank Robin Eagles for this reference.

[11] Styles, 'Evolution', pp. 178–80.

suggested that the bill was introduced by the Lord Treasurer, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, but there is no evidence for this in the Journal of the House of Lords. The bill was first read in the Lords on 8 March 1589; it was sent to the Commons on 15 March; returned to the Lords with some amendments on 24 March and agreed the same day.[12] The housing needs of the impotent poor were given greater recognition with the passage of the 1598 'Act for the relief of the poor' which stipulated that parish officers, with the consent of local landlords and at the charge of the ratepayers, might build 'convenient houses of dwelling' on manorial wastes and commons, and place inmates and more than one family in cottages without being subject to prosecution under the 1589 act.[13] This clause was repeated in the 1601 'Act for the relief of the poor', with the caveat that exemption applied only so long as parish cottages and 'places for inmates' continued to be occupied by the parish poor.[14]

On 13 February 1606 a bill introduced by committee was read in the House of Commons 'For the better execution of one act of Parliament, 31 Eliz. against erecting and maintaining cottages and for the repeal of one branch of the first proviso in the said statute'. This was defeated on 20 March, reintroduced on 17 April and defeated again on 30 April.[15] The purpose of this bill is unclear but one of the committee members, Sir Robert Johnson, member for Monmouth, had a long-standing interest in the plight of the poor, rural depopulation, and the misuse of common land.[16] It is also evident that the interpretation of what constituted a cottage under the 1589 act proved more complicated than the drafters of the statute had envisaged, particularly where existing buildings were converted or sub-divided. In 1632 judicial clarification was provided by the court of King's Bench, and subsequently summarised by the barrister and legal writer, William Sheppard, in part two of *The faithful councillor, or, The marrow of the law in English* (1654). At its most straightforward a cottage was 'a little house newly built, that hath not four acres of land to it' but, in the case of conversions or sub-divisions, Sheppard offered the following guidance:

1. If a man convert that building which before this statute was one dwelling house, into two dwelling houses; these are two cottages punishable by this statute.
2. If one build a new house upon an old foundation in the same quantity that the old was; this is no cottage within this statute.
3. If one build two distinct cottages together, the one upon the old foundation, the other upon the new; that which is built upon the old foundation is no cottage, but that which is built upon the new foundation is a cottage.

[12] Ibid., pp. 178; *Journal of the House of Lords,* II, *1578–1614* (1802), pp. 156–60; 164–5. The journal of the House of Commons for this Parliament does not survive. There is no mention of the 1589 act in T. E. Hartley (ed.), *Proceedings in the parliaments of Elizabeth I* (3 vols, 1981–95), II, *1584–1589,* nor in D. M. Dean, *Law-making and society in late Elizabethan England: the Parliament of England, 1584–1601* (2002). I would like to thank Robin Eagles for his help with the parliamentary history of the act.

[13] 39 Eliz. c. 3 cl. 5 (*SR* IV (i), p. 897); S. Hindle, *On the parish: the micro-politics of poor relief in rural England, c.1550–1750* (2004), p. 302.

[14] 43 Eliz. c. 2 cl. 4–5 (*SR* IV (i), p. 963); Broad, 'Housing', p. 157.

[15] *Journal of the House of Commons*, I, *1547–1629* (1802), pp. 267–70, 283, 287–8; 299–300; 303.

[16] Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris (eds), *The history of Parliament: the House of Commons, 1604–29* (6 vols, 2010), IV, pp. 904–09 (I am grateful to the History of Parliament Trust for allowing me to see this article in advance of publication).

4. If one build a house upon an old and new foundation together, so that the entire house doth stand upon both together; this is a cottage within this statute.
5. If a man have a house, and one hundred acres belonging to it, and he sell the house from the land, or the land from the house, or sell all the land, and keep the house; this is now become a cottage within this statute. And if a man erect a house, and lay four acres to it, and after take it away again, now this is become a cottage within this statute.

Sheppard then went on to list various exemptions.[17] His guidance shows that it was then held that the 1589 act encompassed private landlords who either built cottages or converted buildings into cottages on their land. There were no further qualifications to the act in the seventeenth century, although the 1662 'Act of settlement' cited the problems caused by migrants building cottages in parishes with 'the largest commons or wastes' as one of the reasons for tightening the legislation on settlement.[18] The 1589 act was repealed in 1775.[19]

II

Sussex, bordered by 76 miles of coast to the south and dense woodland and forest to the north, was divided for administrative purposes into eastern and western parts, each with its own regional capital, Lewes and Chichester (the diocesan seat). The primary units of civil administration were the six rapes that ran from the north to the south of the county, with the rapes of Lewes, Pevensey and Hastings lying within the eastern division and those of Chichester, Arundel and Bramber lying within the western division. Rapes were sub-divided into hundreds and the hundreds into smaller units called tithings in the west or boroughs in the east.[20]

There were three distinctive economic regions within the county, the Weald, to the northeast, the downland and coastal plain to the south – both straddling eastern and western parts – and the marshland of eastern Sussex. Agriculture, driven largely by proximity to London, was the predominant form of economic activity. The downland and coastal plain area was primarily a corn-growing region, with sheepwalks on the Downs. Water transport links for export were good, with navigable rivers such as the Ouse and the Adur and significant coastal ports like Chichester. Rural industries were small-scale and local in their markets. Downland parishes were small in both acreage and population; manorial organisation was strong and farm sizes were large. In some areas common land had been enclosed by the seventeenth century, usually with the consent of the tenants; in others, it remained unenclosed until the nineteenth century. Settlements were typically nuclear, with stable populations and little inward migration. The Weald, with its dense woodland and heavy clay soil, was more suited to cattle ranching than arable farming. Parishes in the Weald were typically large (up to 23 square miles) and densely

[17] W. Sheppard, *The faithful councillor, or, The marrow of the law in English*, part 2 (1654), pp. 328–30; quoted in D. L. Roberts, 'The legal significance of fragmentary survival', *Vernacular Architecture* 3 (1972), pp. 24–5.

[18] 14 Car. II c. 12, cl. 1 (*SR* V, p. 401).

[19] 15 Geo. III c. 32 (*Statutes at Large*, XII (1776), p. 307).

[20] C. Herrup, *The common peace: participation and the criminal law in seventeenth-century England* (1987), pp. 11–12; A. Fletcher, *Sussex 1600–1660: a county community in peace and war* (1975), p. 146.

populated, and settlements tended to be scattered. Manorial organisation was weak, with little control over immigration; farm sizes were small, and the landscape was made up of small, enclosed fields, with little common land. The Weald was the location of two great forests, St Leonard's and Ashdown, both of which had a reputation for lawlessness. Communications were hampered by the appalling state of the roads, often impassable in winter. The most significant Wealden industry was iron manufacture, providing seasonal employment for iron-workers and charcoal makers. Glass manufacture took place in Kirdford and Wisborough Green and other opportunities for employment were provided by the timber industry, leather tanning and cloth production. The marshland area of eastern Sussex, notoriously unhealthy and sparsely settled, was mainly used to pasture sheep and cattle. The high price of land and limited employment opportunities restricted immigration.[21]

The Sussex assizes, part of the Home circuit, were held biannually in winter and summer at either East Grinstead or Horsham on the northern edge of the county, as close to London as possible. Sussex was unique in having separate quarter sessions for the eastern and western divisions, which effectively acted as two independent benches. This meant that it had seven rather than four annual meetings. During the sessional weeks for Epiphany, Easter and Michaelmas, one court convened on Mondays and Tuesdays for the western part in Arundel, Chichester or Petworth, and another met on Thursdays and Fridays for the eastern part in Lewes. Midsummer sessions for both divisions were held jointly at Lewes until 1686; thereafter they were held separately. Although a single Commission of the Peace empowered local justices to preside at all meetings, most magistrates attended only the sessions closest to home. There was a considerable overlap of business between the courts of assize and quarter sessions and their procedures were essentially the same. Cases likely to lead to a sentence of death were reserved to the assizes but both courts dealt with a wide range of lesser crimes as well as offences against the communal peace, such as decayed roads and bridges, unlicensed alehouses, vagrancy, illegal cottage building, and taking in inmates.[22]

Records for the Sussex assizes are contained in indictment files, which include all documents collected together by the clerk at the end of each court sitting. Complete files contain the gaol delivery commissions, precepts, calendars of county officers, grand jury panels and gaol calendars, trial jury panels, indictments, coroners' inquests, recognisances, juries of matrons, grand jury presentments, and a variety of writs. But records from more than forty courts held between 1600 and 1700 are missing and the files that survive are incomplete, with many retaining only material relating to felonious crimes.[23] The earliest surviving records for Sussex quarter sessions are the sessions rolls kept separately for the two divisions. The first surviving roll is dated Epiphany 1594 and, up to 1636, only 64 rolls out of a probable 301 exist for the two divisions, but subsequently the series is almost complete. Session rolls contain indictments, presentments, petitions, recognisances, depositions, jury lists, writs, rates of servants and the outer membrane. Until 1646 the outer membrane was used to record orders and judgements

[21] Thirsk, 'The farming regions of England' in Thirsk (ed.), *Agrarian history*, IV, pp. 55–64; Herrup, C*ommon peace*, pp. 11–22; Fletcher, *Sussex*, pp. 3–21.

[22] Herrup, C*ommon peace*, p. 24; Fletcher, *Sussex,* pp. 134–7; B. C. Redwood (ed.), *Quarter sessions order book, 1642–1649* (Sussex Rec. Soc., 54, 1954), p. xiii.

[23] J. S. Cockburn, *Calendar of assize records: Home circuit indictments, Elizabeth I and James I: Introduction* (1985), pp. 11–12.

of the bench on one side and attendance of bailiffs and constables on the other but thereafter the judicial record alone continued to be entered. Order books, covering both divisions, begin in 1642 and record all the orders and decisions of the court. Indictment books, also covering both divisions, summarised all indictments and, from 1652, record the court's judgements. The earliest indictment book begins in 1623. There is a gap for the years 1632 to 1652 but the books then continue without a break.[24]

Two constables served each hundred and were responsible for appointing tithingmen (for western Sussex) and headboroughs (for eastern Sussex) at the hundred leet courts. Presentments made by tithingmen and headboroughs to the hundred courts, about minor offences such as failure to repair roads or scour ditches, formed the basis for many of the presentments made by hundred constables to the assizes or quarter sessions.[25]

J. S. Cockburn has drawn attention to the unreliability of the biographical information contained in assize indictments, observing that 'in many cases the occupation attributed to the accused, or his place of abode, or both, are entirely fictitious'. Such information was merely intended to satisfy legal requirements but was 'factually worthless'. Cockburn's conclusions were based on comparison of information provided in indictments and recognisances, and in several indictments drawn by different clerks.[26] However, comparison of the more extensive range of documentary evidence extant for Sussex quarter sessions suggests that the biographical information is relatively robust.

III

The 1589 act expected the court leet, the court of assizes and the court of quarter sessions to serve as overlapping, rather than hierarchical, jurisdictions. The choice of courts leet is puzzling since by the fifteenth century they had become obsolete on some manors and in any case not all manorial lords had the right to hold one. For those that did, it was often held on the same day as the baron or manorial court. By the seventeenth century many manorial courts met infrequently and the range of business they dealt with had declined, with some merely acting as a court of record for land transactions.[27] In Sussex, where presentments were made, the squatter was typically fined and ordered to pull the cottage down. For example, on the manor of Chancton five tenants were presented in May 1605 for building cottages without licence on the lord's waste, fined 6*s*. 8*d*. and ordered to remove them before 1 November or pay a further fine of 10*s*.[28] Occasionally, the manorial lord 'by his special grace' granted a licence to the illegal cottage builder. In 1630 the lord of the manor of Cowdray gave George Haley permission to enclose a piece of waste, measuring 100 feet by 20 feet, on which he had erected a cottage, after he presented a petition endorsed by the manorial tenants. Haley then held the cottage and enclosure by copy of court roll, paying an entry fine of 6*d*. and an annual rent of 2*d*.[29]

[24] Redwood (ed.), *Quarter sessions*, pp. viii-xii. Sessions rolls for the eastern and western divisions are held separately by East Sussex RO and West Sussex RO [hereafter ESRO and WSRO]. Order books and indictments books are held by ESRO.

[25] Herrup, C*ommon peace*, pp. 11–13; Fletcher, *Sussex*, p. 146.

[26] Cockburn, *Calendar*, pp. 78–9.

[27] M. Bailey, *The English manor, c.1200-c.1500* (2002), pp. 178–89.

[28] Arundel Castle, MS M127, fo. 5.

[29] WSRO, Cowdray MS 239, fo. 59r.

Presentments made to manorial courts do not specifically refer to the 1589 act or even to the requirement for cottages to have four acres of land. In other words, they were dealt with as manorial rather than statutory transgressions. The infrequency with which many manorial courts were held and their erratic enforcement of manorial custom meant that they were never going to be an effective jurisdiction for enforcing the 1589 act.[30]

To see how the 1589 act was being enforced in Sussex we need to turn to the records of assizes and quarter sessions.[31] Prosecutions for illegal cottages recorded in the assize indictment files and the quarter sessions rolls are of two types: building and erecting a cottage or maintaining or continuing a cottage, reflecting the two main clauses of the act. The process of prosecuting the builders or occupants of illegal cottages began with the presentment, usually made by one of the hundred constables. The defendant was then bound over to attend the next assizes or sessions and required to provide a financial guarantee of his or her attendance, which was recorded in the recognisance. The formal record of the charge, the indictment, was endorsed *billa vera* (a true bill) or *ignoramus* ('we do not know', i.e. no case to answer) depending on whether the grand jury found the accusation to be true or false. If the bill was marked *ignoramus* the charge was dismissed. In the case of a true bill, the accused would then go on to stand trial before a petty jury. Indictments record the defendant's name, status or occupation, and parish of residence or former residence but provide no other information about the circumstances of the case. Unlike criminal cases, depositions were not taken. Judgement followed and if found guilty the defendant paid a small monetary fine, usually 6*d*. or 12*d*. (but never the statutory fine of £10 or 40*s*. per month), and was ordered to pull the cottage down. Failure to obey an order could lead to further prosecution. In a minority of cases, the court responded by granting a licence to continue a cottage, usually for a fixed term. There is no evidence of cases brought before the quarter sessions being transferred to assizes by a writ of *certiorari* or obvious reason why a case was brought before one court rather than the other. It is probable that the choice of court was dictated by its proximity, both geographically and chronologically, to the place and date of the offence.[32]

For cases heard in the court of assizes, the presentment and indictment are the only surviving documentary record of the offence. For those heard at the court of quarter sessions, additional information on the background to the case is sometimes available in the form of a petition or an order. Petitions could be made by the cottage builder or occupier or on his or her behalf. Some petitions were made in response to an indictment; others were made independently of one.[33] Licences were granted infrequently, usually in response to a petition. There are 95 true

[30] Bailey, *English manor*, pp. 184–8. The haphazard survival of Sussex manorial records precludes a systematic assessment of the use of manorial courts to regulate cottage building. It is apparent that some manors were more assiduous in regulating cottage building than others, but whether this reflects manorial policy or other factors (such as the incidence of cottage building) is unclear. The court records of 11 Sussex manors covering some or all of the seventeenth century were examined, and they collectively support the interpretation offered above.

[31] This and subsequent paragraphs are based on an analysis of material from 1600 to 1699 contained in a sample of 42 out of 154 assize indictment files, all 226 quarter session rolls for western Sussex and all quarter session indictment and order books for the eastern and western sessions.

[32] Redwood (ed.), *Quarter sessions*, pp. xiii-xix; J. A. Sharpe, *Crime in early modern England, 1550–1750* (1999), pp. 50–7.

[33] There are 14 petitions surviving amongst the session rolls for the western division.

bills relating to illegal cottages amongst the session rolls for the western division for the period 1600 to 1699. Of these, only four led to a licence being granted by the court.[34]

Presentments for cottage building or for continuing a cottage constituted a negligible proportion of business for both the courts of assize and quarter sessions. Cynthia Herrup calculated that for eastern Sussex only eight per cent of presentments made to quarter sessions or assize related to cottages or the keeping of inmates. In contrast, those relating to the neglect or abuse of roads or bridges amounted to 36 per cent and those relating to unlicensed alehouses to 24 per cent.[35] For the western division, there are 108 bills relating to cottages amongst the 226 session rolls that survive between 1600 and 1699, which means on average two a year.[36]

IV

The most visible use of the cottages clauses of the 1589 act is in the provision of housing for the poor and it is this aspect that has received the most attention from historians.[37] The 1598 and 1601 poor law acts had strengthened the exemption contained in the act relating to the cottages of the impotent poor by allowing churchwardens and overseers to build 'fit and convenient places of habitation' on waste or commons without risk of prosecution. Many of the licences granted by the court of quarter sessions were for pauper cottages, either for named individuals or to allow parishes to increase their housing stock. The court could also order parishes to provide housing for its poor in the form of habitation orders. All of the petitions that survive amongst the session rolls for western Sussex are from, or on behalf, of the poor – people like Jonathan Pierce and John Birchall. In October 1648, Pierce, a husbandman living in West Grinstead, was indicted for building a cottage.[38] In January 1652 the sessions heard a petition from some of the inhabitants of West Grinstead which certified that:

> Jonathan Pierce born in the said parish and has lived there all his time did about seven years since erect a cottage and enclose about half a rood of ground thereto in the highway leading from Stock Common to Ashington which said Jonathan was at the quarter sessions about two years since by some of the parish (as is supposed merely out of malice) indicted for the said cottage and enclosed ground thereto belonging, it being the chief livelihood and maintenance of the said Jonathan, his poor wife and four small children, we whose names are hereunder written, inhabitants of within the parish, do therefore most humbly entreat your worships in the behalf of the said Jonathan seriously to consider the premises and to grant your worships' order to the said Jonathan whereby he may quietly for the future possess and enjoy the said cottage and half rood of ground.[39]

The petition was signed by the pastor, John Tredcroft, and twelve other parishioners. In response to this petition, the bench issued a licence to Pierce to continue his cottage with the

[34] Cases resulting in a licence are: WSRO, QR/W51, fo. 52/10; QR/W53, fo. 54/27; QR/W63, fo.11; QR/W72, fo. 9; QR/W85, fo. 6; QR/W136, fo. 66A; ESRO QO/EW2, fo. 26v; QO/EW3, fo. 24v; QO/EW6, fo. 101v; Redwood (ed.), *Quarter sessions*, p. 87.

[35] Herrup, C*ommon peace*, p. 111.

[36] WSRO, QR/W2-W228.

[37] Broad, 'Housing'; Hindle, *On the Parish*, esp. pp. 301–3.

[38] WSRO, QR/W63, fo. 11.

[39] WSRO, QR/W72, fo. 9.

consent of the manorial lord for the remainder of his lifetime.[40] Pierce was presented again in October 1666 for erecting a cottage but the bill was marked *ignoramus* and dismissed.[41]

John Birchall, a labourer living in the parish of Billinghurst, was indicted in October 1672. In January 1673 the court received a petition from the minister, Thomas Oram, and 21 parishioners asking for the indictment to be discharged. They informed the court that,

> … John Birchall, a poor inhabitant of our parish, has lately erected a cottage in the same on the waste of the manor of Hardham wherein his poor old mother, a widow, now inhabits with himself, and has for long time since his father's death preserved his said mother and we in some measure eased of her charge.

The petition was supported by the lady of the manor, Lady Mary Goring, who asked only for 'some small acknowledgement' at the court's discretion.[42] At the same sessions the court ordered that, with the consent of the lady of the manor and of several inhabitants, Birchall could continue his cottage for the remainder of his life 'for his dwelling and habitation without incurring the penalty of the statute for erecting and continuing of cottages'.[43]

What is less clear is the extent to which the clauses of the 1589 act relating to cottages were being used to regulate settlement prior to the passage of the 1662 'Act of Settlement'. Steve Hindle has argued that until the 1662 act gave legal definition to the issue of residence by introducing the 40-day residency rule, 'the two statutes of 1589 and 1598 effectively constituted the keystone of early modern policies on migration, settlement and belonging', whilst noting that 'the fit between them was not always as close as its parliamentary architects would have hoped'.[44] The notion of 'settlement' – that each individual had a parish to which he or she belonged and from which he or she was entitled to relief – was implicit in much of the early poor law legislation but the length of residence required to secure it was undefined. As Hindle has described, until 1662, the only statutes that specified a minimum period of residence to secure settlement were those relating to vagrancy, but these were not applicable to the circumstances of the majority of the rural poor. In the absence of any statutory definition there was considerable local variation in the interpretation of length of residence and many parishes openly flouted judicial advice that only the vagrant should be removed in order to rid themselves of those likely to become chargeable.[45] In 1633 the judges of assizes resolved that residence for a period of one month constituted a legal settlement.[46] This resolution was adopted by the Sussex bench, who nevertheless took the trouble to issue an order exempting inmates from gaining settlement in this way.[47]

Prompt action to pull down cottages that were under construction was one method employed by rural communities to control settlement. Where the cottage was already inhabited, the 1589 act provided a statutory mechanism for ensuring its destruction and the eviction of its occupants. However, in Sussex at least, the act does not appear to have been systematically used

[40] ESRO, QO/EW2, fo. 26v.
[41] WSRO, QR/W117, fo. 21.
[42] WSRO, QR/W136, fo. 66A.
[43] ESRO, QO/EW6, fo. 101v.
[44] Hindle, *On the parish*, p. 302.
[45] Ibid., pp. 306–10.
[46] T. G. Barnes (ed.), *Somerset Assize Orders, 1629–40* (Somerset Rec. Soc., 65, 1959), p. 68.
[47] Fletcher, *Sussex*, p. 169; ESRO, QO/EW2, fo. 18r.

in this way. Although the background to most of those indicted remains unknown, many were clearly resident in the parish prior to their indictment. Nicholas Goring of Horsham, indicted in 1644 and 1645, had signed the Oath of Protestation in his parish in 1641; so too had Nicholas Powell of Shipley, indicted in 1646, 1647 and 1650.[48] Moreover, indictments for continuing a cottage always give the period of time over which the offence had been committed. Since most of these begin on the first day of the month they are fictional to some extent, but the periods of continuation are typically between one and 24 months, with the longest being 47 months.[49] The periods of continuation cited in indictments do not get noticeably shorter after the passage of the 1662 act. It may be that rendering a poor family homeless was enough to force it to move on, thereby ridding the parish of its maintenance, but subsequent indictments of some individuals suggest that either the court's order to pull the cottage down had not been successfully enforced or the defendant had moved to another cottage. For example, Thomas Chifnall, a wheelwright, resident in Lyminster, was indicted at the western sessions for continuing a cottage for a period of three months in 1656, and again for continuing a cottage for a period of six months in 1660.[50]

Obvious instances of the 1589 act being used in settlement disputes are found where cottages were erected on parish boundaries, which could lead to inter-parochial squabbles about chargeability. In 1638 a dispute arose between the parishes of Billinghurst and Pulborough over the location of a new cottage and in response the parishioners of Pulborough petitioned the court of assize to certify that 'the cottage new erected by Robert West, a poor inhabitant of our said parish, is by him set up within the bounds of the parish of Pulborough and by and with the consent of the said parishioners'. A copy of the petition, and of the court's order that the cottage was in Pulborough and should be allowed to continue, was signed by the vicar of Billingshurst, Thomas Oram, as a 'true copy' and carefully kept amongst the parish papers in case any further dispute arose.[51] In April 1670, the two constables of the hundred of Dumpford presented John Chaundler and Robert Moody to the western sessions for building two cottages in Elstead Marsh, saying that, 'Elstead avers they stand in Elstead and Trotton avers they stand in Trotton'. The constables themselves were of the view that the cottages were in Elstead and John Chaundler and Robert Moody were indicted separately as resident within the parish of Elstead.[52]

An analysis of the status and occupation of the 95 individuals who were presented to the western sessions for building or continuing cottages between 1600 and 1699 show that the labouring poor were disproportionately represented: 30 husbandmen, 33 labourers, 17 craft or tradesmen and six widows. Only four yeomen were presented, one viscount and three men and one woman for whom no occupations or status were given. One of the target groups of the 1589 act was that of landlords who built or bought up cottages or converted existing buildings into cottages, filling them with poor people who might become a financial burden on the parish.

[48] WSRO, QR/W51, fo. 52/10; QR/W53, fo. 54/27; QR/W56, fo. 31/57; QR/W59, fo. 60/20; QR/W68, fo. 13, 14; R. Garraway Rice (ed.), *West Sussex Protestation Returns 1641–2* (Sussex Record Soc. 5, 1905). Goring was granted a licence to continue his cottage in 1646 (Redwood, *Quarter sessions*, p. 87).

[49] TNA, ASSI 35/75/6 (3).

[50] WSRO, QR/W84, fo.15; QR/W96, fo. 9.

[51] WSRO, Par 21/11/2. There is no record of this in the indictment file for the 1638 summer assizes.

[52] WSRO, QR/W128 (3, 13, 14).

This group is, however, almost completely absent from the presentments and appears to have largely escaped judicial notice. There are a few examples. In 1622 Gregory Sawyer of Mayfield was presented to the eastern sessions for continuing five cottages, including two occupied by Thomas Olive and William Edborow and two 'where the windmill stood in Mayfield'.[53] In 1651 William Fletcher of Friston, yeoman, was severally indicted at the eastern sessions for converting a barn into two cottages and for continuing a cottage.[54] Richard, Viscount Lumley, usually resident on his Durham estates, was indicted severally at the western sessions in 1653 for continuing three cottages inhabited by widows for a period of 12 months.[55] It may be that potential landlords were discouraged by parochial by-laws insisting on indemnity bonds from those accepting tenants, such as that made by the parish of Cowfold in 1604 that 'whosoever did bring into any of his houses or tenements any tenant without the consent of 12 of the best of the parishioners that any so doing shall of his own cost discharge the parish of any such tenant'.[56] Overwhelmingly, however, the 1589 act was being used against those who collectively comprised the poorer or meaner sort. In this context, the terms 'husbandman' and 'labourer' were seemingly synonymous: both were landless or land-poor and partly or wholly wage-dependent.

The motivations that lay behind local decisions to present cottage builders and occupiers are only obliquely discernable. Anyone who built or continued a cottage without four acres of land was vulnerable to prosecution but some cottages were evidently tolerated and others only presented several years after their erection. The most obvious motivation for presenting a cottager was that either the cottage or the cottager was causing a nuisance. Many cottages were built on roadside verges and were deemed to be encroaching on the highway, thus causing a nuisance to travellers. In other instances, their proximity to other housing caused a nuisance in ways that are not usually described. In 1671 the constable of Shiplake Hundred presented Richard Thunder of East Hoathly to the assizes for continuing a cottage for five months 'to the prejudice and to the continual wrong to three freehold tenements next adjoining to it, not having any land occupied with it but what is by encroachment taken in and enclosed from the waste'.[57]

Encroachments onto common land always had the potential to be contentious since they placed an additional burden on communal resources like grazing and fuel collection. The 1589 act offered the potential to evict a neighbour who was deemed to be troublesome or socially undesirable. Thomas Johnson, a husbandman living in Shermanbury, was severally indicted at the western sessions in 1650 for continuing a cottage for twelve months and for stealing three bushels of wheat from the barn of his neighbour, Thomas Rawkins.[58] At the time of his first indictment for continuing a cottage, Thomas Chifnall, the wheelwright of Lyminster, was also indicted for stealing 'fir boards, shutters for windows, one form, four rails and two oak posts, one three-legged stool and two oak planks' from his neighbour, Samuel Downer, and for keeping a common tippling house.[59]

[53] ESRO, QI/EW1, fo. 4r.

[54] ESRO, QO/EW2, fo. 25v.

[55] WSRO, QR/W76, fos. 28–30.

[56] WSRO, Par 59/12/1, fo. 44; for a fuller discussion of the use of indemnity bonds see Styles, 'Evolution', pp. 178–86.

[57] TNA, ASSI 35/112/6, fo. 13.

[58] WSRO, QR/W67, fos. 29, 78.

[59] WSRO, QR/W84, fos. 16, 37.

Parish petitions on behalf of individuals like Jonathan Pierce were based on a remarkably consistent set of criteria. Was the cottager a long-term resident of the parish? What was his or her relative need? Was he or she honest and industrious? Did the cottage have the support of the manorial lord? And what impact would the cottage's removal have on the parish purse? In the cases of Pierce and Birchall the continuance of the cottage saved the ratepayers money; with Pierce it was because the cottage was his 'chief livelihood and maintenance' and with Birchall it was because he was supporting his mother. By implication, those who were not deemed to fulfil these criteria were more likely to find themselves presented. The fact that some petitions were made in response to an indictment suggests that cottage building both provoked and reflected local conflicts about parochial responsibility for the poor; the construction or continuance of the cottage – to use Hindle's expression – 'tested the thresholds of tolerance' between and within communities.[60]

At the summer assizes in 1613 the grand jury complained that 'too many cottages have been built contrary to statute, four in Angmering and many in other parishes'.[61] Quantifying what constituted 'too many' or, indeed, identifying areas that were particularly susceptible to illegal cottage building on the basis of the surviving evidence is impossible. It is notable that where clusters of indictments were made at assize or quarter sessions they are for Wealden parishes. For example, in 1633 six men were severally indicted at the summer assizes for either erecting or continuing cottages in the parish of East Grinstead and in 1656 four men and two women were severally indicted at the western sessions for continuing cottages in the parish of Wisborough Green.[62] However, parishes in the Weald were larger and more densely populated than those in downland Sussex and so a greater number of indictments cannot necessarily be attributed to a sudden influx of migrants. A survey of Ashdown Forest made in 1610 identified 14 illegal cottages built over the previous 25 years, but this is not an enormous number bearing in mind that the Forest comprised some 13,000 acres and covered five parishes and several manors.[63] It could be argued that presentments for illegal cottages were more likely to arise in the smaller and more tightly regulated parishes of the downland area.

V

In his report to Parliament in 1864 on the state of rural housing Dr Hunter observed that: 'It was a common opinion among the peasants of pre-enclosure times that he who could in one night build what was called a "mushroom hall" or "now-or-never" without hindrance from the lord's agents had thenceforth a copyhold right in the ground he occupied'.[64] This 'opinion' is frequently cited by historians in the context of illegal cottage building and yet its origins are obscure.[65] An article by R. U. Sayce on 'The one-night house, and its distribution' published

[60] Hindle, *On the parish*, p. 321.

[61] J. S. Cockburn (ed.), *Calendar of assize records: Sussex indictments, James I* (1975), no. 279.

[62] TNA, ASSI 35/75/9, fos. 15–20; WSRO, QR/W85, fos. 10–15.

[63] J. E. Small, 'A review of Ashdown Forest and the common rights thereon', *Sussex Arch. Coll.* 126 (1988), p. 163; B. Short, *The Ashdown Forest Dispute, 1876–82* (Sussex Record Soc., 80, 1997), pp. 15, 23.

[64] BPP, 1865, XXVI, 1, Seventh report of the medical officer of the Privy Council, App. 6, p. 136.

[65] Broad, 'Housing', p. 154; J. H. Bettey, 'Seventeenth-century squatters' dwellings: some documentary evidence', *Vernacular Architecture* 13 (1982), pp. 28–30.

in *Folklore* in 1942 provides a number of examples but these are mainly from the Celtic fringe – Wales, Ireland, Scotland, the Isle of Man and Cornwall – although he does cite some nineteenth-century evidence from the New Forest in Hampshire.[66] A letter by C. F. Tebbutt published in *Folklore* in response to Sayce's article provides two nineteenth-century examples from Ashdown Forest.[67] J. H. Bettey provides a seventeenth-century example in an article on squatters' dwellings which he sees as supporting this 'commonly-held belief'. The tenants of the Dorset manor of Cranborne complained to the manorial steward in 1625 that 'Richard Cooke intends either this night or the next to set up a house (which he has already framed) upon the common of Alderholt, and has placed straw upon the common in the place he has made choice of to erect his house in'.[68]

If Cooke thought that erecting his frame overnight would protect him from the law he was mistaken. The 1589 act offered no exemption to those building 'one-night cottages' and those who escaped notice remained vulnerable to legal challenge until the repeal of the act. Scrutiny of title was most likely to occur when manors changed hands. When John Caryll of Harting bought the manor of Knepp in 1657 five presentments for illegal cottages were made in the next manorial court and in each case the occupant was ordered to pull their cottage down.[69] The Parliamentary surveys of Crown lands in Sussex made between 1649 and 1658 record a number of cottages with questionable legal status. William Pollard and Widow Hover both occupied cottages in the manor of Duddeswell which lay within Ashdown Forest for which neither could prove title to the surveyors' satisfaction. However, because they were poor and had both 'been at charges in building the said cottages and fencing the said plots of ground' the surveyors urged leniency. In contrast, a further seven cottages were deemed to be 'very prejudicial to the said park' and the surveyors recommended they be pulled down.[70] Moreover, if there was a widespread belief that building a cottage overnight gave it legal status then we would expect to find it used as a defence in petitions made to quarter sessions. None of the seventeenth-century Sussex cottagers who found themselves the wrong side of officials showed any awareness that their squatters' rights were being infringed.

VI

The tenacity of the idea of the 'one-night cottage' relates to another view found amongst historians, that the cottages of the labouring poor, and those of squatters in particular, were 'of the most rudimentary kind, very small and built of flimsy materials' and 'in reality little more than huts or hovels'.[71] What is interesting about the case of Richard Cooke is not whether or not he was trying to build a 'one-night cottage', but what it says about the degree of planning necessary for the would-be squatter to build his cottage and the difficulty of undertaking such a task in secret. Just how much organisation could go into building an illegal cottage

[66] R. U. Sayce, 'The one-night house and its distribution', *Folklore* 53 (1942), pp. 161–3.

[67] *Folklore* 54 (1943), p. 391. See also W. W. Gill, 'The one-night house', *Folklore* 55 (1944), pp. 128–32; C. F. Tebbutt, 'The one-night house and its distribution', *Folklore* 95 (1984), p. 122.

[68] Bettey, 'Squatters' dwellings', p. 30.

[69] Knepp Castle, Burrell MS, 5927, fos. 24–5.

[70] J. R. Daniel-Tyssen, 'The parliamentary surveys of the county of Sussex, 1649–1653', *SAC* 23 (1871), pp. 301–2.

[71] Bettey, 'Squatters' dwellings', p. 28.

is shown by another example provided by Bettey from the Wiltshire manor of Downton. In 1698 the manorial steward presented a number of men who 'in riotous manner broke the Lady's waste within the Franchises of Downton by digging holes in the ground to put posts in for erecting of a cottage on the said waste'. Those presented included Nicholas Lane senior, the 'owner' of the cottage, a carpenter called Samuel (or Abe) Wheeler and his apprentice, a thatcher called Joseph Chalker junior, George Noble who 'breaded' (that is, daubed) the cottage walls and an unnamed man 'who helped dig the holes for erecting the said cottage'. For Bettey, the use of earth-fast poles confirmed his view that squatters' cottages were flimsy and impermanent.[72] However, in the opinion of M. W. Barley, the use of craftsmen was what distinguished a 'permanent dwelling' from a 'primitive structure' built by the occupants.[73] The lifespan of a cottage built with earth-fast poles would depend upon the type of timber, the construction methods and the soil conditions. Hewn six-by-six timber inserted into stone-lined holes might last up to fifty years, producing a cottage which could at least be described as 'semi-permanent'.[74]

No comparable descriptions of the process of erecting an illegal cottage have so far been found for Sussex. However, as in the case of Richard Cooke, many of the would-be cottage builders started by assembling and erecting their timber frame. A poor husbandman, Robert Pearlie, of Madehurst petitioned the western sessions in 1627 because the parishioners were preventing him from erecting a frame given to him by the manorial lord. An undated letter of *c*.1600 to Thomas Pelham, lord of the Rape of Hastings, informs him that William Garrom has 'bought a house ready framed to set up' and seeks Pelham's licence so that he can 'go about it'. And a letter of *c*.1610 to Thomas Pelham from his cousin informs him that a shingler, Thomas Blatcher, had 'a frame set up for a little house', for which permission was disputed.[75] Fuller descriptions of two cottages for which title was disputed are included in the Parliamentary survey of the manor of Pevensey made in 1649. The first cottage, occupied by Widow Knight, with an adjoining stable and garden plot, was located at the west end of Pevensey Castle. The surveyors recorded that 'the said cottage and stable is built shed-wise against the castle wall of timber and mud walls and covered with thatch'. It had two rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs. The second cottage, built on waste near the castle wall, was occupied by 'one Purchin' and was held by lease from Thomas Meeres who had built it but was unable to prove 'copy or other grant' for the land to the surveyors' satisfaction. This cottage was described as 'new built with stone walls and well covered with tiles'. It had two rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs.[76]

The Pevensey cottages were relatively large; many cottages are likely to have consisted of a single room with a gable-end chimney.[77] Even so, the construction methods that were used

[72] Ibid., p. 30.

[73] M. W. Barley, 'Rural housing in England, 1500–1640', in Thirsk (ed.), *Agrarian history*, IV, p. 762.

[74] I would like to thank Jon Roberts for this information.

[75] WSRO, QR/W21. fo. 23/59; BL, Add. MS, 33058, fo. 33; BL, Add. MS, 33084, fo. 34. The lords of the Rape of Hastings claimed ownership of the wasteland and regulated its use. I would like to thank Christopher Whittick for providing me with his calendar of the Pelham material.

[76] Daniel-Tyssen, 'Parliamentary surveys', pp. 280–1.

[77] Barley, 'Rural housing', p. 765; A. Longcroft, 'The Hearth Tax and historic housing stock: a case study from Norfolk', in P. S. Barnwell and Malcolm Airs (eds), *Houses and the Hearth Tax* (CBA Research Report 150, 2006), pp. 66–7.

– whether they were timber-framed or stone built, thatched or tiled – would require the use of specialist craftsmen, at some cost to the cottager in labour and materials. How much it cost to build a cottage and how long it took would have varied enormously. In 1638, after the house of a labourer called Simon Duke burnt down, the parish of Stoughton petitioned the western sessions for relief for him. According to the petition Duke had 'out of his great pains and endeavours saved and disbursed some £10 or thereabouts to build and provide for himself, his wife and children a house and dwelling …'.[78] In 1645 the overseers of the parish of Cowfold built a cottage for one of their paupers, James Luxford, at a cost of £7 1*s*. 0*d*. This included £1 3*s*. 4*d*. for a load and three quarters of timber, 3*s*. for 200 bricks (including carriage) and 12*s*. for two loads of straw. The wages of the craftsmen and labourers who built the cottage, including sawyers, a carpenter, a thatcher and a mason, came to £3 16*s*. The highest labour bill was that of the carpenter, who was paid £1 4*s*. for eighteen days work at 16*d*. a day. He also received 2*s*. 6*d*. for two and a half days work by his 'man' and 6*s*. for 13 days work at 6*d*. a day by his 'boy'. One man was employed to make the laths, which took two days, and two men were employed to saw the timber, which took seven days. The time spent on other work including thatching, internal carpentry and masonry, is not quantified but the total build would have taken at least a month.[79] Based on the amount of timber used, it is likely that this cottage was single storey, of one or two bays, and with a footprint of between 150 and 250 square feet.[80]

Many cottagers paid for their cottages out of their own pockets, like Duke scrimping and scraping the money together, and probably doing any unskilled labour themselves. Some, like Pearlie, were lucky enough to be given a frame by a benefactor or to receive a contribution towards the cost of construction from the parish funds. Frames could also be bought second-hand, as the case of William Garrom suggests. Thomas Chifnall, the wheelwright of Lyminster, evidently stole not only materials for his cottage, but also household goods, from his neighbour. The theft of timber, wood and other materials from woods, coppices and commons to build or repair cottages was a continuing problem for manorial lords and their stewards and undoubtedly influenced their attitude to cottagers. The dispute over the location of Blatcher's cottage was because of its proximity to the lord's coppice and, despite Blatcher's promise that he would not 'meddle' with it, Pelham's steward threatened to cut the frame down 'fearing that he will be an enemy to the prospering of [Pelham's] woods'.[81] In 1622 the homage of the manor of Cowdray presented Thomas Aylwin alias Valentine, an inmate of Elizabeth Fludd, herself the occupant of a wasteland cottage, for cutting and removing coppice wood and timber without licence, for which Fludd forfeited her cottage. In March 1623 Aylwin was presented for building a cottage on the waste without licence and ordered to pull it down.[82]

It is surprising that many of those who built cottages without permission were willing to invest so much time and money in them. But there were also those who, out of necessity, built themselves more makeshift accommodation, no doubt hoping it would only be temporary. In his account of the Shropshire parish of Myddle written between 1700 and 1702 Richard Gough includes two descriptions of 'huts'. Gough records that Childlow's 'tenement or cottage' had

[78] WSRO, QR/W35, fo. 36/8.

[79] WSRO, Par 59/31/1.

[80] I would like to thank Joe Thompson and Jon Roberts for their help with this.

[81] BL, Add. MS, 33058, fos. 27, 54; 33084, fo. 34.

[82] WSRO, Cowdray MS 239, fos. 42r, 44v.

originally been a 'poor pitiful hut, built up to an old oak', inhabited by his great-grandfather, but was now a 'better house'. Its location 'near the side of the lane called Divlin lane formerly, and now Taylor's lane' suggests that it may have been a wayside encroachment. A Welsh man called Evan Jones had built himself a 'little hut' in Myddle Wood on a piece of land enclosed out of the common. The hut had, however, burnt down and Jones had built himself a 'pretty good house' with the proceeds of the subsequent parish collection.[83] Barley provides an example from a deposition taken in 1604 of a 'sorry cote pitched into a nook of rock of stone' in Charnwood Forest in Leicestershire', which had been 'a dwelling house, upon the want and necessity of another house, of a poor man, a wisket [basket] maker, that for his own succour made the same of sticks and turves, but paid no rent or fine'.[84] And in 1605 the Rector and 13 of the inhabitants of Ripe in Sussex wrote to Thomas Pelham informing him that John Pegden's 'small cote' was 'pitched in the ground and placed in the king's highway', following a successful application to Pelham for a licence.[85] The terminology used in these cases indicates that, to contemporary observers, there were human habitations that did not qualify as cottages because of their small size, rudimentary construction and relative impermanence. Whereas cottages were 'built', 'erected' or 'set up', cotes were 'pitched'. The cottages being presented in the courts of assizes and quarter sessions are unlikely to have been mere 'huts' or 'cotes'. Indeed, in some cases it may have been their perceived permanence that provoked legal action. Something 'rudimentary' or 'flimsy' could be easily kicked or pulled down and it is questionable whether it would be worth a constable's time to proceed with a presentment.

VII

The 1589 act is frequently referred to by historians writing about early modern rural communities and yet the background to its passage and the way in which it was used has received very little attention. Where it has been discussed in any detail it has generally been in the context of poverty and poor relief. This article has examined the circumstances that gave rise to the act and its inter-relation with the poor law legislation of 1598 and 1601. It has suggested that the act represented a change in policy from that of the middle of the sixteenth century, reflecting increasing levels of concern about rising population, poverty and vagrancy. The housing needs of the impotent poor were nevertheless recognised by the act and reinforced by subsequent poor law legislation.

An exploration of the way that the cottages clauses were used in Sussex has shown that manorial courts were not operating as effective jurisdictions for enforcement of the legislation as the act had envisaged. Their role was immediately superseded by the courts of assize and quarter sessions, for whom illegal cottages represented a small, but regular, stream of business. In Sussex the act was being used to provide housing for the poor but it was not routinely used to regulate settlement unless the cottage was built on or near a parish boundary. Although private landlords were one of the targets of the act, an analysis of the pattern of prosecutions

[83] R. Gough, *The history of Myddle,* ed. D. Hey (1981), pp. 242–8; J. T. Smith, 'Short-lived and mobile houses in late seventeenth-century England', *Vernacular Architecture* 16 (1985), 33–4.

[84] Barley, 'Rural housing', p. 762.

[85] BL, Add. MS, 33058, fo. 51.

shows that in Sussex they largely escaped judicial notice and that the weight of the law fell on the labouring poor. Several factors have been suggested for why communities chose to present some individuals and protect or ignore others, including whether the cottage or cottager was causing a nuisance and the financial consequences to the parish of removing a cottage. Finally, this article has challenged the popular and somewhat romantic idea of the 'one-night cottage', suggesting that, until the repeal of the 1589 act, squatters always remained vulnerable to prosecution, no matter how long their cottage had been 'continued'. Leaving legal considerations aside, the evidence provided here of the time and labour involved in building illegal cottages shows that is was unfeasible for anything other than 'huts' or 'cotes' to be put up overnight.

How far the 1589 act was employed in the eighteenth century has yet to be explored, as have the circumstances surrounding its repeal. The short act of repeal of 1775 simply stated that the act 'has laid the industrious poor under great difficulties to procure habitations, tends very much to lessen population, and in diverse other respects has been found inconvenient to the labouring part of the nation in general'.[86] However, as Sir Frederick Morton Eden noted some twenty years later, the repeal of the act did not lead to an increase in the number of cottages, and finding accommodation remained the rural poor's 'greatest difficulty'.[87]

[86] 15 Geo. III c. 32.

[87] F. M. Eden, *The state of the poor: or, an history of the labouring classes in England* (3 vols, 1797), I, p. 361.

Paternalism and rural protest: the Rebecca riots and the landed interest of south-west Wales*

by Lowri Ann Rees

Abstract

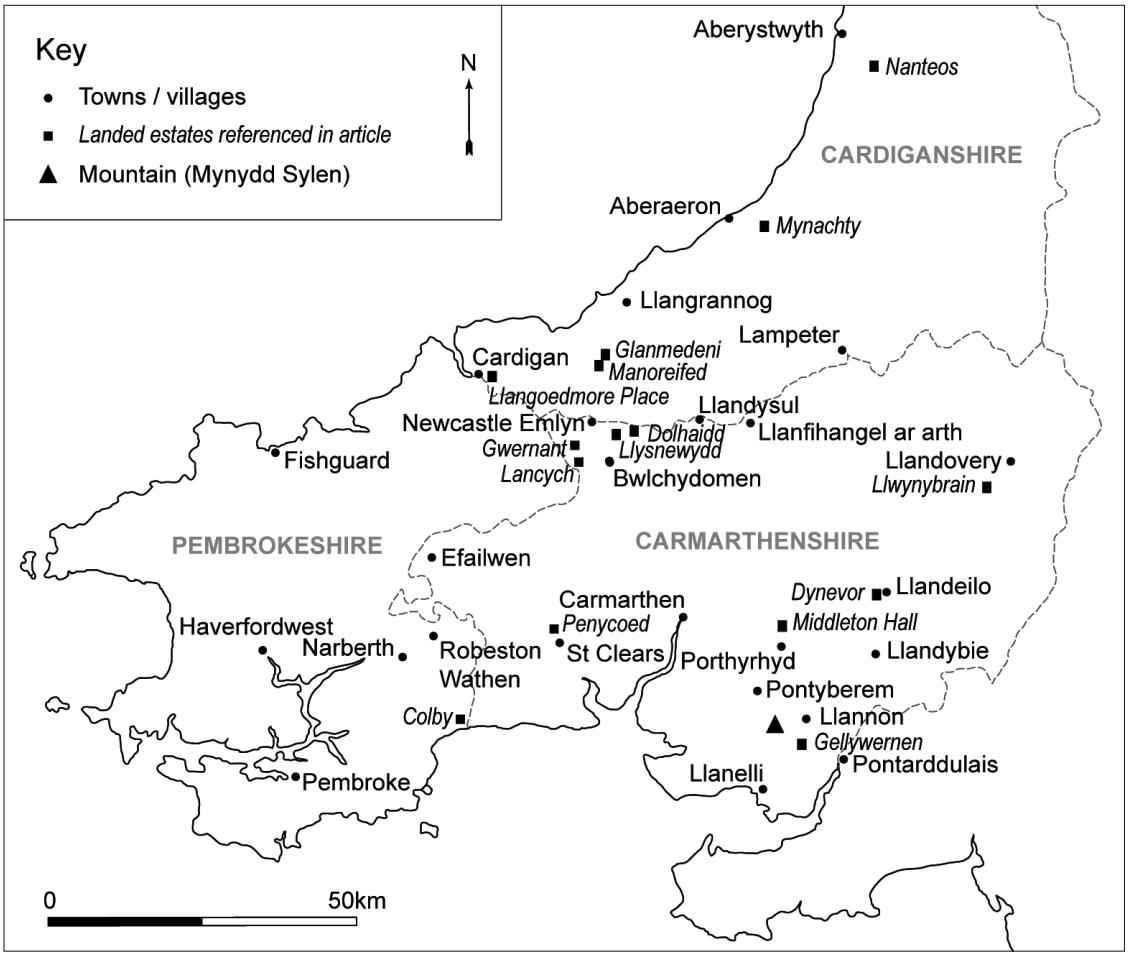
The role of the landed interest in nineteenth-century rural protest movements was largely marginalised in earlier works. In recent years, however, historians have been redressing the balance, moving the focus to the experiences of authority figures. This article describes the involvement of the landed interest of south-west Wales in the Rebecca Riots, concentrating mainly on the summer and autumn months of 1843. The theme of paternalism is discussed in relation to the riots, followed by case studies of attacks made upon the landed interest by Rebecca and her daughters. The particular methods of intimidation employed by the rioters are considered, as well as the response of the elite to these attacks and their attempts at suppressing Rebecca. Letters sent by landlords to the Home Office and newspapers accounts are used to shed more light on the experiences and responses of the landed interest.

During the late 1830s and early 1840s, south-west Wales saw widespread rebellious activities by a band of men who called themselves the daughters of Rebecca. Their first recorded appearance was during the summer of 1839, when men disguised in women's clothing demolished a tollgate at Efailwen, on the border between Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. Rebecca and her daughters largely disappeared after that summer, only to re-emerge stronger than before during the winter of 1842, their nocturnal attacks continuing throughout 1843. Their presence was felt across the counties of the south-west, and, as Gwyn A. Williams claimed, 'within a few months south-west Wales had become ungovernable; there seemed to be no law west of Swansea'.[1] This outbreak of violence came as a great shock, especially as Wales had long been perceived as a peaceful and quiet nation, its inhabitants respectful of life and property. Indeed, in a speech to Parliament during the autumn of 1843, Queen Victoria declared Wales to have been, up until that point, 'the most loyal and obedient of her territories'.[2] The Queen feared her government had grossly 'underestimated' the riots and, whilst the increasingly violent

* I am most grateful to Dr Eryn White and Dr James Cooper for reading through drafts of this paper and offering helpful advice, and to Dr Kate Waddington for her help with the map. Thanks are also due to the referees and editor for their comments and suggestions.

[1] G. A. Williams, *When was Wales? A history of the Welsh* (1985), p. 193.

[2] D. J. V. Jones, 'Rebecca, crime and policing: a turning-point in nineteenth-century attitudes', *Trans. Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1990), p. 101. However, the disturbances in Merthyr in 1831 and Newport in 1839, preceding the Rebecca riots, contradict this image, as do other instances of rural protest; therefore, Wales was not as law-abiding and subservient as contemporaries initially believed.



MAP 1. South-west Wales during the Rebecca Riots.

disturbances in Ireland were geographically further afield, the riots in south-west Wales were uncomfortably close. Importantly, they could damage the image of a stable and peaceful British Empire.[3] In addition, the secrecy behind the movement provoked much fear, for, as David J. V. Jones wrote: 'in Ireland one could expect opposition, but the behaviour, attitudes and language of Welsh people made it more difficult to anticipate unrest'.[4]

The Rebecca riots form a well-chronicled chapter in Welsh history, but a largely overlooked aspect of the disturbances is the experience of the elite. A considerable amount of the historiography focuses on the rioters themselves, including the socio-economic pressures which drove them to commit acts of destruction.[5] This is attributed to the emergence of 'history

[3] Jones, 'Rebecca, crime and policing', p. 99.

[4] D. J. V. Jones, 'The Welsh and crime, 1801–1891', in C. Emsley and James Walvin (eds), *Artisans, Peasants and Proletarians, 1760–1860* (1985), p. 82.

[5] The main works are D. J. V. Jones, *Rebecca's Children: a study of rural society, crime, and protest* (1989) and D. Williams, *The Rebecca Riots* (1955).

from below' during the 1960s and 1970s, especially in the works of Eric Hobsbawm and E. P. Thompson.[6] In addition, the Rebecca riots were not a political movement in the same sense as Chartism was, and therefore have not been afforded attention in political histories. In the most comprehensive study of the riots, *Rebecca's Children* (1989), Jones sets out to place the riots in the wider context of the evolving rural society, but focusing on 'Rebecca's children, the peasantry of Wales'. He gives due attention to the experiences of the landed classes during the riots, but this is largely in relation to the rioters.[7] In this respect, the reactions and responses of elites have been largely neglected. Adrian Randall and Edwina Newman have highlighted the way in which the landlord is largely missing from many works on nineteenth-century rural protest, including that of Roger Wells.[8] However, recent works on protest history show a renewed interest in the experience of authority figures. Amongst the writers who have sought to place the figures of authority in a central position are Peter Jones, Katrina Navickas and Steve Poole.[9]

Following this trend in the historiography, this article will therefore consider the riots from a different perspective, that of the landed interest, specifically looking at those who acted as local figures of authority, such as landlords and magistrates, during the turbulent time of the Rebecca Riots. The article is structured as follows. The first section will discuss the idea of paternalism in relation to the riots, and in particular, the demands of the rioters. This will be followed by a study of the grievances voiced by the rioters, before detailing the methods of attack they employed when targeting the landed elite. There will then be an account of the response of the landed interest to these Rebecca attacks. Case studies of particular attacks will be considered thematically according to the method of intimidation employed in order to highlight patterns that emerge. The chronological range will be narrow in focus, concentrating mainly on the summer and autumn months of 1843, a period when attacks intensified and changed in nature, as David J. V. Jones explained: 'in the autumn of 1843 the use of the torch and the destruction of farm produce and private property seemed to be as popular as the removal of tollgates'.[10] Out of more than 530 attacks carried out in Rebecca's name between 1839 and 1843, nearly half had nothing to do with the tollgates. Jones believes such attacks to be a central part of what is considered 'Rebeccaism', although they have been portrayed as sinister elements, demonstrating the movement straying from its original objective and taking an unsavoury slant.[11]

[6] E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, 1789–1848* (1962); E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963).

[7] Jones, *Rebecca's Children*.

[8] A. Randall and E. Newman, 'Protest, proletarians and paternalists: Social conflict in rural Wiltshire, 1830–1850', *Rural Hist.*, 6 (1995), p. 205.

[9] P. Jones, 'Finding Captain Swing: Protest, parish relations, and the state of the public mind in 1830', *Int. Rev. of Social History*, 54 (2009), pp. 429–58; K. Navickas, 'The search for "General Ludd": the mythology of Luddism', *Social Hist.*, 30 (2005), pp. 281–95; S. Poole, '"A lasting and salutary warning": Incendiarism, rural order and England's last scene of crime execution', *Rural Hist.*, 19 (2008), pp. 163–77.

[10] Jones, *Rebecca's Children*, p. 256.

[11] Jones, 'Rebecca, crime and policing', pp. 104, 111.

I

Even before Rebecca turned her sights towards the property of the elite, many of the gentry were greatly alarmed by her activities. Mary Anne Rice, wife of Major Walter Rice of Llwynybrain, whilst holidaying at Ostend in September 1842, lamented the situation back home:

> I hope peace will be restored soon, and that a bountiful harvest will not only give employment to the idle, and bread to the poor, but will also prove an inducement to peace and good will.[12]

The gentry strongly believed that ownership of property afforded them special rights and duties, which included ruling, helping and guiding the lower orders of society. Crimes against property were therefore dealt with harshly, magistrates believing they had to protect their own interests. In this climate the landed interest became far less tolerant of rural unrest. Sharon Howard describes a general European phenomenon, the 'withdrawal of the upper classes', which saw the elite distance themselves from any riotous activities that took place in their local communities. Especially after the outbreak of the Revolution in France, the elite 'were far less likely to collude in any violent collective activity that involved criticism of their behaviour'.[13] Across Britain, the deterioration of this tolerance was fuelled by a series of riots during the late eighteenth century, whilst the impact of the French Revolution shook the whole country. As Adrian Randall has argued, many historians have seen the era of the French Revolution as alarming to the 'English *ancien regime*', forcing them to adopt more stringent methods of social control.[14] E. P. Thompson argued that this fear was amongst the main factors that changed the attitude of the elite towards their authority role.[15]

Central is the debate regarding the breakdown of deference in Wales. In one of the first full-length studies of the Rebecca riots, David Williams drew attention to the paternalism of the gentry, and its erosion, due partly to the growing number of absentee landowners. The distancing of the gentry and absence of educated leadership had a detrimental impact on the community. Traditionally the gentry expected those lower down the social scale to look up to them with respect, and as this deference was steadily eroded, the gentry lost faith in the people's goodwill and honesty.[16] David J. V. Jones's work supports this theory, suggesting that the ties of paternalism were becoming strained by the turn of the nineteenth century. Jones explains that 'the gentry were … judged by the assistance which they gave to Bible societies, missionary work, and the poor'.[17] This was the outward display of their paternalism, their concern for the less fortunate members of society, providing moral and religious guidance and support. However, amongst the areas of ideal behaviour being abandoned were, according to Jones, those involving direct social contact with the rest of society. The landed were accused of

[12] Carmarthenshire Record Office [hereafter CRO], Aberglasney 3, MSS 20/532, Mary Anne Rice, Ostend, to John Walters Philipps, Aberglasney, 19 Sept. 1842.

[13] S. Howard, 'Riotous community: crowds, politics and society in Wales, *c*.1700–1840', *Welsh History Rev.*, 20 (2001), p. 673.

[14] A. Randall, *Riotous Assemblies: Popular protest in Hanoverian England* (2006), p. 314.

[15] E. P. Thompson, 'The moral economy of the English crowd in the eighteenth century', *Past and Present*, 50 (1971), p. 136.

[16] D. Williams, *The Rebecca Riots* (1955, 1986 edn.), pp. 17–18.

[17] Jones, *Rebecca's Children*, p. 116.

growing distant, and of failing to invest their time and money in fostering the good relationship that had previously existed between landlord and tenant. Landlords were blamed for not taking a direct interest in farming, allowing agents to inspect their farms on their behalf. There was a feeling that the gentry were deliberately distancing themselves from the rest of society, with whom they had very little in common, most notably in terms of language and religion.[18]

Indeed, Rebecca and her daughters questioned the central role of the landed interest in rural society. In a letter, reprinted in the *Carmarthen Journal* in October 1843, Rebecca criticised those members of the elite who had moved away from more traditional methods of charitable bequests.[19] Individual landlords were targeted by Rebecca, as shall be seen later in this article, an especial grievance being high levels of rent. Due to dire economic circumstances, it was increasingly difficult for tenants to pay their rent, with some landlords forced to tolerate arrears. With the drop in profits of agricultural produce, tenants sought a corresponding reduction in the level of rents, as much as 4*s*. in every pound. Whilst a small number of landlords were willing to reduce their rents, many stood their ground, only lowering their rents after a threat from Rebecca. Many contemporaries believed, as Jones explains, that 'it was the inflexibility of landowners which turned the crisis into confrontation'.[20]

'Landlord tyranny', as Jones describes it, became a popular topic amongst those who opposed the landed interest, with many blaming landlords for turning deferential and peaceful tenants into violent rioters. Whilst absenteeism was blamed for the riotous behaviour, Jones claims that when evidence to the contrary surfaced, the blame was shifted to the newly wealthy landowners, who were said to be ignorant of such paternalistic customs.[21] Roger Wells has argued that although the gentry's paternalistic role in rural society had severely deteriorated, they still expected obedience and deference from their tenants and dependents. Wells claimed that 'the final nail in the coffin of rural paternalism' was, amongst other factors, the elite's support of the New Poor Law, and the harsh punishments they imposed on Swing rioters, arguing that in its place there developed a new class consciousness amongst the agricultural labourers.[22]

Conversely, Matthew Cragoe's model of the 'moral economy of the landed estate' sees landlord and tenant co-existing more harmoniously, with greater adherence to deferential and patriarchal codes. Cragoe believes that nonconformists and the Liberal press were behind the spreading of anti-landlord sentiments, exaggerating the impact of certain events, such as rural unrest, on the landlord-tenant relationship.[23] In support of Cragoe's theory, we see deferential practices prevailing well into the nineteenth century, even during the most turbulent era of the Rebecca riots. For example, the Middleton Hall agent, Thomas Herbert Cooke, whilst reflecting on the threats he had received from the rioters, was confident that his employer was safe:

[18] Ibid., pp. 116–17.

[19] *Carmarthen J.,* 27 Oct. 1843; Jones, *Rebecca's Children*, pp. 116–17.

[20] Jones, *Rebecca's Children*, p. 149.

[21] Ibid., pp. 95–97.

[22] R. Wells, 'Social protest, class, conflict and consciousness in the English countryside, 1700–1880', in M. Reed and R. Wells (eds), *Class, conflict and protest in the English countryside, 1700–1880* (1990), p. 194.

[23] M. Cragoe, *An Anglican Aristocracy: the moral economy of the landed estate in Carmarthenshire, 1832–1895* (1996).

> Mr Adams' politics are a great safeguard to every matter & thing appertaining to him – he is more popular among them than I can well describe: the mob actually *wanted* to take the horses from his carriage, and to draw him into the town of Llandibie [sic] last week.[24]

In line with Cragoe's thesis, Adrian Randall and Edwina Newman explain, in relation to the Swing riots, that the rioters thought they were right to protest, believing it was through these methods they would have their grievances addressed.[25] The same ethos can be applied to the Rebecca Riots: the protestors wanted the removal of the tollgates and the lowering of rents in order to alleviate the economic pressure on them, believing they could appeal to the ties of paternalism that bound rural society together.

Amongst the other factors driving Rebecca and her followers were the socio-economic problems and intense poverty. Other protest movements highlighting the plight of the poor included the Chartists, Luddites, Blanketeers, anti-Poor Law demonstrations and the Swing riots. According to G. E. Mingay, the Swing riots are the most notorious instance of rural unrest amongst agricultural workers in the history of modern England.[26] By the close of the eighteenth century, corn riots were prominent in Wales, and although food riots had been common throughout the century, Jones maintains the corn riots came to take on a much more dangerous dimension. Into the nineteenth century, although there were fewer instances of food riots, such disorders still took place, including the Carmarthen cheese riot of 1818, and a riot in Fishguard in 1827 in response to the export of corn.[27] In Cardiganshire, the enclosure riots sparked by Augustus Brackenbury's enclosure of common land, purchased in 1819 from the government, resulted in him being driven away by arson attacks and intimidation.[28] The Carmarthen riots of 1831 were spurred on by clashes between the lower and middling orders, who were anxious to see reform, and those predominantly of the landed orders, who opposed the reform bill. In addition, rising unemployment and low wages, especially amongst craftsmen, sailors and fishermen, intensified the violence.[29] Anti-poor law agitation in Wales was also fuelled by growing unemployment, with strong objections to the establishment of the workhouses. Therefore, with the memory of these riots still fresh in the mind of local magistrates and landowners, it is no wonder that they were anxious to silence Rebecca from the outset.

In his work on the moral economy, E. P. Thompson claimed riots were played out between those who wanted to maintain customary rights and the figures of authority who were charged with keeping order.[30] He argued that such riots were far from senseless acts of random violence, and were instead organised and disciplined, with threatening letters sent to warn wrongdoers, who, if they did not right their wrongs, faced punishment through a mechanism of community justice.[31]

A long-standing tradition of community justice influenced the Rebecca riots, as it did

[24] National Library of Wales [hereafter NLW], MSS 21209 C, Thomas Herbert Cooke, Llanddarog, to his mother, Northampton, 3 Sept. 1843.

[25] Randall and Newman, 'Protest, proletarians and paternalists', p. 209.

[26] G. E. Mingay, '"Rural War": the life and times of Captain Swing', in G. E. Mingay (ed.), *The Unquiet Countryside* (1989), p. 36.

[27] D. Jones, *Before Rebecca: Popular protest in Wales, 1793–1835* (1973), pp. 13, 206.

[28] E. Jones, *War of the Little Englishman: the enclosure riots on a lonely Welsh hillside* (2007).

[29] D. J. V. Jones, 'The Carmarthen riots of 1831', *Welsh History Rev.* 4 (1968), pp. 129–42.

[30] Thompson, 'Moral economy', pp. 76–136.

[31] E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (1991), p. 224.

many other protest movements. Whilst the rituals varied from district to district, from the skimmington of south-west England, the rough music of the Midlands and the *ceffyl pren* (wooden horse) of Wales, they all exhibited similar features. Traditionally the *ceffyl pren* was a wooden prop, such as a ladder or cart, on to which the offender was placed and paraded around the vicinity to the accompaniment of rough music. Offenders were subjected to ritualised humiliation, beaten and abused, dragged from their homes, and pelted with mud and stones, before sometimes being immersed in a nearby pond or river. On occasion, an effigy was paraded instead and a sinister 'execution' acted out, whereby the effigy was either hung, shot, or burnt. These acts symbolised the notion of turning the world on its head, inverting the balance of power, all in the name of restoring a sense of communal normality. Rosemary Jones explains that the *ceffyl pren* was a particularly effective method of punishment due to the closeness of the rural community:

> Those who threatened the social equilibrium invited punishment, and in a society where all members of the community were well-known to each other, public ridicule proved to be the most effective vehicle for the enforcement of social discipline.[32]

She explains that attacks administered through the *ceffyl pren* were waged on authority figures in society when they failed to behave paternally towards those lower down the social scale, and it is through this that the link between the *ceffyl pren* and Rebecca is most prominent: 'Rebecca was well-placed to deride the authorities and remind them, often in threatening tones, of their customary duties'.[33] As David Williams first proposed, many protest movements in early nineteenth century Wales could be seen as extensions of the *ceffyl pren* and its methods of community justice, stating: 'it is particularly important to notice that these disorders [*ceffyl pren*] occurred in precisely the area which saw the beginning of the Rebecca Riots a few years later'.[34] Contemporaries also made the link between Rebecca and community justice, as enacted by the *ceffyl pren* tradition. Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, a barrister who sat on the Quarter Session and held radical political views, referred to the custom, concluding that the use of nocturnal violence to eradicate grievances was a familiar concept to the working class.[35] The Lord Lieutenant of Carmarthenshire, and son of Lord Dynevor, Colonel George Rice Trevor, also drew attention to the *ceffyl pren*: 'These Cyffil [sic] Pren processions were the root of Rebeccaism so far as the *modus operandi* was concerned'.[36]

[32] R. A. N. Jones, 'Popular culture, policing, and the "disappearance" of the *Ceffyl Pren* in Cardigan, *c.*1837–1850', *Ceredigion*, 11 (1988–89), p. 22.

[33] Jones, 'Popular culture', pp. 26–7.

[34] Williams, *Rebecca Riots*, p. 53. More work needs to be done on the innovation evident in Rebecca in relation to the *ceffyl pren* and the idea of community justice.

[35] TNA, HO 45/454, Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, Emlyn Cottage, Newcastle Emlyn, to Sir James Graham, 15 June 1843.

[36] Jones, 'Popular culture', p. 21.

II

Whilst David Williams declared that 'the riots were entirely an affair of the small farmers', David J. V. Jones argued to the contrary.[37] Although many of the rioters were farmers, evidence shows that labourers and artisans were also amongst Rebecca's daughters. These labourers and artisans typically took part in Rebecca activities based in the towns, such as demolishing tollgates at Carmarthen and Haverfordwest. Similarly we find examples of colliers and other non-agricultural labourers taking part in Rebecca activities in the mining districts of Llanon and Pontyberem. It appears, however, that many of the rioters active in the countryside were farmers and agricultural labourers. Of 86 cases of convicted Rebeccaites, where their occupation was stated, two thirds were farmers, labourers and farm servants, with a quarter being farmers. Nonetheless, also amongst this sample were craftsmen such as carpenters, shoemakers, tailors, masons and weavers, in addition to millers, blacksmiths, fishermen, publicans, colliers and other labourers (not including farm labourers). Regarding the age of the rioters, whilst there were exceptions, such as older men and even young boys in their early teens, most of the rioters were in their early twenties.[38] In his study of arson attacks during the Swing riots, Carl Griffin concludes that, in this case too, most protestors were in their early twenties, therefore 'protest was a young man's game'.[39]

Initially, the most immediate grievances of the riots seem to have been the turnpikes and the burden of the tolls imposed. One incident that could only have enraged those who scraped together the toll money highlights the flagrant contempt with which some of the landed elite held the tolls. On 13 July 1843, the wife of Colonel Colby refused to pay the toll on passing through a gate near Narberth, and on the following day, one of her servants, William Harris, also refused to pay, but went a step further and broke the toll bar, allowing unrestricted passage. The Reverend Richard Buckley, who alerted the government to the incident, believed if an example were made of the lady, it would show the rioters that law and order always prevailed, regardless of the wealth and status of the individual. The general opinion in the area, according to the Reverend, was that 'a rich man may do that with impunity for which a poor man would be punished'. The Home Office responded by alerting the magistrates of the district in order to make the matter public. Harris was duly arrested and brought before a Grand Jury, but was ultimately discharged. Whilst Harris's misdeeds were made known in the press, Mrs Colby's name was not, her reputation preserved.[40] However, there were deeper socio-economic elements than the tollgates driving the mob, and, as Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall explained, if the government ministers believed the riots to be 'a mere local impatience of Turnpike Tolls', they were greatly deceived.[41] Hall believed the most disliked factors were tithes, followed by the poor rates and then the high level of rents.[42]

Rental levels rose with prices, but very rarely fell with them. They were a heavy burden for

[37] Williams, *Rebecca Riots*, p. 75.

[38] Jones, *Rebecca's Children*, pp. 242–43.

[39] C. J. Griffin, '"The mystery of the fires": "Captain Swing" as incendiarist', *Southern Hist.*, 32 (2010), p. 40.

[40] TNA, HO 45/454, Rev. Richard Buckley, Begelly Rectory, Tenby, to Sir James Graham, 24 July 1843; *The Times,* 21 Oct. 1843.

[41] Ibid., Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to Sir James Graham, 15 June 1843.

[42] Ibid., Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to Sir James Graham, 23 July 1843.

the tenants to bear, and considered by many as the greatest strain. Agitation about rents was not entirely seditious, and there is evidence that meetings were being called by the rioters to protest at rent levels, with Rebecca urging tenants to pay only what she deemed an appropriate price for the land, usually 20–30 per cent lower than the rent being asked.[43] Demands for the permanent reduction of rent to aid the poverty stricken farmers were especially heard in 1843. Whilst Jones explains that it is difficult to give exact figures on the rate and level of rents, his 'conservative estimate' is that, between 1793 and 1843, the level of rent in Carmarthenshire, Cardiganshire and Pembrokeshire rose by at least 100 per cent.[44] Rebecca believed that if farmers paid less rent, they would have more money available and could therefore employ more labourers, who were in desperate need of work.[45] During the nocturnal meetings, tenants were urged not to pay rents that were too high and where the landlord was resisting reducing the rental level. Therefore, farms let at a higher price than their worth fell under Rebecca's gaze, and tenants foolish enough to take up undesirable leases were visited by the mob at night, often with disastrous consequences. *The Times* correspondent, Thomas Campbell Foster, reporting from south Wales, firmly believed that the gentry's refusal to lower their rents was at the core of the riots.[46]

The landed interest and the government, many of whose members were landed proprietors, were greatly concerned by this refusal to pay rents, especially considering that many landlords were reliant on their rental income to sustain their estates. Overall, some rents were indeed fair, whilst others were higher due to competition, with landowners believing the land was worth more than it actually was.[47] The Home Secretary, James Graham, whilst believing bad conduct on behalf of landlords did much to agitate the people to rebellion, also acknowledged that rents had to be collected, and if tenants refused on the grounds set out by Rebecca, then they had to be ejected. Nonetheless, the landlords had a difficult situation on their hands, for if they evicted tenants for refusing to pay their rent, they then had to find replacements, which often proved difficult, as the prospect of a mob of rioters descending on the farm in retaliation was all too real.[48] Poverty and unemployment were certainly at the root of the riots, and some of the elite recognised this. Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall rather dramatically imparted his opinion:

> the men feel that they cannot be worse off and therefore become reckless in exhibiting the real state of their feelings towards their landlords and others to whom in more prosperous times they were accustomed to crouch like the slaves of Jamaica to the planters and overseers.[49]

However, there were also examples of landlords who refused to acknowledge the intense destitution. Edward Lloyd Williams of Gwernant believed the working classes were actually

[43] Jones, *Rebecca's Children*, p. 277.

[44] Ibid., p. 61.

[45] TNA, HO 45/454, 'A literal translation of a notice in Welsh, on the door of a public house in the parish of Penboyr', signed Becca, 15 Sept. 1843.

[46] *The Times,* 17 Nov. 1843; Jones, *Rebecca's Children*, p. 276.

[47] D. W. Howell and C. Baber, 'Wales', in F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge social history of Britain, 1750–1950* (3 vols, 1990), I, p. 385.

[48] Jones, 'Rebecca, crime and policing', pp. 112–13.

[49] TNA, HO 45/454, Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to Sir James Graham, 23 July 1843.

better off when compared to ten years previously, holding that bread and butter were at nearly half the prices of 1832.[50] Ultimately, as David Williams suggests, the socio-economic difficulties often stemmed from problems of government and rural administration in south-west Wales, coupled with the ever-growing population applying uncomfortable pressure on the rural economy.[51]

Another grievance which aggravated the rioters was the increasing number of negligent magistrates. The administrative duties on the county level were largely undertaken by the landed classes. Whilst there were certainly examples of competent and fair magistrates, corruption and carelessness were also to be found. Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall felt 'that the further you go westward in this district the more incompetent the magistrates appear to be', and that he believed little confidence was invested in the capabilities of most of the local magistrates.[52] There is a long history of attacks made upon the character of magistrates, with examples of harsh punishments for petty offences, and even magistrates passing judgements before court hearings took place. It is difficult to ascertain whether the accusations were well founded, but there is evidence to suggest that some magistrates were swayed by financial incentives and bribery.

Corruption was rife, with magistrates rewarding friends and supporters with offers of comfortable offices. A report appeared in *The Welshman*, in late August 1843, highlighting the illegal activities of the Turnpike Trust and magistrates of Aberystwyth. Hall believed this report would lead to more difficulties, as well as reinforcing the popular opinion that magistrates were 'omnipotent', doing as they pleased, regardless of any laws.[53] Another landed proprietor harsh in her condemnation of lax magistrates was Miss Jane Walters of Glanmedeni, who was convinced there were too many examples of magistrates abusing their powers. She asserted that if the magistrates had taken a stricter approach to quelling the riots from the outset, the violence would not have escalated.[54] Although justices were selective in the laws they upheld, with particular focus on the laws that protected property and the propertied class, there was conversely a strong belief that they had a social obligation to the local community and thus carried out their duties as justices. As Cragoe argues, this paternalistic ethos pervaded the landed gentry's outlook on life, in their capacity as landlords, law enforcers, political representatives and heads of country houses.[55]

The Vice Lieutenant of Carmarthenshire believed that virtually anyone who dared stand in Rebecca's way could fall prey to her. In other instances of rural protest, landlords fell victims, but were usually not the predominant target group. Hobsbawm and Rudé, in their influential study of Captain Swing, claim that, as a group, farmers were more often targeted than landlords during the Swing riots. For example, out of 202 arson cases connected with

[50] Ibid., printed notice issued by Edward Lloyd Williams, Gwernant, near Newcastle Emlyn, entitled 'To the person calling himself Rebecca and to those unlawfully conspiring with him, naming themselves the daughters of Rebecca', 9 July 1843.

[51] Williams, *Rebecca Riots*, p. viii.

[52] TNA, HO 45/454, Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to Sir James Graham, 8 Sept. 1843; Dr Walter D. Jones, Lancych, Newcastle Emlyn, to Sir James Graham, 7 Aug. 1843.

[53] Ibid., Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to Sir James Graham, 2 Sept. 1843.

[54] See especially Ibid., Jane Walters, Newcastle Emlyn, to the Home Office, 20 Sept. 1843.

[55] Cragoe, *Anglican aristocracy*, p. 2.

these riots, where the identity of victims were largely verified, a staggering 132 cases involved farmers, with only 36 involving landlords.[56] However, Roger Wells has argued that whist 'Swing rocked the foundations of English landed society', attacks on landlords were less important than previously thought. Indeed, the grievances during the Swing riots predominantly focused on employment and the dissatisfaction with the threshing machines, wages and inadequate welfare provisions.[57]

Whilst similar cases of protests and attacks were taking place in the English countryside, interestingly, no direct connection was made between the two areas. However, contemporaries drew parallels between the situation in Wales and the situation in Ireland, due to the similar protest methods employed, namely mass meetings, incendiarism, violence and even murder. Nonetheless, most contemporaries acknowledged that whilst there were similarities, the 'movements were at different stages of development and intensity'. In addition, the Rebecca Riots were not a separatist movement, and there were no religious similarities, with Rebecca fearing Catholics in the same way as the nonconformists did.[58]

In south-west Wales, tenant farmers were punished for taking up leases against Rebecca's commands. The victims of Rebecca's wrath were varied and so were the motives of attack. In surveying Rebecca attacks not connected to the tollgates, of which there were approximately 235, Jones explained that around 55 per cent of these attacks were against property, and the remaining 45 per cent against people. Attacks on individuals could be spurred on by a sense of community justice, in the style of the *ceffyl pren*, whereby Rebecca was punishing those who disturbed the social equilibrium. Other attacks were launched upon bailiffs, agents, tithe collectors and pound keepers, to name but a few, for their actions linked to their occupation. Even unpopular people within the locality could receive a visit from Rebecca and her daughters, although why exactly they were unpopular is not always clear.[59] As well as magistrates, other figures of law and order were victimised. During an attack on two gates in the parish of Llanfihangel ar arth, the special constables in charge of protecting the gates were threatened at gunpoint. One of the constables was even ordered to start destroying the gate, which he did, in fear for his life. To add insult to injury, he was ordered to take away the gate posts the following day, thus finishing the work he had been forced to start the night before.[60] As well as targeting figures of authority or tenants breaking her stand on unjust leases, Rebecca also acted as a moral guardian, including forcing fathers to recognise their offspring in bastardy cases. Their methods were enough to strike fear into the hearts of those men, with Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall declaring quite dramatically: 'this appears to be decidedly the Lynch law of America'.[61] Clergymen were also under attack during the riots, for a variety of reasons, most notably for preaching against Rebecca. Reverend Eleazar Evans of Llangrannog

[56] E. Hobsbawm and G. Rudé, *Captain Swing* (1969, 2001 edn.), pp. 229, 236.

[57] R. Wells, 'Historical trajectories: English social welfare systems, rural riots, popular politics, agrarian trade unions, and allotment provision, 1793–1896', *Southern Hist.*, 25 (2003), pp. 98–99.

[58] Jones, *Rebecca's Children*, pp. 342–43.

[59] Ibid, p. 259.

[60] TNA, HO 45/454, note from George Rice Trevor, Carmarthen, accompanying a letter to the Home Office, 30 June 1843.

[61] Ibid., Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to Sir James Graham, 20 Aug. 1843.

considered resigning his living, selling up and leaving the country for his native England, after receiving several threatening letters from Rebecca.[62]

III

Members of the landed elite were targeted by Rebecca in their capacity as landlords, but also as magistrates. As landlords they were accused of demanding high levels of rent, and treating or dismissing tenants unfairly. We have also seen how the magistrates were held to be corrupt and partial towards their friends. In their magisterial duties they were charged with acting too harshly, especially when it came to sentencing rioters who had been captured. However, a gentleman, in his capacity as either landlord or indeed magistrate, could enflame Rebecca and her followers by denouncing their activities publicly. Many landlords received anonymous letters threatening an attack directed at their property, or even person, in retaliation for some wrongdoing they had supposedly committed. This was a tactic that could unsettle the recipient of the letter without much danger of the writer being identified and punished, as Jane Walters lamented: 'the threatening letters which they [the landlords] receive reminds them that their lives their families and their property is in danger every moment'.[63] There are numerous examples of both landlords and prominent gentlemen receiving such letters during 1843. For example, threatening letters were sent to the Lord Lieutenant of Carmarthenshire, Colonel Trevor, and his father, Lord Dynevor, 'vowing the destruction by fire of their property and lives'.[64] As Chairman of the Llanelli Union, William Chambers received a letter from Rebecca ordering him to release the poor from the workhouse before 24 June or Rebecca's children 'will clean it out when they come'.[65]

Several landlords received anonymous letters ordering them to lower their rents. Alban L. Gwynne of Mynachty wrote to the Home Office on 12 August 1843 after receiving a threatening letter ordering him to reduce his rents by 30 per cent.[66] Another demand was for landlords to reimburse tenants who had paid too much rent, sometimes referring to individuals, as in the following example. The Deputy Lieutenant of Cardiganshire, S. R. P. Wagner of Manoreifed, near Newcastle Emlyn, received a letter signed by 'Becca' demanding a late tenant, John Thomas, be reimbursed the sum of £41; accusing Wagner and his like of 'savagness [sic] towards tenants', concluding 'you know that it is no lost [sic] to me if you all should be burnt'.[67] Becca also sent a letter to one of Wagner's servants, explaining that, if his master failed to pay back the tenant, Rebecca and her daughters would tear down his country seat in less than three quarters of an hour, with his life being placed in jeopardy.[68] Some were called upon to reimburse servants, such as Jane Walters of Glanmedeni, who received a letter,

[62] Ibid., Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to Sir James Graham, 8 Sept. 1843.

[63] Ibid., Jane Walters, to the Home Office, 20 Sept. 1843.

[64] Ibid., J. Lloyd Davies, Allt yr Odin, Carmarthen, to the Home Office, 14 June 1843.

[65] Ibid., William Chambers, Llanelly House, Carmarthenshire, to Sir James Graham, 25 June 1843.

[66] Ibid., A. L. Gwynne, to Sir James Graham, 12 Aug. 1843.

[67] Ibid., copy of a letter sent to S. R. P. Wagner, Manoreifed, near Newcastle Emlyn, signed Becca, 3 Aug. 1843; Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to Sir James Graham, 19 Aug. 1843.

[68] Ibid., copy of a letter sent to S. R. P. Wagner's servant, signed Becca, 3 Aug. 1843.

signed by Rebecca, requesting she pay one of her late father's former servants, Dina Davies of Rhydypentre, the owed sum of £1, in addition to the interest generated over the past twenty years. The letter finished with a threat of a visit from Rebecca if the money was not paid by 20 September.[69] Other letters called for the landlord to reimburse not only individual tenants, but all tenants who had paid a high rental on their property. The landlord of Gwernant, near Newcastle Emlyn, Edward Lloyd Williams, issued a printed notice addressing the rioters, having received a threatening letter demanding he reimburse all his tenants 5*s*. in every pound before the next rent day. If he failed to comply, Rebecca and her daughters vowed to maim his livestock, and attack his farms and even his house.[70]

In addition to threatening letters addressed to specific individuals, there were also instances of the rioters pinning up notices for public display, warning of impending attacks. The night before a Petty Sessions meeting, a threatening notice written in Welsh was left at Bwlchydomen, vowing that the nearby bridge would be demolished in order to intercept communications and stop the following day's proceedings; if the magistrates dared retaliate, 'fire would be applied to Property, the lives of the magistrates in jeopardy'.[71] The communicator of this news, J. Lloyd Davies, was not perturbed by the threat to property; nonetheless, this was in April 1843, and up until then, little damage had been done to private property. Perhaps his reaction would have been slightly more alarmed had events taken place later in that year. Therefore, Davies's nonchalant response begs the question, did these letters actually have the desired effect? Jones suggests that as with all anonymous letters received in rural areas, 'those of Rebecca had to be taken seriously'.[72] But it is virtually impossible to discover what feelings these letters evoked in the hearts of their recipients. One can assume fear was the predominant emotion, but some must have felt shame and embarrassment at being singled out. Others exhibited disbelief, or were even suspicious, such as Edward Lloyd Williams, who appeared to doubt whether his letter was actually from the Rebeccaites, thinking 'some cowardly rascal' had used Becca's name for effect.[73] However, it seems Rebecca's demands to lower rents did have an impact on some, with Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall claiming that, locally, landlords were returning between 5 and 20 per cent of their rents, he himself even acting on behalf of his father, who had received a Rebecca letter, demanding tenants be reimbursed.[74]

What followed the verbal attacks in the threatening letters and notices were usually physical attacks upon private property. However, it is difficult to conclude how frequently threats were followed up with direct action and whether all recipients of letters fell under attack. Nonetheless, many landlords lost crops to fires, found livestock maimed, and even whole farm buildings ablaze. According to Jones, during the nineteenth century 'perhaps the most feared act of vandalism was arson'.[75] Indeed, during the Swing riots, it was arson and not

[69] CRO, Aberglasney 4, MSS 24/570a, letter signed 'Rebecca' to Jane Walters, Glan Medeni, 1 Sept. 1843.

[70] TNA, HO 45/454, printed notice issued by Edward Lloyd Williams, entitled 'To the person calling himself Rebecca and to those unlawfully conspiring with him, naming themselves the daughters of Rebecca', 9 July 1843.

[71] Ibid., J. Lloyd Davies, Carmarthen, to the Home Office, 21 April 1843.

[72] Jones, *Rebecca's Children*, p. 263.

[73] TNA, HO 45/454, printed notice issued by Edward Lloyd Williams, 9 July 1843.

[74] Ibid., Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to Sir James Graham, 26 Aug. 1843.

[75] Jones, 'The Welsh and crime', p. 97.

machine-breaking that caused the most damage to property.[76] S. R. P. Wagner predicted that as soon as the harvest was completed, the rioters would commit 'a series of agrarian outrages'.[77] True to Wagner's prediction, towards the end of August and into September, there were several arson attacks whereby landlords lost valuable crops. On the night of 10 September 1843, a disastrous attack was launched on three homesteads belonging to William Chamber, where hay ricks, three corn stacks and even an outbuilding were destroyed by fire. This was the fourth or fifth arson attack made upon Chamber's property since, as George Rice Trevor claimed, he had 'acted zealously as a magistrate'.[78] Two days later, whilst returning home from a Quarter Sessions meeting, Edward Abadam saw a fire blazing in the distance, in the direction of his home, Middleton Hall. On arrival he found two large hayricks ablaze in the farmyard, the woods surrounding his mansion full of men, and his family cowering in fear within the house. It appeared the attackers had removed the plugs from the fish ponds in order to hinder any attempts at extinguishing the fires. These haystacks, containing about sixty tons of hay, worth upwards of £200, a substantial loss to the landlord. Four days later they were still smouldering.[79] It seems the attack on Abadam's property stood as retaliation for his actions as a magistrate, dealing with Rebeccaites in court harshly, and for his continual refusal to lower his rents. Not even the powerful Dynevor family could escape the wrath of Rebecca, as on 30 August and 8 September, wheat mows on the estate were set ablaze.[80] The military commander sent to south Wales, Colonel Love, foresaw that further attacks were imminent.[81] Jones elaborated, 'as the later stages of the Rebecca riots indicate, in the days before the belated arrival of trade unionism in Wales arson was a useful form of protest and intimidation'.[82]

In addition to destroying crops, the rioters also targeted livestock. Whilst away at his seaside retreat, Wervilbrook, Mr Beynon's cattle were moved under cover of night. The farm bailiff, on realising the cattle were gone, and fearing they may have escaped and trampled the corn, called the coachman to help him look for the herd. Whilst searching, the coachman ran into a tall, well-built man in disguise, with blackened face and a gun slung over his shoulder. The man called out in Welsh to the bailiff 'Halloa here's Becca' and then disappeared into the night.[83]

Whilst the destruction of crops and the taking or maiming of livestock were a financial blow to the landlord, the cutting down of plantations was a much more permanent method of disfiguring the landscape. In comparison with broken windows, which could be quickly mended, it would take years to replant and cultivate damaged woodlands. Therefore, damaging the plantations of the landed elite held more sinister connotations. Carl Griffin refers to the practise of plant maiming as 'an important tool of rural terror'.[84] He explains that the aim

[76] Hobsbawm and Rudé, *Captain Swing*, p. 223.

[77] TNA, HO 45/454, S. R. P. Wagner, to Sir James Graham, 26 Aug. 1843.

[78] Ibid., George Rice Trevor, to Sir James Graham, 11 Sept. 1843.

[79] *The Welshman,* 15 Sept. 1843; *Carmarthen J.* 15 Sept. 1843; TNA, HO 45/454, George Rice Trevor, to the Home Office, 13 Sept. 1843.

[80] *Carmarthen J.* 1 Sept. 1843; *The Welshman,* 15 Sept. 1843; TNA, HO 45/454, George Rice Trevor, to Sir James Graham, 31 Aug. 1843.

[81] TNA, HO 45/453, Colonel Love, Carmarthen, to the Right Hon Sutton, 31 Aug. 1843.

[82] Jones, 'The Welsh and crime', p. 98.

[83] TNA, HO 45/454, Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to Sir James Graham, 2 Sept. 1843.

[84] C. J. Griffin, '"Cut down by some cowardly miscreants": Plant maiming, or the malicious cutting of flora, as an act of protest in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century rural England', *Rural Hist.* 19 (2008), p. 45.

was to inflict a 'financial as well as a psychological wound upon the target'.[85] Plant maiming was usually used in conjunction with another method of protest, usually incendiarism. Maiming plants was more time consuming and more effort was required than lighting fires, for example, tree maiming required equipment, such as knives and axes. Therefore, these activities usually took place on the plantations and woodlands of the gentry rather than the orchards of farmsteads, which were in closer proximity to the house. Naturally, as with arson attacks, these activities took place under the cover of night.[86]

Earlier in May 1843, the plantation on Timothy Powell's Penycoed estate was set ablaze and, due to the direction of the wind, four acres of valuable yew trees were lost before further help could be sought. However, the loss could have been much greater: if the gorse cut away the previous winter had been left, thirty acres of woodland would have been reduced to cinders.[87] Powell was not a popular figure due to his work on the bench and his opposition to Rebecca, and he was beaten for attempting to apprehend a rioter after the demolition of gateposts at St Clears.[88] David Davies of Green Hall near Carmarthen reported to the Home Office how a mob, 'more than 200', descended upon his estate and destroyed a plantation which belonged to him.[89] As plant maiming caused such grief to the landed interest, harsh punishments were given to those caught. Under an amendment to the Preservation of Timber Trees Act of 1766, those convicted of the willful maiming of plants in private gardens and woodlands could be sentenced to transportation for seven years.[90]

By early August 1843, a growing number of threats were issued, warning of attacks on the houses of the gentry. Colonel Herbert Vaughan of Llangoedmore Place reflected on the state of affairs, convinced that only with the adoption of more 'stringent measures' would attacks on private properties be deterred.[91] One well-documented attack was made upon Dr Walter D. Jones of Lancych, near Newcastle Emlyn, when he was staying at his coastal farmhouse, Pennar. On the evening of 4 August, Dr Jones and his wife retired to bed, but around midnight were woken by the sound of windows crashing all around the house. Finding his gun near his bed, the doctor took aim out of the window, but was fired at, the shot just missing him. On later inspection he found five holes in the glass of the window, a black streak of powder on the left side of his nightshirt, and three of the five slugs embedded in the wall behind where he had stood. He estimated the attack only lasted about three minutes, and inspecting the damage found many of the downstairs windows and frames smashed to pieces, the floor of the drawing room littered with debris, including bullets made of cast iron and a large piece of ash, probably part of a makeshift club. Dr Jones had been urging people to continue paying the tolls, even where gates and bars had been demolished. More dangerous were his claims that he would alert the authorities of the identity of anyone he suspected of being involved in the rioting. Here was a man who had little sympathy for the

[85] Ibid., p. 36.

[86] Ibid., pp. 35–37, 41.

[87] *The Times,* 17 May 1843.

[88] Jones, *Rebecca's Children*, pp. 221, 300.

[89] It is difficult to ascertain exact numbers as they were often exaggerated for effect. TNA, HO 45/454, David Davies, Green Hall, near Carmarthen, to Sir James Graham, 12 June 1843.

[90] Griffin, '"Cut down by some cowardly miscreants"', pp. 38–39.

[91] TNA, HO 45/454, Col Herbert Vaughan, Llangoedmore Place, near Cardigan, to Sir James Graham, 8 Aug. 1843.

lower orders and, as a Poor Law Guardian, believed the men who came before him for help were spending too much of their wages on alcohol.[92]

There were other, perhaps less dramatic, violations of country houses. Having attacked the home of the estate's agent and keeper, the rioters marched past Gellywernen mansion, where they broke 30 pieces of glass in the windows before their leader, posing as Rebecca, ordered the mob to cease the attack until the order was given. Whilst the mansion was empty on that occasion, the landlord, Rees Goring-Thomas, had let it to a gentleman who was to stay there during the hunting season.[93] A band of rioters visited Middleton Hall by night demanding to see the butler, who had fled from the house, and was cowering amongst some nearby bushes. He remained there for two hours whilst the rioters taunted the only (female) servant in the house. However, the rioters never crossed the threshold, remaining outside the hall, and left without causing any physical harm to the property or its inhabitants.[94]

Not even the employees of the landed elite were safe as they carried out their master's orders. Most notably it was those of a higher station, such as land agents and bailiffs, who fell victims to the rioters. A crowd disguised in women's clothing and with blackened faces, carrying lamps, firing guns and blowing horns were led by a figure on horseback to the house of Rees Goring Thomas's agent, John Edwards. Edwards was infirm in bed, but, though he had suspected an impending attack, he had declined the offer of military protection. The mob smashed all the windows, and on hearing the agent was in bed, fired shots through his bedroom window, even after pleas from his wife and daughter to leave. The mob continued their destruction by moving to the garden, partly destroying the kitchen garden, green houses, plants, and herbs, and scarring the fruit trees. They then turned their sights towards the gamekeeper, Williams Bassett's house, breaking in and smashing his furniture, and burning the family's clothes. Bassett and his family fled the mob, who fired at them, injuring one of the children in its mother's arms.[95]

Tactics of intimidation were important, as Andy Wood, in reference to the enclosure riots, states: 'historians have often stressed the relative lack of violence in enclosure riots; yet such crowd action could be terrifying to witness'.[96] This was indeed true of the Rebecca riots, as the Middleton Hall agent found out one night. Having spent the evening transacting business with his employer, when returning home at around midnight, Cooke crossed paths with a group of about 40 rioters. They stood motionless and silent in a narrow lane, armed with guns or long poles, all dressed in white, their faces concealed by veils. Cooke was forced to direct his horse with great difficulty through the eerily silent crowd. In a letter to his mother, he remarked that:

> Several of them were so near me, that I could have struck them with my stick, but I thought it more prudent to thrash my horse instead of them, and was glad to get off so cheaply.[97]

[92] Ibid., Dr Walter D. Jones, to Sir James Graham, 7 Aug. 1843.

[93] *The Times,* 26 Aug. 1843.

[94] NLW, MSS 21209 C, Thomas Herbert Cooke, to his mother, 23 July 1843.

[95] TNA, HO 45/454, George Rice Trevor, to Sir James Graham, 24 Aug. 1843; HO 45/453, printed notice issued by George Rice Trevor, regarding the attack on John Edward, Gellywernen, 20 Aug. 1843; *The Times,* 26 Aug. 1843.

[96] A. Wood, *Riot, rebellion and popular politics in early modern England* (2002), p. 103.

[97] NLW, MSS 21209 C, Thomas Herbert Cooke, to his mother, 6 Aug. 1843.

When discussing eighteenth-century food riots, Thompson claimed that physical assault very rarely occurred.[98] This is largely true of the tumultuous years of the Rebecca riots, and certainly true in the case of the landed interest. Whilst attacks on farm produce and private property were more common, examples of actual physical assault rarely reveal themselves. In addition, in some instances it is unclear whether they were actually instigated by Rebecca's children in retaliation for misdeeds, or were merely random acts of violence. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that the following example was indeed a Rebecca attack. At around half past ten one evening, the notoriously harsh magistrate and Chairman of the Board of Guardians, Reverend James James of Robeston Wathen near Narberth, Pembrokeshire, fell under attack. In the dressing room of his home, preparing for bed, he was fired at through the window and wounded in the arm. The bullet passed through the shutter, window and his dressing gown, striking him below the armpit of his right arm, and, on passing through his arm, the bullet lodged in the wall behind him. James then heard the assailants run away, and on the arrival of the police an hour later, there were no signs of the attackers. James was probably targeted as he was to be the committing magistrate at a forthcoming Rebecca trial.[99]

The next example is less clear, and could have been a random attack not undertaken under Rebecca's name. The famously short-tempered Captain Lloyd of Dolhaidd was attending a church service one Sunday, having only just returned to the county from an 18-month absence in France for the benefit of his grandchildren's health. The reason for his return was to oversee the sale of a property of which he was trustee, and he planned to return to France within the fortnight. On his arrival, possibly unaware of the seriousness of the situation in the county, he publicly condemned Rebecca and her followers. On that Sunday, whilst in the churchyard of the Newcastle Emlyn church, Captain Lloyd was struck by a stone. In a fury, he demanded that bystanders tell him what they had just seen. Some claimed a small boy had thrown the stone from a nearby garden before running away, pledging they did not recognise him and assuring the Captain it must have been an accident. This pacified Lloyd somewhat, but he was still agitated enough to threaten those gathered before him that he usually carried pistols and would have no reservations in shooting the first man that dared attempt to injure him. Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, who had arrived upon the scene after the stone was thrown, was suspicious of the local people, believing them to be lying to protect the true identity of the assailant.[100]

IV

Virtually all the recorded responses to the Rebecca attacks (whether on tollgates or the property of the elite) were from the landed interest, and take the form of personal accounts (private letters or diaries), official accounts (letters to the Home Office, or to local figures of authority, for example, magistrates or the Lord Lieutenant), or printed addresses placed on public display

[98] Thompson, *Customs in common*, pp. 188, 224.

[99] TNA, HO 45/454, Colonel Hankey, Haverfordwest, to Captain O'Brien, Home Office, 19 Oct. 1843; Colonel Hankey, Narberth, to Colonel Owen, Tredegar, Newport, Monmouthshire, 20 Dec. 1843.

[100] Ibid., Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to Sir James Graham, 22 Sept. 1843.

or reproduced in the press. Only the landed elite were in a position to organise the prosecution of Rebecca and her daughters. Therefore, this section focuses specifically on the responses of the elites, the people who had the power to suppress Rebecca and her supporters. What follows is the identification of a general pattern of behaviour by the landed interest following threats or attacks from Rebecca. The focus is on the particular methods of suppression the elite proposed and indeed chose to deploy in their attempts to quell further unrest and apprehend the rioters; some were more traditional, such as issuing addresses appealing for the restoration of law and order, whilst other methods were unorthodox and violent.

In early 1843, when the rioters were still predominantly focused on the destruction of tollgates, magistrates were already beginning to fear that if attacks continued unchecked, they would only intensify, and worse still, their own property and even lives would be put at risk. With the change in nature of attacks to focus upon private property, we can see a pattern in the response of the landed interest. Usually the first response to a Rebecca attack was to call upon the government for help, mainly for military assistance to quell the riots, as magistrates found the existing law enforcement in the counties woefully inadequate. Several resolutions were put forward on how to maintain law and order in the counties. For example, in response to a letter from the Mayor of Carmarthen, the Home Office suggested a yeomanry or some regular force be stationed in the town in order to stop the lawlessness.[101] In June 1843, it was proposed at a meeting of the magistrates in Lampeter that all landowners should call upon their tenants and dependants to enrol as special constables at their district's petty sessions.[102] Alternatively, Dr Jones of Lancych suggested that Welsh speakers should be sworn in as special constables so that they could spy on the people, learn their secrets and inform the authorities, believing it to be the only way to end the disorder.[103]

The presence of the military was reassuring, but some magistrates were concerned about the way they dealt with the situation and there was considerable uncertainty amongst them as to how to respond to attacks. Some, such as J. Rees of Llettymaenllwyd, Llanelli, sought clarification from the Home Office. He asked how he should respond on encountering a band of men in disguise. If he found them in the act of destroying private property, such as a house, would he be right to order the military to fire at them?[104] Such were the concerns of the magistrates, fearful that the wrong direction could inflame the rioters and incite further violence. Trying too hard to be helpful, and fretting over the worst possible outcome, Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall urged the Home Office to warn troops quartered in local public houses to be particularly careful of their weapons, in case some of the 'country people', appearing only to frequent the place for some ale, should overpower them and steal their weapons.[105] Some landlords also feared that the mere presence of the military in the locality could excite the rioters, resulting in more attacks.

As the violence escalated and the number of attacks made upon private property rose, it was resolved at a meeting of magistrates in September 1843 that yet more troops were

[101] Ibid., E. H. Stacey, Mayor of Carmarthen, to Sir James Graham, 12 June 1843.

[102] Ibid., Col Powell, Lampeter, to Sir James Graham, 29 June 1843.

[103] Ibid., Dr Walter D. Jones, to Sir James Graham, 7 Aug. 1843.

[104] Ibid., J. Rees, Llettymaenllwyd, Llanelli, to Sir James Graham, 31 Aug. 1843.

[105] Ibid., Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to the Home Office, 30 June 1843.

needed. The Vice Lieutenant of Carmarthenshire, feared that, if attacks on property did not subside, magistrates would become 'disheartened'.[106] Initially, the government did not take the cries for help from the magistrates of south-west Wales as seriously as they should have done, their opinions of the leaders of the counties of Carmarthen, Pembroke and Cardigan being far from favourable, they were convinced they were ultimately to blame for the riots having escalated. However, with the intensifying violence and change of focus from tollgates to private property during the summer and autumn of 1843, the government was forced to react. Following the infamous attack on the Carmarthen workhouse, on 19 June 1843, the military assistance sent to south-west Wales increased dramatically, with over a thousand troops posted and 150 Metropolitan Police seconded to the district. By the late autumn of 1843, Robert Peel and James Graham, reflecting on how dangerous the situation had become, firmly believed that the establishment of a professional police force in south-west Wales was essential. Indeed, James Graham's response to the numerous letters from south-west Wales was to send help, as long as the magistrates agreed to establish a local police force.[107] A resolution was drawn up by Hugh Owen, acting as chairman for a meeting of the magistrates of Pembrokeshire, calling for a centrally located military force, armed and trained by competent leaders.[108] The magistrates of the Cardigan Quarter Session went further, and were unanimous in their opinion that, if rioters were punished by transportation, fear would deter others from breaking the law.[109]

Another call on the government was for financial assistance, namely the offering of rewards for the apprehension of rioters. Colonel W. E. Powell of Nanteos requested the government to send someone to assist the magistrates of the three counties of Carmarthen, Pembroke and Cardigan in the issuing of rewards for information.[110] Offering a reward was a common tactic employed by men of property who fell victim to attack. For example, Rees Goring Thomas proposed offering a reward of £250 for the conviction of the main offenders who attacked the homes of his steward and gamekeeper on condition that the government matched this sum. The government agreed to this.[111] However, Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall doubted whether promises of rewards would entice locals to come forward to betray their fellow men, stating that 'the offer of a reward however great has I believe never been known to produce any effect in this country'.[112] Hugh Owen believed the reward would have to be substantial in order to induce a Welshman to come forwards with evidence and betray a fellow countryman.[113]

Some wanted to see laws passed to help quell the riots by imposing harsh punishments for large gatherings of men assembled in disguise. Proposals for more extreme methods of defence were put forward to the Home Office. The Deputy Lieutenant of Cardiganshire, S. R. P. Wagner,

[106] Ibid., George Rice Trevor, to Sir James Graham, 13 Sept. 1843.

[107] Jones, 'Rebecca, crime and policing', pp. 99–104.

[108] TNA, HO 45/454, resolutions drawn up by Hugh Owen, Chairman, at a meeting of the magistrates of Pembrokeshire, held on 28 June 1843. It also sought rewards for the apprehension of offenders.

[109] Ibid., resolution of magistrates of the Cardigan Quarter Session, meeting on 27 June 1843.

[110] Ibid., Col. W. E. Powell, Carmarthen, to Sir James Graham, 25 June 1843.

[111] Ibid., George Rice Trevor, to Sir James Graham, 30 Aug. 1843.

[112] Ibid., Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to Sir James Graham, 15 June 1843.

[113] Ibid., resolutions drawn up by Hugh Owen, Chairman, at a meeting of the magistrates of Pembrokeshire, held on 28 June 1843.

asked whether the government would supply magistrates with hand grenades which could be thrown amongst the rioters, and so defend their houses against attack 'as they would strike terror in the minds of these mobs who are entirely ignorant of the existence of such missiles'.[114] Other landlords responded to the unrest in a more controlled and temperate manner by attending public meetings, especially meetings dealing with such issues as rent reductions, tithe levels and matters relating to the turnpike trust. It has been recorded that the landed elite were present at approximately a third of these gatherings, however, not all would stay for the duration of the meeting, with some leaving if the atmosphere became fiery.[115] A meeting was held at Newcastle Emlyn on 23 June 1843 between the magistrates and farmers of the area concerning the attacks at Cardigan and Newcastle Emlyn. Amongst the magistrates present were Lewis Morris, Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall and Colonel George Rice Trevor. These men spoke out against Rebecca and the violent acts committed in her name, but at the same time pledged to listen to the grievances of the people. In a letter to the Home Office, Colonel Trevor confided his low opinion of Hall, convinced that Hall believed he possessed more influence than he actually did. However, this prejudice may have been due to their differing political opinions, with Hall a radical in his politics and a supporter of the secret ballot, whilst Trevor was a staunch Tory, who had opposed reform.[116] Another landlord who addressed a meeting of his tenants and spoke out vehemently against the attacks on his property was Edward Abadam of Middleton Hall, who also held radical political views. On 22 August 1843, Abadam was present at a meeting in Porthyrhyd, attended by about 150 of what his agent, Thomas Herbert Cooke, called 'Rebeccaites'. Abadam dared not risk attending unarmed, therefore he, Cooke and the butler were present 'armed to the teeth … our pockets literally cramed [sic] with hostile weapons'.[117] The fiery tone of the landlord's temper soon emerged, with his agent imagining his master's voice could be heard a quarter of a mile away, such was his fury at being singled out by the rioters. However, addressing the locality was not universally condoned, and even Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall himself was wary that such meetings could take a turn for the worse, exclaiming:

> I hope not mischief may occur. One injudicious remark may act like the spark to a barrel of gunpowder & then there will be no answering for the consequences.[118]

In addition to these meetings, addresses could appear in printed form, in both English and Welsh, placed on public display, distributed as handbills, or printed in local newspapers. Such addresses followed a general pattern, usually appealing to the common sense of the people, urging them to seek lawful means of expressing their grievances, namely by laying complaints before the magistrates; but whether the landed interest listened to or acted on these complaints is another matter. As we have seen earlier, some landlords did indeed attempt to ameliorate the grievances of the rioters, most notably in lowering their rents, whilst others were less inclined to meet the demands of Rebecca and her daughters. In addition to appealing to the people to

[114] Ibid., S. R. P. Wagner, to Sir James Graham, 26 Aug. 1843.

[115] Jones, *Rebecca's Children*, p. 325.

[116] TNA, HO 45/454, Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to Sir James Graham, 23 June 1843; George Rice Trevor, to the Home Office, 25 June 1843.

[117] NLW, MSS 21209 C, Thomas Herbert Cooke, to his mother, 24 Aug. 1843.

[118] TNA, HO 45/454, Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to Sir James Graham, 25 June 1843.

confide in the local figures of authority, the addresses also warned of the serious consequences and punishment that awaited those who continued to break the law. After the attack on his coastal retreat, Dr Jones issued a printed address in Welsh appealing for information. He could not understand how Welshmen had committed such an act of violence, believing they were being led by outside forces and used as fodder. Indeed, many magistrates and landowners shared Dr Jones's opinion, believing the people were being influenced by outsiders, and were in fact, due to their naturally deferential character, not capable of leading such a rebellion. He remarked that by moving their target from tollgates to private property, they would drive the gentry out of the country.[119] Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall believed Dr Jones's address had soothed the public mind and would save him from further attack, summing up the gentry's belief in the healing properties of these printed addresses.[120] On being invited to preside over the public meeting at Mynydd Sylen, William Chambers Jun. issued a printed address to the inhabitants of Llanelli, reinforcing his willingness to help the people to redress grievances, but only if they adopted law-abiding methods. In his role as magistrate, he would have to oppose all illegal proceedings and put an end to the nightly violence. However, he was convinced the people of Llanelli, amongst whom he had lived for fifteen years, would stand united against any attack on private property or persons, declaring:

> I shall persevere unflinchingly in doing my duty, and no threats against my person nor property shall in the least deter me. Should my property be destroyed, I am secured from loss by an insurance office, and by my remedy against the hundred; and should my person be attacked, my assailants will not do so with impunity.[121]

Some magistrates felt they had to give the impression that life carried on as normal, with law and order prevailing in the face of the night-time marauders. On being asked by a fellow magistrate whether the committee to review the Turnpike Trust's accounts was to meet the following week, in light of the nearby Cardigan gates being demolished, Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall firmly replied that they would, of course, be meeting. The magistrates did not want the rioters to see how unsettled they were by the threats, therefore they carried on with their duties as normal.[122] There were even fears amongst the magistracy that several influential and wealthy people were not taking the riots seriously. Some were even suspected of over-reacting. Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall was accused of posing as 'the "O'Connell" of these Counties' by a fellow magistrate, who believed he was agitating the people with his talks of redressing grievances and voting by ballot, doing more harm than good, being of the opinion that: 'the Welch [sic] are a very lawless people when excited whether by intoxication or the advice of their superiors in status'.[123]

Faults in the way law and order were administered in the counties were emphasised when nearly a quarter of active magistrates fled and became absentees. Over 80 years later, Herbert

[119] Ibid., printed notice from Dr Walter D. Jones, Lancych, addressed to the persons who attacked his house, 8 Aug. 1843.

[120] Ibid., Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to Sir James Graham, 1 Sept. 1843.

[121] Ibid., copy of printed address to the inhabitants of Llanelli by William Chambers, Jun., Llanelli, 9 Sept. 1843.

[122] Ibid., Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to Sir James Graham, 25 June 1843.

[123] Ibid., E. Laws, Pembroke, to Sir James Graham, 26 June 1843.

M. Vaughan reflected on the degree of absenteeism during the years of Rebecca's tyranny: 'a good many of the local magistrates showed the white feather on this occasion and held aloof from the movement altogether'.[124] After meeting with the magistrates at Lampeter, Colonel Powell planned to travel to Aberystwyth the following day, happy in the knowledge that he was soon to escape to London.[125] On receiving a threatening letter demanding that he reimburse a tenant, Edward Lloyd Williams of Gwernant issued a printed notice. In this notice he threatened that if any attempts were made to injure him or his property, he would become an absentee. He would employ an attorney to collect his rents, spending the money elsewhere instead of employing upwards of 30 or 40 local men and women all year round.[126] The departure of the landlord certainly had an impact on the local area, as Williams highlighted, for employment in the locality would fall and the figure of authority and leadership would disappear. Williams warned: 'by continuing your lawless acts, you will induce the Gentry of this country to become absentees, and in that respect make this country like Ireland'.[127] In September 1843, even the resolute Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall was so disturbed by the state of the country that he was making arrangements for his family to be sent to England at short notice.[128] However, he was not alone, as in late September and early October, several gentlemen were getting ready to send their families away for their safety.[129] One can easily denounce those landlords and magistrates who escaped, as Vaughan did, labelling them cowards, but they often fled in fear of their lives. There was no way for them to know the course the riots would take, and whether the sudden turn of attacks from gates to private property was only the beginning of a much more militant phase. Undertaking their duties had become increasingly difficult and perilous, and without a professional police force to enforce the law, they were largely 'powerless'.[130]

V

During the turbulent years of the riots, and in particular 1843, many of the landed classes of south-west Wales lived in fear, waiting, as J. Lloyd Davies described, for the 'indiscriminate destruction of property if not life'. A. J. Gwynne lamented: 'threats of incendiarism and even murder are constantly received by those in a heighar [sic] class of life who exert themselves in repressing any rebelious [sic] proceedings'.[131] Some even predicted the riots would escalate to a full-blown revolution; S. R. P. Wagner believed: 'matters are assuming a very serious aspect here and something must be done and that speedily or there will be an open rebellion here in a very short time'.[132] In light of the French Revolution of the previous century and various

[124] H. M. Vaughan, *The south Wales Squires: a Welsh picture of social life* (1926), pp. 16–17.

[125] TNA, HO 45/454, Col Powell, to Sir James Graham, 29 June 1843.

[126] Ibid., printed notice issued by Edward Lloyd Williams, entitled 'To the person calling himself Rebecca and to those unlawfully conspiring with him, naming themselves the daughters of Rebecca', 9 July 1843.

[127] Ibid., printed notice issued by Edward Lloyd Williams, 9 July 1843.

[128] Ibid., Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to Sir James Graham, 22 Sept. 1843.

[129] Ibid., Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to Sir James Graham, 6 Oct. 1843.

[130] Jones, 'Rebecca, crime and policing', p. 114.

[131] TNA, HO 45/454, A. J. Gwynne, Aberaeron, Cardiganshire, to Sir James Graham, 25 Aug. 1843.

[132] Ibid., S. R. P. Wagner, to Sir James Graham, 26 Aug. 1843.

instances of rural protests, this threat was a chilling one indeed. Perhaps the most alarming prediction was that of *The Times* correspondent, Thomas Campbell Foster, sent to south-west Wales to report tales of the riots to London, who wrote in August 1843 that 12 country houses had been targeted and that more would fall by the end of the year.[133] With such apocalyptic images of the fate of the gentry, many landlords fled with their families, whilst others remained and placed all their trust in the military protection they warranted as magistrates.

Many landlords badgered the Home Office with letters, including updates of the very latest events, no matter how small and seemingly insignificant. One gentleman who took it upon himself to report, in minute detail, the state of the country was Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, who rather worriedly wrote on 30 June 1843:

> I have received no acknowledgements of the receipts of my several letters to you of the 22nd, 23rd, 25th and 26th instant. Should they not duly have come to hand I will send you duplicates.[134]

Such was Hall's determination to be of service to the Home Office in their enquiries that he even pledged to forward, on a daily basis, the minutes of the meetings held by the committee auditing the accounts of the Turnpike Trust. Another regular letter writer was Miss Jane Walters of Glanmedeni, who sent frequent reports of the state of the county and even pledged to donate three acres of land for the building of barracks to house troops in Cardiganshire.[135] There was an intense fear amongst landed proprietors that if the riots were not stopped, they would only escalate and intensify. Thompson, in his studies of food riots, suggests that magistrates often acted out fear, not only fear of what the mob would do next, but also fear of further attacks in the future. As Wood summarises: 'so paternalism was conditional upon the possession of social power; and the distribution of social power stemmed from local-political conflict'.[136]

It is no wonder that the landed classes were targeted by Rebecca and her daughters, especially when considering the grievances felt by the rioters, namely the tolls and high level of rents. Some of the gentry held administrative posts on the Turnpike Trusts, and clearly, it was they who had the power to address the rental situation. In addition, they were the figures of authority within the counties, acting as magistrates and responsible for reading the Riot Act, which had been passed in 1715 to increase the powers of local authority figures. In other cases of Turnpike riots, for instance in the West Riding of Yorkshire, near Bristol, and between Ledbury and Gloucester during the eighteenth century, landlords also received the blame for failing to undertake their duties as trustees, and maintaining the roads. Protestors believed the elite were avoiding their financial obligations by pressurising the wider community to fund the maintenance of the roads. Accusations of corruption were widespread, and violence ensued, with tollgates torn down and set alight by bands of men.[137]

[133] *The Times,* 26 Aug. 1843.

[134] TNA, HO 45/454, Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, to the Home Office, 30 June 1843.

[135] Ibid., Jane Walters, to the Home Office, 23 March 1844; a fuller account of Jane Walters's encounter with the rioters can be found in L. A. Rees, '"The Wail of Miss Jane": the Rebecca Riots and Jane Walters of Glanmedeni, 1843–44', *Ceredigion*, 15 (2007), pp. 37–68.

[136] Wood, *Riot, rebellion and popular politics*, p. 100.

[137] Jones, 'Rebecca, crime and policing', pp. 113, 159–66.

However, after the turbulent summer and autumn months of 1843 passed, the number of Rebecca attacks decreased. By 1844 she had largely disappeared. David J. V. Jones explains that the Rebecca riots were a regional movement, and once the immediate goals were met, the movement quickly ended; however, the ethos of the movement lived on, and we see forms of Rebeccaism prevailing in rural society as late as the 1860s. There were still instances of community justice being administered, with the *ceffyl pren* used to punish those who had broken social or moral codes for several decades after Rebecca.[138] Arson attacks still took place even after Rebecca and her daughters had disappeared. William Chambers of Llanelli, who had fallen victim to Rebecca during the height of the riots, later had one of his farms and its cottages set alight during the spring of 1845. These fires were usually preceded by a threatening letter, some even signed 'Rebecca', usually in retaliation to such grievances as church rates, tithes, poaching laws and other harships.[139] However, Jones explained that: 'Although Rebeccaism appeared in a variety of guises during the 1850s and 1860s, it was not on the scale of the early 1840s'.[140]

Did Rebecca and her daughters disappear for the most part because their demands were met? In reality, rural society was largely unchanged in the wake of the Rebecca Riots, with the landed interest maintaining their elevated position of power. Although Rebecca sought a permanent reduction in the level of rents, the landlords never yielded this. During the late 1840s and early 1850s the agricultural economy worsened again, but not to the same extent as 1843. What fortunately followed was a period of prosperity, which drew attention away from the issue of rent. Indeed, in this climate of profit making, some landlords increased their rent by as much as double. On average, the wages of agricultural workers rose by up to 50 per cent between 1843 and 1867. They could afford to be more demanding, as there was always the possibility of earning higher wages in the rapidly growing industrial centres.[141] This was a different economic climate. On the local level, the gentry continued investing in educating the children of the poor and funding the building and upkeep of churches and chapels, in the hope that education would deter such lawbreaking and riots occurring on the same scale again.

However, there were some changes following the riots. Following a report on the administration of the Turnpike Trusts in south Wales, an act ('Lord Cawdor's Act') was passed in 1844 to amend the laws relating to the trusts in that district. Turnpike roads were henceforth managed by the County and District Roads Boards and the rate of tolls equalised. However, the members of these boards were nominated by the magistrates at Quarter Sessions, and so the landed interest still held a degree of power over the way the tolls were administered and roads and bridges maintained. Nonetheless, slowly but surely, the condition of the roads improved over the following 30 years.[142]

It was the increasing instances of attacks made upon the homes and properties of magistrates and landlords that signalled a change in attitudes towards the establishment of a police force in the counties of south-west Wales, but opinion was divided. Whilst some magistrates were anxious for military aid to be sent, they were largely opposed to the idea of establishing a new

[138] Jones, 'Popular culture', chronicles cases of *ceffyl pren* activities in Cardiganshire from c.1837–50.

[139] Jones, *Rebecca's Children*, pp. 345, 371–73.

[140] Ibid., p. 373.

[141] Ibid., pp. 364–65, 368.

[142] Ibid., p. 347; Williams, *Rebecca Riots*, p. 281.

police force. Conversely, several Lord Lieutenants were supportive of the idea, for example, George Rice Trevor in Carmarthenshire and Hugh Owen in Pembrokeshire. Nonetheless, by the end of 1843, Carmarthenshire had a chief constable, and after much deliberation, in 1844, superintending constables were employed in Pembrokeshire to work with the part time parish constables. Meanwhile, the threat from the government to remove the military force in Cardiganshire led to the passing of a motion in the January 1844 Quarter Sessions to establish a new county police force.[143]

The landed interest had been shaken by the activities of Rebecca and her daughters, and in the decades to follow, attempted to present a unified front, feeling the need 'to demonstrate the extent of their legitimate power, worried as they were by the long-term prospect of tenant independence and political change'.[144] Previously, during riots in the eighteenth century, there had been an expectation that landlords would show support, but times were changing, and the landed interest was distancing itself from any involvement with Rebecca's cause. For example, Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall was invited to attend a meeting of the Rebeccaites but was instructed to come along disguised and armed. Another landlord invited to a meeting was Edward Abadam, the meeting to be held on a hilltop on Abadam's land, organised in order to send a petition to the Queen complaining about the new Poor Law, high taxes, rents and tithes. However, neither landlord attended the meetings. In response, Hall issued a printed address, in both English and Welsh, firmly declining the invitation to partake in any violent acts. As a magistrate, he vowed to help the people, but only within the confines of the law.[145] According to his agent, Abadam had 'no desire to compromise his interest, and seems but little disposed to reduce his Rents, which would follow as a matter of course if he countenances such meetings'.[146] The fact that the gentry in south-west Wales declined to lend their support to the rioters fits in with Jones and Williams's arguments revolving around the deterioration of a paternalistic relationship, and the idea of the 'withdrawal of the upper classes', as explained by Sharon Howard.[147] Nonetheless, for the time being, the landed interest remained a powerful force within the counties, and it was not until the late nineteenth century that we see its status seriously threatened, with the curtailment of its political and administrative powers by the Reform Acts and the Local Government Act of 1888.

[143] Jones, 'Rebecca, crime and policing', p. 100.

[144] Jones, *Rebecca's Children*, p. 376.

[145] TNA, HO 45/454, printed notice issued by Edward Crompton Lloyd Hall, entitled 'To Rebecca and her daughters', 20 June 1843.

[146] NLW, MSS 21209 C, Thomas Herbert Cooke, to his mother, 3 Sept. 1843.

[147] Jones, *Rebecca's Children*, p. 376; Williams, *Rebecca Riots*, pp. 17–18; Howard, 'Riotous community', p. 673.

Shaping records on the farm: agricultural record keeping in France from the nineteenth century to the Liberation*

by Nathalie Joly

Abstract

The practice of record keeping on French farms and the forms taken by farm records have not been widely studied. If *livres de raison* have attracted some recent discussion, little interest has been shown in the day-to-day writings contained in *agendas* (diaries). This article shows that persistent efforts were made throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to introduce onto farms accounting management tools and the media needed to keep records. The movement provided an organised body of resources: their use was advocated by authority figures such as *agromanes*, schoolmasters and agricultural masters.

Diary keeping is a widespread practice on French farms. The daily writing that fills the pages of the *agenda,* or diary, reminds us of the characteristics of the *livre de raison,* or domestic account book. All daily writing records everyday life 'in its rhythm, in its most prosaic material aspects and in its most ordinary activities'.[1] But, while the *livre de raison* focuses on the domestic household, lineage, and experience (the '*livre de raison, livre de maison*' as Sylvie Mouysset wrote in the introduction to her remarkable analysis of *papiers de famille*[2]), the *agenda*, with which I am concerned here, is primarily used to record agrarian activities. The materials I studied over the course of an ethnographic investigation – a series of *agendas* kept between the 1950s and 1990s in a region of eastern France[3] – all contained notes taken and structured in the same way. (An example is shown in Figure 1.) In these records, a few words were enough to describe the fieldwork undertaken, when and where it was undertaken and the equipment used. Depending on the writer, these descriptions of

* I am grateful to Marie-Jeanne Rougelot (Agrocampus-Ouest) for helping with the documentary research and I wish to thank Jean-Luc Demizieux and Laura Sayre for the translation.

[1] M. Foisil, 'L'écriture du for privé', in P. Ariès and G. Duby (eds), *Histoire de la vie privée. De la Renaissance aux Lumière*s (first edn, 1985, 1999), III, p. 334.

[2] S. Mouysset, *Papiers de famille. Introduction à l'étude des livres de raison (France, XVe-XXe siècle)* (2007).

[3] N. Joly, 'Ecritures du travail et savoirs paysans. Aperçu historique et lecture de pratiques. Les agendas des agriculteurs' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Paris-X Nanterre, 1997) and N. Joly, 'Chroniques du travail agricole et livres de compte: la diffusion des pratiques d'écriture en milieu paysan', in *Les enjeux de la formation des acteurs de l'agriculture* (2000), pp. 239–46.

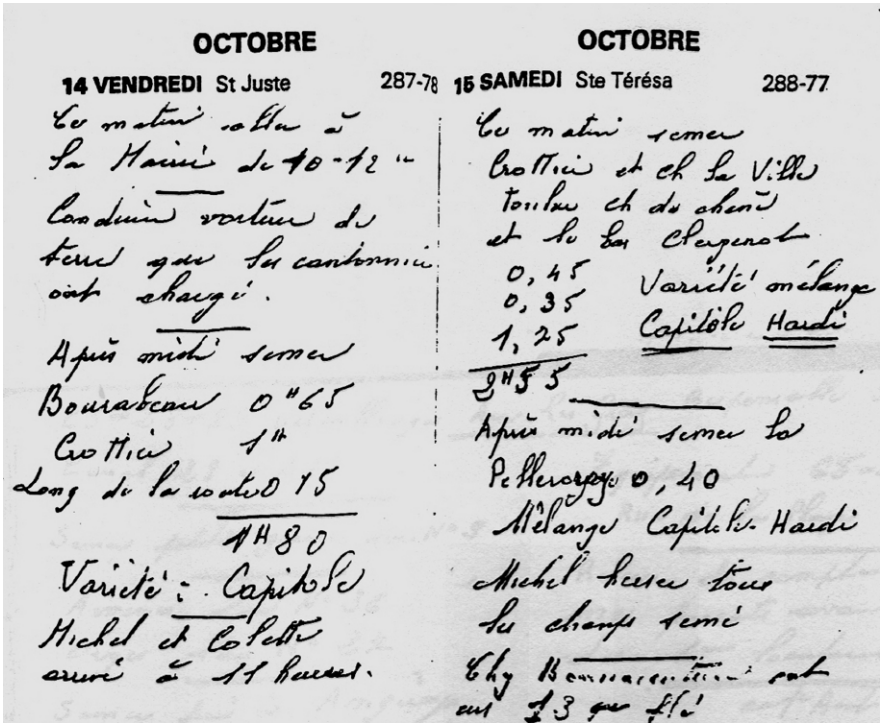


FIGURE 1. An *agenda* kept by a French farmer in the 1970s.

tasks might be accompanied by technical details (fertiliser rates, equipment settings, soil conditions, hectares worked, harvest quality). With regard to livestock, only major events are noted: calving, herd movements, feeding, care, sales. The notes jotted down often also encapsulated, piecemeal, the cycle of life (births, weddings, deaths, relatives' illnesses) and a few individual or family activities.

What do we know about these ordinary, unexceptional writings that seem to take the same form no matter when or by whom they were written? It is possible to analyse *agendas* when they are 'living, current documents', whose purpose and role can be described by their owners. For several reasons we know much less about 'dead documents' (as Marion Demossier provocatively called them[4]). First of all, old *agendas* are rare: their ordinariness (they are normally pocket-sized notebooks) and their aim (more pragmatic than patrimonial) means that they have seldom outlived their authors. Since *agendas* were often used to make notes that were then incorporated into other writings, whether accounting-related, family-related, or autobiographical, they have tended to disappear. Only *livres de raison*, compendia, and memoirs have been transmitted to posterity and the archives. Only a few examples of the more luxurious and book-like *agendas* have escaped the selection of time, and it is on these that we have based our study.[5] Second, our lack of knowledge about *agendas* also comes from a

[4] M. Demossier, *Moi, je suis vigneron: carnets, calepins, agendas, livres de raison et notices en pays de vignobles* (unpubl. report, 1994).

[5] This is what I discovered in the course of my research in the 1990s when I found that the families investigated possessed only a few fragments of writing belonging to previous generations, whether account books or schoolbooks used as *agendas*.

different type of selection, that is, the selections made by historians themselves.[6] As historians have often been persuaded of the illiterate character of the peasantry, they have overlooked the possibilities offered by daily writing on farms and have only recently begun to investigate this type of document.[7] Anthropologists and sociologists have done little to redress this prejudice, the former having privileged oral sources, allegedly a more authentic way of accessing peasant society,[8] while the latter have neglected the study of farm work to concentrate on more general questions of innovation and socio-technical change. The aridity and repetitiveness of *agenda* texts has no doubt discouraged many a researcher from using them for information on working conditions in the peasant sphere.

Even though relatively few *agendas* survive, it is nevertheless possible to reconstitute the history of this form of writing from documentary sources such as agronomic treatises, rural economy manuals, and almanacs, and by investigating the advice and education farmers received from technical education, rural schools and agricultural popularisers. This history, although it is related to that of accounting and to the development of economic rationalisation, is not confined to these areas. In effect, the chronicles of work that have been encouraged by this medium have gradually transformed the *agenda* into a tool for learning about and reflecting on farm work. This is the history I shall delineate, distinguishing two aspects: on the one hand the emergence of book models and the development of publishing conventions that gave shape to writing practices and on the other hand the way these models were institutionalised through educational schemes and embodied by authority figures such as the *agromane*, the rural schoolmaster, the agriculture master, the populariser. My objective is to delineate the mechanisms of diffusion of a documentary form that is still valued by farmers today. How did this tool work its way onto farms? How did it find itself a place within the working day despite the hardness of the labour and the poor training farmers had in note making? Why did it become so indispensable to certain farmers that one can find sentences like, 'A blank page is as if nothing happened'?[9]

I

Let us begin by outlining the characteristics of the *agenda*. Generally speaking, the *agenda* is for the planning of activities. Antoine Furetière already put it that way in his dictionary, '*Agenda* : sm. Tablette, ou mémoire où on écrit ce qu'on a à faire durant le jour, pour s'en aller en ville'.[10] Farmers, however, rather use it as a *journal*, that is, a 'Mémoire de ce qui se fait, de

[6] About the selection-induced effects on ordinary writings, see, among others, A. Farge, *Le bracelet de parchemin. L'écrit sur soi au XVIIIe siècle* (2003) and F. Menant, 'Les transformations de l'écrit documentaire entre le XII et le XIIIe siècle', in N. Coquery, F. Menant and F. Weber (eds), *Ecrire, compter, mesurer. Vers une histoire des rationalités pratiques* (2006), pp. 34–50.

[7] I have identified only one book dealing specifically with agendas, that of P. Madeline and J. M. Moriceau, *Un paysan et son univers de la guerre au marché commun* (2010).

[8] D. Fabre, 'Lettrés et illettrés. Perspectives anthropologiques', in R. Chartier (ed.), *Pratiques de la lecture* (1985), pp. 171–86.

[9] Joly, 'Ecritures du travail et savoirs paysans', p. 240.

[10] A. Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel* (1690). In English, 'Tablet or memorandum on which one writes what one has to do during the day, for the purpose of going to town.'

ce qui se passe chaque jour. Un homme d'ordre tient un papier journal de ce qu'il reçoit, de ce qu'il dépense'.[11] Memoranda in this sense are not specific to France. Henry Stephens mentions them in his *Book of the Farm*:

> Every farmer ought to be provided with a pocket Memorandum-book, in which should be written down every transaction as it occurs, according to its date, whether connected with cash or not, and from the particulars should be posted in the proper book.[12]

When one browses the nineteenth-century agronomic literature and manuals dealing with agricultural accounting, the usage of the *agenda-journal* or similar documents such as the *brouillard* (a kind of scratch book), *mémorandum* (memorandum-book), *journal-aide-mémoire* (daily reminder book), *livre de notes* (notebook), or *mémento* (aide-mémoire) is clearly encouraged. The act of writing down facts is guided by the need for an aide-mémoire, a document to which most writers of articles on accounting refer and which precedes the keeping of *livres de caisse* or *livres spéciaux*:

> The first thing an *agriculteur* [farmer][13] must do is to buy an *agenda* or a memento which shows the days of the year and in which he jots down commitments to deliver commodities, sales agreements with basic terms, all the varied information he must remember, and all the operations which, being not yet accomplished, cannot be registered in the books. He also uses his *agenda* to prepare for his *livre de caisse*, that is, for writing down his cash expenditures as they take place.[14]

Such notes did not need to be neatly laid out. What was important is that they must be taken on the spot, as suggested by the article in the *Encyclopédie pratique de l'agriculteur* on the *brouillard* (waste-book, *memento*):

> This book is little more than a *recueil* or notebook consisting of several sheets of white paper, often a pocket-sized *agenda* in which one jots down – not just once a day, but as they take place – all the commercial, industrial and even merely informative events related to accounting, or calling for the farmer's attention, including sales, purchases and markets, deliveries of commodities, animals' serving, calving, incubations, and so on, to be classified into *ad hoc* registers or tables. In some cases, the only function of the *mémorial* is to receive draft versions of the items which – but for this prior presentation – one would be afraid to

[11] Ibid. In English, 'Memorandum of what has been done, of what has happened each day. An organised man keeps a journal on paper of what he has received and what he has spent'.

[12] H. Stephens, *The book of the farm* (2 vols, sec. edn, 1851), I, p. 776.

[13] As a precaution, let us here recall that the word 'agriculteur' in nineteenth-century French usage had bourgeois (or aristocratic) connotations, whereas the word 'cultivateur' designated small landowners, that is, the richest peasants. See Maurice Agulhon, 'La propriété et les classes sociales', in M. Agulhon, Gabriel Désert and Robert Specklin (eds), *Histoire de la France rurale,* III (1976), pp. 74–95. Nevertheless, specialists in rural history acknowledge variations in the meaning of a word between regions. Qualifying adjectives such as *gros* (large), *riche* (rich), *petit* (small), *simple* (simple), *ordinaire* (ordinary) are sometimes the best way to get an idea of the social position of those referred to as *cultivateur* (cultivator), *agriculteur* (farmer) or *propriétaire* (owner). I use the word 'agriculteur' (farmer) in the generic and administrative sense it took on in the twentieth century.

[14] V. Borie, *Les douze mois: calendrier agricole* (1860), p. 102.

> have to litter with corrections on the *journal*. In this case the *brouillard* is given the very form of the *journal*.[15]

These raw writings, however, do not serve solely to give rigour to accounts by preventing the omission of a purchase, delivery or other transaction. Closer examination of the definitions leads one to notice other aspects of these notes that were to be jotted down on the spot or in the quiet of an office. On the one hand, they lead farmers into a writing process and, on the other, they predispose them to reflect on their work.

(a) Taking to writing

How did farmers find time for writing when so many other tasks that required exhausting physical work were demanding attention? Keeping an *agenda* or a pocket-sized notebook seems to be a practical way of managing the necessity of regular record keeping. Overall, the acquisition of such a habit was in itself a little victory for the advocates of accounts, who knew how farmers resented the accounting techniques they were taught, especially because of their abstract and/or tedious character. Concerned to diffuse the attitudes of measuring and record-keeping that are so indispensable to the development of agrarian capitalism, the promoters of accounts were ready to compromise the rigour demanded by double-entry accounting and to prioritise one or two accounting objectives, particularly for small-scale farms, which in general were run by less well-educated people. This strategy is explained quite bluntly by Lucien Moll in the *Agronomist*. He distinguishes various kinds of tools designed for various classes of farmers, providing in passing a particularly suggestive description of the practices then in use:

> It is at the end of this month (December) that on most of the farms where accounting is used the accounts will be closed, and, where double-entry accounting is used, an inventory of the whole farm will be done as well. Unfortunately, this applies solely to a small number of farms in France. Not that I would like double-entry accounting to be introduced on average *cultivateurs*' farms – for I know it is impossible – but I would like to see at least the setting-up of regular accounting practices, a *livre de caisse*, books dedicated to livestock, the barn, the storehouse, crops, and so on, by our large farmers, most of whom have as a medium for accounting nothing more than the doors of their bedrooms, on which they write with a piece of chalk what they want to remember for some time. I would also like the small *cultivateur* to have his *carnet* [notebook] in which he would note his receipts and expenses, what he harvests, sells or uses, the crops and the costs generated by each harvest, and so on.[16]

A similar strategy of 'small steps' can be observed a century later in the entry on 'comptabilité' (accounting) in the 1921 *Larousse agricole* encyclopaedia, which leaves one to imagine how slowly the ways of record- and note-keeping were being diffused:

> *L'agenda de poche* (pocket-sized notebook).
> On the small- and average-scale crop farm, the *livre de caisse* and the *livre d'inventaire*

[15] L. Moll and E. Gayot, *Encyclopédie pratique de l'agriculteur* (13 vols, 1859–71), V, p. 663.

[16] Moll quoted by J. L. Antoine, 'Comptabilité', *Journal d'agriculture pratique* (1833), p. 47.

> (inventory book) … might be sufficient, but we think it necessary for the *cultivateur* to have a pocket-sized *agenda* too, in which he will record – as the facts take place – his sales, purchases, worker-using days, horse-using days, fertiliser and seed quantities used, and so on. For him, this *agenda* will be a precious memorandum.[17]

Writers of treaties and manuals made every effort to interest the female members of the farm household in record keeping. Were women not better qualified than men to carry out tasks requiring patience and application? Eighteenth-century manuals of domestic economy promoted this idea, urging housewives to look for the moments in the day that called for writing: keeping registers, checking accounts, establishing inventories. As stressed by Aurélie Chatenet, the authors of domestic economy books did not hesitate to be managerial, like for example the Countess of Liancourt, who conceived, for the attention of city-dwelling youth, a calendar of the documentary tasks that needed to be performed in the everyday management of the household. 'Once a week, meeting with the steward for checking the accounts. Every morning, reading through the expense sheets of the previous day. Fortnightly, our business people and I will assemble. Everything must be written down in a register'.[18] Instructions of the same nature could also be found, a century and a half later, in books designed for the wives of *agriculteurs* and *cultivateurs*. Initially aimed at educated and well-off women, these books would, over time, target a larger readership[19] anticipating and furthering agricultural household teaching, which was originally set up by religious houses in the second half of the nineteenth century and then furthered by the French state through the law of 2 August 1918 on seasonal teaching and post-school courses. The agricultural unions made their own contribution. In 1925, the *Union du Sud-Est des syndicats agricoles* deemed it necessary to launch a journal specifically designed for women, *Femme à la campagne*, as a supplement to the almanac it had been editing for its members since 1892. Since the beginning of the century, it had also been publishing an agricultural household teaching manual, edited by P. de Monicault, an agricultural engineer who had attended the courses of the *Institut National Agronomique*.

Overall, these books had greater ambitions: while conduct books confined women's authority to the household,[20] these books emancipated women by stating that 'the duty of a woman who lives in the country is to take part in managing the farm'.[21] These books aimed to educate women in all sectors of agriculture in the activities for which they were likely to be responsible (the poultry, dairy, pigsty, garden, and orchard) and, in the main arena of household economy on farms, for maintaining accounts.

It is here that one can find instructions similar to those mentioned above. Thus it is not surprising to observe that the female readers of *La maison rustique des dames* were urged to keep a *carnet* (notebook) so as to prepare for *livres comptables* (account books):

[17] E. Chancin and R. Dumont, *Le Larousse agricole* (2 vols, 1921), I, p. 380.

[18] A. Chatenet, 'La femme, maîtresse de maison? Rôle et place des femmes dans les ouvrages d'économie domestique au XVIIIème siècle', *Histoire, économie & société* 2009/4 (2009), p. 29.

[19] The two volumes of the *Maison rustique des dames* sold for 7F 75 in 1868, while the *Economie domestique*, a more popular manual funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, cost 1F 25.

[20] Chatenet, 'La femme', p. 21.

[21] C. E. Mille-Robinet, *Maison rustique des dames* (first edn, 1845, 9th edn, 1873), p. 1.

> One must always carry a *carnet*, so that all the receipts and expenses, and even all the notes beyond the scope of accounting, can be provisionally jotted down. This book is a kind of memento; each article is written on the page of the day concerned, and crossed out once it has been recorded in other books.[22]

In *La fortune de la fermière*, we learn that the practice had become an everyday feature of life:

> Just content yourselves with writing down in your *agenda de bureau* [desk notebook] the incidental expenses of the household, as well as your receipts, for because of credit sales you are obliged to do that so as to avoid mistakes. As soon as they have paid their debts, tick off the names of your customers and that way you will be sure not to forget anything.[23]

But, given the sarcastic tone used by the author, one guesses that such habits had still to be perfected. Were female farmers able to indicate the cost basis of the eggs they sold or the profits they made from their dairy operations? As the moralist saw it, leafing through the pages of one's *mémorial* was not the safest way of drawing up such statements of accounts. Hence the recommendations made to female farmers to adopt more efficient methods, including taking inventories and keeping *livres de caisse*. According to Arnould, this method was accessible to all and he insisted that a mere school notebook to keep records in would do the trick.

With such examples, it is clear that practising true accounting, in the sense of 'analytical, investigative, rational accounting',[24] required the underpinning of a quite comprehensive writing system, in which day-to-day notes were worked up into drafts. Contrary to what the manuals claimed, the tools used toward this end were certainly not the preserve of the 'lowest' class of the peasantry. In effect, many prefaces to manuals betrayed practices far removed from the authors' hopes and it can be assumed that enrolling into this writing process the top section of the peasantry was as important as enrolling its most modest section. In addition, the lack of agricultural accounting on large demesnes was regularly discussed in articles in the *Journal d'agriculture pratique*, which was edited by the *Librairie agricole de la Maison Rustique* bookshop. In this respect, it was also deplored that state-run teaching establishments did not always set an example.

(b) Accounts or work chronicles?

The first accounting lesson in the *Journal d'agriculture pratique* of 1833 contains a puzzling footnote: 'Here the word *Journal* is not understood in the sense it conveys in double-entry accounting. It is the detailed account, day after day, of the totality of work and operations of the farm'.[25] This footnote is interesting in that it draws to the centre what in the definitions presented so far stands at the margin. In effect, if writing is necessary to counting, not all the elements of information recorded had the calculation of profits as their goal. Discreetly, but significantly, authors encouraged the collection of other information. In this way, in his

[22] Ibid., p. 24.

[23] C. Arnould, *Fortune de la fermière. Occupations féminines à la campagne* (1918), p. 9.

[24] Tagliabue (1873), quoted in M. L. Rossi, 'Une comptabilité industrielle. l'entreprise agricole du Pô à l'Arno (1826 à 1922)', http://odlv.free.fr/jhcm/papiers/rossi.pdf (2007), p. 1.

[25] Antoine, 'Comptabilité', p. 47.

Douze mois (1860), Borie invited the writers to record all the varied information they must remember. As for *L'Encyclopédie pratique*, it suggested using the *journal* to keep track of a range of technical 'instructive facts': 'commodity deliveries, animal coverings, calvings, incubations, and so on'.[26] In the entry for 'Agriculteur', the 1921 *Larousse Agricole* encyclopaedia portrays a farmer doing his rounds with a notebook in his pocket, so as to 'take numerous individual notes: working hours, animal feed intake, fertiliser quantities, seeds, harvests, and so on'.[27]

These authors said little about the purpose of recording such facts. What was the use of remembering the days of serving, calving, sowing, harvesting or livestock feed intake if one does not go back through the information recorded to understand them? Some discussion can be found in *La maison rustique des dames* of the 'mémoire-grenier' ('memory-storehouse'), as suggestively described by Christian Bromberger and Anne-Hélène Dufour.[28] In the same way, alongside the use of a *carnet-agenda*, Cora-Elisabeth Millet-Robinet recommended the use of a *livre de notes* (literally a note-book) and gave the following piece of advice:

> One writes in it [the *livre de notes*] the various notes that may be useful to remember, for example the day when a beast gives birth, the number and sex of the newborns, and so on. On this same book, certain work can also be recorded daily, whose date one wants to remember, for example, certain sowing dates, so as to know whether the sowing operations took place at the appropriate time and to benefit from the experience when other sowing operations will take place. In a way, one makes – in this book – a very concise account of the events of the day. It is very easy to refer to these notes which regard a spate of things the memory cannot cope with.[29]

When Pierre Euryale Cazeaux made his plea for the creation of an agricultural institute, he even supposed that the observations made by women might be useful to science:

> There are few farms on which it is impossible to create – with the help of housewives showing great willingness – most interesting registers by consigning therein the daily events with regard to weather, vegetation or livestock. Now it is by collecting a large number of such registers kept at various places that scholars will be able to verify or extend the natural laws already known. It is by studying these that they will penetrate the mysteries of laws yet unknown.[30]

In order to spread a taste for record keeping, a few authors added illustrative examples to show how the notes they envisaged would be kept. Thus J. L. Antoine, a teacher at the Roville Institute, who after using the forum of the *Journal pratique d'agriculture* to publish his accounting course in 1833, reproduced it in *La maison rustique du XIXe siècle* (then managed by M. Malepeyre the elder) in 1836.[31] Nearly 200 pages of text deal with demesne

[26] Moll and Gayot, *Encyclopédie pratique,* V, p. 663.

[27] Chancrin and Dumont, *Larousse agricole*, p. 34.

[28] Ch. Bromberger, M. H. Dufour, 'Du bon usage du temps. L'agenda agricole d'un ouvrier-varois en 1942', *Provence Historique* 33 (1983), pp. 119–44.

[29] Millet-Robinet, *Maison rustique* (1873 edn), p. 28.

[30] P. E. Cazeaux, *Du rôle des femmes dans l'agriculture. Esquisse d'un institut rural féminin* (1869), p. 31.

[31] J. L. Antoine, 'Comptabilité agricole', in M. Malepeyre aîné (ed.), *Maison rustique du XIXe siècle* (1836), IV, pp. 526–49.

administration, among which 50 or so relate to administrative management; and eight or so to the management of the workforce. A few differences can be observed between the two versions, one of which is worth noting since it is related to *journal* keeping. In 1836 Antoine turned his back on established models (notably those which the Director of the Roville Institute, C. J. A. Mathieu de Dombasle, had advocated in his first issue of the *Annales* in 1824, and which owed a great deal to the *Principes raisonnés d'agriculture*, written by the equally famous German agronomist A. Thaer). Thaer had recommended that farmers set up tables, which he deemed to be more convenient than a *journal*. He also recommended other recording techniques. 'Hang on the wall a blackboard with vertical and horizontal lines designed not to be erased, so as to jot down daily with a piece of chalk the work done and the number of workers involved'.[32] Antoine called for detail and freedom in writing. Whether he changed his views out of experience, or to distance himself from Dombasle, is not clear, but Thaer and Dombasle both had a taste for synthesis and the synoptic view, gathering together sizeable amounts of information. They devised specimen documents, some of which were printed in an annex of the *Annales de Roville*, to assist the management of most aspects of farmwork (management of grain and fertiliser stocks, workers' food consumption, horses' work, and so on). By contrast, concerning *journal* keeping, Antoine called for detail and freedom in writing, which – as he himself indicated – made it a specific type of document: '*journal* writing is not subjected to any particular form or to any obligatory mechanism. *For me, this principle seems to be so important that I consider it as the accountant's emancipation* [italics in the original]'. The writing would be developed, 'without being prolix; and concise, without being dry'.[33]

These observations are illustrated by three pages of examples, which teem with work-related comments. In the entry for 'Ferme', one can read:

> Animals' consumption has not changed. Six kilos of rye flour must nonetheless be added in for sick bullocks. Marie, the cook, has told me about the state of eggs hatched in February. There were seven dozens of them, four of which were consumed by the household. The remaining three dozens cannot be sold because Lent is approaching. The cows give two litres of milk more a day than in the previous month, which makes 19 litres a day.'[34]

Notes give information about daily work:

> Ploughing and Harrowing of the *Pré Battu*, for oats, made by Bradier, Denis and Faraud; at the *Champ de la Fontaine*, for potatoes, Philippe. Pierre carted manure to the wheat of the *Haut-Gravier*. This wheat is languishing.

They give information about the decisions made too:

> I was carting manure to the wheat of the *Haut-Gravier*, noting that the horses and the cart were leaving deep tracks in the ground, I decided to have the cart unloaded by the path and to have the manure taken from there to the field on handbarrows.[35]

[32] A. Thaer, *Principes raisonnés d'agriculture*, Paris (1811, sec. edn, 1831), p. 275.
[33] Antoine, 'Comptabilité agricole', p. 531.
[34] Ibid., p. 533.
[35] Ibid.

The only guideline provided by Antoine was the reference to the presence at the top of the page of the *journal* to a note on the 'climatic physiognomy of the day', which the writer was to reproduce as follows: 'Temp. morn. +2; noon +7; eve. +3. Light and sunny intervals, N.E. wind.'[36]

(c) Writing templates

To be successful, writing-related instructions required some education (we shall address this point in the following section) as well as a few tools. In this respect, stationers and booksellers in the nineteenth century furthered the vogue of accounting by providing specialised media. What the *Maison rustique* bookshop provided gives a good overview of the printed and blank books available to farmers in the second half of the century. Its catalogue went from the *Registre-Mémorial de l'agriculteur* selling at 3 Francs, which gathered together all the tables necessary to keep a record of the farm, to the *Agenda de poche du cultivateur* at 1F 50, a small notebook to be put together with all the common *agendas,* to various *cahiers quadrillés* (squared-paper notebooks) at 1F 25. There was then the annual edition of a 'fine *almanach-calendrier* richly printed by chromolithography that contains overleaf the information indispensable to *cultivateurs*, such as the work to be required of teams and of day labourers, weight of commodities, animal yields, and so on', retailing for 2 Francs.[37]

Several authors of manuals mentioned the need for such documents. Among them, the agronomist Moll, who referred to the practices across the Rhine:

> In Germany they have small notebooks of that type that contain the various registers with patterned lines and column heads. I am sure that their introduction into France would have a beneficial influence on agriculture, for from the day *cultivateurs* are willing to become aware of their operations and drive everything toward the final objective of cropping, namely, money, they will better understand their own interests and fend off routine when detrimental to them.[38]

Three decades later, Moll signalled a few advances in this respect:

> On certain farms, notably in the rural establishments of the Crown, we were pleased to see in replacement of the *brouillard* a daily-report sheet, lithographed in advance, which, at a place accessible to all the agents of the farms and without their losing much time, makes it possible for them to take notes of all the events as they occur during their working hours with regard to consumption, work, grain flailing, deliveries of all types, and so on, notes which the accountant has then simply to add up at will.[39]

Hence we can see that farmers were strongly recommended to keep daily records. How was the demand for suitable books in which to keep these records met, and how, in turn, did they influence the way that records themselves were kept?

Specialists in almanac literature rightly remind us that the practice of daily writing is a very old indeed, and benefited from the diffusion of calendars as early as the sixteenth century.

[36] Ibid., p. 530.

[37] 'Catalogue de la Libraire agricole de la Maison Rustique', in F. Bastian, *Les abeilles. Traité théorique et pratique d'apiculture rationnelle* (1868), pp. 12–36.

[38] Moll quoted by Antoine, 'Comptabilité', p. 47.

[39] Moll and Gayot, *Encyclopédie pratique*, p. 663.

About 1550, that is, when printing began to gather momentum, 'an entirely revised and updated layout of the calendar answered the desire to jot down notes onto it. The sheets of the calendar were folded down to quarto size and bound, thanks to the reorganisation of the columns.'[40] Following the *livres d'heures* (books of hours), the *SchreibKalender* published in Germany about that time contained spaces for notes opposite the calendar page. Later on, these spaces disappeared, being replaced by 'stories' designed for education and entertainment.[41] It seems to have been only in the nineteenth century that note recording regained some vigour with the use of the fashionable *agenda*:

> The First Empire, with its precise, methodical turn of mind, seems to have had a decisive influence on the development of this annual *recueil*, which after all is no more than an account book, despite the fact that apparently some people are trying to turn it into a kind of *livre de raison* for individual notes and thoughts.[42]

Then, unions, created in 1884, began to play a key role. The *Union Beaujolaise* decided in 1890 to launch its own almanac and to give copies for free to its members. In 1892, the nascent and soon powerful *Union du Sud-est des syndicats agricoles* took over the publishing of this almanac, whose circulation reached 20,000 the following year and which sold at 10 centimes each.[43] This almanac quickly had a very large readership, extending beyond the district limits of the *Union du Sud-Est des syndicats agricoles*, selling 100,000 in 1897, twice as many in 1900, and 250,000 in 1939.[44]

Examination of the almanacs valued within the nineteenth-century agricultural sphere, such as Mathieu de la Drôme's triple almanac, the *Cultivateur français*, the *Almanach de l'Union du Sud-Est des syndicats agricoles*, the *Conteur Almanach Amusant* and others, reveals that certain publishers provided a small space for short notes, in general within the weather forecast section, recommending that readers confirm or reject the accuracy of the forecast with their own observations. (For an illustration of this genre, see Figure 2.) In his book on the almanac, *Le Messager Boîteux*, Michel Vernus states that, between 1879 and 1885, a Haut-Jura Peasant jotted down in his almanacs – next to the calendar – weather indications and some agricultural work notes. This peasant slipped into an issue of the *Nouveau Conteur, Almanach Amusant* a hand-written sheet of paper on which he had copied the weather forecast included in *Mathieu de la Drôme's* almanac for 1879. Arguably, his aim was to compare the forecasts between the two almanacs.[45] The famous Mathieu de la Drôme used this practice to his own advantage, seeing to it that his faithful readers became his informants and in that way – thanks to their notes – took part in the foundation of a true science of meteorology.

[40] H. J. Lüsebrinck, Y.-G. Mix, J.-Y. Mollier and P. Sorel (eds), *Les lectures du peuple en Europe et dans les Amériques* (2003), p. 17.

[41] H. Meise, 'Image de soi-même et de l'autre: Rapports interculturels et stratégie du récit dans les Geschichtskalender de langue allemande au XVIIè siècle', in Lüsebrinck, Mix, Mollier and Sorel (eds), *Les lectures* (2003), pp. 251–7.

[42] J. Grand-Carteret, *Les almanachs français (1600–1895)* (1896), p. lxx.

[43] C. Silvestre, *Monographie de l'Union du Sud-Est des syndicats agricoles* (1894), pp. 391, 393.

[44] J. Vercherand, *Un siècle de syndicalisme agricole. La vie locale et nationale à travers le cas du département de la Loire* (1994).

[45] M. Vernus, *Pourquoi le messager boitait-il ? Ou l'histoire d'un almanach fameux* (2003), p. 67.

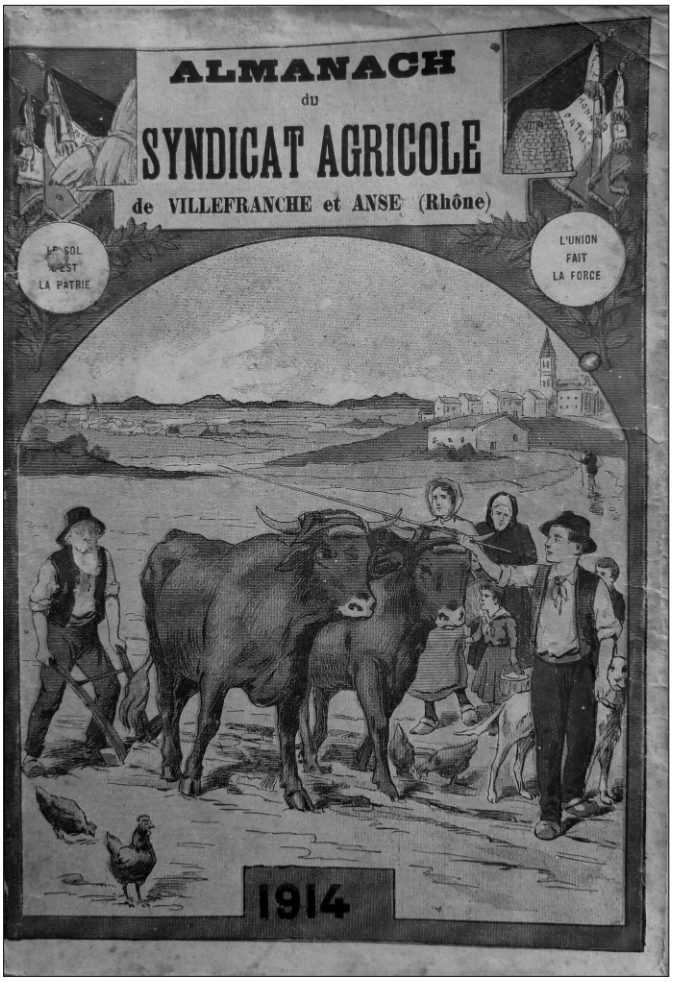


FIGURE 2. The *Villefranche et Anse* Union Almanac, 1914.

In France, *agendas* multiplied in the first half of the twentieth century. At that time, a large number of agricultural organisations began to publish them: unions, cooperatives, agricultural newspapers, banks and credit unions. Competing on the market, each of these operators boasted about their assets: expert knowledge of agriculture, scientific reliability, or the encyclopaedic character of the knowledge diffused, the quality of illustrations, the luxury or the simplicity of the medium, and sometimes the importance of the spaces devoted to individual notes. Two different types of *agenda* were available: the *agenda-calendrier* and the *agenda-almanach*. As the name indicates, the former is essentially a kind of calendar, to which a few pages of practical information (a directory of agricultural organisations, tables of weights and measures, and so on) and advertisements were added. The *agenda-almanach* contains a bigger reference section, which reveals a desire to popularise the knowledge available.[46] The

[46] L. Andriès, 'Les livres de savoir pratique dans la France des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles', in R. Chartier and H.-J. Lüsebrink, *Colportage et lecture populaire. Imprimés de large circulation en Europe, XVI-XIXe siècles* (1996), pp. 173–81.

Lyon bookseller Silvestre's *agenda-almanachs* are the epitome of this documentary form. They provided for farmers in the various branches of agriculture – the *agriculteur* (farmer), *viticulteur* (winegrower), *horticulteur* (horticulturalist), *ménagère agricole* (the farmer's wife) – a variety of knowledge useful to their agricultural practice, from the principles of fertiliser use and animal feeding, to a rural law digest and a short guide to algebra and basic arithmetic. This form of *agenda*, 'a small, practical, portable encyclopaedia',[47] appealed to the writers of manuals. Thus, the agricultural household economy book, *Pour préparer le bonheur de votre foyer*, republished regularly in the inter-war years, tells us that 'Publisher Silvestre's *agenda* is all that one could wish for'.[48]

These documents influenced the process of writing far more than the advice from manuals. Sometimes they led writing toward figures thanks to the provision of narrow-columned tables, sometimes they allowed it to conquer blank spaces. The desire to guide is evidenced by numerous details in the layout: this skilfully manages to reconcile accounts with chronicles. The top of the page often has lines drawn for note taking and the bottom of the page presents a two-column 'receipts and expenses' table. An individual observations box adjoins the weather forecast and astronomical data (sunrise/sunset; moonrise/moonset) sections, with very clear instructions: the key is to measure air pressure and temperature both in the morning and in the evening and to record the rain, the state of the sky and the prevailing wind. In the end-of-the-month pages space was provided to encourage the practice of making a statement of accounts (statement of the receipts and expenses of the month and notes to be kept).

II

How was the regular practice of writing encouraged if not by example? This second section describes the ways in which the French peasant was educated to acquire the understanding and skills necessary for a rational approach to farming. As we shall show, writing practices were inculcated in a top-down fashion. First, agricultural elites were led to writing through the vocational training scheme designed for them. Next, most of the peasantry were introduced to it through primary vocational training schools (farm schools), rural primary schools and adult training schemes.

(a) Frame of mind and writing devices

> One of the essential conditions for a successful [agricultural] enterprise is the frame of mind, as it were, that makes a man more or less apt to perform the various operations that can be referred to as farm administration. M. de Gasparin said, 'The worst cropping system, if well-run, is worth a hundred times as much as the best cropping system, if badly run'.[49]

These lines illustrate the philosophy of the pioneer teachers of well-off landowners' sons. The

[47] J. A. Barral, *Le Bon fermier. Aide-mémoire du cultivateur* (sec. edn, 1861), p. viii.

[48] Y. Trouard Riolle, *Pour préparer le bonheur de votre foyer* (first edn, 1932, 1940), p. 75.

[49] C. J. A. Mathieu de Dombasle, *Annales agricoles de Roville ou Mélanges d'agriculture, d'économie rurale et de législation agricole* (1832), pp. 88–9.

same philosophy was also used as a basis for the creation of vocational training schools in 1848.

In 1826, in eastern France, the Roville Institute welcomed 30 students or so, who wanted to learn how to run an agricultural enterprise. Its head, C. J. A. Mathieu de Dombasle, was opposed to the idea of opening a school on the edges of the capital city, as was suggested by his subscribers. He did not intend to give lectures to numerous students. Rather, he wanted to train true agricultural managers, employing the tutorial model. Agricultural practice held a central place within the teaching delivered at Roville. It was through the observation of farm work that students acquired the skills deemed essential to their careers as demesne managers, but also, generally speaking, for the improvement of agriculture. Considering that the scientific knowledge available was far from complete, Dombasle, in line with Thaer's reflections on rational agriculture, invited his students to engage in an 'intellectual practice'. This was grounded in the acquisition of facts and an understanding of the context in which they were gathered.

Collecting information required sustained writing. In the first issue of the *Annales de Roville* in 1824, de Dombasle offered his views on how to keep records and presented in an annex the numerous tables he had elaborated toward this end. Twenty three auxiliary books to be kept by farmers encompassed the totality of the operations performed at the Institute. He also described his educational method, which hinged on a kind of ritual:

> Every evening, the students attend the *Ordre* [order], in which all the operations of the day are written down, at the dictation of the managers who have had them performed. The secretary elected by the students themselves is in charge of jotting down every day in a register kept in their meeting room the details of the operations performed on the farm.[50]

This scheme, from the work done and the observations conducted, allowed the students to ask questions of their master. In this fashion they became acquainted 'with the practice as much as with the theory of agricultural art'.[51] Besides, de Dombasle tells us that the numerous trials conducted at his institute required note taking, a process carried out under his supervision.

During the Second Republic (decree of 3 October 1848), the vocational training outlined in the *Annales agricoles de Roville*, which was written in a style to appeal to a wide readership,[52] inspired the project to provide training more widely. Two graduates of the Roville institute became heads of the newly created establishments. Examining their programmes, one discovers that 'the lawmakers included in the school time-tables half an hour for "consigning things to writing"'. They even went so far as to keep the name, *l'Ordre*, as a tribute to its instigator.

Later, in the successive training formulas proposed in both state-run and private agricultural education (whether distance courses or seasonal teaching), writing templates became more explicit, modelling the creation of work chronicles and their educational uses. A circular issued

[50] C. J. A. Mathieu de Dombasle, 'De l'agriculture moderne', in Y. Maurin, 'L'Institut de Roville', *Annales d'histoire des enseignements agricoles* (1824, repr., 1987), no. 2, pp. 17–29.

[51] Mathieu de Dombasle, *Annales agricoles de Roville* (1828), p. 115.

[52] F. Knittel, 'Mathieu de Dombasle. Agronomie et innovation, 1750–1850' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Nancy II, 2007).

on 25 August 1918 stated, for example, that a farm work *agenda* and an estate management ledger should be kept in state-run secondary school establishments:

> The *agenda des travaux* [farm work diary] is the book in which the student writes down each day the types of work in which he took part and adds his observations about the crops, cowshed, and garden. The *livre d'exploitation* [estate management ledger] is a compendium in which the student summarises each week – with the help of his personal observations and the technical information that he was able to procure – all of the events relating to running the estate.[53]

An almost identical writing plan was proposed by the providers of private agricultural education. The peasants who enrolled on correspondence courses had to keep a 'cahier de ferme' (farm notebook) in line with the following instructions:

> On the left-hand page, which is split into two columns, the young people shall write down what they see each day: observations on a crop or some operation in the fields will be written in four words in the first column. All ancillary work, work having to do more with the farm than with cultivation, will be written in the second column. Here they shall content themselves with reading in the big book of practice; they will not add comments. However, on the right-hand page, opposite this dry chronicle, they will write down their observations and what they learn there from once a week.[54]

Then there is the *cahier d'exploitation* or business ledger, put at the centre of the teaching methods used by the *Maisons Familiales Rurales* (Rural Family Homes) and which the learners were to fill in once a week with the help of a 'study plan'.[55]

The idea that farmers should put pen to paper to build up a daily record of their own was therefore a commonplace of agricultural education in France from the early nineteenth century onwards. In this respect, however, one should not overstate the role of vocational training, whether state-run or private.[56] Writing templates certainly shaped the mind. They allowed for measurement and calculation as well as the management of events, a key capacity in a dynamic environment, in which living things, plants and animals have their own rhythms of growth. Little by little, the idea developed that daily record keeping was necessary to the proper running of a farm, an idea which the *agromanes* circulated amongst the peasantry.

[53] E. Chancrin, *L'enseignement dans les Ecoles Pratiques d'agriculture* (unpubl. report, 1933), p. 24. E. Chancrin was the inspector general of agriculture, responsible for agricultural education.

[54] M. Dubruel, 'Les études agricoles par correspondance', *Annales d'histoire des enseignements agricoles* 4–5 (1928, repr. 1992), p. 74.

[55] D. Chartier, *A l'aube des formations par alternance* (1986).

[56] It must be noted that few farmers attended vocational training courses. Thus, according to the 1959 general agricultural census, 96.7% of the farmers had received no technical training at all. From this situation, however, one should not leap to the conclusion that vocational training did not influence the farming sphere: first, since many former students became teachers or popularisers, the learning methods they had acquired in vocational training establishments spread rapidly; second, the practices taught in these establishments symbolically prevailed over customary practices.

(b) Administrating agromanes

As has been widely observed, the promotion of 'practical, scientific' agriculture owed much to the socio-political context of the 1830 Revolution, which ousted the nobility from power and encouraged them to return to the land. Eager to secure more value from their estates and to try out the new ideas diffused in the scientific and propagandist literature, large landowners, both nobles and city-dwelling bourgeois, and innovative *cultivateurs*, referred to as *agromanes*, acted as a 'catalyst for and diffuser of modern agriculture'.[57] By doing so, they also reinforced their social and political basis in the country.[58]

What image did *agromanes* convey of their management techniques? To know more about this, it is interesting to consider the description of the *agromane* in the *Maison Rustique du 19ème siècle*. Progress, far from being the preserve of the nobility (who, when judged by the number of their subscriptions to agricultural societies and shows in various French regions, can have had little influence over innovation), can be attributed to 'a practical-knowledge elite which is able to make demesnes productive', as has recently been stressed by Nadine Vivier.[59] Thus, the landowner interested in making his demesne farm yield a profit was distinguished by his assiduous, hands-on style of management. He frequently went into his fields in order to inspect both animals and workforce and did not hesitate to put his shoulder to the wheel. As recalled by the author of the 'demesne administration' section of the *Maison rustique*, his personal supervision could only be profitable: '*l'œil du maître engraisse les bestiaux*' (the eye of the master fattens the beasts), as the saying went.[60] Monitoring and control were the essential qualities of the administrator. We soon understand, however, that the master was not only attentive to his crops, animals and personnel, he also pored over the numerous registers he or his employees were keeping. When it came to inspecting real estate, 'everywhere he records in a special notebook'[61] his observations and the information he deems necessary. Once home, he makes, according to *his notes*, the decisions that were necessary for settings things straight and for restoring order. 'He plans out all the work, repairs and improvements to be carried out'.[62] When selecting the animals destined for fattening or breeding, the administrator refers to the register containing the animals' history:

> when the animal was born, its father, mother and other antecedents, its sex, the characteristics displayed at various stages of its life, its characteristics with regard to height, weight, shape, meat-product quantity and quality, fast or slow growth, ability to fatten, fertility, condition and ability to proliferate.[63]

He also recommended giving written instructions to farm servants undertaking specific tasks:

[57] G. Désert and R. Specklin, 'Victoire sur la disette', in Agulhon *et al*. (eds), *Histoire de la France rurale,* III, p. 106.

[58] C. Gaboriaux, 'Entre innovations agronomiques et pratiques paysannes. La figure de l'agriculteur pratique au 19ème siècle', in C. Bonneuil, G. Denis, G. and J. L. Mayaud, *Sciences, chercheurs et agriculture. Pour une histoire de l'agronomie*, (2008), pp. 45–60.

[59] N. Vivier, 'Le rôle des élites françaises en faveur du progrès agricole au xixe siècle: Réalitiés et construction d'une image', in Vivier (ed.), *Elites et progrès agricole, XVIe–XXe siècle* (2009), p. 204.

[60] Malepeyre aîné (ed.), *Maison Rustique du XIXème*, 'Agriculture forestière, législation et administration', (4 vols in two, 1836 edn), IV, p. 488.

[61] Certain passages are italicised in the original text. The author obviously wanted to highlight all writing events and the tools available to the administrator.

[62] *Maison rustique*, p. 485.

[63] Ibid., p. 489.

> It is always profitable, when servants can read, that most orders (and often the totality of the instructions going along with them, especially when applied to a several-day period) be *written down* and given to the section head or to the most intelligent servant. Such orders and instructions must be written down in a clear, concise and precise way and, if need be, accompanied by a basic sketch indicating the scope, course and limits of the operation or by a graph representing it, so as to better convey the way it must be performed to be carried out properly.[64]

Is this utopian? Was it ever implemented in practice? Examining the *mémoires* awarded by district agricultural shows in the 1830s, one can find some foundation for this portrait of the *agromane*. The participants, often large landowners,[65] but sometimes simple peasants,[66] clearly possessed a mastery of their technical and economic data. Thus in the farm monographs produced on such occasions, they described in detail their soils, the tools used, the cropping systems, as well as the cost basis of their animal production and their outlets for livestock. In the same way, the farmers who were rewarded with prizes by the French Ministry of Agriculture were able to demonstrate that their farms were profitable. Among the elites emerging from vocational training, moreover, there were some of de Dombasle's followers, who in their turn put pen to paper to popularise the far-reaching scheme of agricultural improvement set up by their master.

(c) Reading, writing and counting to the benefit of agriculture

Although proposed by Condorset as early as 1792, the introduction of basic agricultural instruction into primary education had to wait until the period of the Second Empire. Established throughout France, rural primary schools represented an unprecedented opportunity for the popularisation of the knowledge thought indispensable for perfecting agriculture. At first, they fulfilled this task through practical teaching grounded in field experiments and practical agricultural work. Later, when the financial means and skills to do so were lacking,[67] they contented themselves by including some agricultural education within their teaching. Schoolmasters also organised courses for adults in order to reach a public interested in progress. After World War I, those specialising in agriculture, the 'agriculture masters', were also responsible for post-school agricultural courses aimed at teenagers of both sexes. They also set up schemes of itinerant teaching in order to be in contact with a larger number of farmers.

What role did these various types of teaching provided by schoolmasters and agricultural masters play in the diffusion of writing practices? Not surprisingly, the acquisition of accounting techniques was given priority. As an echo of the recommendations made by accounting manuals, schoolmasters were requested during the Second Empire to make

[64] Ibid., p. 497.

[65] J. M. Wiscart, 'Agronomes et fermes-modèles dans la Somme à la fin du Second Empire', *Ruralia* 9 (2001), pp. 63–87.

[66] Y. Lagadec, 'Petite exploitation et innovation agricole au XIX siècle: l'exemple d'Olivier Le Diouron, paysan trégorrois', *Histoire et Société Rurales* 17 (2002), pp. 187–217.

[67] Despite the efforts made during the Third Republic era to introduce rural schoolmasters to agriculture through courses delivered by agriculture teachers, who were the state employees more specifically charged with popularising agriculture in the French *départements*.

students keep *registres* or a *cahier-journal*. The most determined of them benefited from state financial assistance to organise the work of their classes as follows:

> Arise at 5 am; followed by field work from 5 to 8 am … then again after class from 4 to 7 pm; in the evening from 7 to 9 pm, meeting on the events of the day and on the notes to record in the account book, which must be updated by the students under their master's leadership.[68]

This orientation endured under the Third Republic. In the 1886 enquiry into agricultural and horticultural teaching, the state was concerned to know whether an accounting course was included in the programme. It asked three questions: 'Is there specific agricultural or horticultural teaching? What is the programme of such teaching? Does it include an accounting course?'[69] In the same way, when it came to giving school teaching an agricultural inflection, the commission in charge of reflecting on this issue made the following proposal: 'Why should abstract arithmetic exercises not be replaced by problems which would insist on agricultural operations? Why should we not teach children to keep a *livre-journal* by giving them examples of basic account-keeping?'[70] Half a century later, the same strategy was still being used in post-school agricultural and farm domestic economy courses, as well as in the popularisation carried out by the agricultural masters on the farms themselves.

The type of learning proposed, however, was not confined to writing. Schoolteachers also gave lessons covering various aspects of agriculture: soils, fertilisers, animal feeding, dairy hygiene, and so on. To render such teaching attractive, the idea of keeping work diaries informed school methods too. This is shown by this mock speech, which a teacher delivered to his class at the start of the new school year:[71]

> My primary objective is to draw your attention to all that happens every day before your very eyes and to develop in you a good sense of observation and an enquiring mind. I would like to have you follow the succession of agricultural work, operations and facts of all types that take place before you during a whole year. Toward this end, I would like to turn you into true little collaborators by giving you the responsibility of recording every day what is done in the fields, vineyards, gardens, cowsheds, and farmyards, so that you could tell me about it in here and I could go into the whys and the wherefores of the situation and give you the specific notions implied by each question. We will thus make on an informed basis a true agricultural calendar which, given the topicality and immediate application of the questions addressed, will no doubt hold your attention and enquiring minds in the long run.[72]

In this continual effort to train students in the discipline of writing, the school could rely on its personnel's qualities. Who was better placed than the schoolmaster to give students a taste

[68] 1852 teaching project, quoted by T. Charmasson, A. M. Lelorrain and Y. Ripa, *L'enseignement agricole et vétérinaire* (1992), p. LIX.

[69] Ibid., p. 114.

[70] C. Grignon, 'L'enseignement agricole et la domination symbolique de la paysannerie', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 1 (1975), p. 82.

[71] The book from which this excerpt is taken is a manual aimed at guiding schoolmasters in their agricultural teaching. The *calendrier annuel* (annual calendar) technique provides them with references to the contents to be addressed in class.

[72] H. de Lapparent, *Le Calendrier agricole expliqué à l'Ecole Rurale. Région du Nord* (1900), p. 4.

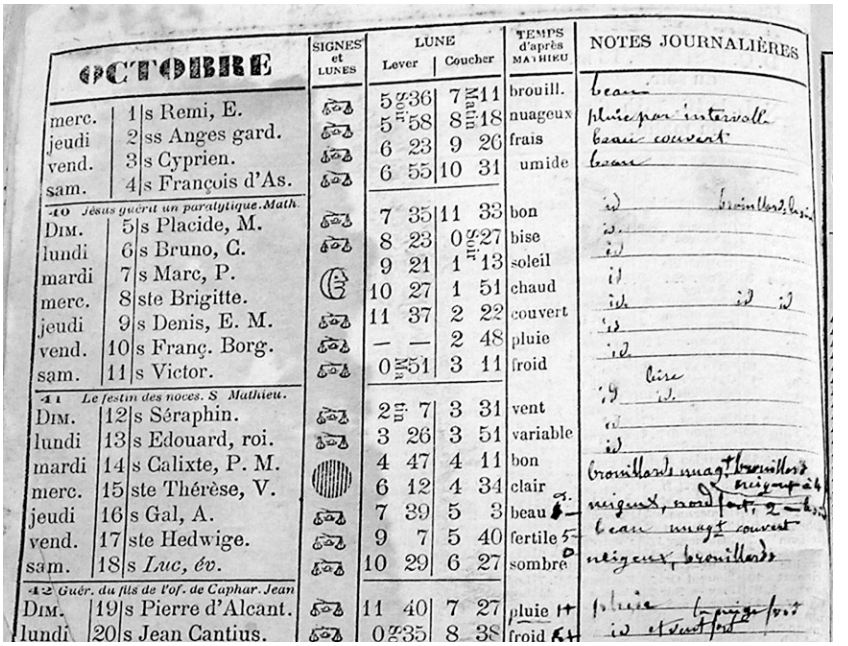


FIGURE 3. A farmer's notes in the *Nouveau conteur almanach amusant* for 1879.

for note taking? Did people not see this village notable walking in the country with a notebook in his pocket?

III

Defined in terms of technical and economic rationalisation, agrarian activities have required new forms of writing since the nineteenth century. Obviously, record keeping as such is not something new. All landowners knew how to manage their accounts. They were often accustomed to recording *novelletés* (novelties) in books. But these practices are those of scholars or the elite – individuals who have a cultural advantage over the people around them. As early as the fifteenth century, some farmers in the Ile-de-France decided to invest in education in order to maintain and pass on their social position.[73] The novel character of the practices I have described here lies in their philosophy, aimed at the calculation of profits, and in their ambition: ultimately, their aim is to drive the whole agricultural class to writing.

Throughout the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, well-organised and constant efforts were made to introduce into farming accounting management tools and media for recording work. As has been seen, this movement involved an organised body of resources: the production of manuals, writing tools, educational schemes, as well as the advocacy of these new writing supports by authority figures such as *agromanes*, schoolmasters and agricultural masters. The *agenda*, with its calendar form and its pocket size, thus became the favourite form of this approach. The use of an *agenda* showed that a farmer possessed a methodical approach. It demonstrated the 'enlightened' character of the farmers who adopted it (see Figure 3).

[73] J. M. Moriceau, *Les fermiers de l'Ile de France. XV-XVIIIe siècle* (1994), p. 210.

There remains an unexplored element in this account. How was the recording of agricultural work undertaken in practice, by individual farmers? As indicated at the beginning of this article, this question cannot be precisely answered, since the notebooks and almanacs with notes have largely disappeared. A few examples have survived and can be compared to the models displayed in manuals and almanacs. One could estimate the circulation of manuals and almanacs,[74] but it would be presumptuous to derive from this data an analysis of the reception of writing models. Those historians concerned with modern European merchants' knowledge of accounting meet the same kind of problem. They find it difficult to infer from the sale of manuals the practices actually employed by merchants.[75]

This investigation of the record keeping which was enjoined on farmers has made it possible to understand the writers' logic and the cognitive resources offered by *agendas*. Daily writing, which is rarely shirked, is the most interesting feature of the diary. It provides farmers with a synoptic overview of their work on different timescales: daily, weekly, monthly and yearly. In this way, they can grasp the thread of their activities and organise their time. My study of the characteristics of *agendas* (content, format and style) has also made it possible to understand how farmers took only what they wanted from the models (in Chartier's words, they paid them 'oblique attention'[76]), the ways they reformulated the normative frameworks that were suggested to or imposed on them. To shed light on these practices would require developments that lie beyond the scope of this article. I refer the reader to previous work, which highlights forms of writing appropriation.[77] This shows that, far from following a diffusionist approach, writing passed slowly down to the country through successive borrowings and reformulations. Confirmation of this is found in the writings of a Provençal journalist-peasant who was a fervent supporter of modern agriculture in the 1950s:

> The peasant has to become curious. He will never be too curious. He must always question nature and learn to question it. … All lands are valuable. One must know their value and seek it unrelentingly. It is only through trials and experiments that one can discover the value of lands. With a one-franc notebook and a pen, one must record notes and figures. It is not a question of counting to within about a gram or centimetre or of doing precise accounting. The key is to know the direction taken, whether bad or good.[78]

The full power of the one-franc notebook has yet to be fully revealed, but one may already see how integral elementary forms of record keeping were to the modernisation and conduct of French farming in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

[74] This point is still to be investigated since little research on French agricultural literature has been carried out. See Marion Duvigneau, 'La naissance de l'édition agricole en France au XIXème siècle: des Huzard à la "librairie agricole de la Maison Rustique"', in M. C. Amouretti and F. Sigaut (eds), *Traditions agronomiques européennes: élaboration et transmission depuis l'Antiquité* (1995), pp. 65–81.

[75] P. Jeannin, *Marchands d'Europe. Pratiques et savoirs à l'époque moderne* (2002).

[76] R. Chartier, *Lectures et lecteurs dans la France d'Ancien Régime* (1987). The author develops this thesis in relation to popular readings.

[77] N. Joly, 'Vaches et blés sur le papier. Socalisations à l'écrit du monde agricole', *Communication & Languages* 159 (2009), pp. 77–90 and, 'Tracing cows. Practical and administrative logics in tension' in D. Barton and U. Papen (eds) *The anthropology of writing: Understanding textually-mediated worlds* (2010), pp. 90–105.

[78] M. Artaud, *Le métier d'agriculteur et l'agriculture nouvelle* (1968, excerpt from a 1955 article), p. 39.

Agricultural depression in England, 1873–96: skills transfer and the 'Redeeming Scots'*

by E. H. Hunt and S. J. Pam

Abstract

This article considers whether the migration of Scottish farmers to East Anglia constitutes evidence that English agriculture failed to respond effectively to changed market conditions in the later nineteenth century. In received accounts of the agricultural depression, enlightened, adaptable, and hard-working Scottish farmers are contrasted with local agriculturalists who, until the Scots demonstrated that survival lay in producing milk for London, were allegedly reluctant to abandon cereal growing. Using detailed evidence from 39 Essex parishes, the magnitude and timing of farmer-migration, and the transfer of skills, are examined in the context of claims that English agriculture 'failed'.

Migration might transfer skills, as well as labour, bringing advantage to the host economy: refugee Huguenots with their textile expertise for example, and pioneer settlers who introduced British farm stock to new world agriculture. Likewise, skills might be transferred by internal migration, as with the dissemination of eighteenth-century mechanical know-how by men trained at Boulton and Watt's engineering 'academy'. Perhaps the best-known example of skills transfer within British agriculture, and the subject of the present investigation, is the migration of Scottish farmers to East Anglia, particularly to Essex, during the late nineteenth-century agricultural depression.

Essex farming, heavily dependent on cereals, was in difficulties after 1873, its plight exacerbated by the contrast with its recent prosperity. That lost prosperity is usually accounted among the obstacles to successful adaptation. The arable farming of the eastern counties had been renowned for its methodological elegance, the lavish application of capital and labour, and prodigious yields. So taken were they by the apparent success of 'high farming', it is said, so flattered by numerous laudatory reviews, that when imports rose and cereals no longer paid, farmers and landlords were disinclined to change their ways. They sought other explanations for distress, and their agricultural reputation diminished. Their revised image was of men who were stubborn, short-sighted, and prepared to let land lie derelict rather than adopt alternatives to cereals. One visitor to Essex noted, 'an obstinate traditionary rule requires that under any

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and every circumstance such and such farm shall grow nothing but corn'.[1] Another described Essex farmers embedded in 'a pattern of farming from which they were unable to extract themselves'.[2] With farmers allegedly 'stunned', landlords conspicuously failing to display the progressiveness and vigour of their eighteenth-century predecessors, and governments disinclined to temper market forces, the outlook appeared bleak.[3]

And then, as recorded in numerous scholarly, journalistic, and anecdotal accounts, revival began with the invigorating influx of migrant Scottish farmers. These incomers were enterprising and hard-working, as devoted to pasture as Essex men were to cereals. With their equipment and Ayrshire cows they moved into low-rent Essex farms, demonstrating to astonished locals how to survive, flourish even, despite still falling cereal prices.[4] This, at least, is the story often told. E. A. Pratt's account (1906) is among the more colourful: 'when things were absolutely at their worst', he wrote, 'they began to get better. Far away from Essex … lived a sturdy race of farmers … unspoilt by prosperity … thrifty and hard-working'.[5] The question implicit in a chapter-heading in P. A. Graham's *The revival of English agriculture* (1899), 'How derelict Essex was saved', was answered similarly and succinctly, 'a great number of Scottish farmers came'.[6] More recent accounts describe migrants 'coming to the rescue', making farming pay on 'run-down arable holdings that had bankrupted their predecessors', providing a 'principal' solution to depression, the 'greatest contribution to its limitation', and showing Essex farmers how 'even derelict clay holdings might be transformed'.[7] The key to this reversal of fortunes, was, of course, replacing cereal growing with milk for London, in which re-structuring migrant Scots were usually attributed the leading role.[8] Although dairying was reported to have 'everything in its favour', and Essex as 'the land of milk and money', local farmers 'hesitated' to exploit this opportunity, 'while Scottish farmers acted'.[9] E. G. Strutt, less hesitant than most Essex-men, was nevertheless fulsome in acknowledging the Scots as 'the chief cause

[1] P. J. Perry, 'An agricultural journalist on the 'Great Depression', Richard Jeffries', *J. British Studies* 9 (1969–70), p. 131. On this theme generally see E. H. Hunt and S. J. Pam, 'Managerial failure in late-Victorian Britain?: Land-use and English agriculture', *EcHR* 54 (2001), p. 240; id., 'Responding to agricultural depression, 1873–96: managerial success, entrepreneurial failure?', *AgHR* 50 (2002), pp. 225–7.

[2] H. Watt, 'Changes in agriculture in Thurrock from 1880–1965', *Panorama: J. Thurrock Local History Society* 9 (1965), p. 22.

[3] R. P. Stearns, 'Agricultural adaptation in England, 1875–1900', II, *Agricultural Hist.*, 6 (1932), p. 148.

[4] Some moved south in trains hired for their exclusive use, stopping at milking time *en route*. For an example, Kathleen Filby's grandfather, J. Gemmill, moved from Ayrshire in 1896. K. Filby, *The annals of the Young family during three generations of farming in Essex, 1896–1995* (1995), p. 1.

[5] E. A. Pratt, *The transition in agriculture* (1906), pp. 26–8.

[6] P. A. Graham, *The revival of English agriculture* (1899), p. 23.

[7] G. E. Mingay, *Rural life in Victorian England* (1977), p. 70; id. 'The Farmer', in E. J. T. Collins (ed.), *Agrarian history of England and Wales,* VII, *1850–1914* (2 vols, 2000), (i), p. 776; P. Horn, *The changing countryside in Victorian and Edwardian England and Wales* (1984), pp. 81–3; A. F. J. Brown, *Meagre harvest: the Essex farm-workers' struggle against poverty, 1750–1914* (1990), p. 79; J. A. Symon, *Scottish farming: past and present* (1959), pp. 195–6.

[8] Among many such comments see *VCH Essex,* II, (1907), p. 339; E. L. Smith, *Go East for a farm: a study of internal migration* (1932), p. 35; E. J. T. Collins, 'Rural and agricultural change' in Collins (ed.), *Agrarian history,* VII (i), p. 175; Graham, *Revival of English agriculture,* p. 23.

[9] J. Brown, *Agriculture in England: a study of farming, 1871–1947* (1987), p. 48. See also H. Levy, *Large and small holdings* (1911), p. 208; P. Wormell, *Essex farming, 1900–2000* (1999), p. 52.

of Essex becoming a dairy county'.[10] And while some diehards persevered with 'corn, corn, corn', many others followed the Scottish example.[11] Thus was 'derelict' Essex saved.

Such is the traditional story, as told at the time and since recounted by descendents of both the pioneer migrants, and of Scots who moved south later. In time the Essex-Scots flourished: by the mid-twentieth century they farmed somewhere approaching half of the county and were prominent in the local agricultural community.[12] But parts of the story are unclear and other parts, influenced by the self-evaluating accounts of migrant Scots, or their descendants, may have been exaggerated. One Essex-Scot, for example, Hew Watt, claimed his migrant grandparents were 'comparatively poor' when they moved to Thurrock in 1879, whereas other sources indicate that they arrived a decade later, on a hired train carrying their stock and equipment.[13] Among several issues to be addressed are the scale of the migration, when it began, where settlement occurred within Essex, which transferred skills proved the most valuable, and whether the Scots' contribution was as significant as is claimed. The prominent role of 'redeeming Scots' in received explanations of the recovery obviously reflects unfavourably on the performance of south-eastern agriculturalists as a whole and is often cited as evidence that English agriculture 'failed' at this time. It is in this context, in particular, that the 'redeeming Scots' episode merits serious investigation.

I

While the Scots' influence is mentioned in most accounts of late nineteenth-century farming, and extensively in evidence to the 1894–7 *Royal Commission on Agricultural Depression,* the only previous detailed analysis is E. L. Smith's, *Go East for a farm: a study of rural migration* (1932). This, like the present study, focused on migration into Essex, the destination of most migrant farmers and 'the typical example of agricultural depression'.[14] Smith's pioneering investigation was concerned with more theoretical aspects of rural migration than the present inquiry, and gave little attention to how, or whether, migration brought about agricultural revival. His main source was responses to a questionnaire, distributed in 1930–1, to approximately half of Essex farmers, which included questions on family history. More detailed, and probably more reliable, information can be gleaned from the census enumerators' books now available for the depression period. These list farmers' names and addresses, their age and place of birth, together with similar information for their wives, children, and other co-residents. These details have been assembled for all those whose place of birth was Scotland, Wales,

[10] Evidence to the *Royal Commission on the Agricultural Depression,* BPP, 1894, XVI (i), evidence, 13890.

[11] T. W. Fletcher, 'The Great Depression of English agriculture, 1873–96', *EcHR* 9 (1960–1), p. 431.

[12] Wormell, *Essex farming*, p. 52, and below, p. 86. Three out of four Essex delegates to the NFU in the 1960s, and half of the chairmen of the Colchester Farmers' Union between 1912 and 1998, were of Scottish descent.

[13] The hired train was shared with one other Scottish family. Watt, 'Changes in agriculture', pp. 22–3; E. J. T. Collins, *A history of the Orsett Estate, 1873–1914* (1978), p. 43; id., 'The Great Agricultural Depression in south Essex' *Panorama: J. Thurrock Local Hist. Soc.,* 9 (1965), p. 17; Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading (hereafter MERL), ESS 3.

[14] Collins, 'Rural and agricultural change', p. 162; P. J. Perry, *British farming in the Great Depression, 1870–1914* (1974), p. 99.

TABLE 1. Parish groupings employed in the study (39 parishes).

Group	*Parishes*	*Characteristics*
1	Ingrave, Mountnessing, Margaretting, Ingatestone, Shenfield	heavy London clay, near to railway
2	Downham, Purleigh, Laindon, West Horndon, Ramsden Bellhouse, Cold Norton	heavy London clay, near to railway by late 1880s
3	Steeple, East Hanningfield, Gt. Wigborough, St Lawrence, Layer Breton	heavy London clay, poor access to railway
4	Takeley, Steeple Bumstead, Gt Canfield, Rayne, Stambourne	boulder clay, near to railway
5	Good Easter, Pleshey, White Roding, High Easter, Aythorpe Roding	boulder clay, poor access to railway
6	Frating, Lawford, Bradfield, Little Bromley	medium soil (Tendring Hundred), near to railway
7	Lamarsh, Hatfield Peverel, Stanway, Southchurch, Broomfield	light soil, near to railway
8	Danbury, Gt. Stambridge, Gt. Wakering, Woodham Walter	light soil, poor access to railway

Note: see Map 1 for the location of these groups.

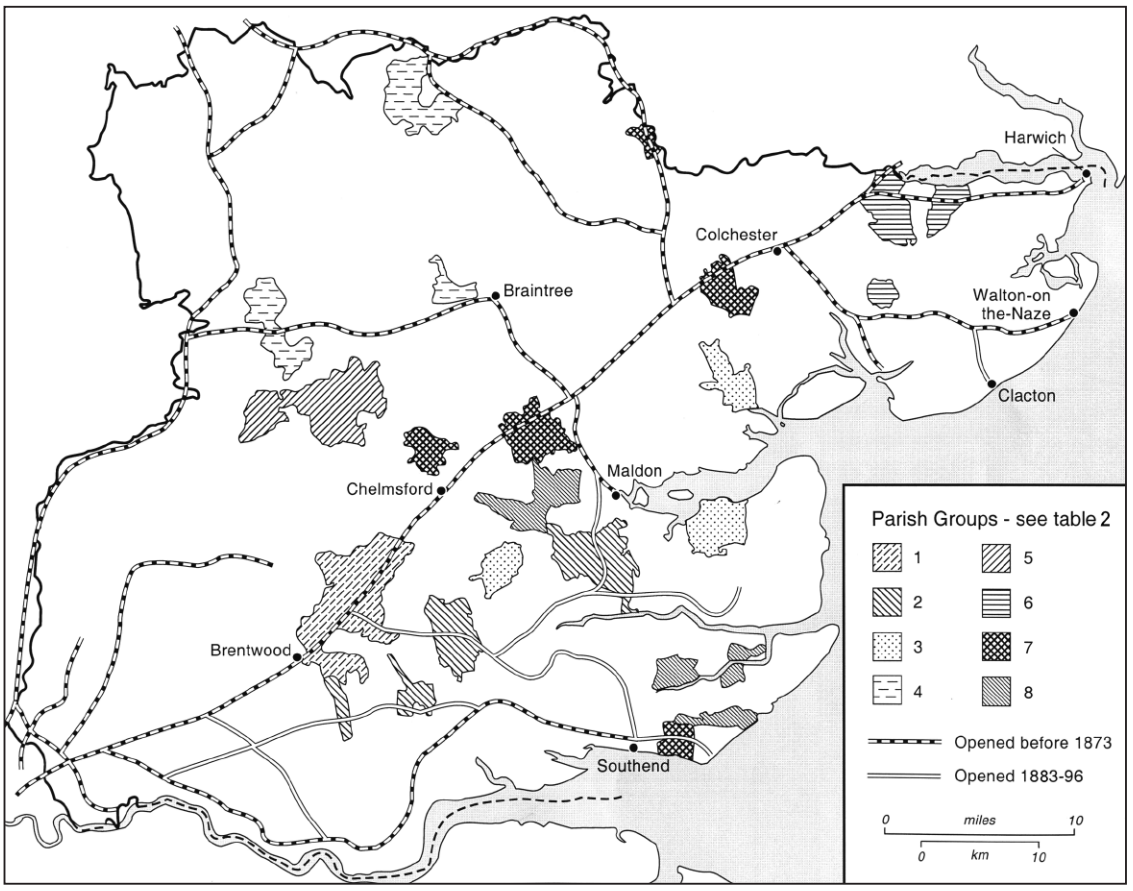
or the more-remote English counties. Time, and budgetary constraints, precluded collecting information from every Essex parish. Accordingly, information has been compiled for the same 39 parishes, containing over 20 per cent of Essex farms, investigated in our earlier analysis of changing land-use (Table 1).[15] Supplementary evidence has been extracted for various dates from *Kelly's Directory*, which lists farmers' names and addresses (or approximate location), but little other information.[16]

For 1901, by which time a tentative recovery had begun, the census enumerators' books for the 39 parishes under investigation list just 22 Scottish-born farmers, not much more than one in every 40 farmers.[17] More Scots moved to Essex than to any other county, but on the evidence

[15] For more details see S. J. Pam, 'Essex agriculture: landowners' and farmers' responses to economic change, *c*.1850–1914' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of London, 2004), ch. 5. Identifying Scots among farmers listed in *Kelly's* and the *Post Office Directories* was greatly assisted by the specialist knowledge of the late F. E. Kenchington, sometime lecturer at The Essex Institute of Agriculture, Writtle, and Mrs Audrey Lyon, an Essex-Scot, of North Benfleet Hall Farm. More recently Professor E. J. T. Collins kindly made available his annotated lists of migrant farmers drawn from *Kelly's* and the *Post Office Directories*, supplemented by his notes on individual families. He had also been advised by the late F. E. Kenchington and we are grateful to Professor Collins for making available Kenchington's notes and correspondence.

[16] *Kelly's Directories, 1874, 1886, 1894, 1896, 1906*. *Kelly's Directory* and the *Post Office Directory* were the first resort for identifying in-migrants before the census enumerators' books for 1891 and 1901 were made available to researchers, an exercise that relied heavily on identifying those with 'Scottish' names. Smith, Brown, and similar ubiquitous names presented obvious difficulties and it was quite impossible to identify from this source more than a few migrants from distant English counties. This study therefore depends heavily on the census enumerators' books.

[17] Those returned as poultry farmer or market gardener, are counted as 'farmers'. So is the Danbury 'landowner' who in 1871 employed eight men and two boys. Other individuals such as the Takeley 'farmer' with only 4½ acres (1871), and all those returned as



MAP 1. Essex: parishes and railways.

Adapted from A. C. Edwards, *A history of Essex* (1978), p. 91. First published in *Economic History Review* 54 (2001), p. 243 and reproduced with permission of the Economic History Society.

from these parishes their number might be considered barely sufficient to have transformed local agriculture.[18] Nor is it sufficient to support the more robust claims concerning how many came. For example, the unofficial spokesman for the Scots, Primrose McConnell, boasted in 1891 'now the country is overrun with us'.[19] E. A. Pratt's 1906 description of 'the Essex farmer of old' being largely displaced by Scotsmen, and mid-twentieth century accounts that deploy

Note 17 continued
'gardener' have been excluded. Details of landholdings taken from the *Agricultural Returns*, TNA MAF 68. As others have discovered, the census enumerators' books are not without errors. This limited survey encountered, besides illegible entries, a 'son-in-law' named Hannah Bailees, a 'female' James Lamplugh, and a farm labourer at Great Wigborough born in 'Yorkshire, Newcastle'

[18] Perry, *British farming*, p. 99.

[19] P. McConnell, 'Experiences of a Scotsman on the Essex clays', *JRASE* 52 (1891), p. 312. McConnell was unusual among the Scottish migrants. He had studied agriculture at the University of Edinburgh, and was Professor of Agriculture at Glasgow Veterinary College before he settled in Essex. P. Brassley, 'A pioneer in everything: Primrose McConnell, 1856–1931', *JRASE*, 156 (1995), p. 172.

imagery of 'flood' and 'invasion' are similarly exaggerated.[20] The more recent of these claims may have been influenced by the far larger number of Scots who arrived, or expanded their holdings, in the twentieth century, particularly between the mid-1920s and early 1930s.[21] When applied to the depression years (1873–96), however, such claims appear to be wildly misleading. Moreover, and reassuringly, the implications of census evidence from these 39 parishes are broadly compatible with an estimate that appeared in the *Royal Commission on Agricultural Depression* (1894–7), with E. L. Smith's estimate from the 1930s, and with our earlier calculations from *Kelly's Directories*. The sample of 39 parishes contained between a fifth and a quarter of Essex farms which, if they were at all representative, implies some 100 Scottish-born farmers established in the county in 1901: the *Royal Commission* estimated 120 to 130 were present in the mid-1890s; E. L. Smith estimated that 93 moved in between 1880 and 1910; and our analysis of *Kelly's Directories* found 83 farmers in 1894, and 142 by 1906, whose names are compatible with Scottish ancestry.[22]

Thus, although the literature focuses on migration from Scotland during the depression, the influx was greater after 1900. More relevant for this inquiry, however, is when the migration began: how many of the Scots farmers in Essex in 1901 had moved south in the early stages of the depression? Living with them in the sample parishes in 1901 were 19 sons and daughters born before 1881: none of these were Essex-born and most had been born in Scotland. The eldest Essex-born child living with Scots-born parents at this time had been born in 1887. This suggests that few Scots moved to Essex before the mid-1880s. It is possible, of course, that children born into migrant families before 1887 had left home by 1901, but earlier census evidence endorses the impression that most Scots migration occurred well after depression began. All but four of the 38 sons and daughters living with Scots-born farmer parents in 1891 had been born in Scotland, and the eldest Essex-born child among them was born in 1882. In all, in the 39 sample parishes, 22 Scots-born farmers were recorded in 1901, only 9 in 1891, just one in 1881, and none in 1871 (Table 2).

Other evidence is consistent with the impression that few Scots arrived to take advantage of depression opportunities before the mid-1880s. Earlier work on *Kelly's Directory* for 1886 found just 21 farmer families in all of Essex whose names suggested possible Scottish origin. Some of these, like the sole Scottish-born farmer enumerated in the survey parishes in the 1881 census, may have already been resident when the depression began.[23] Similarly, Sellars' work on the census enumerators' books of 56 central and west-Essex parishes discovered only one Scottish-born farmer listed in 1881.[24] On the 18,000-acre (64 farms) Thorndon Estate,

[20] Pratt, *Transition in agriculture*, pp. 37–9; G. L. Waring, 'The "Invasion"', *Essex Farmers' J.,* 26 (1947); G. E. Fussell, 'The foreign invasion of Essex', *ibid.,* 30 (1951).

[21] Watt, *Changes in agriculture*, p. 23. See also Collins, *Orsett,* p. 71; Wormell, *Essex farming*, pp. 46, 51.

[22] *BPP*, 1894, XVI (i), report by R. Hunter Pringle, p. 44; Smith, *Go East*, p. 20; Pam, 'Essex agriculture', p. 299. Scots farmers were far from evenly-spread across the sample parishes and they were similarly 'clustered' elsewhere in the county. Unfortunately, recent advances in computer access to census data provide no easy means to discover the total number of Scottish farmers in Essex.

[23] This individual, a Scotland-born market gardener in Shenfield, was not recorded there in 1871, but had an Essex-born son aged 9.

[24] We are grateful to Mrs Elizabeth Sellars of Chelmsford for this information.

TABLE 2. Thirty nine Essex parishes: farmers' places of birth, 1871–1901.

	1871	*1881*	*1891*	*1901*
Scotland	0	1	9	22
West Country	7	4	11	20
North	2	2	4	15
Midlands	1	2	3	5
Wales	0	0	1	4
Total	10	9	28	66

Note:
West Country: Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire.
North: Cheshire, Cumberland, Durham, Lancashire, Northumberland, Yorkshire, Westmorland.
Midlands: Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire.
Source: Census enumerators' books.

the first Scots, James Craig and Thomas Picken, arrived in 1885; 12 more had followed by 1890.[25] It is significant too that the 1893–7 Royal Commission included extensive comment on Scottish farmers in Essex, and dates their arrival from around 1880, whereas they are little, if at all, mentioned in the previous Royal Commission of 1879–82.[26] Primrose McConnell, who certainly regarded himself as a pioneer and liked to believe that his writings may have triggered a subsequent 'invasion', moved south with his father in 1882 or 1883.[27]

It appears, therefore, that depression-led migration from Scotland began about 1880, slowly at first, and accelerated in the 1890s. F. E. Kenchington described it as 're-colonising Essex farms after the disasters of the eighties'.[28] All commentators agree that south-west Scotland, particularly Ayrshire, was the main source of Scots in-migrants, and that the great majority were dairy farmers: 'the county of Essex is now flowing with Ayrshire milk'.[29] A distinguishable secondary migration stream from Scotland, not evident in the census, was of farmers from Perth, the Lothians, and Stirling, who were more likely to have been familiar with stock-raising and arable.[30] In fact, the census does not greatly add to our knowledge of the Scottish origins of migrants as in most cases it records only the *country* of their birth. However, three of the

[25] Essex RO, Petre Mss, Thorndon tenant ledger, iii–v, D/DP A366/8. The first Scot on the Orsett estate arrived in 1889. Collins, *Orsett,* p. 43.

[26] BPP, 1894, XVI (i), report by R. Hunter Pringle, p. 43. On this point, see also Smith, *Go East*, p. 15.

[27] Brassley, 'Primrose McConnell', pp. 172, 176; P. McConnell, *The diary of a working farmer* (1906), p. xvi. This claim, too, may have been exaggerated. The Oxley Parker estate was encouraging in-migration before the McConnells arrived and both Waring ('Invasion', p. 26) and Wormell (*Essex farming*, p. 59) claim the first depression Scots migrant came in 1878: J. Oxley Parker papers, ERO, D/DO/p B123/216/219; J. Oxley Parker, *The Oxley Parker papers* (1964), p. 161. The McConnells probably arrived in 1883, but 'Scottish farming in Essex', *Country Life*, 8, 29 Sept. 1900, claimed they arrived in 1882.

[28] Personal communication, F. E. Kenchington to E. J. T. Collins, 1964.

[29] Smith, *Go East*, p. 26; BPP, 1894, XVI (i), report by R. Hunter Pringle, pp. 43–4; Waring, 'Invasion', p. 25; McConnell, 'Experiences', p. 311. In Suffolk, too, Scottish settlers were reported to be 'chiefly Ayrshire men'. BPP, 1895, XVI, report by A. Wilson Fox, p. 66.

[30] Personal communication, F. E. Kenchington to E. J. T. Collins, 1964.

six farmers for whom more information was provided were born, like Primrose McConnell and Kathleen Filby's and Hew Watt's grandfathers, in Ayrshire, and the others were born in nearby Wigtown and Argyll.

The census is far more helpful in tracing the number and county origins of English and Welsh migrants (Table 2). For this investigation, information was collected on those moving into the Essex survey parishes from beyond a line from Hampshire, Berkshire, and Oxfordshire, through Northants, Leicestershire, and Nottinghamshire, to Lincolnshire. It is immediately clear that the Scottish inflow was paralleled, and considerably exceeded, by migration from the more distant English counties and from Wales. On the evidence in Table 2, the West Country alone was the source of more farmer-settlers than Scotland among those enumerated in 1871, 1881 and 1891. E. L. Smith also noted these other inflows, but in much of the literature they receive little attention.

Smith's figures, which are for migration to Essex from all counties, show 46 English and Welsh and 33 Scots arriving in the 1880s, and 57 and 34 respectively in the 1890s.[31] Neither his figures, nor those in Table 2, support claims that English migrants arrived *after* those from Scotland.[32] Moreover, the one Scottish-born farmer enumerated in the survey parishes in 1881 seems likely to have moved before the depression, because he had a son who was born locally in 1871–2, whereas each of the two north-country migrants enumerated at this date had a Yorkshire-born child aged under three, and a West Country family had a Wiltshire-born daughter aged seven.

Place-of-birth evidence from the sample parishes also affords several peripheral insights into migration patterns at this time. For example, there is evidence of 'stage migration': a Montgomeryshire-born stockman at Ingatestone (1901) with three children born in Warwickshire, and a farmer at Purleigh (1901) with five Devon-born children and a younger child born in Northamptonshire. It seems too that the population of rural Essex was probably less sedentary and homogeneous, less-insulated from external stimuli, than the allegedly cataclysmic impact a Scottish 'invasion' implies: in fact, the county reflected aspects of the generally high level of mobility evident in Britain at the time.[33] There were farm labourers born in Guernsey and Sicily resident at Ingrave (1871) and Danbury (1881) before many Scots arrived; an Essex-born farmer at Frating (1891) was assisted by a grandson born in the United States; and the parishes of Takeley (1891) and Woodham Walter (1901), could each boast a farmer born in Australia. At Pleshey (1901) there was a Cornish-born farmer living with his Danish-born wife, and elsewhere in the sample parishes, a gardener born in India and sufficient Irish-born farm workers to qualify significantly the generalization that Irish immigrants avoided the over-stocked labour markets of the rural south.

Where did Scottish, English, and Welsh migrants settle within Essex? Were they dispersed evenly or in discernable patterns that reflected type of farming, market-accessibility, or place of origin? In Map 1 and Table 1 the 39 sample parishes are arranged in eight groups according

[31] Smith, *Go East*, p. 20.

[32] For such claims see, for example, Pratt, *Transition in agriculture*, p. 29: '… the influx of Scots into Essex … followed by the immigration of a goodly number of English'. Claims of this kind possibly arose, in part, from the late arrival of substantial numbers of migrants from the north of England (Table 5).

[33] E. H. Hunt, *British labour history, 1815–1914* (1981), ch. 5.

TABLE 3. Essex-resident farmers born elsewhere,[a] 1871–1901: by parish groups.[b]

Parish group[b]	*1871*	*1881*	*1891*	*1901*
1	1	2	9	20
2	0	1	6	15
3	3	3	4	7
4	2	2	3	14
5	1	0	1	3
6	0	0	0	1
7	2	0	2	1
8	1	1	3	5
Total	10	9	28	66

Source: Census enumerators' books.
Notes:
[a] Born in Scotland, Wales and distant English counties as defined above.
[b] As defined in Table 1.

to soil type and proximity to rail transport. Fresh milk production for urban consumption was viable only on farms close to towns or within a few miles of a railway station. Groups 1, 2 and 3 represent the hard-to-work, expensive-to-drain, heavy clay soils that were first to become marginal for cereals; Groups 4, 5 and 6 represent the more easily worked boulder clays and medium soils, good cereal land; and Groups 7 and 8 occupied soils that were lighter and easier to work than the heavy and medium soils, but also less fertile and more vulnerable to 'drying out'.[34] Some of these parish groupings had good access to rail transport, others were less favourably located.

Table 3 makes it clear that migrant farmers were not evenly distributed across the survey parishes, they had not 'settled largely all over the county' at all.[35] Over half of those enumerated in 1901 resided in heavy clay parishes in close proximity to rail transport (Groups 1 and 2). This concentration doubtless reflected both the need for in-coming diary farmers to have easy access to London consumers and the attraction of low rents.[36] Demoralised cereal farmers, hard-pressed despite reduced rents, abandoned the heavy clay farms whose rents were then further reduced to attract new tenants. In these heavy clay parishes, the number of dairy cattle increased at more than twice the county average (Table 4). Comparatively buoyant rents in Group 6, and buoyant rents and distance from railways in Group 5, are consistent with sparse migrant settlement, but other aspects of the 1901 migrant distribution are less readily explained. The concentration of settlers in the Group 4 boulder clay parishes, where transport advantages were not associated with particularly low rents or many vacant farms, is unexpected, and it is

[34] For more details see Hunt and Pam, 'Managerial failure', pp. 241–4.
[35] *VCH Essex,* II (1907), p. 339.
[36] See, for example, Collins, *Orsett*, p. 43; Mingay, 'The farmer', p. 778.

TABLE 4. Dairy cows per 100 acres: change between 1870/74 and 1896–7.

Parish Group	*Change %*
1	+86
2	+86
3	+24
4	+20
5	–20
6	+6
7	+67
8	+4
Essex	+39

Note: Data for 1870 and 1874 is used because data is not available for contiguous years.
Source: Hunt and Pam, 'Managerial failure', p. 245.

perhaps surprising also that so few were attracted to the parishes near to a railway with light soil in Group 7. Of course, not all of the incomers specialised in milk production, which may help to explain some of these seeming disparities. Some of the Scots incomers, and still more of the English, were mixed stock and arable farmers, and some raised poor-quality beef cattle on extensive rough grazing, for which low rent was far more important than good transport.[37]

Distinguishing incomers by their place of origin might throw more light upon these divergent patterns and this is done in Table 5. The most notable feature of Scottish settlement is how much it was concentrated in heavy clay parishes along the established railway lines: two thirds or more of all Scots farmers present in the 39 sample parishes in both 1891 and 1901 were settled in the five parishes that comprise Group 1. Only a handful were returned in the boulder clay and medium soil Groups 4, 5 and 6, none before 1901. On the fertile soils, Tendring Hundred (Group 6), amongst the finest farming land in England and with ready access to rail transport, only one Scottish farmer was listed at this date. Equally interesting is that the Group 2 parishes, like the Group 1 parishes on heavy clay, and, by 1891, close to railways, and therefore seemingly equally attractive to dairying incomers, appear to have been largely shunned by the Scots but to have attracted West Countrymen. They, in turn, appear to have avoided the Group 1 parishes where the Scots congregated. This, in all probability, is evidence of 'chain migration', of pioneer settlers informing their kin and former neighbours of opportunities in Essex and thus encouraging further migration to the same locality.[38] Primrose McConnell had a particular influence in this respect: on one day in 1885, sixteen fellow Scots were accommodated at his

[37] Table 5 shows that most migrant farmers in Group 4 parishes were from West Country and northern counties.

[38] P. Horn, 'When the Scots moved South', *Countryman* 86 (1981–2), p. 82; ERO, Z13.1 *Preston Guardian,* 1 Oct. 1892, 3 Oct. 1896. For more details see Pam, 'Essex agriculture', ch. 5.

TABLE 5. Essex parish groups and farmers' place of origin, 1871–1901.

Parish Group	*1871*					*1881*					*1891*					*1901*				
	WC	*N*	*M*	*W*	*S*	*WC*	*N*	*M*	*W*	*S*	*WC*	*N*	*M*	*W*	*S*	*WC*	*N*	*M*	*W*	*S*
1	1							1		1	1		1	1	6		1		3	16
2						1					2	2	1		1	9	3	2		1
3	2	1					2	1			3				1	2	4	1		
4	2					2					2		1			5	4	1	1	3
5			1								1					2	1			
6																				1
7	2										1				1	1				
8		1				1					1	2				1	2	1		1

Key: WC: West Country; N: North; M: Midlands; W: Wales; S: Scotland.
Note: Parish groups as defined in Table 1; place origin as defined in Table 2.
Source: Census enumerators' books.

Ongar farm whilst appraising nearby holdings. Of the three parish groups in which dairying expanded most (Table 4), Group 1 attracted Scots, Group 2 attracted West Countrymen, and in Group 7 dairying expansion occurred with little assistance from long-distance migrants. North Countrymen were not much evident in any of the survey parishes until after 1891. The northerners were widely dispersed: on soils of different kinds and both near to, and distant from, railways: among them a Lancastrian farmer and corn dealer at Danbury (Group 8), and a poultry farmer, another Lancastrian, at East Hanningfield (Group 3).

Landlord activity played a large part in determining where incomers located. Migrants were drawn to particular Essex estates by offers of reduced rents and flexible leases, sometimes advertised in Scottish journals and newspapers such as the *North Scottish Agriculturalist* and the *Ayr Advertiser*. The first to advertise was John Oxley Parker, an Essex land agent, in 1878; Lord Petre advertised in 1885, attracting Scots to all seven vacant farms on his Thorndon estate; and the Governors of St. Bartholomew's Hospital found tenants in the same way.[39] Of course, like most migration flows, that of Scots farmers to East Anglia was a consequence not only of 'pull' influences, such as low rents, London's demand for milk, and the advertising just described, but also of 'push' influences. Land-hunger was an important 'push' influence. In south-west Scotland, little affected by agricultural depression, rents remained high and competition for vacant holdings was keen: one account described Ayrshire as 'a veritable congested district which rears twice as many farmers than there are farms for'.[40] These

[39] R. G. E. Wood, *Agriculture in Essex, 1840–1900* (1975), p. 30; Oxley Parker, *Oxley Parker papers*, p. 161; Oxley Parker papers, ERO, D/D Op. B123–216; Horn, *Changing countryside*, p. 35; St Bartholomew's Hospital Mss (St Bartholomew's Hospital, London), Almoners' Reports, 1889, EO 8/7; Brassley, 'Primrose McConnell', p. 176.

[40] BPP, 1895, XVII, evidence on Ayr, Wigtown, Kirkcudbright and Dumfries, pp. 4–5, 8–10; R. E. Prothero (Lord Ernle), *English farming past and present* (sixth edn, 1961), p. 385; McConnell, 'Experiences', p. 311; Smith, *Go East*, p. 18.

circumstances encouraged landlords to minimise expenditure on repairs and resist pressure for rent reductions and freedom of cultivation.[41] 'Pull' and 'push' influences affecting English and Welsh migrants to Essex are less often recorded, but were probably similar to those that shaped migration from Scotland. Shortages of suitable holdings were reported from Devon and Cornwall, for example, and Lancashire witnessed landlord-tenant friction over issues similar to those in Scotland, as well as regarding compensation for unexhausted improvements and damage caused by game.[42] Landlord advertising too was by no means confined to Scotland: Francis Whitmore, at Orsett, placed advertisements in several Devon and northern English newspapers in 1897.[43] And everywhere potential migrants weighed the attractions of Essex against those of Canada, Australia, and other overseas destinations.[44]

II

Such was the broad pattern of farmer migration to Essex during the late Victorian agricultural depression. To what extent was Essex agriculture transformed at this time; either by 'Scottish' practices, or by Scottish influence in combination with other factors? Between the early seventies and mid-nineties the wheat acreage fell by approximately two fifths, while the area under grass and the number of milking cows increased by similar proportions. Nevertheless, in 1896–7 cereals still occupied a third of Essex land and income from milk sales was still no more than that from wheat.[45] Clearly a substantial restructuring had taken place: equally clearly, this fell well short of a total transformation.

Should this failure to switch more emphatically towards milk be attributed to the inertia which, in many accounts, had become the defining characteristic of south-eastern agriculture, a malaise for which the Scottish influx, and the example it set, might have provided a remedy? In earlier articles, we argued that, far from being devastated by falling prices, parts of Essex farming were able to survive depression without radical restructuring, and that partial, rather than wholesale, transformation was a rational response.[46] On much heavy clay land, it is true, wheat ceased to be viable as prices fell, no matter how much rents were reduced. But on the better soils, falling prices were matched by falling costs and arable farming remained viable.

[41] R. H. Campbell, *Owners and occupiers: change in rural society in south-west Scotland before 1914* (1991), ch. 8; Pam, 'Essex agriculture', p. 300.

[42] Smith, *Go East,* pp. 29–34; Pam, 'Essex agriculture', pp. 299–300. Tenant unrest in Lancashire assumed a political dimension when farmers combined to publicise their grievances. One farmer-activist, James Middlehurst, offered himself as a candidate in the 1892 General Election: evicted from his holding, he moved to Essex, where he prospered. The same year, the Lancashire Tenant Farmers' Association dispatched representatives in search of suitable Essex farms for rent. A. Mutch, *Rural life in South-west Lancashire, 1840–1914* (1988), pp. 29–30, 50, 53–5.

[43] The *Devon Herald,* the *Devon and Exeter Daily Gazette,* the *Preston Herald, Yorkshire Post, Leeds Mercury* and the *Whitehaven News.* MERL, ESS 17/4/45.

[44] Advertisements placed by Essex landlords sometimes appeared adjacent to those placed by railway and shipping companies, dominion and foreign governments, and by charities that sponsored emigration. On these themes see, for example, M. Harper, *Emigration from north-east Scotland* (1988); J. M. Brock, *The mobile Scot: a study of emigration and migration, 1861–1911* (1999).

[45] Hunt and Pam 'Managerial failure', p. 245; Pam, 'Essex agriculture', ch. 5.

[46] Id., 'Managerial failure', 'Responding to agricultural depression'.

Rents on these better soils fell only moderately, tenants were less anxious to quit, and thus there were fewer vacant holdings. It was probably for these reasons, and because here there was less pressure to convert to dairying, that such areas attracted fewer Scots. None were enumerated in Groups 4, 5 and 6 in 1891, and only four in 1901 (Table 5). Moreover, the optimal response to depression was less one-dimensional than a simple expansion of dairying. Oats and barley prices fell by no more than beef prices, and farmers moved readily between oats, barley, and wheat in response to shifts in their relative prices: the acreage under oats rose over the course of the depression.[47] Another restraint upon dairying expansion was noted above: milk sales were seldom viable on farms far from a railway station. In the heavy clay Group 3 parishes, for example, although rents fell considerably and vacant farms were readily available, very few Scots settled (Table 5), presumably deterred by poor access by rail to London. Change occurred in such places: but rather than the textbook substitution of dairying for arable, farmers moved towards less obvious alternatives. In particular, they focused increasingly upon raising low-quality beef, with minimal labour, on rough pasture. Thus partial transformation was appropriate, neither a consequence of Essex-men failing to follow good Scottish practices, nor of the Scots failing to effect a comprehensive substitution of milk for cereals.

Claims that this partial transformation should be attributed to enlightened Scots, and would have been more widespread but for the intrinsic shortcomings of Essex-men, stem from two further misconceptions. First there are the suppositions that exploiting the 'lucrative liquid milk trade', where that was possible, was manifestly more profitable than persisting with cereals; that dairy farmers 'suffered not at all'; that London 'would take all the milk that could be produced'.[48] In fact, city markets were periodically glutted. At such times milk prices fell and dairy farmers suffered considerable distress.[49] Milk production in the long run, it seems, expanded as fast as market opportunities permitted. Dairying, without question, played a major part in the transformation of Essex agriculture, but the 'Scottish' remedy was no panacea. If more Essex farmers had heeded Scottish advice, crises of over supply would have occurred more frequently: towards the end of the depression R. H. Rew reported claims that dairying had been 'overdone', the market 'spoiled'.[50]

Secondly, the 'redeeming Scots' version of Essex agriculture in the depression assumes that dairying was indeed the 'Scottish' remedy, that its expansion began when the Scots moved south: 'As to the Scotch farmers, have they largely introduced dairy farming into Essex? – Yes.'[51] Mid-century Essex was unquestionably a corn county, but it had not always been so. At one time it was noted for dairying.[52] And although cereals had taken centre-stage by the 1840s, 'alternative agriculture' was far from totally eclipsed. Claims that dairying was 'almost entirely neglected', confined to 'a single farmer here and there', scorned as 'unfamiliar and

[47] Id., 'Prices and structural response in English agriculture, 1873–1896', *EcHR,* 50 (1997), p. 497; id., 'Managerial failure', pp. 228–33.

[48] Fletcher, 'Great Depression', p. 419; Fussell, 'Foreign invasion', p. 41.

[49] Hunt and Pam, 'Prices and structural response', pp. 490–3.

[50] BPP, 1894, XVI (i), report by R. Hunter Pringle, p. 83; R. H. Rew, *The agricultural position of today* (1897), p. 96.

[51] BPP, 1894, XVI (i), evidence, 13890.

[52] Pratt, *Transition in agriculture*, p. 25; J. Broad, 'Regional perspectives and variations in English dairying, 1650–1850', in R. W. Hoyle (ed.), *People, landscape, and alternative agriculture: essays for Joan Thirsk* (2004), p. 104.

distasteful', are quite wrong.[53] Nearby farmers had long sent their milk to London, and when railways opened markets to more-distant farmers they responded appropriately. London's St Thomas's Hospital, for example, was supplied with milk from Romford by 1846, decades before the Scots supposedly introduced dairying to Essex; and St Bartholomew's Hospital began to buy milk from farmers near Brentwood in 1856–7.[54] Not surprisingly, therefore, in the Group 1 parishes, along the London-Chelmsford railway, over two-fifths of farmland was already under pasture before depression struck.[55] Thus, when Scots dairymen later settled in these parishes their impact could hardly have been transforming, because they were moving into established dairying localities. By the mid-eighties, when substantive Scottish settlement had barely begun, the Essex wheat acreage had already declined by over a quarter from its early seventies peak, and the dairy herd had grown by a similar proportion.[56] Moreover, Essex pastureland had long supplied London with hay as well as milk, and a minority of Essex farmers, including A. C. Wilkins at Tiptree, produced fruit or vegetables. In short, there had been quite sufficient agricultural adaptation to demonstrate that the contribution of Scottish migrant farmers was supplementary rather than pioneering, that credit for the earlier expansion of dairying and other alternatives to cereals belongs to Essex men.

Moreover, the Scots' contribution must be judged within the context of other developments that encouraged dairying around the time of their arrival. By the mid-eighties the depth, persistence, and causes of depression were better understood and landlords responded accordingly: with accelerated reductions in rent, less stringent lease enforcement, and enhanced expenditure on new dairies, cow stalls, and piped water.[57] Around this time, too, basic slag was beginning to demonstrate its revivifying effect on clayland grass. Far from the Scots having initiated such positive responses to depression, these were among the incentives that attracted them to Essex and contributed to their success. Another incentive to change, and to in-migration, was the opening of new railway lines. No new lines were completed in Essex between 1873 and 1883 but six, all in the south of the county, opened in the following six years (Map 1). Milk sales then became viable from land where earlier the main practicable alternative to cereals had been beef. The agricultural returns for the heavy clay Group 2 parishes indicate that in the years before the new railways, and before the arrival of many long-distance migrants, beef cattle numbers were increasing faster than the number of milking cows. But when new branch lines opened, the increase in dairy numbers accelerated while beef cattle numbers fell.[58] Thus some newly arrived migrants occupied farms where milk production was previously restrained, not by native inertia, but by poor transport.

[53] Brown, *Agriculture in England*, pp. 3, 45–9; Smith, *Go East*, p. 38; McConnell, 'Experiences', p. 321; J. Thirsk, *Alternative agriculture: a history* (1997), pp. 64, 168; Horn, *Changing countryside*, p. 81.

[54] G. Dodd, *The food of London* (1856), p. 122; P. J. Atkins, 'The growth of London's railway milk trade, *c.*1845–1914', *J. Transport History* 4 (1978), p. 208; St Bartholomew's Hospital Mss, London, Governors' minutes, Ha/1/21–23.

[55] Hunt and Pam, 'Managerial failure', p. 245.

[56] *Agricultural Statistics (England and Wales), passim.*

[57] Hunt and Pam, 'Responding to agricultural depression', pp. 238–42; 'A Scottish farmer on farming in England', *Agricultural Gazette,* 28 Jan. 1895.

[58] Hunt and Pam, 'Managerial failure', p. 247. These Group 2 parishes were on the Barking-Pitsea (1885) and Shenfield-Southend (1888–9) lines and on the extension from Maldon to the Shenfield-Southend line (1889). As noted above, migrants from the West Country responded to the opportunities offered by railway developments more readily than did Scotsmen.

III

The evidence, so far, suggests that whatever the specific contribution of Scottish incomers to agricultural recovery in Essex, their overall impact was less than has often been suggested. Very few Scottish farmers arrived before the early 1880s, by which time adaptation was already well under way; and in any case, restructuring entailed far more than substituting dairy cattle for wheat. This, of course, on its own, does not indicate that Scots brought little of value. Their influence has been exaggerated, but it was nonetheless substantial.

What specific benefits accompanied Scottish immigration? Perhaps the most useful transfer of skills was in grassland management, particularly the use of temporary pasture (leys) in arable regimes. Introduced into existing rotations, leys of two, three, or four years provided a cheaper and more flexible alternative to arable than conversion to permanent pasture.[59] Well-managed temporary pasture restored the soil, discouraged weeds, yielded cattle-fodder, and was a labour-saving alternative to traditional fallowing. To avoid twitch, wireworm, and similar afflictions, temporary grass required the correct mixture of grass and leguminous seeds, followed by an appropriate fertiliser. Fine judgement was required on when to mow; on when, and how much, stock could graze. Such skills, once commonplace, had languished in the south-east during the 'golden age' of cereals. Contemporary investigators reported 'a great lack of knowledge as to the best [seed] mixtures to use', and that 'grass farming is something new to Essex men'.[60] But the Scots brought state-of-the-art skills in grass management with them. One described how neighbours mocked as he prepared temporary pasture, but in time followed his example.[61] Scots also gave particular attention to dairy herd management and increasingly purchased feed to regulate milk supply and thus profit from higher winter prices.[62] Moreover, Ayrshire dairy cows, introduced to Essex by the Scots, yielded more milk that the Shorthorn all-rounder, had a longer milking life, and showed greater resistance to tuberculosis.

The Scots' pursuit of 'low farming', especially by those who were not primarily milk producers, is, on balance, also to their credit.[63] Although much criticised by Essex men, 'low farming' was a rational response to falling rents and rising wages, and criticism derived in part from misconceived nostalgia for 'high farming' and the visually unappealing consequences of ruthless economy. One commentator described a 'wretched' landscape between Billericay and Althorne, much of it 'in the hands of Scotsmen'.[64] They made do with less ploughing and fewer beans and roots; hand weeding, hedging, and ditching were each minimised to save labour.

[59] James Caird estimated it required 6 to 14 years to make good permanent pasture. Others drew attention to the particular difficulties of establishing permanent pasture on heavy clayland, especially in low-rainfall Essex. J. A. Caird, 'Recent experience of laying down land to grass', *JRASE* 49 (1888), pp. 148–9; M. Evans and T. Bowstead, 'Report on laying down land to permanent pasture', *JRASE* 36 (1875), pp. 450–1.

[60] W. E. Bear, 'Advantages in agricultural production', *JRASE,* third ser., 5 (1894), p. 263; BPP, 1894, XVI (i), report by R. Hunter Pringle, p. 61.

[61] BPP, 1896, XVII, appendix j, p. 611.

[62] Mingay, 'The farmer', p. 789; Symon, *Scottish farming*, pp. 195–6; MERL, ESS, 17/1/26.

[63] On the rationality of low farming at this time see Hunt and Pam, 'Responding to agricultural depression', pp. 236–7. On excessively 'low' farming see below, pp. 98.

[64] Rider Haggard, *Rural England* (2 vols, 1902), I, p. 466. For more on this theme, see BPP, 1894, XVI (i), evidence,13918; J. Thirsk and J. Imray (eds), *Suffolk farming in the nineteenth century* (Suffolk Records Soc., 1, 1958), p. 35.

Primrose McConnell, on his mixed farm at Ongar, described how his English neighbours 'literally waste labour … the first thing was to reduce the number of men and horses'.[65] With the same labour-saving end in view, Scots farmers cheerfully ran poor-quality beef cattle on extensive rough pasture. Variations of low farming, of course, were far from unknown in Essex even in the 'golden-age'[66] but, with little experience of 'high farming', the newcomers followed the logic of market forces with fewer inhibitions.

While expending no more labour or capital than was strictly required, the Scots were equally renowned for not sparing themselves: 'they live and work hard', spending 'nothing, except on their cows', 'you can't starve a Scotchman'.[67] By working alongside their men, in contrast to Essex farmers with their characteristic 'collar, tie, and clean hands', the Scots were more capable of establishing managerial priorities, not least to maximise labour productivity. Some paid above the going Essex wage, attracting the best local labour and retaining the services of migrant Scots labourers, 'the Scotchmen pay 3*s*. more, try to get 5*s*. worth of work more in return, and mostly succeed'.[68] Costs were contained by the widespread use of unpaid family labour, including hard-working wives and daughters who eschewed the 'piano and dogcart' gentility of pampered neighbours, and cheerfully turned out 'in stockingless feet' to milk the cows.[69] Family labour was a particular asset at a time when real wages were rising.

This readiness to work hard was combined with adaptability and an eye for opportunities; aspects of the 'canniness' said to be prominent among their characteristics.[70] Such attitudes possibly owed something to superior Scottish education, something to migration selecting the more enterprising and materialistic, and something to a first-generation determination to succeed.[71] One consequence of these restless and speculative inclinations was a readiness to move repeatedly in response to perceived opportunities. Evidence from the Thorndon estate, for example, shows that Scots tenants were particularly footloose, and the 32 entries for Scots-born families in the four census survey described earlier indicate only five families that failed to move between censuses.[72] Some moved to rent, or buy, larger or additional holdings, some to diversify into quasi-agricultural activities such as carting, milk retailing, or wholesale greengrocery.[73] Such activities were said to have been encouraged by a communal willingness to advance loans to fellow Scots. This 'clannishness' also led to their taking a leading role in early attempts to develop agricultural co-operation in East Anglia, beginning with establishment of the Eastern Counties Dairy Farmers' Association in 1892.[74]

[65] McConnell, 'Experiences', p. 317.

[66] In an earlier article we argued that textbook, capital-intensive, 'high farming' was less widespread in 'golden age' Essex than is usually supposed. E. H. Hunt and S. J. Pam, 'Essex agriculture in the 'golden age', 1850–73', *AgHR* 43 (1995).

[67] On these themes see: BPP, 1894, XVI (i), p. 45, evidence, 13891; BPP, 1896, XVII, pp. 611, 614, evidence, 61661–3; Collins, 'Great agricultural depression', p. 17.

[68] *Agricultural Gazette,* 28 Jan. 1895.

[69] BPP, 1895, XVI, report by A. Wilson Fox, pp. 67–8; BPP, 1896, XVII, appendix j, p. 613.

[70] See, for example, Smith, *Go East*, pp. 40–1.

[71] See, for example, Prothero, *English farming* (introduction II, O. R. McGregor), pp. cxvi–vii.

[72] ERO, Petre MSs. Thorndon tenant ledgers, iii–v, D/DP A366–8. Kenchington noted this characteristic: personal communication, F. E. Kenchington to S. J. Pam (1977).

[73] Pratt, *Transition in agriculture*, p. 37. Some had followed similar quasi-agricultural occupations in Scotland before moving south. Pam, 'Essex agriculture', ch. 5.

[74] Obstacles to co-operation in England, however, were formidable. Scots also assisted the expansion of potato growing and market gardening, although the

IV

Impressive as it is, this chronicle of Scots' contributions to agricultural recovery in Essex requires qualification. Possibly the most enduring consequence of their involvement in market gardening, for example, arose from the opportunistic purchase of smallholdings close to towns and stations, less for their horticultural potential, as in the expectation of early resale to speculative builders. This activity became more widespread after the depression: indeed, it has been suggested that the twentieth-century prosperity of the Essex-Scots ascendancy may owe as much to successful land speculation as to successful farming.[75] Such activity is overlooked, or discounted, in traditional accounts anxious to portray twentieth-century material wealth as just reward for earlier hard work, thrift, and enlightened methods. Moreover, their acclaimed geographical mobility, relocating to East Anglia, should be attributed, partly, to the enterprise of Essex landlords who advertised vacant farms in Scottish newspapers. In one respect, moreover, relocation required little adaptability: the Scots were long accustomed to farming of a kind that, fortuitously, was well adapted to depression. Thus their migration involved less occupational mobility than occurred when Essex farm labourers sought work in London, or when Essex farmers abandoned cereals for milk or beef. Determined to maintain their hereditary occupation, and with few vacant holdings available locally, these 'intrepid adventurers' moved to Essex because it entailed less discontinuity than moving to nearby urban employment: spatial mobility was spurred by occupational inertia.[76] Ironically, one minor occupational change that accompanied this relocation was unhelpful to agricultural recovery. Once in Essex many Scots abandoned their traditional, but arduous, butter and cheese making: 'most of us have come here to escape the drudgery of cheese and butter dairies'.[77] But butter and cheese making, particularly if it had utilised Scots' co-operative experience and incorporated pig raising, had the potential to moderate the occasional over-supply of fresh milk, and to provide an alternative to rough grazing on land no longer viable for cereals.[78] While newly arrived Scots were proclaiming the virtues of converting arable to pasture and abandoning butter and cheese, Essex dairy farmers beseeched assistant commissioner R. Hunter Pringle to avoid recommending any measure likely to exacerbate the intermittent over-supply of fresh milk.[79]

There are questions too regarding 'Scottish farming', and its presumed role in helping to deliver hapless locals from their incompetence. Much local criticism can be disregarded, and Scots deserve some credit for farming 'lower' than most locals, but their success rate, and in some cases their practices, fell short of what is often claimed. On the Thorndon Estate, at Michaelmas 1893, Scots accounted for over a third of tenants in rent arrears; the *Royal*

Note 74 continued
slow expansion of market gardening in Essex appears not to have accelerated significantly following their arrival. BPP, 1894, XVI (i), p. 36; Pam, 'Essex agriculture', pp. 261–3; Hunt and Pam, 'Managerial failure', pp. 246–7; Collins, 'Rural and agricultural change', p. 175; Rider Haggard, *Rural England*, I, p. 470; Perry, *British farming*, p. 122; Fussell, 'Foreign invasion', p. 41.

[75] 'A point for *very* great discretion in discussion', personal communication, F. E. Kenchington to E. J. T. Collins, 1964.

[76] Wormell, 'Essex farming', p. 54.

[77] McConnell, with customary exaggeration, 'Experiences', p. 322.

[78] On butter, cheese, pigs, and other under-exploited alternatives to cereals in Essex, see Hunt and Pam, 'Responding to agricultural depression', pp. 244–9.

[79] BPP, 1894, XVI (i), pp. 64, 83.

Commission on Agricultural Depression suggested that two of the fifteen Scots tenancies on the same estate ended in failure, and included also numerous accounts of Scots 'barely holding their own', or 'losing money'.[80] Moreover, claims that 'most of the migrants made a success of their farming where their English predecessors had found such difficulty', even if true, should take into account that the newcomers enjoyed lower rents, easier leases, and better access to markets than prevailed in the earlier stages of depression.[81] Some Scots at first assumed too readily that Essex farmers failed to adopt some of their traditional practices out of ignorance, rather than deference to local soils and rainfall. The initial introduction of temporary grasses, for example, was not everywhere successful; and in time Scots discovered also that the heavier Essex clays required more careful management than had been anticipated.[82] Hunter Pringle noted several examples of Scots being forced to revert to traditional Essex ways, 'after repeated failures to work … on the north-country fashion'. Primrose McConnell himself, in 1891, admitted to favouring certain practices he had earlier disparaged; later he left his Ongar tenancy, in dispute with his landlord and charged with bad farming.[83]

Evaluation of the Scots' contribution needs also to address concerns regarding the possibly exhaustive effect of their system of grass management. It was said that land became 'cow-sick', infested with weeds and wireworm and ill suited to a return to arable: off-farm sales of hay, and over-enthusiastic application of nitrates to boost hay crops, were a particular threat.[84] Scots tenants dismissed such claims, contending that Essex men used similar methods: but Scots were prominent among those who farmed 'lower', and harder, than might be compatible with long-term fertility.[85] Some were said to exploit their land and move on when the consequences – falling yields and rampant weeds – became manifest: 'the Scotchmen put nothing into the land, they try to take a farm in good condition and leave it in bad'.[86] These were the 'robber farmers', or 'land skimmers', who cynically abused landlords' anxiety to keep farms tenanted. Hunter Pringle described farms on which:

> the fallow lands were very foul … the old pastures decidedly impoverished … some … had top dressed meadowland with nitrate of soda year after year and sold the hay … and then complained that the meadows were little better than useless … the Scotchmen are the chief culprits.[87]

Predatory farming of this kind was the unacceptable face of 'canniness'. There are, too,

[80] ERO, Petre MSS, Thorndon tenant ledger, D/DP A367; BPP,1894, XVI (i), evidence 8527–8, 8620; BPP, 1895, XVI, report by A. Wilson Fox, p. 69; BPP, 1896, XVII, appendix j, p. 611, evidence, 67810–18.

[81] Horn, 'Scots moved South', p. 82.

[82] Collins, *Orsett,* p. 70; Perry *British farming*, p. 165; C. S. Orwin and E. H. Whetham, *History of British agriculture, 1846–1914* (1964), pp. 243–7.

[83] BPP, 1894, XV (i), report by R. Hunter Pringle, pp. 37–8, 46, 60; McConnell, 'Experiences', pp. 313–8; Brassley, 'Primrose McConnell', pp. 173–4; G. E. Fussell, 'Primrose McConnell', *Essex Farmers Journal*, 30 (1954).

[84] BPP, 1894, XVI (i), report by R. Hunter Pringle, p. 57, evidence, 81715–7; BPP, 1895, XVI, report by A. Wilson Fox, p. 70; *Essex Standard,* 18 Oct. 1884, 20 Feb. 1895; Perry, *British farming,* p. 101; 'Scottish farming in Essex', pp. 396–8.

[85] McConnell, 'Experiences', p. 322; BPP, 1894, XVI (i), report by R. Hunter Pringle, p. 45; St Bartholomew's Hospital Mss, Almoners' reports, 1891–1903, EO 8/7.

[86] BPP, 1895, XVI, report by A. Wilson Fox, p. 66.

[87] BPP, 1894, XVI (i), report by R. Hunter Pringle, p. 57. For other examples see Collins, *Orsett*, p. 70; P. J. Perry (ed.), *British agriculture, 1875–1914* (1973), p. xxviii.

claims and rumours that the twentieth-century fortunes of certain Essex-Scots families owed something to practices more reprehensible than mere exploitative farming. The accounts of one farm, owned by an Essex widow and managed by a Scot, showed substantial losses year upon year until the owner died: the bailiff was then granted a lease and the farm subsequently flourished.[88] According to the late F. E. Kenchington, examples of such probably disreputable practices were common knowledge within the mid-twentieth century Essex-Scots community, 'other Scots purse their lips over them'.[89] When an outraged descendant, and Kenchington's employers, became aware that he intended to expose irregularities of this kind in a projected book, its publication was vetoed.[90]

V

Like many a good story, that of migrant Scottish farmers rescuing 'derelict' Essex from depression is partly myth: a compound of fact, exaggeration, simplification, misinterpretations, and omissions. Those, including historians, who have sustained and perpetrated this legend have too willingly accepted the Scots' assessment of both their own achievements and the inadequacies of Essex men. It is emphatically wrong to deploy this as evidence that south-eastern agriculturalists failed to respond effectively to changed market conditions after 1873.

In too many accounts, descriptions of the timing and magnitude of migration appear to have been distorted. Responses to depression, as we have seen, were evident well before many Scots moved to Essex, thus their contribution to recovery was never more than supplementary. Moreover, the limited numbers that arrived between the early 1880s and the mid-1890s, fewer than came later, was insufficient to have 'rescued' Essex agriculture or to warrant talk of 'invasion'. Suggestions that the depression was so severe as to render Essex agriculture 'derelict' are similarly exaggerated; the assumption that recovery entailed little beyond substituting milk for cereals is a crude over-simplification; and claims that dairying was introduced to Essex by the Scots are simply wrong. Omitted from many accounts, and thus reinforcing the myth, is any recognition that reduced rents, relaxed leases, new railway lines, and active recruitment by landlords, encouraged both migration and recovery; that there were failures as well as successes; that high mobility in some cases was a response to questionable incentives; and that many individual successes were substantially assisted by property speculation.

It remains, of course, that the 'redeeming Scots' myth, like most good myths, contains a hard core of truth. Although their contribution to dairying expansion derived from occupational inertia, and although they reinforced, rather than pioneered, that expansion, dairying was crucial in responding to market changes and the Scots both accelerated its expansion and brought with them several specific skills, particularly in the use of temporary grasses. Some of them demonstrated the more positive aspects of 'low farming', and their reputation for hard

[88] Personal communication, F. E. Kenchington to S. J. Pam, 1977.

[89] Personal communication, F. E. Kenchington to E. J. T. Collins, 1964.

[90] Personal communication, F. E. Kenchington to S. J. Pam, 1977. He was a lecturer at The Essex Institute of Agriculture, now Writtle Agricultural College. A grand-daughter of the bailiff mentioned above, according to Kenchington, threatened legal action and his college warned that publication would jeopardise his employment and pension.

work and 'canniness' was fully merited. Their achievement therefore, although short of what has been claimed, was positive and deserving of recognition.

No less deserving of recognition, although barely perceptible in the literature, is the contribution of other migrant farmers.[91] Demographic evidence from the Essex parishes examined earlier suggests that long-distance migrants from the West Country, the north of England, and from Wales considerably outnumbered the Scots and began arriving at around the same time. In official reports and elsewhere – mentions of cowmen, shepherds, and other specialists in the census, for example – there is evidence also that they, like the Scots, were adaptable and hardworking, contributed to the expansion of dairying, and brought other useful skills. West Countrymen, for example, made a particular contribution to Essex horticulture, and on the remote Dengie peninsula Lancastrian farmers made butter and cheese for a Lancashire co-operative society.[92] The main reason that so little is known of the experience of these English and Welsh migrants is that, both during the depression and subsequently, they were less conscious than the Scots of differences between themselves and the local population, less inclined to nurture this distinctiveness and links with their homeland, less disposed to marry within their own community, and less given to self-publicity.[93] Thus, their contribution to agricultural recovery in the late nineteenth century was, and remains, largely overlooked. The legend of the 'redeeming Scots', by contrast, born of robust pride in community achievement and sustained by communal tradition, still endures.

[91] Besides E. L. Smith, exceptions to this generalisation include brief comments by Mingay, 'The farmer', p. 776; T. W. Fletcher, 'Lancashire livestock farming in the Great Depression', repr. in P. J. Perry (ed.), *British agriculture, 1875–1914* (1973), p. 102 from *AgHR* 9 (1961), pp. 17–42.

[92] Rider Haggard, *Rural England*, I, p. 195; BPP, 1895, XVI, p. 71; 1896, XVII, pp. 612–3; Smith, *Go East*, p. 28; Collins, *Orsett*, p. 69.

[93] On these points and the proliferation of Caledonian Societies, Scottish dancing and Burns Night celebrations in Essex, see, Wormell, *Essex farming*, pp. 57–8, 63; Horn, *Changing countryside*, p. 82; Smith, *Go East*, p. 3.

'The Forgotten Army of the Woods': The Women's Timber Corps during the Second World War*

by Emma Vickers

Abstract

The Women's Timber Corps (WTC) was a little-known subdivision of the Women's Land Army. Formed officially in April 1942, and composed entirely of women, the Corps was organised to make up for the drift of male forestry workers into the Armed Forces and to assist with the drive to reduce Britain's unsustainable reliance on imported timber. Given the relative absence of the organisation from official histories of the Second World War, the aim of this article is to reconstruct the form and function of the WTC from its early manifestation in 1917 as the Women's Forestry Service to its final days in 1946.

In October 2007, a memorial was unveiled in Aberfoyle, Scotland (Figure 1). Cast in bronze, it acknowledges not the sacrifices of the war dead but the civilian contributions of the living, specifically a rapidly shrinking group of veterans known as the Women's Timber Corps (WTC), a subdivision of the Women's Land Army (WLA). Between 1940 and 1945 the WTC employed a small, elite cohort of just over 6000 women doing work that previously had only ever been done by men. Members of the Corps worked in nomadic gangs across the length and breadth of England, Wales and Scotland, surveying, clearing and processing Britain's standing timber into essential wartime commodities. Amongst other things, the women of the WTC helped provide Britain with the timber which was used to create the chestnut 'railings' or tracks that were used during the D-Day landings, the telegraph poles that maintained vital lines of communication and the charcoal that created the smokescreen under which the allies were able to cross the Rhine in 1945.[1] The Corps are also credited with keeping the British mining industry alive through the production of pitprops, manufacturing the masts that kept British ships afloat and processing the beech that was used to construct Mosquito aircraft.

Despite the remarkable job undertaken by the WTC, the organisation has received relatively little attention in the histories of the Second World War. Even Gill Clarke's recent revisionist work on the Women's Land Army (WLA) makes little more than a passing

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[1] B. Anderson, *We just got on with it* (1994), p. 89. See also The Imperial War Museum, Department of Documents, 88/6/1, memoirs of Mrs D. G. Gardner.



FIGURE 1. Memorial to the Women's Timber Corps by Malcolm Robertson, The Queen Elizabeth Forest Park, Aberfoyle, Scotland. Image used with the permission of the Scottish Forestry Commission.

reference to the Corps.[2] It is an absence that has been exacerbated by the conflation of the WTC and the WLA organisations in the public mind. On 23 July 2008 for instance, BBC Breakfast reported on the visit of 50 former Land Girls to attend a ceremony at 10 Downing Street to collect their recently organised medallion.[3] As the presenters were interviewing a former Land Girl, the screen behind her showed a silent black and white film of the WTC at work. Although this may have mattered little to the BBC, surviving members of the Corps and the Land Army would certainly have noted the disparity between image and dialogue. Indeed, both during the war and after it, members of the WTC were fiercely protective of their unique position and status as independent of (and some might consider, superior to) their Land Army counterparts. While this is clear evidence of a disparity between popular and private constructions of identity, the absence of a contemporary, definitive history of the Women's Timber Corps has maintained the obscurity of the organisation. The WTC, like so many other 'forgotten' organisations of the Second World War (including the Bevin Boys and the women who served within the Home Guard and in Women's Home Defence) has

[2] J. Clarke, *The Women's Land Army: a portrait* (2008).

[3] *The Independent*, 28 Jan. 2008, 'Medals for the 'land girls' of the Second World War' (http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/medals-for-the-land-girls-of-the-second-world-war–774862.html, accessed 12 Mar. 2010).

suffered from the unflinching attention paid to dominant narratives of the British at war, and specifically, from the veneration traditionally bestowed upon male combatants.[4] The main purpose of this article is therefore simple; to retrieve the history of the WTC using institutional archives lodged at the National Archives and oral interviews with veterans of the Corps conducted in 2003 and 2004. It begins with an examination of the contribution that was made by the Women's Forestry Service during the First World War.

I

There was nothing new about women working in agriculture. Locally, they had toiled on the land for centuries alongside their male partners and relatives. However, the advent of the First World War in 1914 signalled a huge influx of women into paid employment. Aside from munitions work, nursing and the auxiliary services, women could also volunteer for the Women's Land Army, a process of substitution that helped to counter the drift of farm labourers into the Armed Forces and sustain the flow of home grown produce. By 1918 there were 28,000 women working the land as part of the WLA.[5] The vast majority of these Land Girls worked on local farms but a small cohort was directed into forestry work under the banner of the Women's Forestry Service (WFS). The organisation was officially formed on 1 August 1917 under the National Service Department, initially employing 25 measurers and 20 timber cutters.[6] Measurers were taught to assess the volume of standing timber and calculate the cubic capacity of each tree. Their work was relatively sedentary in comparison to the job of the timber cutter, who were trained at camps in Nottinghamshire and Suffolk where they learnt to fell and process standing timber.[7] The first four months of the fledgling WFS were difficult for two reasons. Owing to the demand for female labour from other industries, the organisation was barely able to expand its ranks. The timber industry was also slow in calling on the women already serving in the organisation to assist their operations. However, by early 1918, demand for timber and labour both began to rise. By the time hostilities ceased later that year, the WFS had employed 2000 women who, with the help of 43 battalions of Canadian Forestry Corps, had surveyed, stripped and processed over 450,000 acres of woodland.[8] In addition to these 'official' workers, there were at least 1000 other women who, while not formally registered with the WFS, were employed in local forests and sawmills.[9] Despite the apparent success of the organisation, the official historian of timber production in the Second World War, Russell Meiggs, described the WFS as 'rough and ready'. Indeed, he believed that the revival of the organisation in 1940 and the widespread substitution of women for male timber workers would not have succeeded had the government not stepped in and set up the WTC on firmer foundations than its predecessor.[10]

While the First World War may have provided ample evidence that women could work effectively in forestry, it also demonstrated Britain's acute inability to generate enough of its

[4] See P. Summerfield and C. M. Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence* (2008).

[5] V. Sackville West, *The Women's Land Army* (1944), p. 9.

[6] TNA, F18/230, C. W. Bird, 'Supply and Control'.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] R. Meiggs, *Home timber production, 1939–45* (1949), p. 194.

own timber. In peacetime, stocks of timber came almost exclusively from the Empire and other overseas suppliers. Reducing this import dependency was not easy. As we have seen, although small amounts of timber were being produced on home soil, in the First World War France was charged with providing the bulk of the supply, thereby replacing the need for timber from the Baltic. It was a situation which could not be replicated in the event of another war, not least given the cost of importing timber and the growth of aerial warfare. With this in mind, the problem of future supply was tackled by the Acland Committee, which was formed in 1918 as a sub-committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction. Its report led to the establishment of the Forestry Commission in 1919 as a state forestry authority which was responsible for afforestation and increasing the production of timber on home soil. This was far from an easy task. By 1939, Britain had become the largest wood-importing country in the world.[11] On average, only four per cent of the timber consumed was produced on home soil.[12] The gravity of this continued reliance did not go unnoticed. On the eve of the Second World War, one correspondent writing in *The Times* warned that, 'should this country be engaged in a major war in the next few years, she will be in a much less advantageous position for timber supplies than in 1914'.[13] Timber that should have been reaching maturity in 1939 had been felled prematurely over the course of the First World War and post-war efforts to replant woodland had mostly not yet come to fruition.

When the Second World War began in September 1939, two of the most vital requirements were beech wood, which was used in the production of aircraft, and pitprops for the mining industry. It was this latter commodity which caused ministers within the Ministry of Supply the most anxiety. At the beginning of 1940 it was estimated that stocks of pitwood would last for a maximum of seven months. The severity of the shortage required a rapid increase of timber production at home, something which could only be achieved by an accurate survey of Britain's standing timber and a rapid increase in the workforce able to process existing stocks. A census undertaken in 1942, revealed a high quantity of coniferous woods which could be turned into pitprops.[14] Landowners would also play their part and surrender their woodland to the war effort. All that was now required was an increase in personnel.

II

In common with other aspects of wartime organisation, the outbreak of war in 1939 was met with a prepared restoration of the structures and institutions which had evolved during the First World War. Initially, female timber workers were directed into forestry through the WLA. The WTC was not formed as a separate entity until April 1942. Scotland was the first area of the country to mobilise the new workers, including a small cohort of Land Girls who had already trained as telegraph pole selectors. In these early days, the WLA was reluctant to advertise the possibility of forestry work to potential recruits into the Land Army because of the poor

[11] 'Woodlands in the War', *The Times*, 24 Dec. 1940, p. 40.

[12] Meiggs, *Home timber production*, p. 1.

[13] 'Timber in wartime British supplies, from wooden walls to ARP', *The Times*, 19 Aug. 1939, p. 11.

[14] 'Woodlands in the War', p. 40. See also *Meet the members: a record of the Women's Timber Corps* (1944), pp. 34–8.

response from women volunteers to work on the land. It was their fear that 'if an alternative of forestry is offered, it will make the land work even less attractive'.[15] Farmwork was considered to be one of the least prestigious wartime occupations for women and the WLA struggled to attract new members into its ranks. The Corps, on the other hand, was deemed to be different, exciting and an adventurous alternative to land work.[16] For this reason, forestry work was never widely advertised and the recruitment of women as measurers and pole selectors continued on an internal (and largely informal) basis until 1942, as and when a request was filed by a timber merchant. The main body of the timber industry was sustained by the male sawyers, tractor and lorry drivers, hauliers, fellers and saw doctors, all of whom had been reserved from military service in 1939. They were joined by 860 Territorials and a multi-national contingent of forestry workers from Canada, Australia, British Honduras, and Britain.[17] The ranks were topped up by a motley crew of friendly 'aliens', conscientious objectors, university students, seasonal workers and schoolboys over fifteen, the latter working for a minimum of three weeks and doing everything from sawing timber to light felling work.[18] Prisoners of war were also employed; in 1942, 3,000 Italians were integrated into timber production[19] and, by 1945, it was noted that 45,000 Germans were employed in agriculture and forestry.[20] Despite the complaints lodged by local Parish Councils and members of the public over the freedom granted to these men, their employment was, according to the MP Sir Alfred Knox, preferable to 'keeping them in camps, eating their heads off and doing nothing'.[21] In practice, their employment was not always welcomed by the Corps. They were thought to receive better treatment than their female co-workers, including larger rations and a more consistent supply of vital equipment, including Wellington boots.[22]

In these early days, and despite a clear demand for labour and timber, the number of women recruited into forestry work was relatively small. At the close of 1941, 3,800 women were working alongside 16,900 men.[23] In part, the limited impact of women in the early part of the war was due to the unwillingness of the authorities to establish a permanent women's service, something which might have facilitated a greater level of cooperation between the exclusively male timber trade and female workers. Meiggs firmly believed that a separate, permanent service was 'not acceptable to the authorities'[24] even though necessity demanded it. This was

[15] TNA, F18/230, Note by the Chairman of the Forestry Commission, Mr Wynne Jones, 15 June 1939.

[16] Rita Pullen and Dorothy Lee interviewed by Emma Vickers, 14 Nov. 2003.

[17] Meiggs, *Home timber production*, p. 140 and W. C. Wonders, 'The Canadian Forestry Corps in Scotland during World War Two', *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 103 (1987), p. 21.

[18] Meiggs, *Home timber production,* p. 143. See also 'Children on the land, help or hindrance?' *The Times*, 1 Aug. 1940, p. 6.

[19] TNA, WO 199/407, letter from the Director of Prisoners of War to the War Office, 20 Feb. 1942.

[20] Parliamentary Debates (hereafter PD), Commons, 410 col. 667, reply from Sir J. Grigg, 24 Apr. 1945.

[21] TNA, WO 199/409, Summary of objections to use for unescorted German POW, App. A, 103 and PD, Commons, 410 col. 667 reply from Sir A. Knox, 24 Apr.1945.

[22] Some prisoners of war received Wellington boots before the WTC and WLA. The issue was discussed in the House of Commons, PD, Commons, 385, col. 1298, 3 Dec. 1942. See also Richard Moore-Colyer's comments in 'Prisoners of war and the struggle for food production, 1939–49', in B. Short, C. Watkins and J. Martin, *The frontline of freedom: British farming in the Second World War* (2007), p. 119.

[23] Meiggs, *Home timber production,* p. 307.

[24] Ibid., p. 194.

largely because of the inherent danger and physicality of forestry work. Put bluntly, it was deemed to be no job for a woman. In 1940 the Forestry Commission sought to examine this assumption more thoroughly by conducting a survey of women already working in forestry in order to assess the potential productivity of an all-female operation. The report conceded that female forestry workers could indeed make an effective contribution, albeit a less able one than their male counterparts when it came to the heavier aspects of forestry. It concluded for instance that while the 'nimble fingers' of female planters cost fourteen per cent less than if the work had been completed by a man, heavier work like notch planting cost 67 per cent more than the normal cost for men's labour.[25] There was still, however, ample evidence to suggest that women could make a significant contribution to lighter, less strenuous forestry work should they be employed in greater numbers.

It is perhaps not surprising that it was the Battle of the Atlantic, which began in 1941, rather than the cautious green light offered by the Forestry Commission, which prompted the official formulation of the WTC in April 1942. Unlike the Women's Land Army, which came under the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the WTC came under the jurisdiction of the Home Grown Timber Production Department of the Ministry of Supply (known in peacetime as the Forestry Commission). The nucleus of the Corps was formed by 1,200 women in England, Wales and Scotland who were already working for the Home Grown Timber Production Department and for timber merchants under the auspices of the WLA. When local recruitment officially began in March 1942, the promise of a wartime career in forestry proved to be an attractive prospect. Indeed, the promise of travel, better hours than the regular Land Army and a more generous pay scale ensured that the Corps was never short of recruits. Around 250 women a month between the ages of 18 and 35 volunteered for the Corps.[26] They were an incongruous crop of women composed of, amongst others, university graduates, sales assistants and ballet dancers. In Scotland the ranks were reportedly strengthened by an unnamed tennis star and a group of Hebridean fish workers.[27] It was a diversity that fascinated the trainers entrusted with looking after the women. Bonny Macadam joined the WTC in 1942 and quickly became a trainer at Shandford Lodge, near Brechin in Angus. She vividly recalled a cohort of rookies stepping off the train at Brechin station. 'There were so many townies – shop assistants, hairdressers … you name them. They had high heels, hats with veils … absolutely incredible!'[28] Unlike most of the young women she was employed to look after, Bonny was slightly better prepared for life in the WTC. As the daughter of a wealthy malt extract magnate, she had learnt how to handle an axe and drive heavy vehicles on the family estate before the outbreak of war. It was a training that most 'townies' could only dream of.

Primary accounts of the selection process for the WTC suggest that a higher academic standard was required for applicants in comparison to women entering the WLA.[29] All recruits were required to sit a basic mathematics exam to decide which women should be trained as

[25] TNA, F18/230, Forestry Commission report on the output of female forestry workers, 15 Aug. 1940.

[26] *Meet the members*, p. 6.

[27] Meiggs, *Home timber production,* p. 195.

[28] Bonny Macadam quoted in J. Gilchrist, 'So what did you do in the war, mummy?' *The Scotsman*, 18 Feb. 2000.

[29] See M. Williams, *Lumber Jill* (1994) p. 8 and N. Tyrer, *They fought in the fields* (1996), p. 152.



FIGURE 2. Recruits at Culford Camp, Suffolk, 3 August 1940.

Source: Author's own collection.

measurers. In terms of physicality, there is little evidence to suggest that women were recruited on the basis of their stature or physical strength. Enthusiasm, resilience and good humour were deemed to be more important, although there is some evidence to suggest that women were directed into areas of work that would best suit their stature. Betty Hansford, a veteran of the WTC, described herself as 'small and slightly built'. The doctor who conducted Betty's medical laughed at her desire to join the organisation but, since she possessed no physical impairment which prevented her from 'having a go', she did just that, and served out her time in the Corps as a measurer.[30]

In England, all new recruits were sent to training at camps in Culford (Figure 2), Wetherby, Hereford and Lydney for a month's training in timber and its production. They learnt how to identify trees and measure woodland, how to select trees for telegraph poles and how to fell, haul and process standing timber. Once the month's training was over, each woman was directed into the area of production in which they had shown the most progress and sent either to work for the Forestry Commission or the timber trade.

Of all the 'specialists', measurers were the most highly prized members of the service, described as being 'drawn from a different type of girl altogether'[31] and as being 'the brains of the outfit'.[32] Their work demanded precision and accuracy; potential sites had to be assessed for volume, extraction routes and stacking grounds and each tree was measured for its cubic

[30] Betty Hansford interviewed by Emma Vickers, 14 May 2003.

[31] TNA, MAF 900/162, letter from Miss B. G. Brew, WLA Headquarters to Mrs Crowther, County Secretary of Chester, 5 Jan. 1940.

[32] P. Parker, 'The rewards of hard labour' in M. Nicholson, *What did you do during the War?* (1995) p. 45.

capacity by sight with the aid of a Hoppus Ready Reckoner (a guide which allowed measurers to estimate accurately the amount of timber that a tree would yield).[33] It was on the basis of the measurers' calculations that the fellers were paid.

As 'the brains of the outfit', measurers were sometimes singled out by their co-workers as possessing an inflated sense of self-worth. Two of my interviewees, Eileen Marsden and Pat Rouse, spoke of their mutual dislike for a particular measurer that they encountered during the war.

> EM: I always remember meeting another member of the WTC and asking what she did, and she said [imitates a middle class accent] 'Oh, I'm a measurer.'
>
> PR: Oh they were toffee-nosed weren't they? I shouldn't say this but they were people that came from universities.[34]

As another interviewee, Gwenda Huff, recalled, a certain amount of 'cat calling' occurred between the two groups. 'Measurers seemed to think they were different. Perhaps it was because if their measurements were not correct the fellers' wages were wrong'.[35] This sense of difference – which was often compounded by class – was exacerbated by the higher pay packets received by the measurers. Internal rivalries such as these were arguably part and parcel of life in the Corps. The curious mix of inexperienced urbanites, country dwellers and university-educated women that made up the organisation imbued it with an unrivalled sense of uniqueness.

By December 1943, there were 8500 women working for the Forestry Commission and the timber trade.[36] It did not take long for members of the Corps to develop a strong organisational identity, many of whom expressed pride at their unique role and presumed superiority over their Land Army sisters. Unlike members of WLA, women in the WTC were tied to the service by an Essential Work Order, an agreement that prevented the drift of women from forestry into higher paid but less important work. It decreed that once recruited, members of the Corps could not withdraw from the service without the permission of the Ministry of Labour. It was a bind that prompted some members of the Corps to behave snobbishly towards the Land Army. Eileen Kennedy, for instance, jokingly described the WTC as the 'Rolls Royce of the Land Army'.[37] Likewise, a veteran of the Corps who was interviewed for the Tyne Tees series *Flashbacks* believed that the WTC were in a different class altogether. Asked by the presenter to elucidate, she explained that 'The WTC wasn't the WLA. We wouldn't be classed with the WLA. People didn't believe what you were doing and you just felt that little bit better'.[38] Some veterans of the Corps also believed that they possessed higher morals than their Land Army counterparts. In a clear reference to the crudely modified Land Army slogan 'Backs to the Land', four of my respondents claimed that while the WTC did not conduct sexual relationships with POWs, Land Girls had no such scruples.

[33] Personal memoirs of Marjorie Ridgley, collection of the author, 10 Mar. 2003.

[34] Pat Rouse and Eileen Marsden interviewed by Emma Vickers, 6 Mar. 2003.

[35] Gwenda Huff interviewed by Emma Vickers, 5 Apr. 2003.

[36] Meiggs, *Home timber production*, p. 307.

[37] Eileen Lloyd interviewed by Emma Vickers, 14 Mar. 2003.

[38] Joan Slassor, *Flashbacks*, Tyne Tees Television, 2 Dec. 1994.

Pay was also a bone of contention between the two groups. Women in the Corps worked on a system of piece-work, unlike women in the WLA who worked for a set salary. On average, this granted the Corps a higher overall wage than the Land Army; some 50*s*. per week, a figure which was 'considerably above the Land Army minimum'.[39] The final point of separation from the WLA was the uniform of the WTC; although there was little difference in the walking-out breeches, shoes and jumpers worn by both sets of women, members of the WTC wore a green beret (much envied by their Land Army sisters[40]) and a cap badge composed of a fir tree surmounted by a royal crown. Women who worked as fellers were also distinguished by a badge composed of two crossed axes, worn on the sleeve, a badge adopted from the light infantry division of the Pioneer Corps. Coloured armbands designated women who had stayed within the service for two years or more.

Of all the jobs performed by the WTC, felling was undoubtedly the most complex and physically demanding. Women worked with axes weighing between 4½ lbs to 7 lbs felling trees which frequently topped 80 feet in height.[41] Once a 'dip' or 'v' shaped wedge had been chopped out of the base of the tree, women worked in pairs on a double handed saw, 'cross-cutting' into the tree until it was ready to fall. Once felled, the tree underwent a process called 'snedding' whereby its branches were trimmed back to the trunk. Each tree was then cut into lengths and loaded up to be taken to the local sawmill for processing. The final part of the process was undertaken by the measurers, who calculated rates of pay based upon the amount of timber that was felled.

For most women, the inherent physicality of life in the forests had a transformative effect on their bodies. It was not unusual for work to begin with anything up to a 20 mile cycle ride.[42] Fellers wielded axes weighing up to seven pounds, operated cross cut saws and loaded timber by hand. They also drove tractors and lorries and worked in sawmills which, even by the standards of the 1940s, were considered to be exceptionally dangerous. Accidents were a routine aspect of life in the WTC and included broken legs from horses that bolted while hauling timber; bronchitis caused by the inhalation of sawdust; and amputated fingers, which were most commonly sustained by women working in the sawmills. A small number of women were killed when trees fell the wrong way during the felling process. In the winter months conditions became even more testing, not least for those who lived and worked in the forests of Scotland, bedding down at night in makeshift huts, breaking the ice on top of the water in order to wash in the morning and forced to walk, cycle or hitchhike to civilisation.[43] Aside from hands and feet that were constantly blistered, some women contracted tuberculosis while others developed joint pain and rheumatism from working in the cold. Lilian Sykes (Figure 3) was nearly blinded in one eye while chopping wood. It was an injury that eventually forced her resignation from the Corps.

Disability, illness and isolation were not the only downsides of the job. By its very nature, life in the Corps was also extremely transient and nomadic: once a particular patch of woodland

[39] TNA MAF 900/162, circular 101 from G. Denman to WLA County Secretaries and WLA County Chairmen, 10 Feb. 1942.

[40] See J. Mant, *All muck and no medals* (1995), p. 323.

[41] R. Millard, 'Hail, fellers, well met again', *Life and Times*, 20 May 1992.

[42] *Meet the members,* p. 34.

[43] Millard, 'Hail, fellers, well met again'.



FIGURE 3. Lilian Sykes, July 1940.

Source: Author's own collection.

had been surveyed, felled and manufactured into useable commodities, work began on another area of standing timber. In her first two years of working in the WTC, Pat Younghusband worked in over 80 different locations. Each move meant a new billet and, often, a new set of workmates.[44] However, the women of the Corps proved themselves to be more than up to the task. Despite the Forestry Commission's prediction that women would largely be confined to lighter jobs like planting, women fellers played a crucial part in activities of the organisation. Meiggs referred to a few 'female Amazons who rivalled men'[45] and, likewise, in 1942, James Tait wrote an article in the *Scottish Forestry Journal* which described a memorable encounter with a group of Lumberjills in Scotland. 'I have to admit that a mere man will have to take care if he is to be recognised as a forester in future. The woman in charge could lay a tree with the best of men and it is some considerable time since I saw anyone so knacky [proficient] in the handling of an axe'.[46]

The 'mere men' who worked alongside the Corps (some 51,700 by 1944) did not all accept the influx of women into the timber trade with generosity.[47] As Figure 4 suggests, women were a minority presence in an industry which had always been heavily dominated by men. Kay Evans, a veteran of the Corps, believed that the Forestry Commission 'would never have admitted women unless [it was] forced to'.[48]

Personal testimony seems to substantiate Kay's observation. When Muriel Ward presented herself to the manager of the sawmill to which she had been allocated, he informed her that he had 'never wanted women working for me, but I suppose nothing can be done about it now'.[49] The manager's resignation to the situation was all too common in the private timber trade. Similarly, Pat Rouse described her foreman as a 'devil' yet she was determined to prove her worth. 'The attitude was that women can't do anything. You could see it on the men's faces.

[44] Letter from P. Young husband to Emma Vickers, 8 July 2003.

[45] Meiggs, *Home timber production*, p. 202.

[46] Quoted in Anderson, *We just got on with it*, p. 90.

[47] Meiggs, *Home timber production*, p. 307.

[48] Kay Evans interviewed by Emma Vickers, 6 May 2003.

[49] Muriel Ward cited in 'The other "Green Berets"', *Nottingham Evening Post*, 20 Mar. 1995.



FIGURE 4. Lyth Valley Sawmill, 1943.

Source: Author's own collection.

But they grew to get the idea'.[50] Indeed, it did not take long for the industry to recognise the value of the women who were sent to assist them. The Corps quickly established themselves as 'grafters' who were not afraid of hard work in all weathers.[51]

While some members of the WTC were forced to prove their worth to a highly sceptical and exclusively male industry, the press needed less persuasion of their value. In one article from the *The Leader*, published in 1942, 'smiling beauties' are pictured in turbans and rolled up dungarees carrying logs and wistfully staring into the horizon. Owing to the inherent novelty of former shop assistants and office workers felling trees, it is perhaps not surprising that the author chose to focus on the juxtaposition between pre-war and wartime roles of the Corps. The article begins with the incredulous tagline

> Shiver my timbers! What's going on here? Girls felling trees? Sawing them up? Carrying them about on their shoulders? Yes, it's all just as you see it. For this is Britain, 1942. The Britain where women are now taking over men's jobs everywhere – and making a success of them. Even the most strenuous ones – like that of these hardy forestry girls.[52]

The author went on to contrast the previous work of the Corps in 'comfortable shops and offices' to their new, temporary lives as Lumberjills.[53]

A similar angle was taken in an article published in the *Cornish Times* in 1944. The author described a typical day in the life of an eleven-strong gang and goes on to explore the contrast between life in the Corps and the sedentary pace of peacetime.

> Miss Muriel (Killer) Berry was … a shop assistant … in Halifax. Her department had been ladies lingerie, and she remarked chopping tree-trunks and handling ladies' underclothing are just as extreme as can be imagined. But she really liked the job, although after the war she looks forward to something a little less energetic.[54]

[50] Pat Rouse interviewed by Emma Vickers, 6 Mar. 2003.

[51] Millard, 'Hail, fellers, well met again'.

[52] 'Down in the Forest', *The Leader*, 17 Oct. 1942.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Cited in Williams, *Lumber Jill,* pp. 94–6.



FIGURE 5. The 'Woodland Chorus Girls', Witherslack, date unknown.

Source: Author's own collection.

Those dreaming for a less strenuous life did not have long to wait. As early as 1943, the Corps began to wind down its activities. Timber production had reached a peak and reserves of standing timber began to shrink. It was a period of consolidation for the WTC when work and welfare became more organised. By 1945, and upon the cessation of hostilities in Europe, married women and those with domestic responsibilities were free to leave the WTC or transfer into under-resourced occupations such as teaching and nursing. A year later, in 1946, the organisation was officially disbanded. Like the rest of the Land Army, members of the WTC were classed as civilians and did not receive any post-war training or gratuity. Perhaps not surprisingly, the prospects for women wishing to stay within forestry were bleak; those men who had not been reserved from service returned home from the Armed Forces and reclaimed their peacetime jobs. However, a small number of women were employed on the National Census of Woodlands to assess the amount of standing timber that remained.[55] Others were offered the chance to work in Canada and Germany, requisitioning equipment from the sawmills and undertaking secretarial work for the Control Commission in the North German Timber Control, which was organising timber supplies and re-afforestation.[56] The scarcity of post-war jobs in forestry forced the vast majority of the Corps back into their peacetime roles. However, for many of the 6000 women who served as foresters during the war, life had changed for the better.

For those who had grown up in the 1930s, constrained by the ties of family and education, the Corps provided autonomy, self-sufficiency and friendship (Figure 5). Many left the organisation with a deep and abiding love for the forests, some with a greater sense of freedom and purpose and most with bodies that were stronger and fitter than their pre-war manifestations. They are privileges which for most veterans, outweighed both the hardships of the job and the infirmity in later life, particularly for fellers, caused by the physicality of felling and the harsh conditions that they faced in the winter months. As for Britain, it had emerged from a war of self-sufficiency scarred, but intact. Without the efforts of an elite cohort of female foresters, it might have fared far worse.

[55] Betty Long interviewed by Emma Vickers, 21 Mar. 2003.

[56] A. Gray, *Timber!* (1998) p. 49.

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Book Reviews

Britain and Ireland

TOM WILLIAMSON, *The origins of Hertfordshire* (University of Hertfordshire Press, 2010). xi + 271 pp., 66 figs. £16.99.

Tom Williamson's impressive update of his original book of this title (Manchester University Press, 2000) is a real pleasure to read. The text is lively, stimulating and authoritative, and evidence and arguments are clearly explained. This paperback volume is also a pleasure to look at: the text is printed more clearly than in the original publication, and the 21 new photographs are not only better-reproduced but distributed appropriately throughout the book, rather than bundled in the middle pages.

The book's central theme is the development of territorial organisation in Hertfordshire between 400 and 1000 AD. The original seven-chapter structure has been retained. The wider geographic and chronological context provided in the first two and last two chapters has been edited and updated, but the three central chapters – which focus on the evolution of early Anglo-Saxon folk-groups into middle Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, the development of early medieval extensive estates, and the pre-Conquest origins of medieval settlement and landscape exploitation – have been extensively rewritten and include much new material.

This new look at Hertfordshire stimulates and contributes to any number of research questions, which themselves illustrate how far landscape history has matured in the decade since the book was first published. Just three are explored below to give a brief flavour of the delights to be found by readers of this stimulating trove of evidence, ideas and debates.

Williamson's central premise lies in his adoption of Everitt's model of contrasting *pays* of river and wold as the basis for the emergence of political groupings (Alan Everitt, *Continuity and colonization: the evolution of Kentish settlement*, 1986). He explains the origins of territorial division in Hertfordshire in terms of control by individual groups over discrete zones defined by river catchments – each area encompassing a range of reliefs and soil types, and thereby providing access to the widest possible range of arable and non-arable resources. This model does not, however, take account of the proposition – based on early medieval sources – that Anglo-Saxon political and cultural identity was based on rights over land, rather than territorial definition. Perhaps, it suggests, early Anglo-Saxon clans or folk-groups identified themselves in terms of rights they shared to specific pastures and woodland rather than in terms of defined physical boundaries. How might this play out in Hertfordshire, one wonders?

A second premise of the book is that differences in settlement pattern and agricultural exploitation between more densely settled, 'primary' zones of arable and meadow in river valleys and less densely settled, 'secondary' zones of pasture and woodland on less fertile upland wolds can be explained in terms of population growth over time. That is, early peoples preferred to settle in valleys and subsequently gradually colonised the uplands in response to land hunger forced by demographic growth. There are two difficulties with this assumption. From at least the middle Iron Age there is evidence for settlement across all landscape types, which makes it harder to argue that there was much extensive unclaimed land available for settlement in southern England in any period thereafter. The persistence of rights of communal access to pasture, recognised by prehistorians in monuments such as causewayed camps and stock enclosures, and by historians in Anglo-Saxon laws and charters, demonstrates that such 'secondary' areas were in fact highly regarded. How might the evidence from Hertfordshire play out if it is instead explained in terms of shifting relationships between equally ancient dominant and subordinate settlements?

Such issues bring us up against a third premise. Upland zones, especially along watersheds, are regarded as 'marginal' both because of their distance from the arable 'core' and their location near the territorial periphery. The location on pasture of important prehistoric monuments focused on communal events like feasting, and of large numbers of barrow burials designed to be visible from a distance, may mean that

such areas were not 'marginal' at all, but were central to the identities and practices of the groups that created and used them. Exploration of the distinction between what is 'distant' and what is 'the edge' might enable contrasts between river and wold (and 'core' and 'marginal') to be understood in other terms: for example, by seasonal activity which left a different archaeological imprint – like the young men and women of early medieval Ireland who took cattle 'booleying' on the uplands each spring, or pastoralism as localised agricultural specialisation in a relatively integrated regional economy, or specialised renders required by an elite. The evidence from Hertfordshire contributes to this debate.

That this book on Hertfordshire generates such questions demonstrates the central relevance of regional studies to the discipline as a whole. The reader who picks up this excellent book will find much more besides: discussions of the possibility of cultural continuity from Iron Age *oppidum* to Roman *vicus* to Anglo-Saxon *caput*, the survival of prehistoric land divisions into the modern period, the fossilisation in territorial and diocesan boundaries of shifts in the balance of power between the emerging Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, and so on. This is Williamson at his best and the book deserves to become a classic, standing on academic and lay bookshelves alongside Finberg, Hoskins, Beresford, and Taylor.

SUSAN OOSTHUIZEN
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RICHARD BRITNELL, *Markets, trade and economic development in England and Europe, 1050–1550* (Ashgate Variorum, 2009). xviii + 330 pp. £85.00.

This very welcome book contains a stimulating collection of 21 articles by Richard Britnell, all previously been published in a variety of edited volumes and journals between 1968 and 2001. In addition the volume contains a short, previously unpublished paper entitled 'Urban economic regulation and economic morality in medieval England'.

The articles presented in this volume combine in an attempt to move away from the rather dichotomised interpretations of economic and social development in later medieval England of primarily Malthusian and Marxist perspectives. Instead the essays support Britnell's view of a commercialising society. It is argued that this long-term development of commercialisation, in this collection from *c.*1050 until 1550, is expressed in trade, the growth of markets and other commercial institutions as well as their various social consequences. Britnell argues that taken together these can be seen to have 'contributed directly to the institutional structure of the modern world' (p. xi).

In reflecting these concerns, the essays in this volume examine various aspects of commercialisation. They therefore explore towns, markets, long and short distance trade, aspects of the regulation of trading activities alongside questions of consumption, demand and estate management. As such the collection offers a satisfying mix of detailed studies, like for example 'The making of Witham', 'The Pastons and their Norfolk' or 'Forstall, forestalling and the Statute of Forestallers' on the one hand, and papers taking a more sweeping and long-term view, like the excellent 'Commercialisation and economic development in England, 1000–1300', or the thought-provoking 'Commerce and capitalism in late medieval England: problems of description and theory' on the other.

It is particularly nice to have the two essays comparing towns and the economies of England and northern Italy in the fourteenth century together in this volume. 'England and northern Italy in the early fourteenth century: the economic contrasts' offers a wide-ranging and insightful comparison between various aspects of the two economies, rightly taking agricultural as well as other local peculiarities into consideration in seeking to explain differing levels of enterprise, long-distance trade and banking. 'The towns of England and northern Italy in the early fourteenth century', highlights not only some of the problems arising from comparative work, but also how fruitful such an analysis can be in sketching out the key differences and similarities, and the effect such differences had upon the wider economy.

Such collections of essays are always useful and welcome as rooting through volumes of journals for individual articles can be avoided, and this makes them very helpful for undergraduate teaching.

Two criticisms are to be made of this book. The first is the pronounced concentration on England in the articles. Although the volume's title promises a European perspective, most of the papers in this volume concern primarily English markets, towns and trade. One, 'Local trade, remote trade: institutions, information and market integration, 1050–1330' does take a wider European perspective, and, as mentioned, two compare English and Italian economies and towns.

The second criticism is entirely editorial. The layout of the Variorum Collected Studies series by Ashgate, can be trying and at times distracting, which is unfortunate for a book which is priced at £85. The published papers are not given a continuous pagination and instead articles are numbered by Roman numerals with original page numbers left intact. In addition font and text layout are not harmonised throughout

the volume, and the font of some individual articles, like the 'Burghal characteristics of market towns in medieval England' are so small, that this reviewer found them difficult to read.

These criticisms however, do not distract from the importance of the essays presented in this stimulating volume.

MIRIAM MÜLLER
University of Birmingham

P. D. A. HARVEY, *Manors and maps in rural England, from the tenth century to the seventeenth* (Ashgate Variorum, 2010). x + 340 pp., £75.

The Variorum Collected Studies series exists to publish in a single volume the leading articles and essays of an individual scholar. Those articles are not produced in a fresh format with new, and continuous, pagination: the originals are simply scanned to a high standard and thus reproduced exactly as they first appeared on first publication. If the scholar has contributed influentially to the development of the discipline, then it is a boon to have much of their best work collected in a single place. In a career spanning fifty years, P. D. A. Harvey has been very influential in shaping our understanding of the rural history of medieval England.

There are 18 articles in this volume, arranged in chronological order of their subject matter. The addition of a detailed index adds considerably to the usefulness of the volume. The chronological range of Harvey's interests is unusually wide, and he is equally at home discussing tenth-century harvest workers as he is looking at seventeenth-century estate maps. The subject matter is also eclectic, ranging from landscape history to mainstream economic history.

Harvey's monographs – most notably those relating to the Oxfordshire manor of Cuxham, the format and uses of manorial records, and the history of maps – are deeply rooted in the primary source material. This interest and expertise in documents is strongly represented in the volume, where he explores the strengths and weaknesses of an extraordinary range of sources: manorial accounts, agricultural treatises, two estate surveys (the remarkable *Rectitudines Singularum Personarum and Gerefa*, and the Bolden Book), the Pipe Rolls, maps and personal seals. His analysis of the potential of medieval and early modern local records for reconstructing the English landscape, published in *Landscape History* in 2004, contains some salutary warnings about their shortcomings, and ought to be compulsory reading for anyone embarking upon research in the subject.

Harvey's discussions of the primary sources are characterized by his keen intelligence, thoughtfulness, meticulousness and common sense. His willingness to dwell upon uncertainties, and to articulate areas of ignorance, rather than breezing past them, enhances the reader's confidence in his judgements. This even-handedness, together with a deep knowledge and understanding of the source material, elevates many of his publications to the status of works of reference.

Yet Harvey is more than just an excellent technician, as his major contributions to aspects of the economic history of medieval England reveal. His ground breaking articles on the English inflation of *c.*1180 to 1220, and its impact upon the management of seigniorial estates, are still highly influential 40 years after their publication, and raise challenging (and as yet unanswered) questions about the nature of the late twelfth-century economy. His three essays on the peasant land market are indispensible to anyone wishing to study this important but demanding subject. The development of an exceptionally active and localised market in small pieces of land during the thirteenth century, and the transformation after *c.*1350 of villein tenures into different types of copyholds and leaseholds, carried significant implications for the subsequent development of agrarian capitalism in England. Harvey sketches the broad outlines of these developments in a clear and authoritative manner, and, in his final contribution to the subject (published in 1996), he also offered a future research agenda which advocates advancing along a broad front: an interlinking of estate management, patterns of inheritance, tenurial obligations, and family structure and prosperity. These three essays exemplify the best attributes of Harvey's career and works, and of the historian's craft: technical excellence combined with the ability to handle complex issues and ideas.

MARK BAILEY
University of East Anglia

RICHARD GODDARD, JOHN LANGDON and MIRIAM MÜLLER (eds), *Survival and discord. Essays in honour of Christopher Dyer* (Brepols, 2010). 306 pp., 1 fig., 7 tabs., 1 map. €70.

Christopher Dyer is one of the outstanding scholars of our generation of medieval social and economic historians, a prolific and wide-ranging author, and past President of the BAHS. This collection of essays has been brought together to honour him on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday. As the editors acknowledge in their introduction, it is very difficult to do justice to the breadth and depth of Dyer's considerable research interests and influences. To overcome the problem they have devised two rather artificial motifs of 'survival' and 'discord' to group this disparate collection of essays by past students, colleagues and friends.

One of Dyer's great strengths has been his ability to integrate and harness archaeological and archival research in the pursuit of a plethora of topics encompassing standards of living, economic exchange and numismatics. The single archaeological contribution by Astill reflects another of Dyer's interests; in this instance, rural settlement and the interaction with towns and the economy. In his wide-ranging survey Astill argues against unilineal or incremental development and gives importance to regional differences. Astill provides a long chronological perspective within which he places greater emphasis on the eighth and twelfth centuries as periods of profound change.

Local and regional themes are maintained in the section on survival, which also includes a posthumous essay by Fox on lords' exploitation of 'waste', demonstrating the depth of his understanding of the intricacies of the Devon countryside. Britnell provides a re-assessment of Postan's interpretation of the fifteenth-century economy; whilst Goddard focuses on the mid-century recession and the availability of credit in towns, although data from the decades of the slump are missing from his tables. Swanson focuses on the local economy of Derbyshire and argues for the important contribution of income derived from spiritualities. Langdon's essay provides novel insights into the far-from-static picture of wage labour and uncovers the dynamics of family groups, women and working partnerships from royal building accounts.

Essays by Masschaele and Schofield straddle the two sections and are concerned with developments in the law. Masschaele takes Dyer's research on the interaction between town and countryside as his starting point for an exploration of itinerant royal courts and their impact on the places and people where they were held. Schofield returns to his legal roots in a study of trespass litigation within the jurisdiction of the manor court and argues for the impact of some degree of peasant agency on developments in the law in the local court.

The second half of the book is more closely allied to Dyer's earlier interests in conflict and the range of essays is correspondingly broad, ranging from individual communities to comparisons across Europe. Birrell's essay is a superb example of how a meticulous and nuanced study of one record, in this instance a rental of 1341 for Alrewas, when combined with the author's command of historical and local contexts, can tease out its significance and inform on a wide range of topics including lord-tenant relations, dues and services, peasant attitudes to the written word and peasant recourse to the law, all subjects that Dyer has addressed. Dyer's work has not been limited to England and the contribution by van Bavel on the revolts in the Low Countries expands our understanding of the contrasting contexts in which urban and rural revolts occurred in that region. The unusual nature of the English revolts is a theme explored polemically by Cohn who argues that English commoners were less self-confident than their continental counterparts. Laughton adds an urban dimension by examining the management of discord in fifteenth-century Chester.

Other local studies in this section include Briggs's evaluation of the effectiveness of the demesne farming system before and after the Black Death in eastern England, through a case study of Great Eversden. A closely studied communal lease of Great Horwood is employed by Tompkins to address issues of individualism and collectivism. Diet is a topic that Dyer has done so much to elucidate, and Müller's rather eclectic collection of sources for studying food as a point of conflict is a gesture towards this important area of his research.

The final section of the book, the bibliography of Dyer's writings 1968–2009, further attests to the scope of his interests, and 'The Story So Far …' leaves us in happy anticipation of what is still to come.

MARGARET YATES
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CHRISTOPHER W. BROOKS, *Law, politics and society in early modern England* (Cambridge UP, 2008). xii + 456 pp. £65.

Chris Brooks's book is one to read slowly and savour over a long period. His mission is to explain the role that the law played in early modern society. This brief allows him to look not only at issues of politics and administration, but also the legal writing and education and, a question which interests him greatly, how far legal principles were understood within early modern society. He also writes about how people used the law and how far legal institutions impinged on their lives.

The book effectively falls into two parts. In the first, Brooks adopts a chronological approach which builds to the denouement of 1641 – in which many of the legal disputes of the previous half century, and in particular the innovations of the previous 15 years – were conclusively resolved by statute. Brooks's success is in showing that there is, in a legal sense, a high road to the civil war. In 1640–1 we can see the Elizabethan legal mind reasserting itself and seizing the opportunity given it by the Scots to resolve some issues once and for all. In the course of this he gives us a fuller exposition of the 'common-law mind' than we have had before, drawing a great deal of his material from what might be called 'grey literature': readings at the Inns of Court, assize

sermons and charges at the assizes and quarter sessions – to give us a much clearer sense of what legal ideas circulated and where. From all of this, it becomes clear that there was never a single legal mind, but persisting questions about a variety of issues, including the power of the crown. Brooks is good on the debates around monarchical power, and he confirms the existence of a 'republican' streak in Elizabethan legal and political thought or, as he puts it, a 'mixed monarchical interpretation of the English constitution' (p. 81). Sir Edward Coke, in particular, comes across as a man after his time, fighting a rearguard action against Thomas Lord Ellesmere and others whose view of the prerogative James I found more congenial. Brooks also shows how some of Ellesmere's clients held pretty absolutist ideas. This leads to the thought that in the law, as in religion, the late 1580s and the 1590s were as formative a decade as the late 1540s had been for the Elizabethan generation. Where the Elizabethans saw 1549 and recoiled from inflaming the commons, some of the generation who lived through the Presbyterian campaigns and the furore provoked by Martin Marprelate spent the remainder of their lives suspecting popularity and detecting incipient democracy in all quarters. (Lord Chancellor Ellesmere suspected Coke of popularist tendencies, and he was almost certainly right.)

The second half of the book changes tack. It focuses on a variety of areas in which the law can be seen in operation. Several of these are required reading for early modern rural historians including the helpful discussions of copyhold, employment and family law, debt and credit, and the legal dynamics of local communities. There is some extraordinary material on the scale of imprisonment for debt before the civil war (of which I hope someone will give us a fuller exposition): each reader will find their own cherry. I differ from Brooks on some points here, perhaps approaching these issues from another perspective. I think he fails to appreciate (following the work that Henry French and I did on Earl's Colne) just how far there is a rejection by ordinary people of the seigneurial claims implicit in the exercise of the manorial court. Moreover, John Broad has shown how some lords might be reluctant to convene courts given that they represented a potential source of opposition (and were certainly the locus of custom) to their estate policies. Conversely one would like to know more about the larger 'world view' of those lords who continued to try and make their courts work right through to 1640. The accounts of judicial attitudes to corporation are helpful, but incorporation, I am relieved to say, barely features, which leaves me space to offer my views on this elsewhere. Occasionally the text wanders, and I thought that Brooks's discussion of the 'problem of the over-mighty' rather lost its way and did not offer the firm conclusion that an undergraduate reader might hope for.

There were also a couple of areas I felt Brooks downplayed if only by omission. One is Star Chamber, about which there are some very interesting comments concerning its role as a check on public officials in the seventeenth century, but there is perhaps less on its place as the vehicle through which administrative policy could be enforced. Of course, we need a good modern account of Star Chamber. The other is arbitration, an area of great interest to historians perhaps thirty years ago, but not one which raises any legal principles, and which warrants only three page references in the index. Yet arbitration is pretty ubiquitous in early modern society and deserves its place in any account of how the law was used. Arbiters are often lawyers. Much litigation ended in with an extra-curial settlement and it is possible to see much of the work of Chancery as being arbitration.

I am a little sceptical too when Brooks says that 'it is very difficult to find any evidence at any point during this period of a distinctively "folk justice" that existed outside one kind of local jurisdiction or another' (p. 424). Difficult, but not impossible, and I think that there are hints from 1549 of alternative systems of justice, both in the sense of short-lived tribunals, but also in the justice administered by the earl of Arundel, both perhaps offering a different balance of equity in which greater weight was given to the needs of the small man, the manorial tenant, and less to the manorial lord. Something of this sort can also be seen in the petitions of 1549 and Norfolk petition of 1553, and the same ideas underpin much equitable litigation in which custom is made to support claims of a distinctively peasant equity. The comments of Archbishop Richard Bancroft in 1609, quoted on p. 117, are very interesting here, suggesting as they do that jury trials at the common law were easier for the gentry to manipulate in their favour so that the poor were disadvantaged in enclosure disputes. A forthcoming paper of mine on the protracted disputes in Taverner *v.* Cromwell from north Norfolk in the third quarter of the sixteenth century shows all too plainly how both parties believed that a jury of yeomen would find differently to a jury of gentry on the same facts. Now this may not amount to 'folk justice', but I think we should keep open the possibility that there were voices within the countryside that regarded the common law as the (manorial) lord's law.

Law, politics and society is underpinned by an enormous range of reading, not only from the printed

materials, but also a mass of unpublished literature from both sides of the Atlantic. One of the key sources that Brooks draws on are the charges given at assizes and quarter sessions by judges or magistrates and he shows compellingly how these articulate not only current preoccupations but also the essentials of the law and legal thinking. Brooks is interested in how far legal understanding permeated English society. I would say a long way. Recall, for instance, the doubts expressed when the levying of the Forced Loan was announced in 1626: the legal principles at stake were widely recognised and understood. Now we have this book, we can appreciate that charges were a form of legal as well as political education. The sources he does not consider are the printed sermons contained in the Book of Homilies, some of which might usefully be seen as contributing to a popular legal consciousness.

Brooks has a good eye for a telling anecdote from the law reports, the lectures given at the inns of courts and the charges. Sometimes he précises at length, but all too often one is left wanting to reach for the manuscript to read the text for oneself. Hence, to give an example from late in the book, one would like to know more of Francis Ashley's readings on Chapter 29 of Magna Carta given in 1616. It is a matter of Utopian regret that there is no companion volume giving some of the unknown but key texts which remain in manuscript (and law French too): such a volume would be both enlightening and also useful for teaching.

Readers should not allow themselves to be put off by the title. History students tend to run away from the law – the idea that society has abstract principles underpinning it does not appeal to those who read politics in terms of private advantage. In fact they will greatly profit from the book's clear exposition of some of the legal flashpoints of the period – the ex-officio oath, the disputes over the relation of common law to equity and ship money. The book takes its considerable learning lightly and reads supremely well. I suspect – indeed I hope – that in five years it will be seen as a deeply influential work.

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JOSÉ BOSWORTH, PAT HUDSON, MAUREEN JOHNSON and DENISE SHILITOE (eds), *The Middleton Papers. The financial problems of a Yorkshire recusant family in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Yorkshire Archaeological Record Series, 161, 2009). (The Boydell Press, 2010). xxv + 194 pp., 3 figs. £50.

The Middletons were a middle-rank Yorkshire gentry family resident at Stokeld near Spofforth, much of whose estates were around Middleton, near Ilkley. A substantial accumulation of their archives remains in the possession of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society in Leeds and, from this, the Society has now printed a selection of papers outlining the financial problems of the family in the later sixteenth and mid-seventeenth century. The first section consists of papers relating to the absence of William Middleton (1551–1614) whilst abroad in 1578–82 (he left his wife in Yorkshire to go first to London and then to travel in Europe, going as far as Naples). In the second are printed accounts for 1653–55, after a later William Middleton had bought the estates back from the Commissioners for the Sale of Delinquents' Estates through intermediaries.

The volume is not a success, and so it is important to explain why. In part the editors hit the nail on the head in their own preface: 'Both [sets of documents] followed a time of national upheaval and personal misfortune and hence are not characteristic of the family's fortunes in less troubled time'. So why are extraordinary documents privileged with publication, but not those reflecting the running of the estates in less disturbed conditions? First we have a volume of accounts kept by one Thomas Robinson, who ran the estates in Middleton's absence, under the supervision of four commissioners acting as a debt trust, together with a few ancillary documents. These include the text of Middleton's English passport and the novelty of a licence to travel around Naples at night, which is illustrated but not transcribed. The account is just an unadorned transcript filling 39 pages without any attempt to tabulate the data, or establish whether the attempt to build capital on the demesne at Stokeld (Middleton's justification for leaving Yorkshire) was successful. It will provide useful material for an undergraduate or even MA student to cut their teeth on.

Second, the main document for the later period is a day book of expenditure, 1653–55. We do not seem to be told whose account this, but it appears to be that of a household steward and contains a mixture of expenditure for agricultural costs, household consumption and the personal costs of family members. This fills 32 pages. It is supported by some correspondence and deeds outlining the family's reacquisition of the estate and the heavy levels of debt they carried over the 1650s and 1660s. The latter material is useful enough, but really ought form the basis of an article in the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* or *Northern History*: it is hard to see what might be the justification for its publication in full.

There is then a quite extraordinarily weak introduction by the editors, which never discusses any

of the questions one might like to have answered about this material. There is no attempt to calculate the income of the family at any time and, whilst the title of the volume refers to the family's recusancy, the costs of recusancy to them, as opposed to their civil war royalism, are never explained. (In fact it would seem hard to attribute William Middleton's problems in the 1570s to his Catholicism: the financial penalties on Catholics only really kick in in the 1580s.) The truth is that the introduction does not really exploit the documents, nor set them in a context of the family's fortunes. A rental of 1578 is dismissed as an underestimate of income when compared to earlier and later ones (p. 55), but this is never explored or the comments justified. The later life of William Middleton, and his troubles as a recusant, is left undescribed (although the comments on him in J. T. Cliffe's *Yorkshire gentry from the Reformation to the Civil War* (1969) suggest a much more interesting and historically rewarding figure than the editors acknowledge). Virtually nothing is said about the generation between William Middleton and his grandson who had to buy back his family's estates. The latter William Middleton borrowed to recover his estates from Sir John Lowther of Lowther amongst others, but no use has been made of the Lowther archive at Carlisle, or the accounts that Colin Phillips published as long ago as 1979. It turns out too that the circumstances of the first William Middleton's continental tour have been explored by the same authors in the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 72 (2000), which has to be preferred to the summary account in the introduction of this volume.

In sum, this is far less than the book's title promises. The editorial quartet explains that they started this project as part of a WEA Palaeography class. Their transcription doubtless brought them a great deal of pleasure, but whether they have been well advised to press on with publication has to be doubted.

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JANE WALKER (ed.), *Datchworth Tithe Accounts, 1711–1747* (Hertfordshire Record Publications, 25, 2009). lvii + 129 pp., 7 illus., 2 maps. £22 & £3.50 p&p. (available from Mrs. Gwynneth Grimwood, Honorary Treasurer HRS, 50 Sollershott Hall, Sollershott East, Letchworth, Herts., SG6 3PW).

Tithe accounts have long been recognised as important documents for agrarian historians because they can provide information on prices and farming practices for small and medium-sized estates, rather than the institutional accounts and large estate records that tend to dominate our view of the subject. However, it might be worth adding a rubric applicable to most other primary sources, that they are only valuable when properly understood. As Jane Walker's very detailed introduction to this set of eighteenth-century Hertfordshire accounts makes plain, the complexity of tithing arrangements makes this necessity particularly pressing. The great tithes on all products of the soil might be collected in kind, compounded for wholly or in part in cash, or (until 1549) fall upon the labours of people, in the output of a mill or a fishery. In addition, particularly after the Dissolution, the great tithes might be owned or farmed by a layman, but much 'privatised' monastic land remained exempt from tithes. Not only this, but tithing customs varied from parish to parish, and had to accommodate new crops, such as turnips or potatoes, and others that were difficult to levy in kind, such as milk.

The Datchworth accounts were maintained by Rev. William Hawtayne (1680–1747), chaplain to the Earl of Essex, by whom he was presented to the living in 1709. Hawtayne moved in court circles, and became chaplain to Caroline of Ansbach, Princess of Wales after 1714. In the first few years of his incumbency Hawtayne also kept accounts of his direct farming activities on the 20–24 acres of glebe lands in Datchworth (approximately half of it composed of strips in the village's remaining open fields). Although Hawtayne's income shifted over time largely to (more convenient) composition payments, the accounts reveal that between 1711 and 1717 his total income from Datchworth amounted to between £120 and £140 per annum. Thereafter, wheat prices declined, and it appears that some of the village's farmers were either in some financial difficulties, or less willing to compound in cash, possibly because age was causing them to wind down their farming operations. Either way, Hawtayne rarely managed to extract more than £100 from Datchworth thereafter. Only accounts for 1726 and 1739 are not recorded.

As is often the case with an account book kept by one person over a long period, the Datchworth Accounts are actually something of a miscellany. They include details of composition agreements with a few tenants, various partial surveys of the parish, a tantalisingly brief description of the pattern of farming and the rotation on John Whitfield's farm in 1715, and even the values of grain sold in Northumberland and Cumberland in the winter of 1739, reported by 'Mr Cook a very serious elderly man and at that time a serjeant in Major Farrer's Troop in Earl Cadogans Regiment of Dragoons Quarterd in my parish of Leighton Bossard … in the year 1741'. Very helpfully, the editor has also included a range of other sources in this volume, including the 1607 Glebe Terrier, 1721 Land Tax returns and poor

relief payments, and some biographical information on some of the tithe payers.

This information adds up to a very useful volume for agrarian historians interested in prices, fluctuations and farming practices in lowland England in this period. The editor's introduction is very thoroughly researched, providing a very detailed background discussion to the law and history of tithes in England, and a very effective analysis of prices and income from the Datchworth tithes. This meticulous introduction, and the transcription and preparation of the accounts themselves, displays the editor's considerable expertise. As ever, agrarian historians should remain profoundly grateful to the continuing efforts of county record societies to organise, sponsor and produce valuable editions of this kind; upon their continuing efforts so much else depends.

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RUTH FACER, *Mary Bacon's World. A farmer's wife in eighteenth-century Hampshire* (Threshold Press Ltd., 2010). xvii + 204 pp., 11 figs., 12 illus. £15.

The economic, social and cultural world of the farmer's wife is largely a mystery to the historian. In contrast to day labourers and servants on the farm, whose work has been effectively reconstructed in recent years through the careful analysis of estate and farm account books, documentary sources detailing the daily routines of the farmer's wife remain extremely scarce. Gordon Mingay's comment, made in the early 1960s, that 'farmers' wives and daughters do not emerge very clearly from the contemporary records' is still pertinent (*English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 1963, p. 246). Although an attempt was made a few years ago by this reviewer to recover the contribution made by the farmer's wife using practical farming manuals, encyclopaedias and dictionaries (Verdon, *Agricultural History Review*, 51, 1, 2003), their place in the farming world of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries still remains obscure. Ruth Facer's book is therefore an extremely welcome and valuable volume.

It traces the practical, religious and literary life of Mary Bacon, a farmer's wife from Hampshire. She came from a strong agricultural and religious background and, from her marriage to William Bacon in 1765, farmed successfully for the rest of the century, first in the village of Cliddesden and then at Aylesfield farm, north of Alton. Although representative of the farmer's wife of the 'middling sort', what is unusual about Mary is that she kept a detailed ledger that has survived and is now housed in the Hampshire Record Office. The ledger, first used as a farm account book by her yeoman farmer uncle Augustin Kinchin, was taken over by Mary in 1789 and she continued to write in it until 1807, by which time she was a widow. Facer is right to argue that the document gives 'a remarkable insight into the work and mind of a farmer's wife', providing a 'very valuable contribution to the limited knowledge we have of this group of women' (p. 6).

This book is not a complete transcription of the ledger. Rather it rearranges the content into coherently themed chapters (agriculture, religion, the kitchen, medicinal remedies and so on) and sets it within the context of the age using a wide range of other printed material including newspapers, diaries, farming manuals, almanacs and chapbooks. An inventory of goods listed in the ledger reveals that Mary and William were a prosperous couple who took pride in displaying their status through the acquisition of good-quality furniture and furnishing, and who liked to entertain. Where Mary emerges most vividly however is in the section on human and animal ailments, indicating a cost-conscious concern for animal health and status-conscious interest in community welfare; in the section on cookery, where she shows a particular pleasure in cakes and puddings; and in the chapters on her literary and religious interests, which were central to her life. Facer uses this evidence to show that Mary was a woman of fashionable tastes, of rounded but perhaps limited education. Frustratingly there appears to be much less in the ledger on work. There are few clues as to the number of farm workers or domestic servants employed, although Mary had the help of at least two maids, and the income and expenditure of the farm and household are not kept in the ledger. Instead the climate seems to have preoccupied Mary, and her detailed descriptions of the effects of the weather offer interesting insights into what it was like to live through a cold winter in the late eighteenth century.

Ruth Facer immerses herself in the world of her subject and seems to be quite protective of Mary, offering speculations about what she would have thought or done. She hopes that as Mary lay dying 'she was a peace with herself' and found solace in her religious meditations (p. 173). The style and structure make the book accessible for all audiences, and it includes some lovely illustrations. There is no conclusion however, and this could have been a space to contextualize the Bacons in a little more detail. In particular, more on the 'middling sort' and how typical the Bacons were of this group in rural society would have been useful. Davidoff and Hall's pioneering work on the rural communities of East Anglia between 1750 and 1850 (published as part of *Family Fortunes*) would have offered an additional

perspective. That said, this is a fascinating book and certainly succeeds in offering a window into the life of the farmer's wife in the second half of the eighteenth century.

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JEAN ILA CURRIE, *Three centuries of a Herefordshire village. Putley, 1685 until now (the people, their lives, the farming, the buildings)* (Owlstone Developments Ltd., 2009). x + 256 pp., 80 figs. £18.

While Herefordshire has been served reasonably well by agricultural historians, particularly in relation to cattle breeding and cider production, the wider social and economic history of the county remains under-explored. This volume, which focuses on the history of a small village, six miles from Ledbury, has no pretensions to offer a history of the wider agrarian society of the county. However, it does provide a very interesting illustration of the lives of many of the families who inhabited this community from the eighteenth to the late twentieth century, and seeks to set their experiences in the context of broader developments within the community.

The focus on family lineages, and relations between families and farms, probably derives from the genealogical nature of much of the evidence on which this book is based. As such, it is characteristic of many 'community' histories. It is also reminiscent of the distant ancestor of all such works of parish memory, Richard Gough's *History of Myddle*. This resemblance is compounded here, because in many cases the family histories are linked to surviving memorials in the parish church and churchyard, rather as Gough tied his histories to the holders of pews in Myddle church.

From 1700–1870, Putley was a small, farming, community, of approximately 1,100 acres, 600 within the ancient parish of Putley, and another 500 in the township of Putley and Woolhope. The largest property holders were the Philipps of Putley Court, an early eighteenth-century mansion with 250 acres, and the Gwillims of the Brainge, who owned 350 acres. The remaining lands were distributed among perhaps two dozen yeoman farmers, plus a variety of smallholders. The bulk of this study is concerned to detail the lives of successive generations of these families, and to note family extinctions and changes in ownership.

After 1870, the character of the community was altered by the arrival of John Riley, a Yorkshire textile merchant, who bought Putley Court in 1872 and who changed the mixed arable, pasture and fruit-growing economy of the village by concentrating on commercial fruit production. This allowed the village to evade the worst of the agricultural depression. From this period, Riley also began buying up neighbouring farms, and turned himself into an autocratic, but relatively benevolent squire, and most of the village into his dependents as tenants or labourers. If this trend was typical of its era, so was its aftermath. In 1925, the Riley estate was sold off and broken up, with the commercial fruit and mixed farms being purchased by owner-operators, who endured the 1930s to benefit from the greater profitability after 1945. The later chapters of the book add to these farming genealogies by harnessing the memories of older village residents to detail life in the community in the mid-twentieth century.

As noted, this a village study, pure and simple. However, the care with which it has been produced, and the efforts taken to trace the histories of individual families and farms, mean that it will be of value not only to those interested in genealogy and local history, but also to provide comparative contextual information for studies of ownership, tenancy and farming practices over the last 300 years.

H. R. FRENCH
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JOHN BOHSTEDT, *The politics of provisions. Food riots, moral economy, and market transition in England, c.1550–1850* (Ashgate, 2010). xi + 321pp., 5 figs, 9 tabs., 5 maps. £65.

John Bohstedt's excellent new book has been some twenty-five years in the making. Like his influential and controversial study of 'community (food) politics' in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century England, the *Politics of provisions* also steers a radical course. Taking inspiration from E. P. Thompson's seminal study of the 'moral economy' of the eighteenth-century English market, Bohstedt's study attempts to first contextualise the 'classic' eighteenth-century food riot in terms of earlier antecedents, before taking aim at Thompson's central thesis that food rioters were attacking an 'innovative market economy'. Thompson's rioters were, he argues, operating in a broader historical context of a 'provisions politics' that had started to cohere in the middle of the sixteenth century, a function of the sustained demographic boom and associated economic expansion. Thompson's chronology, so Bohstedt suggests, is therefore wrong. There had been food riots before then, as Buchanan Sharp's studies have shown, but rather post-1550 we see broadly the same social dynamics that underpinned eighteenth-century food riots in place. Indeed, this formative period with its 'maturing market economy' and waves of anti-export riots in 1586, 1597–8, 1614, 1629–31 and 1647–50 was

followed by a discernible downturn in food rioting between *c.*1650 and 1740.

Why did this 'recession of provisions politics' occur? In an elegant and strikingly original chapter, he suggests post-Civil Wars political shifts and easing population pressures coupled with rising agricultural productivity and market integration allowed England to slip the 'shadow famine' that had plagued the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century. Notwithstanding that the number of market-dependent consumers grew, rising productivity even allowed government to offer bounties to encourage farmers to export. This is not to say that food riots did not occur, but rather that they were far less frequent. Moreover, rather than focusing on 'ports', as riots had done in the earlier period, the focus shifted to newly industrialising communities – Halifax, Rochdale and Sheffield engaged in food rioting for the first time in 1728 – and, especially in the crisis years of the 1690s, the emergent 'bread baskets' of East Anglia and Northamptonshire. Bohstedt also notes a change in the discourses and actions of food rioters in this period, shifting from an earlier focus on 'prodding' governments to support local relief to instead more violent, and direct, attacks on middlemen and merchants. Certain social and occupational groups also became key actors in riots, especially the Cornish tinners and the colliers of Kingswood.

As such, the 'golden age' of food riots that followed in the period between 1740 to the mid-1770s was underpinned in some locales by earlier experiences. However, and this is Bohstedt's key point, many communities were drawn into provision politics for the first time in 1740, not by 'moral offense' but by sheer necessity. The thunder of paternalist moral economy discourses about market villains merely acted to 'lubricate' rioters' actions rather than directly motivating them. So, as the country lunged from one food crisis to another with conditions exacerbated by continued bounty-driven exports, communities responded to a genuine need by targeting those marketers who were perceived to be responsible for shortages and other forms of market manipulation. In particular, bolting mills, the critical cogs in the export trade, were frequent targets. Bolting mills and other such targets were not recent innovations, rather they were symbols of profiteering and often suspected of engaging in adulteration. So, Bohstedt suggests, the 'law of necessity' drove poor consumers to act, and in these emergencies moral bonds and law did not hold. Indeed, to risk execution for rioting was to be seen to be in absolute need. What was novel about the eighteenth century, he suggests, was that further commercialisation created new industrial communities of market-dependent consumers who were 'ripe for riot'. It was precisely these independent peoples who were to be found leading protests. In market towns that were also parliamentary boroughs, the culture of political bargaining facilitated repeated food riots. For instance in Norwich, Northampton and Nottingham, food riots often assumed remarkably similar forms and utilised the same language as election riots. Such local cultural precedents were, he argues, far more important than paternalist rhetoric, something espoused mainly by country gentlemen and so little exercised in the courts against forestallers and regraters that it 'must have appeared hollow' to poor consumers.

The highpoint of provisions politics came in 1800 when widespread and effectively disciplined food riots won 'rapid relief concessions'. These riots, and to a lesser extent those in 1795, occurred on a national basis, though the organised and industrial communities that had developed traditions of rioting were both first to protest and most successful. Other 'alien tribes', such as navvies and bankers, were also quick to adopt the techniques of long-established community and occupational groups. Responses in 1795 and 1800 were nationally coordinated in relation to the brutal repression of militia-led riots, mirroring the violence of the 1766 Special Commissions, and locally-driven in relation to effecting 'solutions'. Yet it was not this more effective balance between repression and concession achieved in the 1790s and 1800s that sealed the end of the politics of provisions so much as the fact that shops replaced markets as the most important form of provisions retailing. In short, Bohstedt asserts, targets became more diffuse, whilst consumer reliance on credit from shopkeepers meant that riot was no longer possible let alone appropriate. Moreover, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the combination of the formalisation of elite interventions in meeting subsistence needs and, post-1815, declining food prices, meant that the focus of the poor's opprobrium shifted to remuneration and the conditions of their labour.

So, this is a landmark book. Much like Adrian Randall's *Riotous Assemblies* (2006), it represents a high point for the school of protest studies immediately inspired by Thompson's pioneering works. It is written with economy and precision, it wears its many historiographical readings lightly, and makes excellent use – in the latter chapters especially – of a rich archive. The first two substantive chapters are more reliant on secondary material rather than original archival readings, meaning that Bohstedt's analysis necessarily lacks the certainty of the later chapters. Another, minor, consideration is the fact that Bohstedt's riot survey is based on both his archival endeavours and

that of others, leaving the possibility that not all locations have been subjected to the same systematic archival analysis of local sources to which Bohstedt has subjected Devon and Manchester. Readers of this journal might also question the accuracy of Bohstedt's contention – which in itself is a reworking of a claim first made by Roger Wells – that the development of the poor law system with its emphasis upon the surveillance and good character of the poor meant that rural labourers were unlikely to protest. But that these are such slight criticisms merely serves to highlight that Bohstedt's overall achievement is so impressive. This is an important, rigorous, and original book that deserves a wide readership.

CARL J. GRIFFIN
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ANNIE TINDLEY, *The Sutherland Estate, 1850–1920. Aristocratic decline, estate management and land reform* (Scottish Historical Review Monograph, 18) (Edinburgh, 2010). viii + 190 pp. £45.

The Sutherland Estate – one of the largest estates in western Europe during the nineteenth century at over a million acres – became synonymous in radical discourse with oppression and rapacious landlordism as a result of the Clearances of the period 1807–1820. The marriage in 1785 of Elizabeth, Countess of Sutherland, with George Leveson-Gower, had permitted agricultural reforms and social engineering to be executed on an unprecedented scale in the most northerly estate on the British mainland. By 1850, the second Duke of Sutherland had been partially successful in recasting the family in a more benevolent, patrician light. Indeed, eleven years after his death, the Irish nationalist *Freeman's Journal* (13 Sept. 1872), wrote that the third Duke showed 'excellent intentions', 'practical philanthropy' and 'paternal energy', praising the money expended on reclamation and resettlement projects. In this enlightened landlordism, believed the *Freeman*, could be found a fine example for Ireland. In her meticulous study, Annie Tindley has produced a work that goes beyond the polarised polemics of earlier works on Sutherland Estate, and presents a model for studies of specific estates. She demonstrates clearly the extent to which apparently 'local' issues in a peripheral area of Britain were intimately connected to much wider British and Imperial economic and social debates.

The Sutherland Estate, 1850–1920 is arranged thematically within a chronological structure, and often focuses on the lives and personalities of the estate managers, explaining how their attitudes illuminated broader political events and social issues. The vast size of the estate ensured that, if the ducal family hoped to have effective management, it needed to be split into three smaller units: the Tongue, Dunrobin and Scourie managements. These estate managers exerted considerable local power, and Evander MacIver, the factor of Scourie from 1845 until 1895 – whose face stares out from the cover of the book – was the example *par excellence* of a local dictator: trusted by the ruling family and secure in his own belief that he knew what was best for the tenants, yet constantly bewildered by the lack of gratitude shown by those tenants for his and the estate's benevolence.

The book's main narrative commences in 1850, at a time when much of the Highland region was emerging from a destructive famine which was, in a few local cases, as damaging as the simultaneous crisis in Ireland. The west coast of Sutherlandshire was badly affected, and one of the interesting features of the 1850s was the concern of the estate management about 'agitation' – which was a local reaction to hunger but was also treated as a possible local manifestation of European 'socialism' (p. 13). The incredulity of the estate that the crofting population could challenge the landowners' hegemony is a constant theme throughout the period covered. In 1890, for example, Evander MacIver wrote that 'socialism is speeding fast' (p. 94). It is extremely interesting to note that, although contemporaries often highlighted the baneful influence of Ireland on the crofters, John Box, Factor of Tongue, feared in 1889 that some young crofters from Bettyhill – recently returned from seasonal work in America – had imported 'all sorts of democratic, even communistic views' from the USA (p. 102).

Chapter Two deals with the huge drainage and reclamation project undertaken by the third Duke between 1869 and 1893, a scheme which Tindley argues (p. 47) was 'unique in nineteenth-century British agriculture, in terms of the scale of both acreage and expenditure', and is central to the book's thesis, which demands a nuanced and qualified approach to any charges of rapacious landlordism in Sutherland in the nineteenth-century. References to the coal-mining works at Brora (p. 35), which were developed to support the nascent brickworks and lime kilns in the area, are fascinating. Along with the third Duke's role in the development of the Highland Railway, it is clear from Tindley's research that, although the ducal family and their estate management may have harboured hopes of making money from their Highland holdings, and even of 'improving' the lives of their crofting tenants as a result, Sutherlandshire remained a financial black hole for a fortune gained elsewhere.

Overall, the book shows convincingly that the attitudes of the estate management had changed little

from the racially charged 'improvement' mindset of Patrick Sellar and his colleagues. It is possible to identify a thread running through the management of the Sutherland estate, which was informed by paternalism of the clumsiest kind. The book further demonstrates that, far from the smooth-running behemoth of popular discourse, the Sutherland estate was an 'often tortured, overelaborate structure, ill-equipped to deal with the challenges of the period' (p. 173). Dr Tindley is to be congratulated not only for undertaking a mammoth task in assiduously working through these papers, but also presenting the results in such a thorough, well-analysed and readable manner. She has set a high standard for further research on individual estates.

ANDREW G. NEWBY
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EILEEN WALLACE, *Children of the labouring poor. The working lives of children in nineteenth-century Hertfordshire* (University of Hertfordshire Press, 2010). xv + 168 pp., 35 illus. £14.99

This is a concise and accessible account of the working and living conditions experienced by children of the labouring poor in nineteenth-century Hertfordshire. It is based upon a range of primary sources. Children are defined as those aged 17 years and under. The introductory chapter provides a brief overview of the changing perception of childhood in the nineteenth century, alongside information on the economic and social history of Hertfordshire in general. The main body of the book is then divided into six chapters each focusing on occupations that employed children: agriculture, straw plaiting, silk throwing, paper making, brick making and chimney sweeping. All of these chapters begin with some general background on the origins, history and location of these industries in the county before exploring the types of processes children were employed in, the working conditions that prevailed and how these changed over time. Economic change is shown to have a major (downward) impact on the demand for child labour over the course of the century. State intervention also emerges as a key theme. By the late nineteenth century, hours of work were restricted by law and compulsory elementary education introduced formal learning. The latter created tension between employers, parents and government officials, and the battleground over the traditional straw-plaiting schools, whose focus was on work, and state education in the 1870s is well drawn in chapter 3.

Other less well-known facets of child labour also come to light – the pauper apprentices recruited from London workhouses to work in the Hertfordshire silk mills, the link with Dickens through his account of the St Albans brickfields in *Bleak House*, and the death of chimney sweep James Dye and the ramifications of that case. The book draws widely on a range of contemporary reports and illustrations. It reproduces interesting extracts from local newspapers, Parliamentary Papers and school log books in an attempt to illuminate the world of work. These are pertinent and well-chosen, although sometimes used rather uncritically. An analysis of how the voices of child workers interviewed by parliamentary commissioners in the 1840s and 1860s were selected and reproduced would have been useful. Use of farm account books might have revealed more detailed information on wage levels in agriculture. The book also draws upon the Hertfordshire census figures to provide an idea of the level of child employment in the different industries, but more could have been made of how reliable (or not) these are, and how they can be used to reveal regional patterns of employment and the familial and household circumstances of child workers. These criticisms are perhaps unfair ones to make of a book that is aimed at a general readership. It is well produced and illustrated and is a good example of local history well done.

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JEREMY BURCHARDT and JACQUELINE COOPER (eds), *Breaking new ground. Nineteenth-century allotments from local sources* (FACRHS Publication, 2010). ix + 272 pp., 4 figs., 18 illus., 17 tabs., 20 maps. £12 p. & p. From Family and Community Historical Research Society Limited, Fir Trees, 12 Fryer Close, Chesham, Bucks., HP5 1RD.

A study of allotments might appear to be rather a narrow field of research yet this study demonstrates how allotments can be used as a prism through which to explore broad issues in the nineteenth-century countryside. The major interpretative shift of the book is that allotments should be seen as a mainstream part of community life rather than just for the poorest members of the community.

The research project that underpins this book was set up by the Family and Community Historical Research Project (FACHRS) with Jeremy Burchardt as academic advisor. The research project and this book complement Burchardt's research published in *The allotment movement in England, 1793–1873*. Volunteer researchers were recruited for 30 of the 39 historic English counties and they provided a mass of quantitative and very interesting qualitative material. This publication is in two parts; a book and a data CD containing the Combined Allotments Database.

The book has a tripartite structure. The first part

is an introduction written by the two editors followed by an overview and summary of the project's findings written by Burchardt. In the introduction the interplay of rural poverty, the New Poor Law and Captain Swing are examined, with Burchardt arguing that it was the persistence of rural unemployment and low wages that was the basis for allotment provision. The following overview and summary chapter contains a wealth of information (drawn from the quantitative and qualitative material amassed by the researchers) and analysis. An examination of allotment holders showed that they were not all held by agricultural labourers but that some craftsmen and tradesmen also rented allotments. Other areas explored are the roles of the provincial press, the clergy and the Labourer's Friend Society in promoting and providing allotments. The second section of the book is a series of six county studies each written by the researchers for that county. The final section of the book contains eight themed chapters. One by Chris Leivers examines the provision of allotments in Derbyshire industrial communities, arguing that the provision of housing (with gardens and allotments) by employers was primarily driven by the need to attract and retain workers. This chapter also examines paternalism, which is a theme that echoes throughout the book.

The Combined Allotment Database includes the data gathered by Burchardt for his study and consists of 3503 records for 2281 unique allotment sites. Various chapters within the book demonstrate how an analysis of the data can be used to enrich local studies of allotments. For example the Allotment Tenants List contains records for 1124 individual allotment holders and it also provides some information on occupation derived from census enumerator's books.

One minor complaint is that the definition of an allotment is not given until p. 12 and would have benefited from being highlighted earlier in the book. A recent survey by the National Society of Allotments and Leisure Gardeners established that the minimum value of fruit and vegetables produced on a 250 square-metre allotment was £1564, which gave a profit of £1362 until labour costs were taken into account, when the net profit would have been just £192. This contemporary survey illustrates the continuing role that allotments play in enabling an allotment holder to improve their living standard through their 'free labour'.

This book, packed with primary research and analysis, will appeal to a wide range of readers. The editors, contributors and researchers are to be congratulated on the quality and depth of their research.

ANNE MEREDITH
Guildford

Elsewhere and General

NADINE VIVER (ed.), *The state and rural societies. Policy and education in Europe, 1750–2000* (Brepols, 2008). 278 pp., 6 figs., 12 tabs. €63.50.

This book, edited by Nadine Vivier, is the result of work by an international group of historians brought together by the COST network A35 in the working group dedicated to 'State and rural societies'. The aim of the book is to show the evolution and changes of the relations between rural societies and the state in Europe from the second half of the eighteenth century to the twentieth, that is, the historical period in which the effects of the Industrial Revolution progressively modified and reduced the economic and social relevance of the agrarian sector in Europe.

The book includes the introduction and 13 broad surveys and in-depth studies, which discuss a variety of aspects of the rural economy and life in which public authorities intervened during the analyzed centuries. This is not a new subject, but this book is particularly interesting because it concentrates on a number of different areas of Europe: Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. This provides an opportunity to observe why and how the European states intervened and changed the rules in some important economic and social matters such as the property rights, the market regulations, the tax system, agrarian contracts, rural credit, demographic policy and rural education. Although many European governments recognised industrial development as a source of rising income, they continued to regard the countryside as the basis of national prosperity. They sought to increase agricultural output in order to guarantee a healthy and increasing population, and this oriented state intervention towards improving productive systems and the standard of living in rural areas. This book explains the reasons for this intervention and how policies of rural development were implemented effectively, and also allows scholars to make some interesting comparisons in the European context.

Each contributor illustrates that the efficiency of state intervention in the agrarian sector and rural life obviously depended on the quality of public policy formation and on the ability of government to enforce the new rules. The chapters chart the implications of the different national approaches, noting, for example, the effects of differing levels of private sector involvement, or the varying amounts of public money invested in agriculture. These observations will allow scholars to think critically about the factors that determined the success or the failure of governmental agricultural

policies. The chapters demonstrate that these factors included the historical timing of government intervention, the levels of resistance to changes within village society, and also the sensitivity of political 'élites' to the social and economic needs of the countryside. Although each national contribution confines itself to some of these aspects within a particular time-frame, the extensive and detailed introduction draws together the conclusions of all the historians involved in this working group and, at the same time, enables a deeper appreciation of the relevance of each article to the overall aims of the volume.

The introduction clearly explains the major concerns of the state in relation to European agriculture. These included efforts to modernise systems of agricultural production, particularly yields, the improvement of rural education, and also in securing electoral support from rural areas for the government. It also illustrates the difficult relations that existed in many countries between the state, landowners and intermediate bodies (such as the agricultural societies, 'comices agricoles', farmers' unions and municipal councils), and the breadth of state intervention in economic and social matters, for example by limiting private property rights in the name of public utility, or through the financing of the development of rural schooling and training.

Other contributions shed more light on particular themes. They illustrate how Physiocracy and Cameralism tried to stimulate agrarian growth in the eighteenth century, and show the different ways in which the French and German authorities gathered agrarian statistics, the fundamental data on which assessments of efficient agrarian policy were based. Chapters also highlight how agricultural policy in Belgium was influenced strongly by the growth of the 'Catholic bloc', between the late nineteenth century and World War I; the formation of agricultural public institutions and the model of state intervention in the Iberian Peninsula; and the evolution of French governmental policy towards the development of rural society, the laws regulating agricultural education, and collective agricultural practices. For the German areas, articles show how agrarian reforms and farm modernisation were financed (as in the case of the Duchy of Brunswick), and also the origin of the Prussian Chambers of Agriculture as institutions representing the needs of farmers to the Ministry of Agriculture as well as helping the development of agrarian sector and the promotion of rural education. Furthermore, other contributors explain the direct intervention of the state or its support to private institutions for the development of rural education in Hungary (through the first College of Farming), Italy (particularly in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), and Sweden (where the state had to overcome elite opposition to taxation to fund new rural schools and vocational training in the nineteenth century). Rural education also features in contributions concerning Portugal, Spain and France, as well as in a chapter on agricultural education and training in the United Kingdom between 1850 and 2000. This breadth of analysis will provide scholars with a detailed overview of changes in the economic and social role of the agrarian sector, and the consequence of shifts in the state's agricultural policies.

This book ought to be found in every academic library because it will stimulate scholars to develop new analyses and comparative research into the relation between states and rural societies across Europe. It also provides an opportunity for scholars to enlarge their knowledge of other national historiographies by using the broad and up-to-date bibliographies provided by each contributor's references.

PAOLO TEDESCHI
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JAN BIELEMAN, *Five Centuries of Dutch Farming. A short history of Dutch agriculture, 1500–2000* (Mansholt publication series – volume 8, Wageningen Academic Publishers, 2010). 367 pp., 37 figs., 57 illus., 56 tabs., 15 maps. €60.

This book is a concise and abridged English version of Jan Bieleman's important history of Dutch agriculture since 1500, originally published in 1992 and reworked and extended in 2008. With this textbook Bieleman has positioned himself firmly as the most eminent Dutch agro-historian of the last two decades. As in his other publications he firmly attacks traditionally widespread views of an unchanging rural society before the introduction of fertilisers. Next to this, he underlines the enormous variety in agricultural production systems in the relatively small Dutch territory, which must be attributed to the great variety of 'geological landscapes and soil types' (p. 26) combined with a Von-Thünen-like relationship with the distance to the main urban markets.

His approach makes this book a real 'cows and ploughs history' (preface). However, Bieleman states he also wants to deal with agricultural (agrarian) history in a broader sense. That is, 'the history of farming in its economic and social context, where individual farm management has a relationship with markets, price mechanisms, labour costs, tax burden, free holding and tenancy, common farming institutions, cooperatives, farmers' societies and more' (p. 17).

The agricultural history of the Netherlands has an

appeal that extends beyond a Dutch readership. As one of the most urbanized regions in the early modern world, it presents an excellent example of how urbanization and market demand influences agriculture in both the immediate vicinity and over larger distances. Dutch agriculture was also remarkable for its high productivity (per capita and per acre) for over five centuries. As a result, the Netherlands remains one of the world's leading agricultural exporters, despite its limited land area. Bieleman states that the basis of this continuing success was a process of 'intensification' in which 'ever more labour and/or capital was deployed in order to increase production', where capital also includes technology and knowledge.

In the sixteenth century agriculture in the Dutch coastal provinces was indeed heavily influenced by the extensive and increasing urbanisation. Growing market-orientation resulted in specialisation in specific agricultural products (for instance horticulture or madder), in high productivity, and in an increasing number of rural specialists working outside agriculture. Consequently, only a minority of the total coastal population was working in agriculture in the seventeenth century. The Dutch coastal food market and the coastal farmers had both become fully integrated into national and international markets, with, for instance, substantial imports of grain from the Baltic and oxen from Denmark, and large exports of cheese to France. The effects in the peripheral, less urbanized inland provinces were more limited. Nevertheless, inland agriculture also underwent drastic changes due to the rising market opportunities, which were heavily dependent on the local geographical situation.

For the lengthy period of de-urbanisation between 1650 and 1850, Bieleman depicts the many minor changes in agricultural production in coastal and inland regions as a reaction to changing market circumstances. In this respect, he adheres to the 'secular trend', locating these developments within a long-term positive relationship between (agricultural) prices and population growth. Unfortunately, the term 'secular trend' only describes, but does not in any way explain, these long-term developments.

During the period of the Industrial Revolution, the Netherlands lost its position as a 'core economy', though it became an export nation specialising in 'luxury' livestock and horticultural products, directed first to the English market, and then to countries all over the world. Dutch agriculture remained successful in the long run, thanks to rigorous scientific development and mechanisation from 1850 onwards, which Bieleman again illustrates with many examples. Remarkably, technological development went together with rising inputs of agricultural labour until about 1950. By treating many branches of agriculture (wheat, sugar beet, potato, pigs, poultry and dairy) separately for the second half of the twentieth century, Bieleman shows the emergence of what is often called 'agribusiness' in the Netherlands. Despite employing a diminishing share of the labour force, and being subject to increasing environmental and ecological problems, the high productivity of agriculture remains one of the strengths of the Dutch economy.

It is only possible to give a slight idea of the wealth of information Bieleman provides. However, the enormous amount of detail for different regions does not make this book a particularly easy read. Nevertheless it is, without doubt, an indispensable reference work. For even more data, the Dutch version *Boeren in Nederland, Geschiedenis van de landbouw 1500–2000* (2008), which is almost twice as big, can be consulted.

Bieleman's overview is, nevertheless, unsatisfactory in places. There are few quantitative generalisations for the earlier period in particular. He offers no systematic comparison between regions, and no construction of quantitative indicators for productivity, for the relative importance of the many products over time, for the increase in total labour-input, and for acres cultivated, or wage movements and so on. *Five centuries of farming* provides few ingenious constructions of the development of Dutch agriculture in the past or new methods and theoretical insights. The images presented are mostly directly derived from older literature, and are usually purely illustrative in character. Recent publications, such as Knibbe's provincial study *Lokkich Fryslan* (2006) about the period 1505–1830 and the results of the nineteenth-century Dutch National Accounts Project are not taken into account. In addition, Bieleman hardly presents any international comparisons, because recent non-Dutch literature has not been incorporated. Notwithstanding these weak points, though, this book remains an excellent way to become thoroughly informed about the history of Dutch agriculture.

RICHARD PAPING
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JÁNOS ESTÓK, GYÖRGY FEHÉR, PÉTER GUNST and ZSUZSANNA VARGA, *History of Hungarian agriculture and rural life, 1848–2004* (Argumentum Publishing House and Museum of Hungarian Agriculture, 2004). 294 pp., illus. £28.

Present-day Hungary, the land east of the Alps, west of the Transylvanian hills, and south of the Carpathian Mountains, is one of the best-endowed agricultural

areas of the European Union. With good land in the Danube valley and the Great Hungarian Plain, only two people to each hectare of cultivated land (Great Britain has nearly ten), and about ten per cent of its working population still involved in agriculture, it is a major producer and exporter of cereals, oilseeds, fruit, wine and livestock products. This book was published by the Museum of Hungarian Agriculture in the year in which Hungary became part of the European Union, and its agriculture subject to the Common Agricultural Policy. It is a survey volume, devoid of any academic apparatus, but as a superbly illustrated account of the main events and trends over the last 150 years or so, it offers an excellent introduction to Hungarian agriculture and rural life.

The three parts into which the book is divided reflect the political changes that have had such an impact on land and farming. János Estók and György Fehér cover the period from the 1848 revolution to the end of the First World War, when over half of the Hungarian national income was still produced by agriculture. They discuss the politics of agriculture – Hungary had a Ministry of Agriculture from 1848 and a national agricultural association from 1849 – and the country's integration into European markets as a food exporter and an agricultural machinery importer. British firms such as Garrett, Hornsby, and Clayton and Shuttleworth were all selling in the Hungarian market by the 1860s. The phylloxera outbreak occurred a little later in Hungary than elsewhere but was just as devastating. Mechanisation, animal breeding, and the developing food industry meant that the agricultural sector in the late nineteenth century was commercially dynamic, but the imbalance in the estate structure continued. In 1895 only one per cent of holdings were larger than 57.5 hectares, but these bigger farms or estates covered 48 per cent of the country.

The Treaty of Trianon, negotiated in the aftermath of World War I, resulted in the loss of more than half of pre-war Hungary's land and population, and an even greater proportion of its livestock. A stretch of the north became Slovakia, Transylvania on the eastern side became part of Romania, and some southern districts went to form part of the new country of Yugoslavia. Despite various largely abortive attempts at land reform, Hungary remained a country dominated, in numerical terms, by a poor peasant class, with an inadequate diet and insufficient income, as Péter Gunst argues in his account of the 1919–45 period, to provide enough demand to stimulate industrial production. Wartime food exports to Germany failed to ameliorate the situation, for they were based on a system of forced deliveries, and finally German occupation followed by Soviet invasion completed the ruination of Hungarian agriculture. By the spring of 1945 the granaries and livestock had been looted, the land lay uncultivated, thousands of men had been taken away as prisoners of war, and starvation loomed. Post-war recovery, complicated by the communist policies of forced collectivization and compulsory deliveries, took a long time, as Zsuzsanna Varga shows in the final part of the book. It was not until the mid–1960s that rural electrification, mechanised farming and other technical changes, and a significant decrease in the farm labour force, began to produce a relatively modern agricultural sector. Then the process of adjusting to a new political system had to begin all over again in the 1990s. It is a pattern of change that is foreign to Western Europe, but repeated right across Eastern Europe, and this volume forms a fascinating case study of the process.

PAUL BRASSLEY
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ROHLAND SCHUKNECHT, *British colonial development policy after the Second World War. The case of Sukumaland, Tanganyika* (LIT Verlang, 2010). 364 pp. €34.90.

In the last two decades, historians, political scientists and economists have paid a great deal of attention to the study of colonial rural development policies during the twentieth century in British and French colonies in Africa and elsewhere. One of their main conclusions was that there was a gradual shift from common notions of 'laissez faire' and indirect rule towards a more interventionist policy of 'colonial development and welfare', especially after World War Two. In these developmentalist initiatives, expert knowledge played a crucial role. Colonial historians and historians of science and technology have long been concerned about how and why authorities tried to stimulate 'modernization' and change in colonial territories. Various scholars stressed that agricultural expertise and science in colonies, far from representing a mere transfer of European scientific knowledge, took shape in the colonial context itself. The multi-layered role that science and expert knowledge played in the colonial enterprise is being exposed via case studies for several countries and colonial regions. Agricultural development policy and the introduction of modern western science aimed at replacing or correcting allegedly inefficient and destructive African ways of farming. In the past, many studies started from the assumptions that modern or western techniques and knowledge replaced or subordinated local habits, local farmers were exploited, and local creativity was suppressed. This evaluation resulted in an unbalanced

picture that sketched African (or other colonized) farmers merely as retarded or as victims, and underestimated their creative potential, social resilience and individual agency. Recently, historians have argued more and more that development and economic growth in (former) colonies not only occurred as a result of colonial development plans, but also independently of them.

Rohland Schuknecht's research accords with these conclusions. This book is the published version of his doctoral thesis, which was submitted at the Humboldt University of Berlin in 2008. The author studies British colonial development policy after the Second World War in detail and examines the results of its application. As a case study he takes Sukumaland, a region of about 18,000 square miles and one million inhabitants in north-western Tanganyika (present-day Tanzania). This region was once part of the colony of German East Africa but came under British rule after World War I. This was confirmed by a League of Nations Mandate, later becoming a United Nations Trust Territory (Tanganyika achieved independence in 1961). Sukumaland was one of the tropical areas where Britain unfolded a variety of colonial rural development interventions. Schuknecht describes and analyses this development narrative successfully. Moreover, he does not treat the region as a 'development island', but approaches it as part of the wider imperial and territorial framework of British colonialism. Schuknecht has consulted archives in Tanzania (in the national capital of Dar Es Salaam and in the region of Mwanza) and at the National Archives in Kew.

In his book Schuknecht formulates a number of interesting conclusions. In official reports and debates the British stressed the importance of constitutional development, local government reform, labour market reforms, rural and industrial modernization and the expansion of education and social services. Agricultural policy was based on two major objectives: augmenting production and preserving ecological stability. Colonial experts and scientists attempted to correct inefficient and destructive African ways of land and resource use, and to restrict the movement of people and livestock. They wanted to replace the existing Sukuma practices of agriculture and animal husbandry with a more modern mixed farming, in order to conserve natural resources and to increase productivity at the same time. All this was achieved by compulsion.

In practice, though, British colonial officials and experts were rather unwilling to introduce new measures that could undermine the old systems of peasant agriculture and indirect rule that were well established during the interwar period. It is clear that colonial agricultural experts wanted to improve and to amend agricultural practices in Sukumaland, rather than to change them radically. Nevertheless the agricultural system was modernised, for example via initiatives towards large-scale mechanisation and cooperative marketing, but mostly these were African enterprises rather than discrete colonial policies. Schuknecht demonstrates convincingly that rural modernisation in Sukumaland often occurred not as a result of development efforts but independently or contrary to them. One example of this is that, while colonial officials still regarded self-sufficiency in food as an integral part of the local peasant agriculture, many Sukuma farmers concentrated increasingly on the cultivation of cotton, as food could be bought easily in markets and in shops because farmers got good prices for their cash crops.

The above-mentioned conclusions demonstrate the limited scope and influence of colonial development plans, especially in the long term. Colonial developers treated Sukumaland as a laboratory for agricultural development; they judged the Sukuma practices of land and resource use as (environmentally) dangerous and backward. They had a blind faith in the worth of western 'scientific' agriculture, but many of these western ideas and concepts often proved to be of limited value. One of the reasons for this failure was the lack of contact between colonial developers and Sukuma farmers. British, or Western scientists in general, regarded themselves as agents of progress, while perceiving local farmers as backward and lazy. Although Sukuma farmers generally did not respond to colonial rural development policies and recommendations of experts in the desired way, these initiatives had a profound impact. They eroded the fragile consensus on which the colonial system was built, for instance by demonstrating that local chiefs were puppets of the colonial system. The new African political and economic elites used this sentiment in the 1950s and 1960s to show that colonial development initiatives were not in the interest of the common people. This prepared the ground for Sukumaland and Tanganyika's final transition to independence.

YVES SEGERS
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KAREN BROWN and DANIEL GILFOYLE (eds), *Healing the herds. Disease, livestock economies, and the globalization of veterinary medicine* (Ohio University Press, 2010). ix + 299 pp., 6 figs, 10 tabs. £22.50.

Compared to other disciplines, historians of medicine have been very slow to move away from exclusively

human-centric approaches to embrace non-humans and ecologies of health. This is despite the fact that human-animal-environment interactions were and are critical to many of their favoured topics, for example, plague and malaria. Because they draw connections with work in geography, social anthropology and other disciplines, Karen Brown and Daniel Gilfoyle's excellent collection of essays on disease and livestock economies is a welcome sign that things are changing in the history of medicine and that the subject is becoming more interdisciplinary. The editors identify four main themes addressed by their contributors: the institutionalisation of veterinary medicine; the global spread of zoonotic diseases; diseases that follow the transfer of livestock to new environments; and colonialism and veterinary medicine. The essays range widely across time and space, from epizootic disease in the Netherlands in the early eighteenth century to the Philippines in the mid-twentieth century. Given the focus on livestock diseases, questions of political economy loom large, for example, in Abigail Woods's account of the attempts in Britain in the 1940s to use veterinary expertise to boost livestock production to meet wartime shortages and post-war economic priorities. John Fisher and Robert Peden demonstrate the uses of specific and locally adapted veterinary practices to address, respectively, the endemic problems of sheep scab in Australia and foot rot in New Zealand. However, it was major epizootics, especially rinderpest (cattle plague), that swept across national boundaries that had the greatest impact upon veterinary institutions. There are essays on the disease in the Netherlands, Germany, the Philippines, and East Africa, all of which show that, while it was a challenge to veterinarians, who mostly relied upon so-called administrative actions, rather than science, its visitations were an opportunity to develop veterinary institutions and acted as a stimulus to research. Interestingly, Daniel Doepper tells how, while the first two rinderpest epizootics in the Philippines were 'like biblical plagues' in their devastation of the livestock economy, a third in wave in the 1910s was managed, if not controlled, by a combination of immunisation and administrative actions.

The discussions of livestock diseases and veterinary medicine in colonial settings show the value of interdisciplinary approaches. Martine Barwegen, who also discusses rinderpest, shows the importance of local knowledge and veterinary expertise in Java in the 1870s. She concludes that state control policies probably made the outbreak worse, as the disease was already enzootic, with indigenous farming methods maintaining an ecological balance that prevented the disease from becoming epizootic. Lotte Hughes uses anthropological methods to construct a narrative of how the Purkho Masai reacted to the impact of colonial rule in Kenya on their livestock husbandry. She suggests that in established grazing areas there was an ecological balance between pathogens, vectors, animals and humans that kept the disease at low levels, and that inevitably such conditions could not be replicated in the reserves they were moved to, ironically to escape East Coast Fever. Saverio Kratli works on the nomadic herders, the WoDaaBe, in the Sahel region of West Africa. He uses actor network theory in his chapter to explore the various colonial knowledges and practices that came together to produce a consensus about what breeds were appropriate for the new colonial environment, which was, of course, a natural-cultural hybrid. The editors make this point more clearly their introduction, observing that in colonial settings, 'the practice of veterinary medicine was as much about reordering indigenous society as it was about controlling disease' (p. 12). Finally in this vein, David Anderson charts the development of the Kenyan cattle trade in the inter-war period and gives us an economic history that takes the 'local' seriously, both in terms of the world views and agency of African pastoralists and the effectiveness of administrative and veterinary rule across the colony and at its borders. The editors close the volume with an agenda for further work on other times, places, animals and diseases, and for studies that are more sensitive to gender and local cultures. Such studies would, of course, be very valuable, but Karen Brown and Dan Gilfoyle have already in this collection addressed many of these issues, I expect this volume will stimulate scholars in many disciplines to explore the history of veterinary medicine and animal diseases.

MICHAEL WORBOYS
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CORMAC Ó GRÁDA, *Famine. A short history* (Princeton UP, 2009). xvi + 327 pp. 36 figs. £13.95.

In this learned and humane book, Cormac Ó Gráda offers a wide-ranging account of famine in human society. The first three chapters review famine and the frequency of famine, describe what actually happens in famines, and explain how famines were prevented and coped with when they occurred. The fourth chapter discusses famine demography (including the shortfall in births). Chapters then follow on 'markets and famine' and 'entitlements' (perhaps the most important in the book). Chapter seven discusses 'private and public action', eight treats 'the violence of government' and famine as a form of war, and chapter nine asks whether we have seen the end of famine.

In a sense, the book falls into three chronological parts. The first reviews famine over a very long period, showing how reactions to food shortages have remained very similar over extended periods of time. Ó Gráda has gathered material from the classical societies of the Mediterranean, pre-colonial India and pre-modern China. Deployed side-by-side with examples drawn from the experience of medieval and early modern Europe and, of course, Ireland in the nineteenth century, Ó Gráda weaves his examples into a scintillating if depressing tapestry. His account of the place of middlemen runs from Cicero to the execution of corn traders in Ethiopia in 1974. The instinct to deny shortage and to turn on the vendors of corn turns out to be a very old one, as is the government instinct to meddle in markets in years of high prices and distress. Most pre-industrial societies seem to have been sufficiently resilient to come through a single year of harvest failure without major mortality: but two successive years crippled them and produced famine deaths in the second year. Incidentally, he dismisses famine as having much of a role as Malthus's preventive check. Second, we have a discussion of twentieth-century famine, showing how famine was so often caused by government and war, and might be a political tool. This is perhaps the real heart of the book. Ó Gráda is particularly interesting on the way in which some modern societies undergoing massive food depravation managed to sustain elementary rules of cleanliness and sanitation and so avoid the worst of famine-sponsored disease. Third, Ó Gráda asks whether we have entered an age which has seen an 'end to famine'. Food is easier to move, governments and NGOs are now alert to the early warning signs of distress and cheap medical treatments are available, which can sustain the life of the malnourished.

Whilst the book offers a superb overview, the section which will attract most attention is Ó Gráda's re-examination of the Bengal famine of 1943–4. This has a particular place in famine studies as it provides the basis for Sen's entitlement thesis, which placed an emphasis on the failure of markets to deliver foodstuffs equitably in famine conditions. Thus Sen explained the paradox that there could be a famine when there was no shortage of foodstuffs. As I have argued myself, this has become too pervasive an explanation, and it ignores the agricultural roots of famine. Ó Gráda's views will be familiar to readers of his Tawney lecture to the Economic History Society, now printed in the Economic History Review supplement *Feeding the Masses* (2008). He finds that there was an absolute shortage of foodstuffs in Bengal. Persistent attempts by the authorities to find hoarded foodstuffs failed to discover any. Other supply lines were disrupted by wartime conditions. The Bengal government was delusional about the supplies at its disposal until too late. Entitlements may well explain how food is distributed within a society under stress, but Ó Gráda is in no doubt that at the root of the Bengal Crisis was an episode of Food Availability Decline (FAD).

On one point I find myself stimulated by Ó Gráda into wondering whether he is right. Whilst Ó Gráda finds no evidence of hoarding in Bengal, he also invokes the 'carryover' from year to year a little too much for my taste (see pp. 148–9, 151 and other references). I doubt whether there is such a thing in pre-industrial societies. Holding back foodstuffs until late in the year to maximise profit could always be hazardous. It might well be unpopular, leading to the seizure of stocks by public action or government initiative, but moreover, the expectation of high end-of-year prices might not be realised if either demand collapsed for want of purchasing power (Sen's entitlements) or supplies came in from abroad. As for keeping grain from year to year, do we really know if anyone did this, except of course the few state-sponsored granaries (in Sweden, for example)? It was, after all, a sure way to lose value, the stored grain shrinking in volume as pests ate it: the resulting grain was probably not highly marketable given that in most years it would be sold in the new season to make room for more. In any case, how much would need to be carried forwards as a buffer stock to make much of an impact on the following year's price? If we know relatively little about the agricultural origins of famines, then we also know less than we should about the activities of the middlemen and the international trade in grain.

Having said that, Ó Gráda's book is both learned and humane, it is also elegant in both its writing and production. Occasionally I thought that Ó Gráda was a little laconic – a further sentence of recapitulation to drive home a point would sometimes have been welcome. It is a wise book about an unpalatable subject.

R. W. HOYLE
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GAIL M. HOLLANDER, *Raising cane in the 'Glades. The global sugar trade and the transformation of Florida* (The University of Chicago Press, 2008). xviii + 348 pp., 6 figs., 25 illus., 5 tabs. £23.50.

Florida's Everglades are known to be both a natural paradise and an ecological tragedy as a swampland dying from thirst. The latter is not caused by recent overexploitation. The Everglades' environmental challenges are the result of a process that goes back

to the nineteenth century in which Florida's sugar industry played a crucial role. Therefore, Florida's sugarcane agro-industry became the centre of the recent political tempest over the Everglades' restoration program. This present-day political struggle sets the stage for Gail M. Hollander's environmental history of *Raising cane in the 'Glades. The global sugar trade and the transformation of Florida*.

In seven chapters, Hollander presents the history of the Everglades as a history of industrialisation and agro-environmental conflicts, chronologically starting with the US acquisition of Florida in 1822 and ending with today's environmental problems. These conflicts occurred, among others, between beet and cane producers, producers and consumers, sugar cane growers and refiners, Cuba and Florida, and producers and environmentalists. By situating these conflicts in their local, national, regional, and international contexts, Hollander's book interestingly brings together a global history of sugar trade in the age of globalisation, an economic and technical history of Florida's sugar industry, a socio-political history of national sugar lobbying, and an environmental history of the Everglades as a region that has to be understood as a part of the political economy of food and agriculture in the United States.

In the late nineteenth century, the draining of the Everglades was inspired by the 'big sugar' producers' anxiety regarding the place of the US sugar economy in the global sugar trade, as well as the question of the US being dependent on sugar imports. 'Big sugar' producers demanded that hundreds of thousands of acres of swampland be drained in order to grow sugar cane. At the same time, and in order to defend America's 'sugar bowl', they lobbied for a national protection policy, especially against their strong Cuban competitors. This was the period in which Florida's sugar producers established the lobbying policy that they would maintain from then onwards. In the early twentieth century, sugar became an indispensable part of the American's basket of goods. Therefore, provision of sugar was a national security concern. This priority of US policy can be traced throughout the first half of the twentieth century and the Cold War era. During and between the World Wars, cheap foreign sugar, especially from Cuba, had been the major source of supply to the US. The Cuban revolution of 1959 put an end to these imports. In turn, Florida's sugar production grew fivefold. The good days for Florida's sugar industry came to an end in the 1980s and 1990s, when producers had to face public criticism of the environmental damage they caused. Even so, Florida's sugar industry has not lost its importance for the US economy at the end of the twentieth century. In the face of the increasing global oil shortage, sugar has emerged as a promising alternative source of energy. Therefore it seems that the end has not yet come for the environmental story of raising cane in the 'Glades. For these reasons, the political economy of Florida's sugar industry is the skeleton of Hollander's story.

Hollander presents Cuba as the counterpart to Florida's sugar industry. Its sugar production served as a model for Florida, while at the same time it was Florida's strongest competitor. Therefore, a comparative outlook between Florida's and Cuba's environmental challenges would have been an interesting addendum to the book. Furthermore, it would have been worthwhile not only to focus on economic competition in the American market, but also to fathom the competition for quotas in international trade. The twentieth century has been the century of international economic planning. The conflict about global quotas between Florida's and Cuba's industry would have provided an interesting *pars pro toto* for international agreements which, by and large, are analytically under-represented in this book about the global sugar trade.

These are only minor criticisms. *Raising cane in the 'Glades* is an important contribution to the history of globalisation, agriculture, commodities and environment. It shows in a fascinating way the 'glocalisational' effects of global commodity trade and its local environmental implications.

FRITZ GEORG VON GRAEVENITZ
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Conference Report
The Society's Winter Conference, 2010
Woods and their uses in medieval to modern Britain

by Elizabeth Griffiths

Jane Whittle continues to find popular, and indeed seasonal, themes for this conference, which attract an impressive turnout. The subject of wood drew a contingent from the Woodland Trust, entirely new faces, who enthusiastically asked questions all the way through, greatly adding to the success of the occasion. The audience, having braced icy journeys wrapped in woolly scarves, were not surprised to learn from Paul Warde that domestic fuel consumption accounted for half the annual supply of wood in the early modern period.

After a welcome cup of coffee, Della Hooke, University of Birmingham, started the proceedings with a fascinating survey of woodland usage in early medieval England. Maps of the colonization of Roman and Anglo-Saxon Warwickshire showed the extent of clearance of dense forest by Anglo-Saxon times. As crop land reverted to pasture, regeneration of woodland took the form of the open savannah type as grazing animals checked and shaped the recovery; this became the wood pasture of medieval England, characterised most typically by the New Forest and the Weald. These areas fostered a rich and diverse economy. Wood literally underpinned medieval society, providing timber and coppice for building and transport; fuel for domestic consumption and industrial processes; grazing and shelter for cattle, pigs, sheep and horses; and, of course, a splendid amenity for hunting. Since Anglo-Saxon times, laws have regulated access to this valuable resource generating a wealth of documentation. Della explained how the manorial system in parts of England came to reflect the dependency on woodland. In Kent, estates on the periphery of the Weald were linked to their wooded 'dens' by drove ways, evidence of which survives in place names such as Beneden, Biddenden, Newenden and Tenterden. Nearby, Hawkhurst, Goudhurst and Sandhurst, with 'hurst' meaning wood, also provide further clues to the character of the High Weald. Much of Della's research has concentrated on the West Midlands so we were treated to slides of the Malvern Hills, the Wyre Forest and the well-documented estates of the Bishops of Worcester. In this part of England, parallel route ways can be found leading from the Severn meadows up to the wooded hills, with pollarded oaks and hollies a particular feature. Noted for their long taproots and ability to resist aggressive grazing, oaks were highly valued, while evergreen hollies, whose shoots provided tasty winter fodder, especially for deer, became a protected species imbued with almost mystical qualities. Woods were often dangerous and mysterious places to the medieval mind, steeped in folklore, traditions and names dating back to pagan times; with these thoughts we moved on to the next paper.

From his seasonal title, on the running of the deer, we half-expected a hearty rendition of the 'Holly and the Ivy' (both enjoyed by deer) from John Langton, Oxford University, but no, this was a serious study of English forests as human habitats and the impact of forest law on those communities. John reminded us that forests were areas, specifically designated for hunting, clearly bounded, heavily policed and governed by draconian laws. A landlord, with land in the forest, had severe restrictions imposed upon him by the forest lord; he could not interfere with the free passage of

hunting animals across his farms and fields. Fees for non-compliance were collected by an elaborate forest bureaucracy: in contrast to the lightly officered woodlands controlled by manorial courts. He took us through the intricate system of forest law as it evolved since pre-conquest times; kings from Canute on were always interested in protecting their hunting rights. As an exercise of arbitrary power, over supposedly wild animals and other people's lands, forest law has over the centuries incurred the antipathy of the populace, commentators and academics alike. Despite 'The Anathema of the Forest', such laws persisted to modern times. In recent years there has been a change in perception as to their role and impact. Today, we realize that measures such as these have helped to preserve large swathes of the countryside: it is no coincidence that ancient forests are invariably designated areas of outstanding national beauty. The paper, ending on a controversial note, attracted many questions. We were reminded that the administration of game reserves in colonial Africa and India had benefited from this tradition of strict regulation; without controls many species were now in danger of extinction. By lunchtime, the forest laws were viewed in a different light; anathema had turned into an appreciation of their role in protecting the landscape.

In the afternoon, Paul Warde, University of East Anglia, took us down a slightly different path, introducing us to his work on wood in the English economy; he is known for his remarkable study of wood and the role it played in south-west Germany in the early modern period, so this is a new and exciting development. The task is to quantify the scale, supply, uses and consumption levels of wood and wood products in England from 1550 to 1750. Reflecting its value to society, he reminded us that there was always concern about wood supplies and worries about scarcity. The trick was to ensure that consumption did not exceed sustainable levels of supply; consumption needed to be only marginally above this level for it to have a serious and damaging impact on stock. Consumers had to confine themselves to cutting down the increment rather than destroying the core. By the end of the sixteenth century, with a sharply rising population, this core came under pressure. There might have been an increase in absolute supplies, mainly from hedgerow trees, but wood needed to be accessible, easy to cut and cheap to transport. Between 1570 and 1620, coal became a viable substitute for wood, as it was more efficient, generating more heat by volume. The cost of fuel was affected by many factors, such as labour, rent, and freight charges, which would tip the balance in favour of one product. The switch to coal was particularly evident in industrial processes, such as iron making, but wood retained its position in the building and brewing trades and in shipbuilding, which also required huge quantities of pitch and tar, a by-product of pine trees. In the early eighteenth century, wood for these purposes increasingly came from the Baltic, but that market was soon overtaken by the American colonies. With his tables, Paul showed that the supply and use of English wood did not decline; it was supplemented by coal and imported wood to meet the demands of England's burgeoning economy.

The fruits of industrial growth and England's imperial economy were strongly in evidence in the final paper, from Charles Watkins, Nottingham University, on English estate forestry in the nineteenth century. In this period, tree planting became a craze, used to project power, wealth and status. Charles addressed the topic under four headings: 'ancient and modern', concerned with established woods and new plantations; 'ornamental and exotic', chosen for display and novelty; 'power and spectacle', designed around shooting and hunting, and finally, 'new landscapes', indicating the massive increase of woods and the impact on the countryside. The enthusiasm for forestry generated a huge literature with experts, often nurserymen, advising landowners and foresters how to set about their tasks and where to buy the best trees. Debates raged over the respective virtues of indigenous over exotic and whether broad leaf trees should be planted intermixed with larches; did they draw them up to the light or lead to spindly specimens? Power and spectacle was fascinatingly illustrated by a map of Holkham Park, planted to protect and nurture thousands of pheasants, with a battle plan of a day's shooting; a photograph showed beaters dressed in white to avoid being shot. The needs of scientific shooting effectively drove planting policy on large estates in the late nineteenth century; the popularity of rhododendrons stemmed not from their flowers, but their resistance to rabbits and the cover they provided for pheasants. The days of wood being usefully coppiced to make wattles, tools and brooms were well and truly over. On that note, we thanked Jane for organising such a stimulating conference, had a quick cup of tea and made our way out into the snow, warmly reassured by the presence of so many woodland enthusiasts.

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Notes on Contributors

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Agricultural History Review's sixtieth anniversary essay competition

The Society and *Agricultural History Review* are delighted to announce the winners of its essay competition. The judges have awarded the first prize to Dr Johann P. Custodis (University of Warwick) for his essay on 'Employing the enemy: the contribution of German and Italian POW workers to British agriculture during and after the Second World War'. The two second prizes have been awarded to Dr Jonathan Healey (St Catherine's College Oxford) for his essay on 'The political culture of the English Commons, *c*.1550–1650' and Rebecca Woods (MIT) for her essay on 'Breed, culture and economy: the Australasian frozen mutton trade, 1880–1910'.

The winning essays will appear in Volume 60 part two of the *Review*, to be published in November 2012. Dr Custodis will present his paper at the Spring Conference of the Society at Sparsholt, Winchester, in 2012.

We offer our thanks to all those who submitted essays. They reflected a great diversity of interests and approaches and give further evidence, should any be needed, of the vitality of our subject. We hope that a number of the essays not awarded prizes will, in time, also appear in the *Review*.

December 2011

The Society's Spring Conference 2012

The BAHS annual Spring Conference 2012 will take place at Sparsholt College, near Winchester, from Monday 2nd to Wednesday 4th of April. Speakers include the 60th anniversary prize essay winner, Dr Johann Custodis (University of Warwick) on the contribution of German and Italian Prisoner of War workers to British agriculture during and after the Second World War, Dr Nicola Whyte (University of Exeter) on early modern household memory and customary land use rights, Dr Susanna Wade Martins (Norfolk) on the battle over elementary education in Norfolk, *c*.1820–1940, and Leen van Molle (University of Leuven) on rural women's education in 19th century Belgium. There will be a New Researchers session and a fieldtrip to the nearby Chilbolton Down Farm. In addition the programme will feature a round-table discussion of agricultural history in the media with Peter Ginn (presenter), Stuart Elliott or Naomi Benson (director) and David Upshal (executive producer) from Lion TV's *Tales from the Green Valley*, *Victorian Farm* and *Edwardian Farm*.

Land, population and famine in the English uplands: a Westmorland case study, *c.*1370–1650*

by Jonathan Healey

Abstract

There is much we still do not know about the relationship between land, population and famine in early modern England. In his classic work on *Famine in Tudor and Stuart England*, Andrew Appleby presented a broadly Malthusian picture in which population growth in the upland north-west was accompanied by the subdivision of peasant holdings and the expansion of cultivation at the margins of sustainability. This article questions the uniformity of this picture. Evidence from the Barony of Kendal in Westmorland suggests that tenant numbers had peaked by about 1560, while manor courts successfully controlled enclosure and the subdivision of holdings. Indeed, evidence from the early seventeenth century suggests that, rather than forming a famine-prone mass, customary tenants in the area enjoyed at least some prosperity. At the same time, however, the period from the late sixteenth to the early seventeenth century saw the development of a large population of subtenants, and it was this group that suffered most from famine in 1623.

In 1623, parts of England were struck by a major famine. Most of the country seems to have been afflicted with dearth, but widespread starvation was generally confined to the upland north and west, while there is also clear evidence for famine in both Ireland and Scotland.[1] Even in the lowland east of England the situation could be desperate: a Lincolnshire landlord reported how one of his neighbours had been so hungry he stole a sheep, 'tore a leg out, and did eat it raw'. 'Dog's flesh', he wrote, was 'a dainty dish and found upon search in many houses'.[2]

* This article has benefited greatly from readings by Professor Richard Hoyle and Dr. Martin Ingram. A shorter version was presented at the 2010 Stenton Symposium at the University of Reading, and I would like to thank the participants for their very helpful comments.

[1] E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The population history of England, 1541–1871: a reconstruction* (1981), pp. 666, 675–81; M. Drake, 'An elementary exercise in parish register demography', *EcHR* 14 (1962); A. B. Appleby, 'Disease or famine? Mortality in Cumberland and Westmorland, 1580–1640', *EcHR* 26 (1973), pp. 403–32; C. D. Rogers, *The Lancashire population crisis of 1623* (1975); A. B. Appleby, *Famine in Tudor and Stuart England* (1978), pp. 121–7, 145–54; Peter Laslett, *The world we have lost: further explored* (1982), p. 130; John Walter and R. S. Schofield, 'Famine, disease, and crisis mortality in early modern society', in John Walter and R. S. Schofield (eds), *Famine, disease and the social order* (1989), pp. 1–73, esp. p. 34; Richard W. Hoyle, 'Famine as agricultural catastrophe: the crisis of 1622–4 in east Lancashire', *EcHR* 63 (2010), pp. 974–1002.

[2] He may well have been exaggerating, but there are plenty of examples, throughout human history, of victims of famine eating extremely unwholesome foods: when compared to tree bark, tulip bulbs, or even cannibalism, dogs' flesh is a relatively palatable dish. On 'famine foods' more generally see Cormac Ó Gráda, *Famine: a short history* (2009), pp. 73–8.

Those who were not living off dog meat would eat horse flesh, even that 'as hath lain long in a deke for hounds'.[3] But for all these colourful reports of eastern woe, the disaster was noticeably worse in the highland north-west: in Lancashire it has been calculated that famine killed about 5 per cent of the population; in parts of Cumberland and the north-east, poor men, women and children starved to death in the streets.[4]

The famine of 1623 is one of the pivotal moments in English economic history, not in itself, but for what came afterwards. And what came afterwards, surprisingly, was nothing. Dearth returned every decade or so: in 1629–31, in 1637–38, then again in 1647–50, 1657–61, 1674–75, and during the exceptionally hard 1690s.[5] But dearth of corn never again resulted in such widespread mortality.[6] True, there were spikes in the death rate, most notably in 1727–30 when recurrent outbreaks of disease coincided with two bad harvests and, true, there were reports of famine in Cumberland and Westmorland in the late 1640s, not – so far as can be told – corroborated in the parish registers.[7] But 1623 was the real watershed: it was England's last real famine.

We owe much of our knowledge of the catastrophe of 1623, the famine that preceded it in 1597, and the crisis of 1587–88 (which saw famine probably combined with a typhus epidemic), to the research of Andrew Appleby in the 1970s.[8] Focusing on the rugged counties of Cumberland and Westmorland, Appleby not only argued powerfully that the two mortality crises were indeed ultimately caused by hunger, but also explained why they were so severe in his region, and gave a plausible explanation of why famine disappeared thereafter. Population growth at the margins of subsistence, coupled with a specialization in pasture farming and

[3] Joan Thirsk and J. P. Cooper (eds), *Seventeenth-century economic documents* (1972), p. 24.

[4] Rogers, *Lancashire population crisis*, p. 10; Appleby, *Famine*, p. 126; Laslett, *World we have lost: further explored*, p. 130; the registers of St Oswald's Durham show a major spike in burials in 1623, including a large number of unnamed and presumably unknown people dying outdoors, a sure sign of social catastrophe: A. W. Headlam (ed.), *The parish register of St Oswald's Durham, 1538 to 1751* (Durham, 1891), pp. 66–8

[5] Based on the price data in Peter Bowden, 'Statistical appendix', in Joan Thirsk (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales,* V (ii) (1985), pp. 827–902.

[6] Walter and Schofield, 'Famine, disease and crisis mortality', pp. 34–7, 41–57.

[7] On 1727–30, see for example: J. A. Johnston, 'The impact of the epidemics of 1727–30 in south-west Worcestershire', *Medical Hist.*, 15 (1971), pp. 278–92; A. Gooder, 'The population crisis of 1727–30 in Warwickshire', *Midland Hist.*, 1 (1972), 1–22; Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History*, pp. 652–3, 667, 681–4; Jonathan Healey, 'Socially selective mortality during the population crisis of 1727–30: evidence from Lancashire', *Local Population Stud*. 81 (2008), pp. 58–74. It has recently been suggested that 1727–30 and 1740–42 represent England's last subsistence crises, but the evidence for this is not convincing; I hope to write on this in the near future: Ó Gráda, *Famine*, pp. 38, 274; Bruce Campbell, 'Four famines and a pestilence: harvest, price, and wage variations in England, 13th to 19th centuries', in Britt Liljewall, Iréne A. Flygare, Ulrich Lange, Lars Ljunggren, and Johan Söderberg (eds), *Agrarhistoria på många sätt; 28 studier om manniskan och jorden. Festskrift till Janken Myrdal på hans 60-årsdag* (Stockholm, 2009), pp. 25–7. On the 1640s see Steve Hindle, 'Dearth and the English Revolution: the harvest crisis of 1647–50', in Steve Hindle and Jane Humphries (eds), *Feeding the masses: plenty, want and the distribution of food and drink in historical perspective* (EcHR, supplement, 2008), pp. 64–98.

[8] In particular: Appleby, *Famine*. Contemporary sources from the region also refer to an outbreak of plague in 1597, with reports of 2,500 deaths in Kendal alone, as well as some 2,260 in Penrith, in Carlisle, 1,196 and in Richmond 2,200. It may be worth reopening the case of the 1590s to investigate the specifics contributions of famine, plague and other epidemics to the crisis. William Parson and William White, *History, directory and gazetteer, of the counties of Cumberland and Westmorland, with that part of the Lake District in Lancashire, forming the lordships of Furness and Cartmel* (1829), p. 638; James Stockdale, *Annales Caermoelenses or annals of Cartmel* (1872), p. 567.

insecure access to grain from other, more productively arable regions, meant that when poor harvests struck in the 1590s and in 1622, many of the region's peasants had no access to food and, tragically, died from outright starvation or of complications arising from malnutrition. After this, however, famine was averted as the local economy developed, thanks to improving markets for cattle, growing industry and increasing trade.[9]

Central to this argument was Appleby's depiction of the demographic and economic changes in the region leading up to the Elizabethan and early Stuart crises.[10] Appleby showed that the sixteenth century had seen gradual population growth in the north-west, as elsewhere. This, given the poor quality of the soil, inevitably led to over-population with, as Appleby saw it, an impoverished peasantry, teetering on the brink of hunger even in reasonably bountiful years. The problem was not, it seems, related to change in the relationship between landlords and tenants: the region's great estates were only partially successful in raising entry fines in line with inflation, and increases tended to have been effected well into the seventeenth century, in many cases post-dating the 1623 famine.[11] But this growth, partly thanks to the migratory flows that resulted in the filling-up of weakly manorialized marginal areas with large areas of common land, led to the atomization of holdings, rendering self-sufficient agriculture increasingly difficult. Appleby's picture of change in the north-west is summarized by John Walter and Roger Schofield: 'population growth, promoted in places by partible inheritance and the enclosure of minute holdings out of the waste, created a large, but marginal, smallholding sector'.[12] The region suffered, it appears, from a surfeit of peasants.

Appleby's canvas was broad: he was surveying the economic and demographic characteristics of a whole region, encompassing the historic counties of Cumberland and Westmorland, and he was clearly attuned to local variation within this region. Yet for something so influential, indeed for something so *important* as an explanation of England's last famine, remarkably little work has been done to test Appleby's picture of rural change leading up to the tragedies of 1587–88, 1597 and 1623. This will be the aim here, but the perspective will be more microscopic in nature. Whilst Appleby was attempting to describe the broad sweep of agrarian change over two counties, the focus here will be on just two manors (albeit fairly large ones): Grasmere and Windermere, or – more properly – seven of their constituent manorial jurisdictions, referred to here as townships or 'graveships' (Table 1).[13] These were part of the Barony of Kendal, an ancient feudal unit that covered the whole southern part of Westmorland, specifically part of its Richmond and Marquess Fees, which, by the 1570s, had both fallen to the crown.[14]

[9] This argument in many ways anticipated the concept of 'exchange entitlements' introduced by Amartya Sen in *Poverty and famines: an essay on entitlement and deprivation* (1982).

[10] Appleby, *Famine*, pp. 17–94.

[11] *Ibid*., pp. 67–83.

[12] Walter and Schofield, 'Famine, disease and crisis mortality', p. 22. The picture is a broadly Malthusian one, and is analogous to the classic depiction of the fourteenth century presented by Postan: e.g. M. M. Postan, *The medieval economy and society: an economic history of Britain in the middle ages* (1972), pp. 15–40.

[13] In this article the larger units will be referred to as 'manors', the smaller ones as 'townships'; in the case of Grasmere I will refer to the manor as 'Grasmere' or 'Grasmere manor', the township as 'Grasmere township'. There were three 'manorial' jurisdictions which had become separated from the head manors of Grasmere and Windermere: Rydal, Little Langdale and Baisbrown. These are not considered here.

[14] For the history of the barony, Joseph Nicolson and Richard Burn, *The history and antiquities of the counties of Westmorland and Cumberland* (2 vols., 1777), I, pp. 29–63.

TABLE 1. Manors and townships under study.

Manor	*Township*	*Estimated Population, 1674 (multiplier: 4.3 to 4.75)*
Grasmere	Grasmere	270–300
	Loughrigg[a]	–
	Great Langdale[a]	–
Windermere	Ambleside	220–250
	Troutbeck	280–310
	Applethwaite	330–360
	Undermillbeck	430–470

Notes:
[a] Great Langdale and Loughrigg graveships were not coterminous with civil townships, and thus population figures cannot be satisfactorily abstracted for them. Great Langdale probably accounted for around two thirds of the 310–50 people in Langdale civil township (around 210–30); Loughrigg may have accounted for around half of the 240–70 population of Rydal and Loughrigg (around 120–30).
Source: Colin Phillips, Catherine Ferguson and Andrew Wareham (eds), *Westmorland Hearth Tax: Michaelmas 1670 and surveys 1674–5*, Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, Extra Ser., 19 (2008), pp. 291, 295.

The townships were mountainous by the standards of the British Isles. The nearest major town, the economic and political hub of the south Westmorland region, was Kendal, some 10–20 miles away. The microscopic perspective adopted here allows us to test Appleby's depiction of social structural change in this poor and isolated region; it will consider the degree to which the period saw the increasing marginality of the customary tenantry, which Appleby argued was a critical precondition for famine. The article will then introduce important new evidence, which allows us to recreate a more detailed picture of the structure of landholding in the crisis-prone uplands and which has major implications for our understanding of the relationship between social structure and early modern famine.

I

To modern eyes, Cumbria is almost synonymous with the Lake District: sweeping mountains, deep blue waters, whitewashed cottages, and poetry. But to the early modern historian, England's rugged north-west is most familiar as a rain-sodden, impoverished, isolated, and famine-prone borderland. It was a world apart from the lush pastures and golden cornfields of southern England.[15] The weather was amongst England's most inclement and much of the land, even the improved land, was stony, glacial till. Indeed, most of the surface area of the townships under study was given over to vast tracts of steep, craggy fell (Table 2).[16] Commons were clearly of considerable economic importance, and Angus Winchester has shown how

[15] Appleby, *Famine*, pp. 17–18; Eric Kerridge, *The agricultural revolution* (1968), p. 161.

[16] TNA, TITH 2/261–3.

TABLE 2. Pre-nineteenth century Common Fell in Grasmere and Windermere.

	Total Acreage	*Common Fell (including large stinted pastures)*	*% Common Fell*
Grasmere	6900	5000	72.5
Rydal and Loughrigg	5201	2500	48.1
Langdale (Great and Little)	7702	5000	64.9
Ambleside	2790	800	28.7
Troutbeck	4700	2000	42.6
Applethwaite	5320	2595	48.8
Undermillbeck	2335	1031	44.2
Total	34948	18926	54.2

Source: TNA, TITH 2/261–3.

they were carefully managed by the region's manorial courts.[17] But they nonetheless comprised exceptionally poor-quality land: when asked in 1622 to describe the barrenness and unprofitability of the fells in his home valley of Longsleddale, 36-year-old Robert Gilpin duly reported that the land was 'very mountaynous & full of foule greate rocks & craggs so that their sheepe & cattell are in greate danger to breake their necks, and that he hath seene & knowne that both horses & sheepe have broken their necks there'.[18] Modern recreational sensibilities would no doubt have mystified Gilpin, and he could equally well have been talking of any of extensive common fells of Cumberland or Westmorland: Troutbeck Park, at the head of the Troutbeck valley, for example, was described by local men in 1607 as 'a steep mountainus rocke place good for litill or nothinge at all'.[19] Squeezing profit out of the fells was tough work.

Pasture farming was the key economic activity, and one of the most enduring images of the region is that of a broadly egalitarian social structure, with very few large landowners, and a persistent class of small, owner-occupier peasant graziers whose descendents would be lauded as such by romantic writers from the late eighteenth century.[20] In a well-known passage of his 1810 guide to the region William Wordsworth referred to the rural society of the Lakes as a 'mountain republic': a 'pure commonwealth', free of the interference of nobles, and where 'the plough of each man was confined to the maintenance of his own family, or to the occasional accommodation of his neighbour'.[21] Certainly holdings in severalty were small: a few acres of 'inbye' land in the valley (and sometimes, as in Great Langdale, within a still surviving earthen bank called the 'ring-garth') usually formed the core of the holding, with corresponding

[17] Angus J. L. Winchester, *The harvest of the hills: rural life in northern England and the Scottish Borders, 1400–1700* (2000).

[18] TNA, E 134/19Jas1/HIL8, Deposition of Robert Gilpin of Longsleddale, 1622.

[19] TNA, E 178/4690, Survey of Troutbeck Park, 1607.

[20] Angus J. L. Winchester, 'Wordsworth's "Pure Commonwealth"? Yeoman dynasties in the English Lake District', *Armitt Library J.* 1 (1998), pp. 87–8; Jonathan Healey, 'Agrarian social structure in the central Lake District, *c.*1574–1830: the fall of the "Mountain Republic"?', *Northern History* 44 (2007), pp. 73–5.

[21] William Wordsworth, *The illustrated Wordsworth's guide to the Lakes*, ed. Peter Bicknell (1985), pp. 110–11.

common rights on the fell and in the small, unsophisticated open fields which still existed up to the eighteenth century.[22] The toughness of the terrain ensured that grain would never be the dominant component of local farming, but oats and barley were clearly important crops in our period nonetheless.[23] It may be that in normal years enough was grown locally to feed much of the region's population: using a sample of 225 yeoman probate inventories, Marshall calculated that two-thirds of Lakeland yeomen cultivated between four and eight acres of grain in the late seventeenth century.[24] That this was in a period usually seen as one of greater regional specialization, which in the north-west meant specialization away from grain, makes such a statistic especially important.[25] Before agricultural price conditions changed post-1650 in favour of the products of pasture farming, it is likely that grain production was even more widespread.[26] Unfortunately it is impossible to gauge the amount of arable production in the two study manors at present, but data do exist for the small, valley hamlet of Legburnthwaite, just six miles north of Grasmere over the county border in Cumberland. A survey of the inbye holdings of nine tenants survives for 1588 and, of a total of 84½ (presumably customary) acres, just under 34 acres (40 per cent) were arable: the mean arable acreage per tenant being 3¾ acres: probably, in other words, around six statute acres.[27]

There is patchy but consistent evidence, then, of a significant amount of arable cultivation in the Lakeland valleys in the early modern period. This should not, however, detract from the economic importance of the common fell, and Winchester has shown that this was used not just for rough grazing, but also for the collection of various materials 'for hearth and home', notably bracken and peat.[28] Grazing rights were technically restricted to those holding customary tenements, with tenants in our manors paying a nominal rent *en masse* for their 'agistment' of livestock on the fell, although it is possible that some rights, particularly the less valuable ones, were available to the landless in some circumstances.[29]

By the early sixteenth century, the majority of land was held by a customary border tenure known as 'tenant right'; there were few freeholders.[30] Tenant right was in practice little different to copyhold of inheritance, save that tenants owed a fine, or 'gressum', on the death of their lord, and that they were obligated to turn out, armed, to defend the border from any Scottish incursion. The development of tenant right in the peculiar agrarian conditions of the sixteenth century varied from manor to manor, but in the crown manors of the Barony of Kendal, rents and fines had evidently become fixed by the late sixteenth century. Indeed, so far had customary rents lagged behind prices in 1604, that a surveyor calculated that, although

[22] Winchester, *Harvest*, pp. 52–102.

[23] Appleby, *Famine*, p. 43.

[24] J. D. Marshall, 'The domestic economy of the Lakeland yeoman, 1660–1749', *Trans. Historical Society of Cumberland and* Westmorland, Sec. Ser. [hereafter *CW*[2]] 73 (1973), pp. 201–2.

[25] Anne Kussmaul, *A general view of the rural economy of England, 1538–1840* (1990); Keith Wrightson, *Earthly necessities: economic lives in early modern Britain* (2000), pp. 231–5.

[26] Wrightson, *Earthly necessities*, pp. 229–31.

[27] TNA, ADM 76/84, no. 59.

[28] Winchester, *Harvest*, pp. 123–45.

[29] Angus J. L. Winchester, 'Common land in upland Britain: tragic unsustainability or utopian community resource?', in Franz Bosbach, Jens Ivo Engels and Fiona Watson (eds), *Umwelt und Geschichte in Deutschland und Grossbritannien – Environment and history in Britain and Germany* (Munich, 2006), pp. 65–6.

[30] Nicolson and Burn, *History and antiquities*, II, pp. 51–9; R. W. Hoyle, 'An ancient and laudable custom: the definition and development of tenant tight in north-west England in the sixteenth Century', *Past and Present* 116 (1987), pp. 24–55.

the crown manors in the Richmond and Marquess Fees of the Barony were together worth nearly £2,665 a year, they were only drawing in rents of just under £496.[31] The only attempt to change this came in the reign of James I, but the crown was only able to entice its tenants to compound, in 1619, for the sum of £2,700, roughly the value of one year's improved rent, in return for security of tenure and fixed entry fines.[32] In general, Appleby was sceptical that tenurial changes could have had much impact on tenants' vulnerability: though entry fines rose on some manors, any increase was probably not out of proportion to inflation in general.[33] In any case, the relative security of tenure on the crown lands in the Barony discounts this as an explanation for famine in our manors, though in 1623 the recent composition with the crown would have dented tenant wealth a little.[34]

Finally, it is worth noting that – in the late sixteenth century and perhaps for much of the early seventeenth – the Kendal region was the seat of a textile industry of some importance. The cloths produced were low-quality 'old draperies', and the industry cannot have been particularly lucrative, but the local products were sufficiently famous to be mentioned in *The First Part of Henry IV*, when Falstaff claimed to Prince Henry (in act 2 scene 4) that he had been assailed at night-time by 'three misbegotten knaves in Kendal green'. Indeed, the dark colour of the cloth must have been familiar enough to Shakespeare's London audience for them to understand Henry's riposte, that Sir John could not have seen the men in Kendal green, 'when it was so dark thou could'st not see thy hand'.[35] A minimum of 18 fulling mills have been detected operating in Grasmere parish in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, suggesting a significant workforce, even if not all of them were operating simultaneously; but the industry was probably in decline by the seventeenth century, and the economic hegemony of farming, which was to last up to the rise of tourism in the area in modern times, was largely unchallenged.[36] That said, a crown survey of the Barony taken in 1604 recorded the belief that – along with the low rents – the textile industry had allowed most of the tenants to grow notably wealthy and invest heavily in new houses.[37] And, as late as 1660–89, Marshall found spinning wheels in about a third of yeomen probate inventories in the upland parts of Kendal Deanery.[38]

[31] TNA, CRES 40/19A, no. 6, pp. 24–6.

[32] Appleby, *Famine*, pp. 67–83; R. W. Hoyle, '"Shearing the hog": the reform of the estates, c.1598–1640', in Hoyle (ed.), *The estates of the English crown, 1558–1640* (1992), pp. 249–52; Joe Scott, 'The Kendal tenant right dispute, 1619–26', *CW²* 98 (1998), pp. 169–82.

[33] A. B. Appleby, 'Agrarian capitalism or seigneurial reaction: the northwest of England, 1500–1700', *American Historical Rev.* 80 (1975), pp. 574–94.

[34] Cf. J. T. Swain, *Industry before the industrial revolution: north-east Lancashire, c. 1500–1640* (1986), p. 25.

[35] William Shakespeare, *The first part of King Henry the Fourth*, ed. P. H. Dawson (1968), p. 85.

[36] Mary L. Armitt, 'Fullers and freeholders of the parish of Grasmere', *CW²* 8 (1908), p. 155; C. D. Phillips, 'Town and country: economic change in Kendal, *c.*1550–1700', in P. Clark (ed.), *The transformation of English provincial towns* (1984), pp. 102, 110–17; F. W. Garnett, *Westmorland agriculture, 1800–1900* (1912); C. M. L. Bouch and G. P. Jones, *A short social and economic history of the Lake Counties* (1961); G. Elliot, 'The decline of the woollen trade in Cumberland, Westmorland and Northumberland in the late sixteenth century', *CW²* 61 (1961), p. 112; J. D. Marshall and John K. Walton, *The Lake Counties from 1830 to the mid-twentieth century: a study in regional change* (1981).

[37] TNA, CRES 40/19A, no. 6, p. 26.

[38] Marshall, 'Domestic economy', p. 195.

II

One of the clearest aspects of social change in the region to emerge from Appleby's work is the increase in population. Based on an analysis of parish registers, as well as diocesan population listings from 1563 and 1603, Protestation Returns from 1641/2, Hearth Tax and Compton Census data from the 1670s, and an informal census of Cumberland by Thomas Denton in 1687–88, Appleby produced plausible estimates of population change from the time of Elizabeth to that of James II. To summarize, he calculated that the population of Cumberland and Westmorland together rose from just over 43,000 in 1563 to around 62,000 in 1603, an increase of some 43 per cent; it then dropped by 9 per cent to the early 1640s, when it stood at around 56,400. Most importantly, he showed, this time using 37 parish registers, that there were major population crises in 1587–88, 1597 and 1623.[39] Of these, that of 1587–88 Appleby ascribed to disease (probably typhus) exacerbated by famine; the latter two were, he argued, more squarely the consequence of mass starvation.

Unfortunately, neither the 1603 ecclesiastical census of the diocese of Carlisle nor the 1641/2 Protestation Returns cover our study area. The 1563 diocesan returns give a total of 518 households for the parishes of Grasmere and Windermere combined, a population of around 2500 (using a 4.75 multiplier).[40] The 1674 Hearth Tax returns give a total of 483 households (total population around 2,300 using the same multiplier).[41] These, then, suggest either that the population of Grasmere and Windermere was stagnant, in contrast to much of England and, indeed, the north-west as a whole, or that any gains made after 1563 were lost later. It is worth noting that relative stagnation is also evident in a similar comparison between diocesan and hearth tax returns for both the Barony of Kendal (which apparently grew by 7.8 per cent between 1563 and 1674/5) and Lancashire's Furness district (which grew just 3.2 per cent).[42] In fact, this is not uncharacteristic of Westmorland in general. Appleby's figures for the diocese of Carlisle suggest that, while the number of households in the Cumberland part of the diocese increased by some 46.8 per cent from 1563 to 1641/2, in Westmorland (effectively north Westmorland) the population remained roughly constant. In fact, this is doubly striking, given the possibility that the 1563 figures might have been unusually low, either for reasons of spotty collection, as argued by Nigel Goose, or because the recent influenza crisis had caused a massive drop in the population, as recently claimed by John Moore.[43]

[39] Appleby, *Famine*, pp. 95–154.

[40] The parishes and manors of Grasmere and Windermere were roughly contiguous, though in both cases the parish was slightly larger. Alan Dyer and D. M. Palliser (eds), *The diocesan population returns for 1563 and 1603* (Records of Social and Economic History, New Ser., 31, 2005), pp. 91–2.

[41] Note that the Hearth Tax figures are 65 households greater than those used by Appleby. My figures are based on the 1674 returns, which are more comprehensive than the earlier ones used by Appleby: Colin Phillips, Catherine Ferguson and Andrew Wareham (eds), *Westmorland Hearth Tax: Michaelmas 1670 and surveys 1674–5*, Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, Extra Ser., 19 (2008), pp. 291, 295.

[42] Colin Phillips, 'Westmorland about 1670', in Phillips, Ferguson and Wareham (eds), *Westmorland Hearth Tax*, pp. 11–13.

[43] John S. Moore, '"Jack Fisher's 'flu": a visitation revisited', *EcHR* 46 (1993), pp. 280–307; Nigel Goose, 'The Bishops' Census of 1563: a re-examination of its reliability', *Local Population Stud.* 56 (1996), pp. 43–53. See too Heather Falvey, 'Searching for the population in an early-modern forest', *Local Population Stud.* 81 (2008), pp. 37–57.

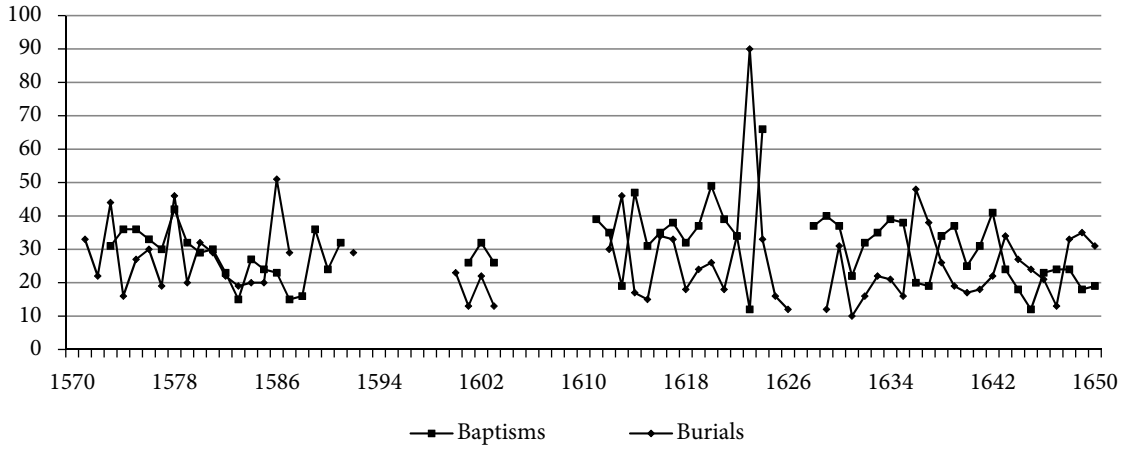


FIGURE 1. Baptisms and Burials in Grasmere Parish, 1570–1650

Source: Cumbria RO (K), WPR 91/1/1/1, Grasmere Parish Register, 1570–1687.

Parish registers complicate things further. Three sets of registers cover our study area: the parish register for St Oswald's, Grasmere, covers the graveships of Langdale, Loughrigg and Grasmere, as well the jurisdictions of Rydal, Little Langdale, and Baisbrown not included in this study. The register for St Oswald's survives from the 1570s, though with significant gaps from 1588 to 1610 (Figure 1).[44] It shows the severity of the 1623 famine, with burials that year well over three times higher than the mean for the previous ten years. It also shows a clear surplus of baptisms over burials, despite the population losses of 1623, at least from the turn of the century. In fact, the mean surplus of baptisms over burials in Grasmere lay at just 0.2 per annum up to 1600, but reached the much higher 5.5 per annum from then to 1650.[45] This does not suggest stagnation.

Natural growth was apparently even higher in the chapelry of Troutbeck, covering the manors of Troutbeck and Applethwaite.[46] The register survives, again with some gaps, from 1580 (Figure 2). Allowing for these gaps, there was a surplus of 535 baptisms between 1580 and 1626, despite three major spikes in mortality in 1587, 1597, and 1623. This is suspiciously high, and it may be that for some reason residents were being buried at the mother church of Windermere rather than the newer chapel of Troutbeck. Unfortunately Windermere registers only commence in 1613, and are fragmentary at best until mid-century.[47] Nonetheless, it seems unlikely, given the magnitude of the surplus, that the Troutbeck register conceals stagnation or decline. The vast nearby parish of Kendal tells a rather different story: data are a little patchy, though the crises of the 1590s and 1620s come out very clearly, but there is notably

[44] Cumbria RO (Kendal Branch) [hereafter CRO (K)], WPR 91/1/1/1, Grasmere Parish Register, 1570–1687.

[45] This pattern of stagnation in the sixteenth century followed by rapid expansion in the early seventeenth is similar to that found in Hawkshead (Lancashire) on the other side of Lake Windermere: Jonathan Healey, 'Marginality and misfortune: poverty and social welfare in Lancashire, *c*.1630–1760' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2008), pp. 186–8.

[46] CRO (K), WPR 62/1/1/1–2, Troutbeck Chapelry Register, 1579–1629, 1633–61.

[47] CRO (K), WPR 61/1/1/1, Windermere Parish Register, 1613–28.

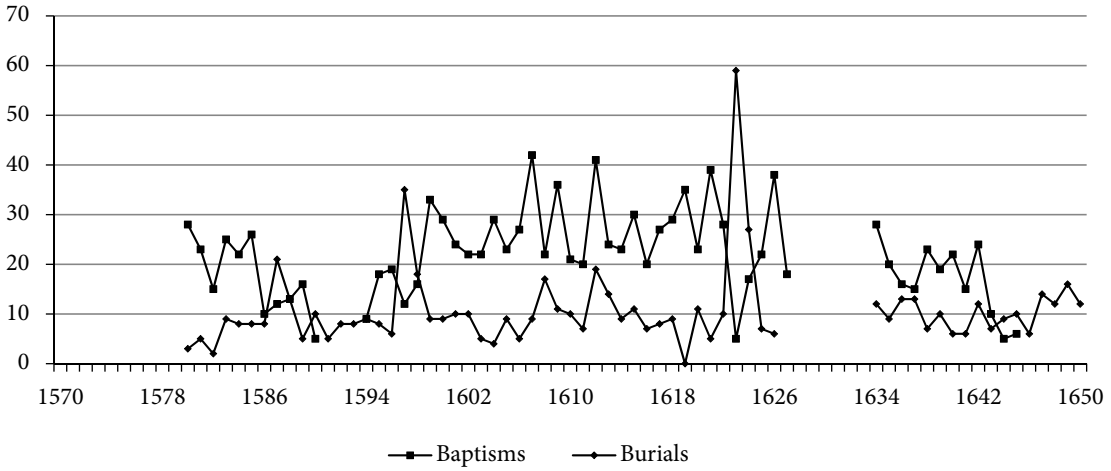


FIGURE 2. Baptisms and Burials in Troutbeck Chapelry, 1570–1650

Source: Cumbria RO (K), WPR 62/1/1/1–2, Troutbeck Chapelry Register, 1579–1629, 1633–61.

little evidence for natural demographic growth (Table 3; Figure 3).[48] The mean number of baptisms per month was actually *below* the number of burials for the period 1570–1631. Even if we exclude crisis years, it is only in the early seventeenth century that the parish shows natural increase, and this was wiped out by the famine of 1623.

There is still, however, the discrepancy between the parish register figures for Grasmere and Troutbeck and the census-type listings for Grasmere and Windermere parishes. The hearth tax populations are probably too low: according to C. B. Phillips, they 'undoubtedly' excluded the poor, and this probably has major implications for the reliability of the returns as global population figures.[49] Poor accounts from 1637 record 81 recipients of relief in the two parishes: if there were a comparable number of paupers in 1674, and if each of these represented a household, then this would increase the 1674 household total to 564, which is actually an 8.9 per cent increase on the 1563 figure.[50] Nonetheless, even slow growth contradicts one of the standard characteristics we expect of 'forest-type' local economies in rural England, namely that their large tracts of loosely regulated waste attracted poor migrants from elsewhere. Instead, the combined picture from the diocesan returns, hearth tax, and extant parish registers leaves little room for in-migration: if anything the parishes were likely to have been net *exporters* of people.[51] Surname analysis reinforces this point. Of some 397 customary tenants with identifiable surnames in 1604, 306 (77.1 per cent) of them had names that are recorded in Grasmere or Windermere before 1450; and of the remainder, 16 had locative surnames that link them to places within the two manors. This leaves just 75 tenants with names that appear to have been new arrivals since the mid-fifteenth century: a mere 18.9 per cent.[52] Compared

[48] Henry Brierley and R. N. Birley (eds), *The registers of Kendal, Westmorland* (1921–52).

[49] Phillips, 'Westmorland', p. 12.

[50] TNA, SP 16/338/7, nos 9 and 40.

[51] For north-south migration see: A. L. Beier, *Masterless men: the vagrancy problem in England, 1560–1640* (1985), pp. 32–7.

[52] W. Farrer and John F. Curwen (eds), *Records relating to the Barony of Kendale* (4 vols, 1924), II, pp. 1–80; TNA, SC 2/207/121–2, SC 2/207/111.

TABLE 3. Mean monthly baptismal and burial totals, Kendal parish, 1570–1631.

	Totals		*Excluding 1587, 1597–98 and 1623*	
	Baptisms	*Burials*	*Baptisms*	*Burials*
1570–1587	16.7	17.6	16.8	16.9
1591–1600	17.5	27.5	18.9	21.3
1607–1531	18.7	19.0	19.0	17.2

Source: Henry Brierley and R. N. Birley (eds), *The registers of Kendal, Westmorland* (1921–52).

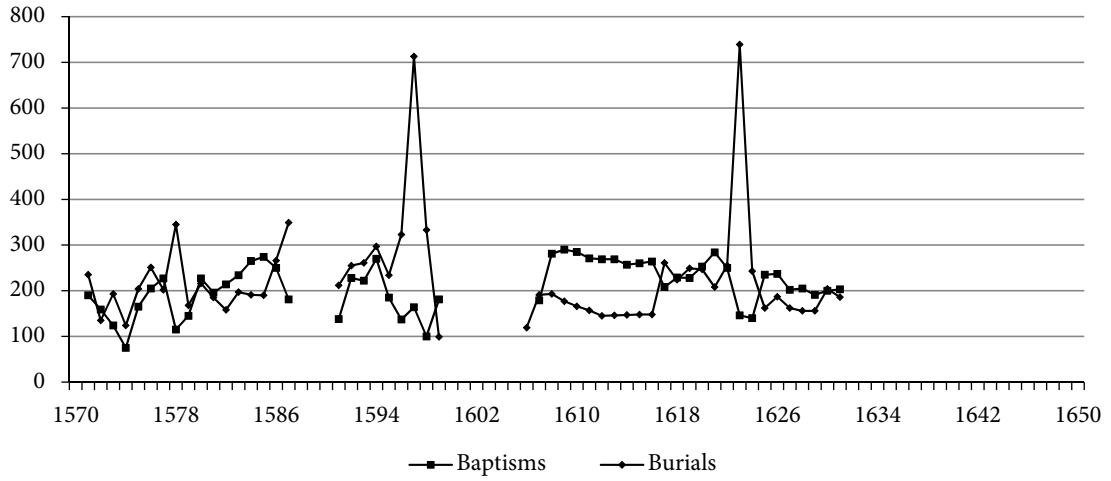


FIGURE 3. Baptisms and burials in Kendal Parish, 1570–1631.

Source: Henry Brierley and R. N. Birley (eds), *The registers of Kendal, Westmorland* (1921–52).

to some lowland southern manors, in which an almost complete turnover of surnames can be found within a century or so, this is a very low rate of change.[53] We must acknowledge, then, that in Grasmere and Windermere parishes, the evidence for population growth is more complex than might be expected.

III

Alongside the growth in total population, one of the central planks in Appleby's argument was the idea that, as population expanded, holdings became subdivided so that eventually the Cumbrian peasantry was teetering on the brink of starvation even in good times. Of families who held an average of an acre of arable and six of pasture in the 'Debateable Lands' on the Scottish Borders, Appleby felt that it was 'difficult to see how these people could have

[53] Peter Spufford, 'Population movement in seventeenth-century England', *Local Population Stud.* 4 (1970), pp. 46–7; Peter Laslett and John Harrison, 'Clayworth and Cogenhoe', in H. E. Bell and R. L. Ollard, *Historical essays 1600–1750, presented to David Ogg* (1963), pp. 174, 177.

survived, without stealing from their neighbours'.[54] This was not the case in all communities, in lowland Holm Cultram (Cumberland), for example, the number of tenants remained stable, but, having perused the 1574 rentals for the Barony of Kendal, Appleby believed that the picture of dangerous expansion held for the south Westmorland fells. Our next task is to test this in more detail in our seven townships.[55]

Certainly there had been a very considerable expansion in the numbers of customary landholders since the late fourteenth century. Rentals exist from the late 1300s, from 1574, 1619, 1665, and then at fairly regular intervals into the late eighteenth century (Tables 4 to 7). In addition, there is a list of tenants from 1560, as well as lists of payments for 'greenhew', i.e. the right to collect wood in the township, from 1442, 1443, 1560, 1596, 1597 and 1604 and the 1610s.[56] If we use the 'minimum' figures in Table 4, which assume that *all* identical names in the documents can be conflated (the maximum figures assume the opposite: that identical entries represent distinct individuals), then the increase in the number of tenants was general from the late medieval period to the third quarter of the sixteenth century, with the partial exception of Applethwaite. Totalled figures, which assume that no tenant held land in more than one township, suggest an increase from 247 tenants in the late 1300s to 405 by 1574.[57] For reasons that are not clear, the biggest growth came in Langdale, Troutbeck, and Undermillbeck. Indeed, in Applethwaite, there were already 54 tenants as early as 1283, which suggests that township had 'filled up' very early, whereas in Ambleside (11 tenants in 1324 and 1334), Troutbeck (8 in 1283, 11 in both 1324 and 1334), and Loughrigg (9 tenants in 1324) there is evidence for substantial growth in the fourteenth century.[58] The total rent paid in each township also increased, though evidently not as fast as the numbers of tenants, so that in most townships the mean customary rent paid per tenant decreased. In Ambleside, Troutbeck and Langdale the decrease was so pronounced that tenants in 1574 were paying around half as much customary rent as their predecessors in the late fourteenth century had. But this was not universal, in Grasmere and Applethwaite there was a much smaller decrease, and in the small township of Loughrigg, and the much larger one of Undermillbeck, the mean rent paid per tenant actually *increased*. It is unlikely that the expansion of the total rental represented an increase in rents per acre: any increase in the burden of rents before about 1500 would be hard to reconcile with the low pressure demographic regime of late-medieval England. Rather, the

[54] Appleby, *Famine*, p. 52.

[55] *Ibid*., pp. 57–8.

[56] The principal rentals used here are as follows: 1300s: Farrer and Curwen, *Records*, II, pp. 1–84; 1574: TNA, E 178/3130; 1619 and 1665: TNA, LR 13/5/1–2; 1738: TNA, SC 12/33/1–2. There is also a Commonwealth survey from 1650, but this does not distinguish between types of tenure, and so has been excluded from this study, TNA SC 12/31/16–17; for further rentals see: Healey, 'Agrarian social structure', p. 79, n. 34. In addition to the rentals, I have used lists of tenants from 1560 in Farrer and Curwen, *Records*, II, pp. 11, 25–6, 35–6, 48–50, 76–9, and lists of greenhew payments from 1441–43, 1596 and 1597: TNA, SC 2/207/121–2, LR 11/3/68, and 1604: TNA, SC 2/207/111. The 1560 list of tenants does not appear to make much effort to distinguish between tenants of the same name: no tenant is recorded as 'junior' or 'senior', for example. Thus, the real figure for number of tenants in 1560 is likely to be higher within the margin of error than in other years.

[57] This is certainly an incorrect assumption, but the number of landowners with tenements in more than one township is likely to have been small, and counter-balanced by a small number of inevitable incorrect linkages between identical names within townships.

[58] Farrer and Curwen, *Records*, II, pp. 1–3, 20–2, 30–1, 40–1, 58–61.

TABLE 4. Customary tenants in manors of Grasmere and Windermere, *c.*1400–1738.

	Manor of Grasmere									*Manor of Windermere*											
	Grasmere			*Loughrigg*			*Langdale*			*Ambleside*			*Troutbeck*			*Applethwaite*			*Undermillbeck*		
	Max.	*Min.*	*Rent (s.)*	*Max.*	*Min.*	*Rent (s.)*	*Max.*	*Min.*	*Rent (s.)*	*Max.*	*Min.*	*Rent (s.)*	*Max.*	*Min.*	*Rent (s.)*	*Max.*	*Min.*	*Rent (s.)*	*Max.*	*Min.*	*Rent (s.)*
1370–94	63	**56**	236	19	**19**	33	27	**26**	138	28	**25**	516	24	**22**	462	65	**54**	381	46	**45**	100
1441–43	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	25	**25**	–	21	**21**	–	71	**70**	–	–	–	–
1560				21	**18**					63	**50**	–	61	**54**	–	72	**64**	–	108	**90**	–
1574	94	**76**	276	26	**24**	57	59	**53**	151	56	**47**	501	56	**54**	465	65	**61**	396	106	**90**	230
1596[a]				19	**18**					46	**40**		54	**52**	–	67	**62**	–	93	**81**	
1604	97	**75**	–	21	**21**	–	55	**46**	–	51	**47**	–	56	**49**	–	79	**67**	–	106	**95**	–
1619	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	43	**43**	494	68	**48**	478	75	**65**	394	86	**69**	211
1665	86	**74**	266	20	**20**	52	62	**49**	146	43	**38**	493	53	**40**	483	63	**60**	392	78	**66**	219
1738	71	**54**	267	23	**23**	52	54	**31**	140	37	**34**	491	59	**55**	479	55	**50**	391	76	**68**	214

Note: [a] Data for Loughrigg actually for 1597.

Source: W. Farrer and John F. Curwen (eds), *Records relating to the Barony of Kendale* (4 vols, 1924), II, pp. 1–80; TNA, SC 2/207/121–2; LR 11/3/68; SC 2/207/111; E 178/3130; LR 13/5/1–2; SC 12/33/1–2.

TABLE 5. Customary rents per tenant (*s.*)

Manor	*Township*	*c. 1400*	*1574*	*1619*	*1665*	*1738*
Grasmere	Grasmere	4.2	3.6	–	3.6	4.9
	Loughrigg	1.7	2.4	–	2.6	2.3
	Great Langdale	5.3	2.8	–	3.0	4.5
Windermere	Ambleside	20.7	10.7	11.5	13.0	14.4
	Troutbeck	21.0	8.6	10.0	12.1	8.7
	Applethwaite	7.1	6.5	6.1	6.5	7.8
	Undermillbeck	2.2	2.6	3.1	3.3	3.2

Source: as Table 4.

TABLE 6. Combined tenant numbers, *c.*1400–1738.

	1375–1394	*1441*	*1560*	*1574*	*1596*	*1604*	*1619*	*1665*	*1738*
Grasmere manor	101	–	–	153	–	142	–	143	108
Windermere	146	–	258	252	235	258	225	204	207
Windermere without Undermillbeck	101	116	168	162	154	163	156	138	139
Combined	247	–	–	405	–	400	–	347	315

Source: as Table 4.

TABLE 7. Percentage changes, *c.*1400–1665.

	Fourteenth century	*1574*	*1604*	*1665*
Grasmere	101	153	142	143
		+51.5%	–7.2%	+0.7%
Windermere	146	252	258	204
		+72.6%	+2.6%	–20.9%
Combined	247	405	400	347
		+64.0%	–1.2%	–13.3%

Source: as Table 4.

increase in rent almost certainly reflected a process of intaking, by which parcels of the waste land were gradually enclosed and added to the inbye.

The broad picture of development from the late fourteenth century to 1574, then, is for a significant increase in the number of customary tenants, and a slower increase in the total amount of rent paid in each manor. Up to this point, this is in support of Appleby's depiction of increasing peasant marginality and land hunger: there was apparently significantly less

land per tenant: a 37 per cent drop in the amount of rent paid per tenant in Windermere, and a 22 per cent drop in Grasmere. However, this growth in the number of tenants, and thus the apparent diminution of holding sizes, ceased sometime around 1574 and evidence from 1560 suggests that it was already substantially complete by then. According to the method of calculation deployed here, there was a drop in the number of tenants from 405 in 1574 to 400 in 1604, and evidence from surviving lists of greenhew payments suggest that this was in fact a recovery from a low point in 1596–97. This is notwithstanding Appleby's evidence that 1603 marked an early modern pinnacle in the region's population.[59] Rentals also survive from 1619 for Windermere, and we can compare these to the full rentals for 1665. These suggest that the tenant body failed to grow beyond its apparent ceiling in 1574: the subdivision of holdings had stopped, and in the seventeenth century the numbers of tenants began to decline.[60]

This picture can be illuminated further by analysis of the rental structure of Windermere manor from 1574 onwards. For Grasmere, with the 1619 rentals missing, such comparisons are of less use. If the story of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is one of increasing atomization of customary holdings, then this might be manifested in a proliferation of marginal tenants paying small rents, although the relatively constant tenant numbers in Table 4 suggest that this is mathematically unlikely. Unfortunately, there is no way of ascertaining the precise relationship between rental values and actual acreages, or whether this varied between townships, so there is an element of subjectivity in the choice of category headings. In addition, we have to assume that identical names refer to the same individual, which may not be the case. In Table 8, two grouping types have been used: for Ambleside and Troutbeck, which were both within the baronial forest of Kendal, the smallest category has been taken as covering tenancies up to and including 5*s*. 11¾*d*., so as to reflect the fact that initially there were very few tenants paying less than the standard 6*s*. 8*d*. for an 'ancient tenement'. In the non-forest townships (Undermillbeck and Applethwaite), where there were initially a large number of small tenants paying just 1*s*. 3*d*., the lowest category covers rents up to and including 1*s*. 11¾*d*. The picture, however, is fairly clear, and fits nicely with the total tenant numbers: *there is no evidence of the proliferation of small tenancies up to 1619*. In Undermillbeck, the clearest trend was the apparent disappearance of a class of small customary cottagers, paying a few pence rent each. In neither Ambleside nor Troutbeck is there any evidence of a significant population of small tenants developing between 1574 and 1619.

The chronology of change to customary landholding thus does not gel neatly with the chronology of famines as identified by Appleby: the peak in the number of tenants was reached perhaps a generation before the first identified mortality crisis of 1587–88, and following that, as the number of tenants declined, the famines got worse. But this does not necessarily undermine Appleby's fundamental point that by Elizabeth's reign the peasantry of the north-west had become hopelessly marginal. It may be that the customary tenantry, *circa* 1560–1630 remained in a state of vulnerable stasis: hit by recurrent famines but remaining ultimately stable. Indeed, painting a picture of the desperate marginality of the region's peasantry, Appleby analysed the customary holding acreages of four townships in the 1574 survey. He highlighted Grasmere in particular, where the vast majority of tenants apparently held five statute acres

[59] Appleby, *Famine*, p. 32.

[60] Healey, 'Agrarian social structure', pp. 81–3.

TABLE 8. Rental structures, Windermere Manor, 1574–1738.

	1574		*1619*		*1665*		*1738*	
	Number	*% of rent*	*Number*	*% of rent*	*Number*	*% of rent*	*Number*	*% of rent*
Ambleside								
18*s.*+	5	31	7	41.6	7	48	7	58.1
12*s.*–17.99*s.*	8	21.8	9	25	7	19.6	6	20
6*s.*–11.99*s.*	30	43.8	21	28.7	21	29.7	10	16.7
0*s.*–5.99*s.*	4	3.4	6	4.7	3	3	11	11
Troutbeck								
18*s.*+	2	10.8	4	25.1	7	44.3	6	26.5
12*s.*–17.99*s.*	7	20.1	10	28.6	4	12.9	7	20.9
6*s.*–11.99*s.*	44	68.2	31	43.9	28	42.1	20	35.1
0*s.*–5.99*s.*	1	1	3	2.3	1	0.7	22	17.1
Applethwaite								
10*s.*+	–	–	7	30.5	10	43	11	47.4
5*s.*–9.99*s.*	–	–	24	41.9	18	32.6	21	38.8
2*s.*–4.99*s.*	–	–	28	25.6	24	21.9	14	13.1
0–1.99*s.*	–	–	6	2	8	2.5	4	0.8
Undermillbeck								
10*s.*+	0	0	1	5.8	2	17.1	1	12
5*s.*–9.99*s.*	13	39.2	11	34	10	31.8	11	36.3
2*s.*–4.99*s.*	27	38.4	25	41	20	32.1	23	32.5
0–1.99*s.*	50	22.4	32	19.2	34	19	33	19.3

Source: as Table 4.

of land or less.[61] In this he was following the analysis of William Farrer and John Curwen, who transcribed and published the 1574 rentals in the first quarter of the last century, and G. P. Jones, writing in the early 1960s about the decline of the Lakeland yeomanry.[62] All of these scholars, Farrer and Curwen, Jones, and Appleby, assumed that the acreage figures in the 1574 rental could be equated, broadly speaking, with farm sizes. Indeed, describing Grasmere and quoting Farrer, Appleby thought that '"The wretched parcels left after generations of sub-division" were too small to provide a living' to the 'inhabitants' of the manor.[63] Indeed, it is not unfair to suggest that these acreages gleaned from the 1574 survey formed a critical plank to Appleby's depiction of the marginality of the Cumbrian tenant.

Unfortunately, this is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, at most these acreages refer to

[61] Appleby, *Famine*, p. 56.

[62] G. P. Jones, 'The decline of the yeomanry in the Lake Counties', *CW*[2] 62 (1962), p. 203.

[63] Farrer and Curwen, *Records*, II, 14n; Appleby here conflates the terms 'inhabitants' and 'tenants'.

inbye land, i.e. the relatively fertile land in the valley within the ring-garth; they thus take no account of the vast areas of summer pasture on the fell which, though of poor quality, were so extensive as to be critical to the pasture-farming economy of our manors.[64] Secondly, the acreages presented in the 1574 rental do not even seem to represent realistic assessments of inbye land.[65] In Grasmere, where figures are not unduly distorted by the existence of large areas of freehold land, a tithe survey of 1838 records some 1,900 statute acres of enclosed land. If we exclude the woodland from this, and make a very generous allowance for 300 acres of freehold land (the main freehold tenement was at Banerigg, recorded as 14 acres in a 1581 deposition), then this leaves us with about 1,400 acres of enclosed land to account for.[66] Yet the acreages recorded in 1574 total just 280 customary acres, representing hardly more than 450–500 statute acres by Appleby's calculation. If the 1574 figure is accurate, then, around 1,000 statute acres *at least*, would have to have been enclosed between then and the 1830s. Two pieces of evidence argue against this. Firstly, there is the evidence of silence: I have found no evidence of much enclosure after 1600.[67] Secondly, a survey of enclosures in the township since the death of Edward VI, made in 1600, records just 67 (customary?) acres being taken in, many of which were described as extremely marginal.[68] The survey can thus be taken as evidence that intaking had, in Grasmere, reached the margins of profitability by 1600. But the more fundamental point is that the acreage figures from the 1574 survey are obviously unrealistic, and it is very likely that the same is true of the other six townships, where such calculations are more difficult. In Applethwaite, for example, the 1574 rental gives a total of just under 400 customary acres, yet the 'ancient enclosed lands' in the nineteenth-century tithe survey covered some 2,725 acres: again the 1574 acreage seems unrealistic. In fact, some of the most reliable evidence we have for acreages in the region comes from a *breviate* (summary) of a survey of the Barony compiled for the crown estate in 1604, which tells us that 525 customary tenants across the whole Richmond Fee held a total of 12,600 acres of land (excluding encroachments and waste), or a mean of 24 acres[69] per tenant. This may partly represent larger acreages in lowland townships: a preliminary analysis of the full survey (Appleby used the published extracts, which only represent 7 out of 20 surveyed townships) shows larger acreages in lowland townships. But the mean acreage per tenement in the Richmond Fee in the 1574 survey is just 6.2 acres, or just over a quarter of the size suggested by the 1604 survey: thus it may be that we have to multiply recorded acreages not by 1.6 as Appleby did, but by a factor of closer to four. This suggests strongly that the customary tenants of the area had considerably more land than Appleby thought. Estimated tenement sizes calculated by multiplying raw acreages by four are presented in Table 9: these suggest an average tenement size (excluding commons) of 18.4 acres in 1574, considerably higher than the 7.4 acres reached by using Appleby's multiplier.

[64] Winchester, *Harvest*, pp. 78–102.

[65] A point noted in relation to the thirteenth century, Angus J. L. Winchester, *Landscape and society in medieval Cumbria* (1987), p. 64.

[66] E 134/23Eliz/East7.

[67] It would appear that in Satterthwaite (Lancashire) in High Furness the pre-parliamentary enclosure landscape was largely complete by the early seventeenth century: Kevin Baverstock and Suzanne Tiplady, 'Gated trackways between common land and in-bye land within Satterthwaite parish', *CW*[3] 9 (2009), p. 94.

[68] TNA, E 178/2381.

[69] It is unclear whether customary or statute acres are being used: if customary then the average tenement size in statute acres would be considerably greater.

TABLE 9. Estimated mean holding sizes, 1574.

	No. of observations	*Mean acreage (Raw)*	*Mean acreage (estimated real)*
Grasmere	72	3.9	15.6
Loughrigg	35	3.2	12.8
Langdale	35	2.2	8.8
Applethwaite	48	6.5	26.0
Undermillbeck	55	5.9	23.6

Source: TNA, E 178/3130.

Two of these figures are a little misleading: data only exist for the half of Great Langdale in the Richmond Fee, thus 8.8 acres will be an underestimate since tenants often held land in both fees; in Undermillbeck the smaller cottages did not have recorded acreages, thus while 23.6 acres is probably a realistic measure of the tenement sizes of the established peasantry, it is on the high side for the community as a whole. Nonetheless, these recalculations suggest a more prosperous tenantry than Appleby's dismal picture suggests.[70] Indeed, the 1604 survey was quite explicit in highlighting, not the poverty of the region's peasantry, but the *wealth* of its customary tenantry:

> the tenanntes for the moste parte are verie riche by reason of theire greate trade of clothinge and manie of them have verie faire houses builte upon the premisses, and they will give one to another for the tenante righte 100 yeres fine and much more, and in some particular thinge as for a farme of xxx*s*. rente was given £600 for the tenante righte thereof.[71]

Of course, the surveyor, who was sizing the Barony up for 'improvement' after the dissolution of the Border in 1603, may well have been exaggerating as a bargaining counter against tenants reluctant to admit to their own wealth, but we can compare the 1604 breviate for the Barony to another survey compiled the same year by the same surveyors, John Goodwin and John

[70] It is worth bearing in mind also that there may have been a tradition in Westmorland of adjusting the size of acres to reflect the capacity of the land, in which case 'acreages' do not necessarily represent land area as such. For historians of social structure this is not such a problem, as the potential wealth-creating capacity of the land is of more interest than its size. However, it also seems likely that professional crown surveyors would have used a more standardized measure. Robert. S. Dilley, 'The customary acre: an indeterminate measure', *AgHR* 23 (1975), p. 176. In an earlier article on Grasmere, I argued that the 1574 acreages referred to recent enclosures. This remains possible: in the survey, each landholding was recorded as a tenement 'and' a number of acres, suggesting that the acreages were additional to the tenement. In Grasmere, moreover, the mean rent per recorded acre, at 11.6*d*., is suspiciously close to the 12*d*. stipulated in a 1530s agreement discussed below, whereas we know the rent per acre of all inbye lands was 6*d*. in the thirteenth century, although it appears to have risen to about 9*d*. by the late fourteenth. However, I am no longer convinced, as – given the strong correlation across the 1574 survey between recorded acreage and rent – this would suggest a fairly consistent process of enclosure across the Barony, which seems unlikely given the variation in landscapes, particularly between the townships in the heart of the Lakeland fells and the more 'lowland' ones. Healey, 'Agrarian social structure', pp. 79–80.

[71] TNA, CRES 40/19A, no. 6, pp. 24–6.

Johnson, this time for the Borderlands of Northumberland. The large manor of Harbottle, they felt, could be let at 4*d*. per acre, which was a common rent for newly enclosed lands in the middle Tyne and Coquetdale.[72] The local tenants felt even this was 'ridiculous', but it is considerably lower than the rents the same surveyors felt could be charged for customary land in Kendale. Here they found 12,600 acres of customary land in the Richmond Fee, worth a total of £1,200, or 22.9*d*. per acre, and 6,000 acres in the Marquess Fee worth £1,000, or 40*d*. per acre. The importance of this is that it counteracts the suspicion that the surveyors were exaggerating the region's wealth in preparation for the sale of fee farms to the tenants; even if this was likely to be the case, they still rated south Westmorland as considerably wealthier than the uplands of Northumberland. Hardly surprising, given the relative shelter the former area had enjoyed from Scottish raids, courtesy of Dunmail Raise and Shap Fell, but another important qualification to Appleby's pessimistic picture.

IV

If the increase in the number of tenants in our seven townships had halted by the mid-sixteenth century, and if their marginality was not as pronounced as Appleby supposed, then what of the history of enclosure in the area? The picture presented in *Famine in Tudor and Stuart England* is of gradual intaking, that is, small-scale enclosures of portions of the waste, in response to population growth in the sixteenth century, with piecemeal squatting, often by migrants, playing a major role in expanding the enclosed area.[73] The main evidence we have for sixteenth-century enclosure comes from Grasmere, where new intakes followed an agreement between the customary tenants and the lord's steward around 1531.[74] Customary tenants were allowed to enclose an acre of the common for every 12*d*. they paid in rent. At this point, according to a 66-year-old husbandman in a 1581 suit in the Court of Exchequer:

> the groundes weare messured and sence from tyme to tyme inclosed as the tennantes weare able to doo and make the same, and ... the same ware laid to theire tenementes and fermeholdes of the Quenes Majesties tennantes of Gressemer, by the consent of theire officers for the tyme beinge, and so haithe contynewed frome tyme to tyme by the lyke consent of the said officers ... .[75]

Crucially, the tenants paid no rents for their new closes. They were taken out of the common fell for which they already, collectively, paid 'forest silver', an ancient payment for agistment in the medieval Forest of Kendal.[76] The upshot of this, then, is that the tenants of Grasmere had the right to enclose some 230 to 280 customary acres (based on a total customary rental of 236*s*. in the fourteenth century and 276*s*. in 1574) after about 1530, without having to pay additional rent for them. Some of this was probably recorded in the 1600 list of post-1553 enclosures, mentioned above, but it seems likely that much more had taken place in the previous 20 years.

[72] Watts and Watts, *From Border to Middle Shire*, p. 165.

[73] Appleby, *Famine*, pp. 34–6, 59–62.

[74] Winchester, *Harvest*, p. 69.

[75] TNA, E 134/23Eliz/East3, Deposition of Thomas Richardson of Grasmere, 1581.

[76] Winchester, *Landscape*, p. 84.

This agreement is indicative of the relatively tight regulation of enclosure in the region by the customary tenantry, with agreements generally rationing intaking by the amount of land a tenant already held.[77] Another case from our manors is Troutbeck, where a mid-sixteenth-century agreement allowed tenants to enclose 2½ acres in Old Park for every five 'cattlegates' they already held (each cattlegate referred to a stint in the common).[78] By 1592, according to an estimate by an octogenarian Undermillbeck cooper, some 100 acres had been enclosed.[79] Whether similar agreements were made in the other townships is unclear. Certainly, surveys of enclosures in 1600 exist not just for Grasmere, but also for Undermillbeck and Great Langdale, where enclosures took place with the assent of the steward and 'proporcionablie' to existing tenements.[80] Customary tenants can also be found acting to prevent enclosures by freeholders. In Grasmere, when, around 1555, the tenants of the freeholds at Banerigg attempted to encroach on the common fell at Basthwaite Green, their enclosure was pulled down by the customary tenants, though it was 'sence by frendshippe continewid', perhaps a legal manoeuvre designed to allow the enclosure while ensuring it did not establish a precedent.[81] Six years later, when another Banerigg freeholder enclosed a small parcel of fell at Knabb Yeat, it was presented at the manor court and pulled down by Williams Hird and Hawkrigg, again both customary tenants. In the Exchequer suit from which this evidence comes, the customary tenants of Grasmere pointed out that their common fell had been rented to them from the barons of Kendal for £6 16*s*. 4*d*., referring to the ancient 'Forest Silver' they paid to graze their cattle. Since the intakes were made out of that land, the customary tenants were able to argue that encroachments should be restricted to those who paid Forest Silver: themselves, in other words. Enclosure, essentially, was a continuation of commoning by other means.

The control of encroachments in evidence here cuts against the idea that an area with vast commons was a magnet for poor migrants. This does seem to have been the case in forest areas in the Midlands and South, and the evidence is also strong in Yorkshire's Forest of Bowland.[82] Appleby supposed it was also the case in Cumbria: 'a squatter', he thought, 'could carve a few square yards of land out of the common pasture, throw up a rude cottage, and try to scratch a living out of the inhospitable soil'. This was one of the main reasons for the growth in the number of tenants; and, moreover, '[t]he established tenants rarely objected to the loss of pasture; the upland commons were vast, largely unsuitable for cultivation, and the chances slender that enough land would be converted to private use to seriously reduce the herds and flocks pastured there'.[83] In fact, the evidence from this corner of the Lake District

[77] Winchester, *Harvest*, pp. 68–72; Baverstock and Tiplady, 'Gated trackways', p. 94.

[78] Winchester, *Harvest*, p. 69; TNA, E 134/32Eliz/Hil4; Margaret A. Parsons, 'Pasture farming in Troutbeck, Westmorland, 1550–1750, *CW*^{2} 93 (1993), pp. 115–30.

[79] TNA, E 134/34Eliz/East13, deposition of William Matson of Undermillbeck, 1592.

[80] TNA, E 178/2381. There were 68 enclosures, most of less than an acre in Undermillbeck, and around 61 in Langdale, the return being badly faded and in parts illegible.

[81] TNA, E 134/23Eliz/East7, Deposition of Thomas Richardson of Grasmere, 1581; E 178/2381.

[82] Victor Skipp, *Crisis and development: an ecological study of the Forest of Arden, 1570–1674* (1978), pp. 41–2; J. Thirsk (ed.), The *Agrarian history of England and Wales*, IV (1967), pp. 10–11, 13, 409; John Porter, 'A forest in transition: Bowland, 1500–1650', *Trans. of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 125 (1974), 45–8; John Porter, 'Waste land reclamation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: the case of south-eastern Bowland, 1550–1630', *Trans. of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 127 (1977), p. 9.

[83] Appleby, *Famine*, pp. 36–7.

suggests that enclosure was relatively closely controlled, and it was not a driving force behind the development of a marginalized peasantry.[84]

A desire to prevent poor incomers from becoming customary tenants is also detectable in the regulation of the land market, which appears to have become more intense in the sixteenth century. Appleby evoked a picture, influenced by reports from the Borders, in which partible inheritance drove a widespread atomization of holdings, leaving tenants desperately poor.[85] In response to this, many manors in the region acted to prevent tenants dividing their lands, and a parliamentary statute was set down in 1581 to a similar purpose.[86] Appleby noted this in the case of Crosthwaite and Lyth in 1579 and Furness in 1586, and he considered that, by 1650, partible inheritance had disappeared from the crown estates.[87] To this we can add similar evidence, from both of our manors, that restrictions were placed on the land market to prevent subdivision. In the Richmond Fee portions of Grasmere manor held by the crown (i.e. Loughrigg, half of Langdale, and half of Grasmere township), a bylaw was set down in around 1580, by the steward of the Richmond Fee, Sir Thomas Boynton, 'for the tyme being with the consent of the tenantes', to the effect that no 'ancient tenement' might be subdivided; that, if one had been, a tenant of any portion could not sell unless he first offered his share to the tenants of the remaining parts; and that no land could be alienated to 'straingers or forroners being not the Quenes tenant'. This, in fact, was a use of a bylaw to reinforce an existing custom rather than to create a new one. According to John Benson, a 60-year-old Elterwater (Lancashire) yeoman, the ancient custom of the Richmond Fee was that 'no tenannte should parcell or devyde his tenemente albeit', he continued, 'before the tennantes motion to Sir Thomas Boynton there were dyverse tenementes devyded and solde'. The reason, it was deposed in a 1588 suit, was that subdivision was creating an impoverished tenantry unfit for armed service on the borders.[88] The chronology suggested by Benson, and supported by other deponents, is doubly interesting because it *almost* fits with that of the rental data quoted above: there was significant subdivision, but this was deliberately halted in or around the 1570s. In Windermere the evidence is a little more sketchy, but we know that the manor court ordered, probably in the reign of Henry VIII, that 'no tenandry apperteynyng this lordshippe nor within this same shall be devydid nor partid', while there was already a bylaw in force from the mid-fifteenth century against 'taverning'.[89]

[84] See Winchester, *Harvest*, pp. 68–71.

[85] Appleby, *Famine*, pp. 50–3.

[86] 23 Eliz. c. 1; Watts and Watts, *From Border to Middle Shire*, pp. 30–1.

[87] Appleby, *Famine*, p. 53.

[88] E 134/30Eliz/East3, Deposition of Leonard Benson of Ambleside, 1588; cf. TNA, DL 44/398; Thomas West, *The antiquities of Furness* (1774), p. 226.

[89] CRO (K), WD/TE, Book XI, fol. 23r. The precise date is difficult to ascertain from this document, it existing in a compilation of customs from 1478 to 1630. It appears to be retrospective and is placed three items down from an order dated to the reign of Henry VIII. The antiquarian S. H. Scott was certain that the bylaw dated to Henry's reign: S. H. Scott, *A Westmorland village: the story of the old homesteads and 'statesman' families of Troutbeck by Windermere* (1904), pp. 255–6. For the fifteenth-century jury charge: Winchester, *Harvest*, pp. 152–9. The orders printed here are undated, surviving only in a manuscript of the mid-sixteenth century (and not later than 1576), and are attached to a Jury Charge which Winchester suggests dates from before the 1440s. It is possible, nonetheless, that the orders themselves are in some kind of chronological order, beginning in 1477. If this is the case, then the order about dividing should be dated to 1497 or later. The original manuscript can be found in the Lonsdale Archive: Cumbria RO (Carlisle) [hereafter CRO (C)], D/Lons/L5/2/11/291.

Intentionally or not, such regulation would have restricted access to customary landholdings. Restricting enclosure to existing tenants would have had the same effect. The stagnation in the number of tenants in the seven townships suggests that such restrictions were successful. The upshot of this would have been that any growth in population, rather than being absorbed by enclosure or subdivision, must have led to an increase in levels of subtenancy. Unfortunately, subtenancy is usually very hard to recover as landlords normally did not have a direct interest in recording it, though it was clearly widespread in rural England.[90] Appleby found evidence of a significant number of undertenants on lowland manors, but his discussion was largely confined to the lowlands.[91] In Grasmere and Windermere, the most direct evidence comes from occasions on which customary tenants were fined by manor courts for keeping a 'byfire' on their tenement: literally an illegal fire (*igne illicit*) but in reality a regional term meaning a subtenant.[92] It appears that byfires were distinguished from those who rented whole tenements: in nearby Crosthwaite and Lyth a 1579 agreement specifically allowed tenants to sublet their *whole* tenements 'to whome he thinketh good', yet the manor court continued to fine the takers of byfires right through our period.[93] That said, theoretically a byfire could refer to anyone from an inmate to an undertenant of a large portion of a tenement. Data exist in the form of loose estreat rolls that were lodged with the crown estate and now survive in the National Archives; they cover over a quarter of the years between 1560 and 1650 and are particularly good from 1596 onwards.[94] The courts of Grasmere manor fined the keepers of byfires occasionally: less frequently than did those of Windermere. In Grasmere township it was rare for more than two byfires to be reported a year, similarly in Loughrigg, and in Langdale only one was fined in all the years under study. This seems unrealistic: a comparison between the Hearth Tax return of 1674 and a rental of that year shows that in Grasmere township around half of Hearth Tax payers were not customary tenants, suggesting widespread subtenancy. What appears to have happened in Grasmere was that courts exercised a degree of discretion: when they were amerced, keepers of byfires were fined variable amounts. In Windermere, in contrast, the courts seem to have been much more assiduous in fining those who sublet, with a standard charge of 12*d*. per offence being applied throughout.[95] Thus the Windermere court rolls provide a very important new set of evidence for the social structure of a famine-prone upland manor, right at the time of Appleby's subsistence crises. The numbers amerced in Windermere are presented in Figures 4 and 5. Two points stand out. Firstly, the number of byfires was high, and regularly high, something which appears to stand in contrast to what little we know about the fifteenth century: the court roll for Ambleside, Troutbeck and Applethwaite that survives from 1443 records just three presentments for byfires.[96]

[90] E.g. Eric Kerridge, *Agrarian problems in the sixteenth century and after* (1969), pp. 48–53; R. W. Hoyle and H. R. French, *The character of English rural society: Earls Colne, 1550–1750* (2007), pp. 251–92.

[91] Appleby, *Famine*, p. 63.

[92] Winchester, *Harvest*, p. 39.

[93] Farrer and Curwen, *Records*, II, pp. 104–5. There were 22 such fines in 1596 and 20 in 1597, for example: TNA, LR 11/3/68.

[94] The 1560 figures are from Farrer and Curwen, *Records*, II, pp. 50–1, 79; TNA, LR 3/76/898; LR 11/3/61–2, 64–5; LR 11/4/74–8; LR 11/58/834; LR 11/79/908c; SC 2/207/100, 102–3, 107–8, 111, 114–15, 117, 120.

[95] In a very small number of cases offenders were fined 6*d*., though why this should be is unclear.

[96] TNA, SC 2/207/122; Mary L. Armitt, *Rydal* (1916), p. 106n.

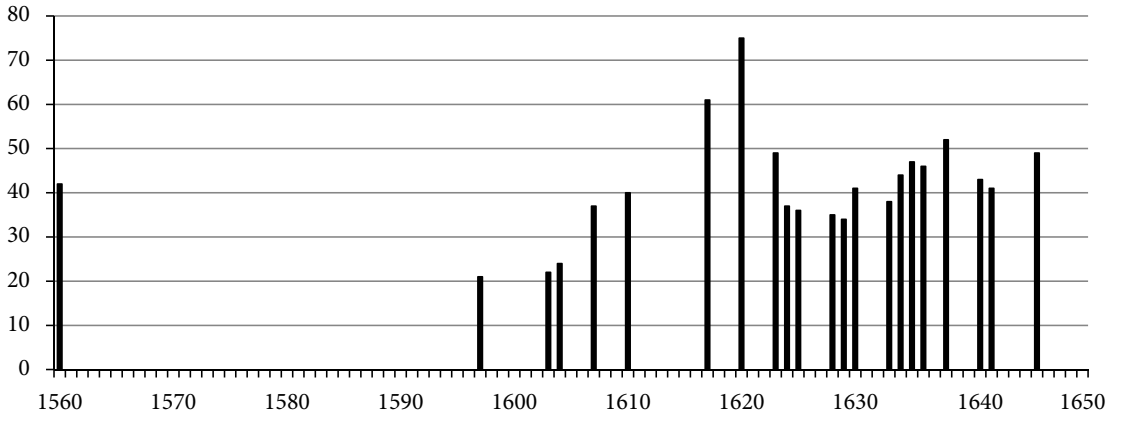


FIGURE 4. Amercements for keeping byfires, Windermere Manor, 1550–1650.

Source: W. Farrer and John F. Curwen (eds), *Records relating to the Barony of Kendale* (4 vols., 1924), pp. 50–1, 79; The National Archives, Land Revenue, LR 3/76/898; LR 11/3/61–2, 64–5; LR 11/4/74–8; LR 11/58/834; LR 11/79/908c; SC 2/207/100, 102–3, 107–8, 111, 114–15, 117, 120.

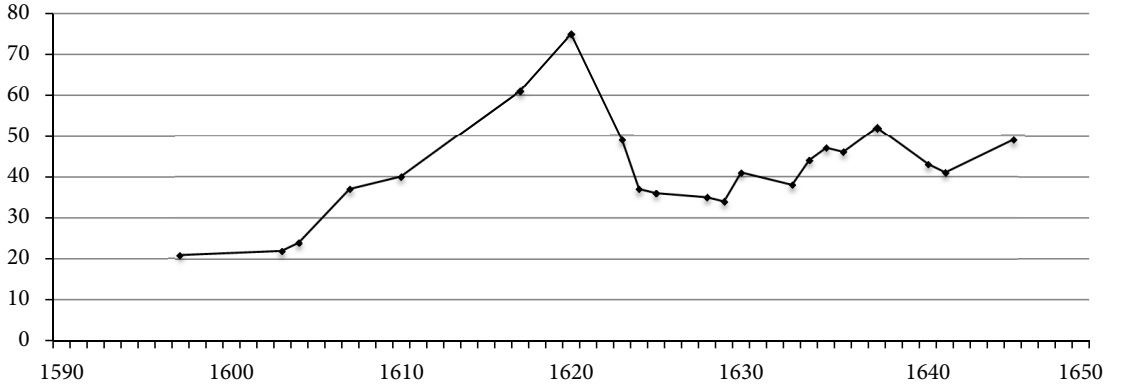


FIGURE 5. Amercements for keeping byfires, Windermere Manor, 1597–1650.

Source: as Figure 4.

It is impossible to know who these byfires were, or how they made a living, but it seems likely that at least a proportion of them were engaged in textile production. We also, unfortunately, cannot know how many of them rented land as well as housing. Secondly, their numbers were highest just before the 1623 famine, and they suffered a major drop during and afterwards. The figures speak for themselves: there were a total of 75 amercements for keeping byfires in 1620, but by 1624 this figure had halved to just 37 (Figures 4 and 5). What these figures appear to be telling us is that by about 1620 the population of Windermere had filled up with individuals and households who could not get onto the customary property ladder and so were forced to rent land, houses, or perhaps even rooms from established tenants. Such undertenants would have suffered from rising market rents as the region's population grew faster than its housing

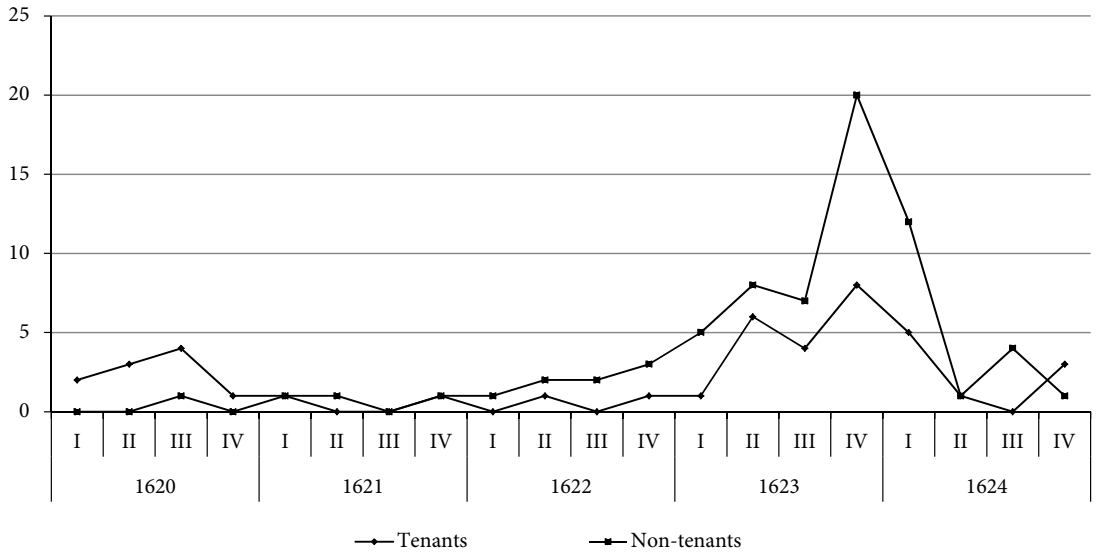


FIGURE 6. Burials in Troutbeck Chapelry, 1620–24.

Source: as Figure 2.

stock.[97] As fines remained fixed at 12*d*., customary tenants stood to benefit from these rising prices, while their own rents remained fixed: indeed, the growth of the subtenant population in the area may have resulted from some degree of collusion between landlords and customary tenants, with byfire fines allowing stewards to cream off some income from what was an increasingly profitable practice of the customary tenants. The most important point, however, for our purposes, is that there was a concealed population peak, but it was of poor subtenants rather than customary landholders.

There is another piece of evidence that hints at the reason for such a dramatic drop in the number of byfires in the wake of the 1623 famine. It is possible to compare burials in Troutbeck chapelry during the 1623 famine with the 1619 rentals for Troutbeck and Applethwaite (Figure 6). Of 113 burials from 1619 to 1624, only 43 (38.1 per cent) can be linked to customary tenants and their families. Moreover, the proportion of burials linkable to 1619 customary tenants seems to have dropped during the famine itself; a third of burials during the crisis months were of customary tenants and their immediate family members, compared with 48.6 per cent in the non-famine months. By contrast, the proportion of burials accounted for by the families of non-tenants (including single women and itinerants) rose from 31.4 per cent to 43.6 per cent during the famine. Numbers are small, but the findings are tantalizing: perhaps the famine hit subtenants harder than it did customary ones. The byfire fines in Windermere thus provide striking evidence that the impact of the 1623 famine was differentiated between two types of inhabitant: the less severely hit customary landholder, and a previously unknown class of (probably poor) subtenants.

[97] This is analogous to what Jane Whittle finds was happening in sixteenth-century Norfolk: Jane Whittle, 'Lords and tenants in Kett's rebellion, 1549', *Past and Present* 207 (2010), pp. 40–1.

V

Clearly the relationship between land, population and famine in our study manors was complicated to a degree that can only really come out through localized study. Appleby's picture of population growth, increasing subdivision of holdings and land-hunger among the region's peasantry leading to a Malthusian-type crisis[98] in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries needs modifying for the seven townships under study here. In particular, it seems that (1) there is a discrepancy in our parishes between the natural growth shown in the parish registers and the apparent stagnation suggested by population surveys; (2) whatever the broad trends in population, the number of customary tenants, which had grown between 1400 and 1560, was stagnant or falling thereafter; (3) moreover, their access to land was much greater than supposed by Appleby; (4) the restricted nature of the land market also probably helped create and maintain a substantial population of subtenants: restricted access to land meant that any population growth after 1560 would have been more likely to cause a growth in the number of subtenants rather than customary ones. After 1623 the numbers of subtenants fell dramatically: many presumably left the area in search of succour elsewhere, or they died. Presumably subtenants were particularly vulnerable to short-term crises in the price of food, to long-term deindustrialization, and to crises in the textile industries.

The purpose here has not been to explain why parts of northern England suffered famine between the 1580s and 1620s, but to test Appleby's depiction of the social and agrarian structure in the north-western uplands. What has emerged is a rather different type of community to that described in *Famine in Tudor and Stuart England*. Appleby's uplands were roughly analogous to the great forest parishes of England: lightly controlled, increasingly populated by poor migrants squatting on small intakes carved out of the waste. In the seven townships described here, the land was much more carefully restricted. The amount of land available was restricted, and so part of the population growth was absorbed by an increase in the number of subtenants. The existence of such a society in the heart of Appleby's north-west raises crucial questions as to whether existing historiography has sufficiently untangled the complex relationship between famine and the social structure of early modern England. In any case, as Appleby pointed out, 'famine can only be understood properly when it is solidly placed in its social and economic context'.[99] There is much to do before we know just what that social and economic context was.

[98] Appleby himself characterizes the overpopulation of the region as 'Malthusian': Appleby, 'Agrarian capitalism', p. 579.

[99] Appleby, *Famine*, p. 4.

Parish farms and the poor law: a response to unemployment in rural southern England, *c*.1815–35*

by Carl J. Griffin

Abstract

Finding a 'solution' for the seemingly intractable problem of unemployment in post-Napoleonic rural England was the Holy Grail for many vestries. Yet, whilst we know much about the depth and consequences of unemployment, parish-driven schemes to set the poor to work have been subjected to remarkably little in the way of systematic study. This paper focuses on one such policy that remains entirely obscure: parish farms, the hiring of pre-existing farms or fields by the parish on which to employ those out of work. Bearing a 'family resemblance' to allotments and other land-based attempts to alleviate poverty, parish farms were unique in that they were managed by the parish and were an employment strategy as opposed to a scheme to supplement the incomes of the poor. Whilst the archive of parish farms is often frustratingly opaque, it is shown that, before they were effectively outlawed by the New Poor Law, many southern parishes, especially in the Weald of Kent and Sussex, adopted the scheme, occasionally with great success.

> On my return from attending our county assizes, Mr. Tye, one of the Overseers of the Poor of this parish, brought me a letter … relative to the management of the poor of this parish, and particularly as to the management and good effect the parish feel from a farm which is rented and used for the benefit of the parish … The farm consists of nearly [five] hundred acres; and a certain number (eight) of the principal inhabitants in the parish, of which I am one, hire the farm as trustees for the parish … I conceive, and I have taken some pains to ascertain it, that the farm lessens the Poors Rate from 4*s*. to 5*s*. in the pound.[1]

Historians of Swing disagree on many aspects of the great rural rising of 1830 but universally concur that it was the experience of pauperization, and specifically un- and under-employment,

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[1] J. Austen, Cranbrook to Thomas Frankland Lewis, London, 24 Mar. 1817, pr. in British Parliamentary Papers (BPP), 1817, VI, Report from the Select Committee on the poor laws, p. 163.

that framed the protests.[2] As is well understood, the huge backwash of demobbed soldiers returning to England on the cessation of hostilities against France, combined with the concurrent collapse in cereal and other agricultural prices, led to a sudden and deep rural depression which lasted from 1815 until the mid-1830s. The increased supply of labour, when juxtaposed with farmers' declining demand – and ability to pay – for fieldworkers, led to an immediate and dramatic rise in unemployment in late 1815. Apart from brief 'recoveries' in 1820–21 and 1827, the problem of unemployment persisted. Thus from the onset of the post-war agricultural depression until the major shifts in rural social policy which occurred after – and partly as a result of – Swing, attempts to find employment for those out of work and reduce the costs of supporting them exercised every parish in the south and east of England for most of two decades.

Such problems define the social and economic history of the post-Napoleonic period. And yet, whilst attempts to quantify unemployment have been central to much research on poverty in the English countryside,[3] attempts to alleviate unemployment have been subject to remarkably few studies. Gash's brief, and almost 70-year-old paper, Todd's study of a post-Swing scheme in Eastbourne, and Flinn's examination of the 1817 'Poor Employment Act' remain the only systematic analyses.[4] Notwithstanding this historiographical lacuna, we know that parishes adopted numerous schemes in their attempt to solve this seemingly intractable problem. Roundsman schemes – where those out of employ were engaged in turn by farmers with wages either fully or partly paid by the rates – together with labour rates, road working and the use of workhouse manufactories, are all recognized as 'solutions' in the voluminous poor law literature but await thorough study.[5] One important policy response, though, remains entirely obscure: the parish farm. As detailed in the quote at the head of this paper, parish farms were either pre-existing farms or blocks of land hired directly by the parish or by trustees acting for the parish on which those out of work were employed. Whilst there was a difference in scale between these two forms of parish farm, there was no distinction in their social policy purpose. Work was thereby found for the workless and the produce of the farm could be sold to cover the costs of the scheme, and maybe even turn a profit for the parish.

[2] E. Hobsbawm and G. Rudé, *Captain Swing* (1969); P. Jones, 'Swing, Speenhamland and rural social relations: the "moral economy" of the English crowd in the nineteenth century', *Social Hist.* 32 (2007), pp. 271–90.

[3] D. Baugh, 'The cost of poor relief in south-east England, 1790–1834', *EcHR* 28 (1975), pp. 50–68; M. Blaug, 'The myth of the Old Poor Law', *JEcH* 23 (1963), pp. 151–84; G. Fussell and M. Compton, 'Agricultural adjustments after the Napoleonic Wars', *Economic Hist.* 4 (1939), pp. 184–204; B. Song, 'Landed interest, local government, and the labour market in England, 1750–1850', *EcHR* 51 (1998), pp. 465–88; id., 'Agrarian policies on pauper settlement and migration', *Continuity and Change*, 13 (1998), pp. 363–89. For a useful summary of these trends see K. D. M. Snell, *Annals of the labouring poor: Social change and agrarian England, 1660–1900* (1985), ch. 1.

[4] The scheme detailed by Todd bears a passing resemblance to parish farms, however it differed in that the cultivation of land hitherto uncultivated was projected and underwritten by a local landowner rather than by the parish. N. Gash, 'Rural unemployment, 1815–34', *EcHR* 6 (1935), pp. 90–3; A. Todd, 'An answer to poverty in Sussex, 1830–45', *AgHR* 4 (1956), pp. 45–51; M. Flinn, 'The Poor Employment Act of 1817', *EcHR* 14 (1961), pp. 82–92. For an inspiring, if initial, attempt to understand the experience of rural unemployment see: J. Burnett, *Idle hands: The experience of unemployment, 1790–1990* (1994), ch. 1.

[5] For such a fleeting reference see J. Poynter, *Society and pauperism: English ideas on poor relief, 1795–1834* (1969), p. 11.

In the context of the period between 1815 and 1835, parish farms were made possible by the ready availability of unoccupied farms. In January 1822 – the nadir of the post-Napoleonic depression – it was reported that 'a great number' of 'moderately sized farms' were available to rent due to the 'oppressive and ruinous' poor rates. During that summer, 19 farms were reported to be unoccupied in Mayfield (Sussex) alone.[6]

Parish farms could take two forms, the first the hire of a pre-existing farm or an individual field by the parish, the second the renting of a single field or block of previously uncultivated land. It is important to note that parish farms were managed by the parish, and as such were very different to allotments, where the parish might hire the land but did not manage or underwrite its cultivation. Inevitably there was some confusion, not least because parishes might use post-enclosure 'allotments' of land to create parish farms.[7] Nor were parish farms the same thing as potato grounds – plots of land let by the parish to poor families for one season alone[8] – poor lands or pastures granted on enclosure,[9] or workhouse 'gardens'.[10] Parish farms were also distinct from schemes where vestries contracted with farmers to provide labourers to engage in spade husbandry.[11]

The advantages of such a scheme were clear. To the landowner it generated rent and kept land cultivated that otherwise might have been left fallow. To farmers, parish farms had the advantage that the parish was still managing the labourer, as opposed to allowing him the degree of independence from wage labour that potato plots and allotments supposedly offered. As Burchardt has found, farmers were often vehemently opposed to landowner-sponsored allotment schemes. Besides, it is important to note that allotments were not intended to eliminate the need for waged labour but to supplement wages. As a solution for unemployment, allotments were of limited scope.[12] Even the allotment-eulogizing Labourers' Friend Society published a letter in 1833 praising the positive effects of a parish farm at Margate.[13]

Before analysing the location and dates of adoption of parish farms in southern England – the region where the post-1815 depression hit hardest and where rural unemployment was most acute – as well as their size and effects, the paper considers how the poor law framed the ways in which rural vestries dealt with unemployment. Moreover, as the totemic status of Speenhamland-type wage supplements in the poor law literature attests, parishes and the

[6] *Sussex Weekly Advertiser*, 21 Jan. 1822; *Sussex Advertiser*, 26 Aug. 1822.

[7] For such an example see: Hampshire Record Office (HRO), 25M60 PV1, Fawley Vestry Minute, 13 Apr. 1820. Typically such lands were let on commercial terms to local farmers rather than being farmed by the parish: S. Shave, 'The dependent poor? (Re)constructing the lives of individuals "on the parish" in rural Dorset, 1800–32', *Rural Hist.*, 20 (2009), p. 74.

[8] J. Burchardt, *The allotment movement in England, 1793–1873* (2002), pp. 13–14, 241–55.

[9] See R. W. Hoyle and C. Spencer, 'The Slaidburn poor pasture: changing configurations of popular politics in the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century village', *Social Hist.* 31 (2006), pp. 182–205.

[10] For a workhouse garden at Alverstoke (Hampshire) see S. Shave, 'The welfare of the vulnerable in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: Gilbert's Act of 1782', *History in Focus* 14 (2008), http://www.history.ac.uk/ihr/Focus/welfare/articles/shaves.html.

[11] For instance, in 1819 the Westbury Vestry established a committee to contract with farmers to provide parish-paid labourers to act in 'having land dug': Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre (WSHC), 548/2, Westbury Vestry minute, 23 Sept. 1819.

[12] For farmer critiques of potato plots and allotments see J. Burchardt, 'Rural social relations, 1830–50: opposition to allotments for labourers', *AgHR* 45 (1997), pp. 165–75.

[13] Reprinted in Labourers' Friend Society, *The labourer's friend: a selection from the publication of the Labourers' Friend Society* (1835), pp. 244–6.

local authorities also innovated in poor law policy. This was, as the following sections show, especially the case in relation to under- and unemployment, with legislative support for parish farms coming only in response to successful parochial experiments.

I

From the middle of the eighteenth century, rapid rural population growth and the decline of living-in service combined with a structurally driven lessening of demand for field workers to create a growing pool of labourers unable to find constant employment. Increasing capitalization and consolidation of farms also meant that large farmers were not only capable of exploiting the increasing pool of labour by hiring by the week, by the day, or by the piece, but their need to secure a return on their capital meant that they were driven to change the way in which labour was engaged. The result was an evermore acute seasonality in agrarian employment, and, therefore, rural unemployment.[14] In the south, this dynamic was also exacerbated by structural changes in rural industries. The once prosperous cloth and linen industry in the Weald, centred on Cranbrook (Kent), had all but disappeared by the start of the eighteenth century. The cloth industries of the west were also in terminal decline. The fortunes of the silk, lace and glove industries were highly variable, as were the fortunes of cottage industries. For instance, the wire button industry that in the 1790s had employed 4,000 workers in and around the north Dorset town of Shaftesbury had disappeared completely by the 1830s.[15]

If patterns of decline were uneven, the structural processes were universal. By the turn of the nineteenth century, according to Barbara Kerr, every parish in Dorset was 'pulling along landless labourers who could not find, or keep, regular employment', a situation that applied almost universally in the south.[16] This was not some sudden shift. In April 1780, the vestry of the Berkshire parish of Shinfield resolved that it would no longer relieve able-bodied men unless they laboured for each rate-payer in turn 'for as many days as shall be in proportion to the rates every man is charged to the poor'.[17] Shinfield was not alone. The extant vestry records

[14] Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor*, p. 94; A. Armstrong, *Farmworkers: A social and economic history, 1770–1980* (1988), pp. 30–43; B. Reay, *Rural Englands: Labouring lives in the nineteenth century* (2004), ch. 2; J. Neeson, *Commoners: Common right, enclosure and social change in England, 1700–1820* (1993), ch. 7. As Brian Short and, most recently, Nigel Goose, Alun Howkins and Nicola Verdon have noted though, farm service persisted well into the middle of the nineteenth century in some parts of the south: B. Short, 'The decline of living-in servants in the transition to capitalist farming: a critique of the Sussex evidence', *Sussex Archaeological Coll.* 122 (1984), pp. 147–64; N. Goose, 'Farm service, seasonal unemployment and casual labour in mid nineteenth-century England', *AgHR* 54 (2006), pp. 274–303; A. Howkins and N. Verdon, 'Adaptable and sustainable? Male farm service and the agricultural labour force in Midland and southern England, *c.*1850–1925', *EcHR* 61 (2008), pp. 467–95.

[15] P. Hastings, 'The old poor law, 1640–1834', in N. Yates, R. Hume, and P. Hastings (eds), *Religion and society in Kent, 1640–1914* (1994), p. 112; P. Brandon, *The Kent and Sussex Weald* (2003), pp. 148–52; N. Raven, '"A humbler, industrious class of female": women's employment and industry in the small towns of southern England, *c.*1790–1840', in P. Lane, N. Raven and K. D. M. Snell (eds), *Women, work and wages in England, 1600–1850* (2004); M. Berg, *The age of manufactures, 1700–1820: Industry, innovation and work* (1994), pp. 94–6.

[16] B. Kerr, *Bound to the soil. A social history of Dorset, 1750–1919* (1968), p. 93.

[17] Berkshire Record Office (BRO), D/P 110/8/1, Shinfield Vestry Minute, 17 Apr. 1780.

of Berkshire parishes reveal that in the ensuing eleven years the parishes of Drayton (September 1784), East Hendred (December 1786), Kingston Lisle (November 1791) and Tilehurst (1795) all made similar pronouncements.[18] As Snell has claimed, by the 1780s, parish relief was no longer as generous in the rural south as it once had been.[19]

The outbreak of war with revolutionary France in 1792 did not lead to a significantly better situation for rural workers. Indeed, the notion that the Napoleonic Wars represented a 'golden age' for rural labourers has been dismissed. Rent and provision inflation more than eroded the temporary, and spatially uneven, increases in labouring wages.[20] Nor did the period witness full employment. Notwithstanding a tightening of the labour market between 1792 and 1815, Samantha Williams has noted that demand for labour was increasingly seasonal and so insecure, with unemployment and under-employment becoming 'pervasive for the many men and boys employed in agriculture'.[21]

If there were recent precedents for both rural unemployment and for attempts by vestries to lessen the burden of their costs, nothing could prepare them for what followed the cessation of hostilities between Britain and France.[22] In the words of Rev. Gleig of Waltham near Canterbury, 'multitudes of disbanded soldiers and sailors … [were] sent back to their parishes' leading to 'a competition among the men to find masters'. An initial resistance to reduced wages inevitably led to farmers 'strik[ing] off a certain number from their employ leading to numbers of young, healthy, and willing persons [who] no longer knew where to apply for a day's work'. According to Gleig, '[vestries] could neither understand nor manage it. They would not listen to the applications of the young and healthy, but refused them peremptorily both relief and employment'.[23]

As the agricultural depression deepened, so the problem of unemployment worsened. By March 1821 in the 40 parishes of the Battle Petty Sessions District there were, so reckoned the clerk to the Bench, some 1,000 men 'with no useful employment'.[24] Indeed, it was the Weald where the agricultural depression hit hardest, with many hitherto successful petty agriculturalists forced into day labouring, thus further swelling the ranks of the unemployed.[25] It was reported in 1823 that in 16 Kentish Wealden parishes, out of a total population of 21,719, inhabitants there were 8,263 paupers of whom 682 were unemployed men. The situation over the county border at Burwash was worse still. Over half of the 2,000 residents were paupers, whilst during the winter 80 to 90 men were constantly out of work, of whom 20 to 40 were out of employment *throughout* the year. Even in the relatively prosperous coastal plains of West Sussex 'a great many men' were out of employ, the result of, according to a Select Committee

[18] M. Neuman, *The Speenhamland county: Poverty and the poor law in Berkshire, 1782–1834* (1982), p. 186.

[19] Snell, *Annals of the labouring poor*, pp. 37–8, 91.

[20] R. Wells, 'The moral economy of the English countryside', in A. Randall and A. Charlesworth (eds), *Moral economy and popular protest: Crowds, conflict and authority* (2000), pp. 229–31; Snell, *Annals of the labouring poor*, pp. 87–98.

[21] S. Williams, 'Malthus, marriage and poor law allowances revisited: a Bedfordshire case study, 1770–1834', *AgHR* 52 (2004), pp. 58, 78.

[22] Armstrong, *Farmworkers*, p. 64.

[23] G. Gleig, *The chronicles of Waltham* (1835), pp. 80–1.

[24] BPP, 1821, IX, 'Report from the Select Committee to whom several petitions complaining of the depressed state of the agriculture of the United Kingdom were referred', pp. 95–7.

[25] *Sussex Weekly Advertiser*, 21 Jan. 1822.

[26] BPP, 1823, V, 'Report from the Select Committee on poor rate returns', p. 19; Hobsbawm and Rudé, *Captain Swing*, p. 74.

respondent, an increased resort to threshing machines.[26] After some improvement in the fortunes of agrarian capitalism in the mid-1820s, the situation again deteriorated. By 1828 unemployment rates amongst agricultural labourers were as bad, if not worse, than during the early 1820s. At West Grinstead in Sussex, 86 of the 300 settled labourers were employed by the parish. Neighbouring Shipley was similarly overwhelmed. Out of 240 agricultural labourers in the parish, 192 were supported in some form by the parish. Of these, between 40 and 80 labourers – with a core of 26 single men – were employed by the parish.[27]

II

At the heart of the 1601 Poor Law Act was the instruction that whilst overseers were to relieve the 'lame, impotent, old, blind, etc., being poor and not able to work' the unemployed were to be set to work 'on a convenient stock of flax, hemp, wool, thread, iron, and other necessary ware and stuff'.[28] 'Nowhere', declared the reforming House of Commons Select Committee of 1817, did the Act of 1601 '[give] warrant for simple relief other than employment'.[29] Ambiguities in defining 'not able to work' meant that, in practice, overseers had almost complete discretion in deciding who to relieve and who to employ, although local magistrates had the power to override overseers' and vestry decisions. Whilst historians have considered the provision of employment for those out of work as the weakest 'pillar of policy' in the Elizabethan poor laws, it was still central to the poor law's parochial operation. Hindle has alerted us to the importance of the practice of apprenticing pauper children and other ad-hoc parochial schemes to set the poor to work, challenging Fletcher's contention that 'the provision of work was generally undertaken only during the harsh conditions of dearth'. Setting the poor to work, Hindle has concluded, was a major part of parish practice from the very earliest days of the poor law.[30]

Parochial attempts to employ the poor followed a broadly similar course from the late seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth, although parishes that became part of urban incorporations or adopted Knatchbull's (Workhouse Test) Act of 1722 were supposed to relieve

[27] BPP, 1828, IV, 'Report from the Select Committee relating to the employment or relief of able-bodied persons from the poor rates', pp. 17–19 and 25–9.

[28] 43 Elizabeth (1601) c.2. See Snell, *Annals of the labouring poor*, pp. 37–8 and 91; R. Wells, 'Migration, the law, and parochial policy in Eighteenth and early nineteenth-century southern England', *Southern Hist.*, 15 (1993), pp. 87–139; Poynter, *Society and pauperism*, p. 14.

[29] Ibid., p. 14.

[30] A. Fletcher, *Reform in the provinces: The government of Stuart England* (1986), p. 213; S. Hindle, *The birthpangs of welfare: Poor relief and parish governance in seventeenth-century Warwickshire* (Dugdale Soc., Occasional Papers 40, 2000), pp. 13–14. Thirsk has also highlighted the importance of 'projectors' in employing the poor in the early seventeenth-century. J. Thirsk, 'Projects for gentlemen, jobs for the poor: mutual aid in the Vale of Tewkesbury, 1600–1630', in Thirsk, *The rural economy of England: Collected essays* (1984), pp. 287–307.

[31] In many ways though this Act formalized existing practices, indeed from as early as the mid-1710s the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge was promoting the establishment of workhouses in urban and rural parishes alike and in turn built upon a movement that had begun in the 1690s: T. Hitchcock, 'Paupers and preachers: the SPCK and the parochial workhouse movement', in L. Davison, T. Hitchcock, T. Keirn, and R. Shoemaker (eds), *Stilling the grumbling hive: The response to social and economic problems in England, 1689–1750* (1992), pp. 145–66; J. Broad, 'Parish economies of welfare, 1650–1834', *Historical J.* 42 (1999), pp. 985–1006.

all those out of work institutionally.[31] Whilst parochial workhouses were widely adopted, few were the places in the rural south that invested in serious workhouse-based manufactories. Nor was the workhouse test always systematically applied. The 'revival' of the test in the 1820s as a measure against rising poor rates was severely challenged by fluctuating levels of unemployment.[32] Of arguably far greater importance was the impact of Speenhamland-type relief practices upon employment provision. Whilst claims to their universal influence have been shown to be overplayed – and post-1822 there is evidence that parishes were moving away from systematic wage subsidies[33] – as Wells has posited, such payments became 'embedded in the principal cornlands'. Most counties enacted the Speenhamland principles through the adoption of static allowances in aid-of-wages as dependent on family size, hence 'constituting *de facto* child allowances'.[34]

Where Speenhamland-type policies operated, all labourers' wages were effectively subsidized by the parish, which meant that it only took one farmer to lower their labourers' wages to force the parish to increase the subsidy. The fragile parochial balance disturbed, agricultural wages were placed in a downward spiral and local labour markets thrown into crisis. The result, as Snell has put it, was that 'free labour [had] to become pauperized to find employment'.[35] The logical extension of this system was for the parish to act as the labour market controller, determining how many labourers each occupier should employ – and then subsiding each and every labourer through roundsman and labour-allocation schemes.

Speenhamland-type manipulations of local labour markets incensed those who avowed a strict adherence to the tenets of political economy, for it failed to reward the utility of the labour performed. By 1827, over 30 years after the notorious Speenhamland meeting, the Berkshire magistrates had realized the effect of the earlier policy: 'the reward of industry' had been reduced to bare subsistence, and that therefore they would no longer set a minimum wage, instead wages 'should best find their own level'. Moreover, justices were now to 'use powers' to correct 'this abuse'.[36] The 1828 Select Committee on the employment of labourers from the Poor Rates believed it should be made illegal to aid the wages of labourers from the poor rate, adding that the 'right to employment' was at odds with the law. In future, the market alone should determine labourers' wages.[37]

Whilst such pronouncements were not official government policy and were unenforceable, they echoed broader misgivings about supporting labourers' wages from the poor rates. At the level of the parish, such uncertainties were largely driven by roundsman and labour allocation schemes, the manipulation of labour markets enraging many ratepayers who not only had to subsidize the wages of the farmers' men but who had also to engage labourers themselves. The vestry books of southern parishes are replete with examples of roundsman schemes failing

[32] Poynter, *Society and pauperism*, pp. 192–3; S. King, *Poverty and welfare in England 1700–1850: a regional perspective* (2000), p. 164.

[33] Neuman, *Speenhamland county*, p. 165; Baugh, 'The cost of poor relief', pp. 60–4; G. Boyer, 'Malthus was right after all: poor relief and birth rates in south-eastern England', *J. Political Economy* 97 (1989), p. 96. See also Williams, 'Malthus, marriage and poor law allowances revisited'.

[34] R. Wells, 'Historical trajectories: English social welfare systems, rural riots, popular politics, agrarian trade unions, and allotment provision, 1793–1896', *Southern Hist.* 25 (2003), p. 89.

[35] Snell, *Annals of the labouring poor*, p. 27.

[36] *Reading Mercury*, 15 Jan. 1827.

[37] BPP, 1828, IV, p. 4

when ratepayers refused to employ the labourers allocated to them.[38] Against this backdrop of high costs, equity issues, ratepayer opposition, and a lack of legal enforceability for allocation schemes,[39] alternative 'solutions' to rural unemployment were eagerly sought.

Parish farms were one such alternative. Whilst their potential for becoming self-financing was an obvious attraction, keeping labourers employed in agriculture had strong resonances with other schemes attempting to 'relieve' the poor on the land. As Poynter and Burchardt note, before the start of the Napoleonic Wars there were few advocates of such schemes although no less a figure than Arthur Young was a vocal supporter. Thereafter there was a marked increase, reflecting concerns over scarcity, the relief of poverty and national security.[40] Invariably proposals focused either on providing the poor with cattle (and access to pasture), gardens, potato grounds, or allotments and/or smallholdings, often suggesting such land should be enclosed from the waste. Thus, whilst one should not equate all such schemes as being essentially the same thing – as Burchardt reminds us, they were quite distinct – they were not directly concerned with offering employment to those out of work. Even proto-Owenite attempts to 'remove labourers from the need to labour by converting them into "yeoman" or small farmers' were not driven by a desire to reduce unemployment but rather to remodel the structure of English rural society.[41] However, that the first parish farm was founded in 1794 whilst such debates were raging is at least suggestive of the impact of the debates on the pioneers of parish farming.

III

As noted, parish farms are little known and even less well understood. References to them in the 'recent' historiography of the poor laws and social conditions are few. Besides a couple of references to their existence in John Burnett's excellent study of the experience of unemployment between 1790 and 1990, most other recent references are found in Poynter's 40-year-old study of poor relief in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century England, Keith-Lucas's 30-year-old study of the unreformed English local government system, and Mark Neuman's study of the operation of the old poor laws in Berkshire.[42] To the first historians of the poor law, parish farms were not so obscure, warranting more than a passing reference. Mavor's 1893 study of 'labor colonies' as a solution to unemployment noted that historically the parish farm was the closest antecedent. According to Mavor, parish farms dated from 'at least the beginning of the eighteenth century' and were abandoned in 1834 on the Poor Law

[38] For an excellent example of opposition see the case of Rev. Wake of Over Wallop (Hants.) against his vestry's policy of 'the stemming of men': HRO, 15M84/Z3/61, Rev. Henry Wake, *Abuse of the Poor-Rate!! A statement of facts* (1818); *Hampshire Chronicle*, 26 Apr. 1819.

[39] The 1824 Select Committee on the Employment of Agricultural Labourers had also noted the potential problems and duly offered their support for a bill placed before parliament that would give legal sanction to labour rates. Despite their support, the bill never reached the statute book. BPP, 1824, VI, 'Report from the Select Committee on labourers wages'.

[40] Poynter, *Society and pauperism*, pp. 98–105; Burchardt, *Allotment movement*, pp. 11–22.

[41] Ibid., pp. 1, 12.

[42] Burnett, *Idle hands*, pp. 32–3, 39; Poynter, *Society and pauperism*, p. 14; B. Keith-Lucas, *The unreformed local government system* (1980), pp. 82–3; Neuman, *Speenhamland County*, pp. 189.

Commission's belief that '[they] had failed of their objects, and had been proved to be sources of malversation'.[43]

Nicholls's *History of the English Poor Law* (1854) also went beyond merely noting their existence. To Nicholls, an ardent political economist, it was 'singular' that the Select Committee on the Poor Laws of 1817 'should speak favourably of establishing parochial farms as a means of affording employment'; to his mind it was a gross manipulation of local labour markets. Besides, the committee's recommendation was, he harrumphed, 'seemingly influenced' by the example of only two 'apparently successful practice[s] in the county of Kent'. The result of this recommendation was a clause in the Poor Relief Act – the second of the Sturges Bourne Acts – that permitted parishes to utilize up to 20 acres of land to employ any persons 'as by law are directed to be set to work'. With this support and encouragement, Nicholls believed, without adducing any evidence, that parish farms became 'well known in most parts of England'. In his native Southwell (Nottinghamshire), 'a parish farm had been adopted', a policy he railed against as, during the winter months, the Southwell farmers had 'turn[ed] over their men to the parish farm' instead of finding them employment.[44]

Sidney and Beatrice Webb acknowledged the existence of parish farms but were hardly less critical in their assessment. Parish farms, they claimed, were 'a common panacea' in 'bad times', 'applicants' for employment being set to work digging. It was 'extremely dubious', though, whether the 'small and costly crop of potatoes thus raised contributed towards the wages paid to the labourers'. Still, they too noted that the 1817 Select Committee was positively inclined to parish farms, and that the subsequent Act encouraged labourers so employed to be paid 'reasonable wages' and have the status of 'independent' wage earners. Here their analysis became impressionistic. Acknowledging that there was only 'scanty information' on parish farms, they concluded that most schemes were 'brief experiments, quickly abandoned as unsuccessful, with unsatisfactory financial results'. Most of this evidence though came from the ideologically driven and, in the words of Tawney, 'wildly unhistorical document', the 1834 Poor Law Report.[45]

Given that the 1834 Report was a broadside against all poor law innovations since Knatchbull's Act, that the authors of the Report criticized rather than praised parish farms is perhaps unsurprising. But that the Report – and the voluminous appendices – mentioned parish farms at all is testimony to their importance. The Report described a parish farm occupied by the incorporated parishes of the Isle of Wight, and in the appendices detailed parish farms at Calne (Wiltshire), Poole (Dorset), Boldre (Hampshire), Ash, Brenchley, Cranbrook, High Halden, Margate and Wye (Kent), Writtle (Essex), Oundle (Northamptonshire), and Shipley and Ticehurst (Sussex).[46] The farm on the Isle of Wight, it was related, had employed 240 men in the period immediately preceding Swing. They 'scarcely did any work' but were still paid at

[43] J. Mavor, 'Labor colonies and the unemployed', *J. Political Economy* 2 (1893), pp. 26–7.

[44] G. Nicholls, *A history of the English Poor Law*, (3 vols, 1898 edn), II, pp. 173–4, 202–4; 59 Geo III (1819) c.12.

[45] S. Webb and B. Webb, *English local government*, VII, *English poor law history, pt 1, The Old Poor Law* (1927), pp. 227–8, 230; R. Tawney, *Religion and the rise of capitalism* (1926), p. 272. For the report see BPP, 1834, XLIV, 'Report from His Majesty's commissioners for inquiring into the administration and practical operation of the poor laws'.

[46] Ibid., pp. 26–7, 288, 294, 295–6, 445, 489–90, 492–3, 498, 512–3, 830, 1156–7, 1954, 2121, 4323.

the same wages 'as those usually given by the farmers'. According to squire George Courthope, the parish farm at Ticehurst had been 'attended with [unspecified] evil consequences', whilst at Brenchley it was suggested that young men, rather than turn their hands to thatching, hedging or ditching, 'prefer[red] to linger on the parish farm'.[47] And yet, whilst such critiques were hardly surprising given the ideological positioning of the committee, some of the committee's respondents were actually positive about the impact of parish farms. The farm at Poole was said to be 'really productive', and at Writtle it was thought that the farm encouraged industry and gave a good training to those young men who would otherwise be employed on the roads. The most positive comment though was left for the large parish farm at Cranbrook. According to Ashurst Majendie, the farm was established in 1774 (it was actually established in 1794) and had not only industriously employed many of those who would otherwise been out of employ, but had also kept the rates lower than in many of the adjoining parishes, making a 'direct pecuniary return to the parish funds'. It also kept a large farm in a high state of cultivation when, post-1815, many farms remained unoccupied.[48]

The Cranbrook parish farm, and another farm at nearby Benenden, founded in 1806, were first brought to wider attention by the 1817 Select Committee on the Poor Laws. As related in the quotation that introduces this paper, the Cranbrook farm consisted of 499 acres. In fact, it was two separate farms combined: Sissinghurst Castle Farm (360) acres and Brickkiln Farm (139 acres). Sissinghurst Castle was also used as the parish workhouse, being capable of accommodating 100 people. This was the first known example of a parish farm in England.[49] According to the report submitted to the Committee by Sir John Sinclair, the founder of the Board of Agriculture under Pitt the Younger, the Cranbrook farm had had the effect of keeping poor rates at 8*s*. in the pound whilst in neighbouring parishes they were typically 14 or 15*s*., saving, so the parish estimated, £1,650 a year. In addition, it equipped poor boys with ploughing, team driving and other husbandry skills, whilst the girls were taught how to milk cows and, as a result, found service at an earlier age than otherwise would have been the case. At a time, Sinclair continued, when so many farms were unoccupied and their buildings falling into decay, it was 'a favourable time to try the experiment' on the model adopted at Cranbrook beyond Kent. Mr. Epps, the 'overseer' of the workhouse concurred. The plan of renting parish farms was 'by far the best system to be adopted for the advantage of the poor in country parishes'.[50]

With such positive support, the second 'Sturges Bourne Act' contained a clause that allowed parishes to 'purchase, or to hire and take on lease for and on account of the parish' up to 20 acres to 'employ and set to work in the cultivation of such land … any such persons as by law they are directed to set to work'. Individuals so employed were to be paid 'reasonable wages' and subjected to the same punishments as 'other Labourers in Husbandry are by law entitled and subject to'. In short, parish farms were to be encouraged, and labourers so employed were to be given, in the words of the Webbs, the 'status of independent wage-earners'.[51]

[47] Ibid., pp. 26–7, 4323, 1159.

[48] Ibid., pp. 294, 512–13, 445, 489–90.

[49] BPP, 1817, VI, pp. 163–5; Centre for Kentish Studies (CKS), P100/8/2, Cranbrook vestry minute, 11 Apr. 1794.

[50] BPP, 1817, VI, pp. 163–5.

[51] 59 Geo. III (1819), c.85, s.19; Webbs, *Old Poor Law*, p. 228.

IV

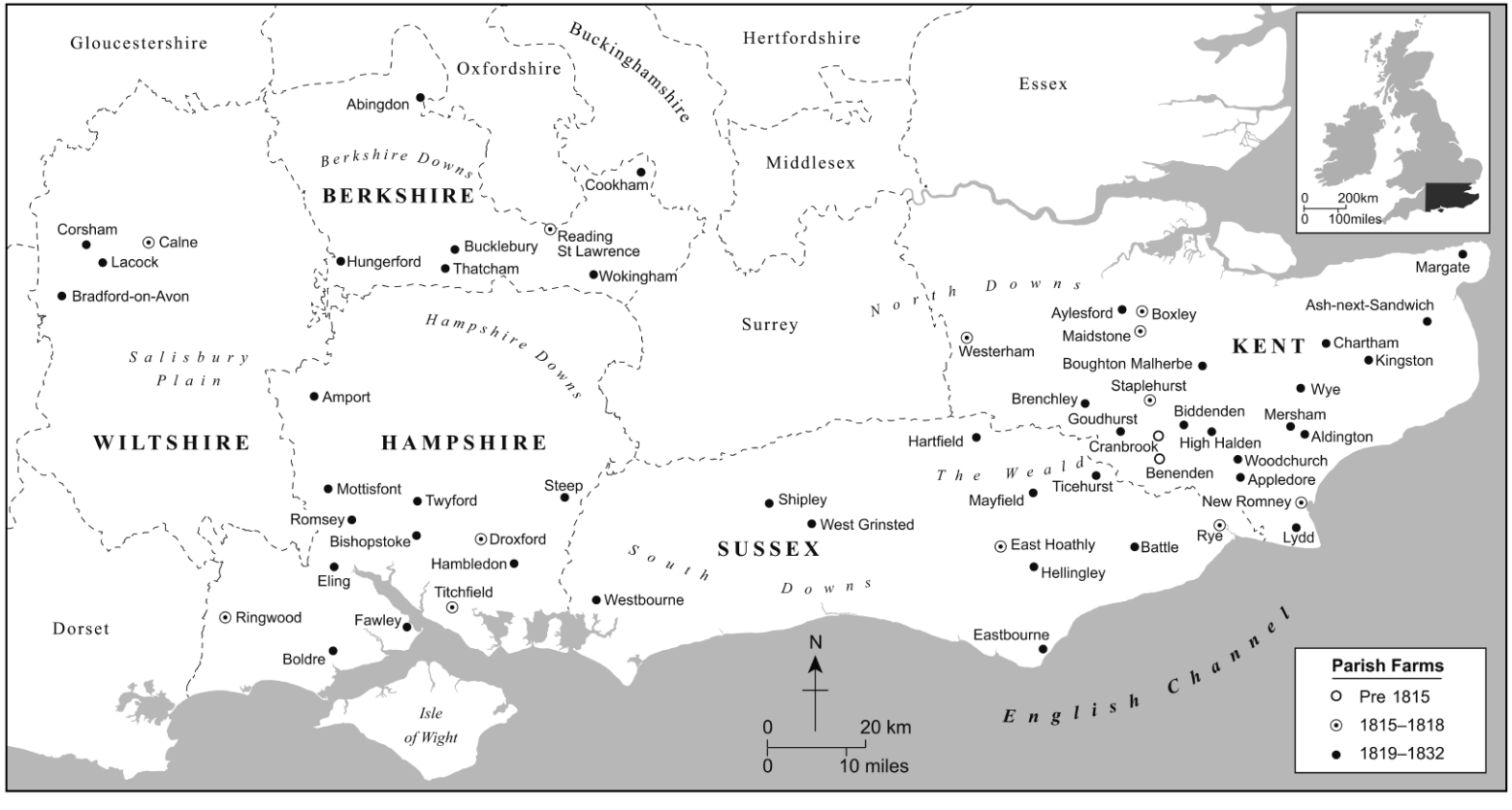
The archive of parish governance has an illusory quality, offering great riches yet often disappointing in terms of depth of geographical coverage and survival rates. Given that parish farms were administered by the parish, these dynamics necessarily structure how we understand their geographical distribution and dates of adoption. Moreover, because the survival rate of vestry books – the most important source for determining parish farm adoption – has a distinct spatiality, our understanding of the geography of parish farms is probably skewed.[52] The further west the county, the lower the coverage of useful vestry minutes for the period of study. For instance, whilst only 42 of the 391 parishes (11 per cent) in Wiltshire for the period 1815 to 1830 have surviving vestry minutes detailing poor law matters (whether recorded in vestry books or overseers' account books), neighbouring Hampshire has an equivalent survival rate of 15 per cent (52 out of 337 parishes) and Sussex 21 per cent (73 out of 346 parishes). Even this consideration does not take into account the fact that many vestry books are effectively only *de facto* overseers' disbursement books, rarely detailing policy pronouncements. This does not mean that such parishes were not formulating policy. Rather, policy was either unrecorded or the parish took an 'on the hoof' approach, pragmatically responding to needs through the lens of past practice. Adopting a parish farm was a major decision though, both in terms of cost and the impact on the broader parochial social policy. As such, it would be more likely that the decision to set up a parish farm would be detailed – even if subsequent records relating to its management were thin – compared to other less costly employment provision relief schemes.

With these provisos in mind, and combining parish records with parliamentary and newspaper reports, Map 1 details the location and founding date (if known) of southern parish farms. Initially, from 1815, parish farms were founded in a relatively narrow arc around the pre-existing farms at Cranbrook and Benenden. Whilst early adopting parishes made no explicit reference as to why they turned to parish farms, it was, in the words of the *Maidstone Journal* when reporting a scheme at Maidstone, 'to give occupation to the labouring poor out of work'. It would appear that the local examples of Cranbrook and Benenden were important.[53] Even before the proselytizing efforts of the 1817 poor law committee, these farms would appear to have been well known in the Weald, and mid- and south Kent.

In December 1816, the *Kentish Gazette* gave over a whole column to reprinting Sinclair's account of the Cranbrook and Benenden farms. The 36-acre Beaconhill Farm at Benenden had been hired in 1806 at an annual rent of £62 10*s*. 0*d*., and, combined with several other fields, gave a total rental of £111 16*s*. 0*d*. Initially, the farm had been taken on 'with the view of diminishing by means of the profit it yields, the burden of the poor rates', though as the previous 'scarcity of labourers' was reversed, 'some extra hands' were employed. A profit of £206 in 1815 fell to £160 in 1816, a reflection of both declining prices and the farm's increased

[52] For a consideration of the impact of geographically uneven archival coverage on our attempts to 'map' the past: C. Griffin, 'Knowable geographies? The reporting of incendiarism in the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century English provincial press', *J. Historical Geography* 32 (2006), pp. 38–56.

[53] CKS, P309/8/8, New Romney vestry minute, 3 Dec. 1815; East Sussex Record Office (ESRO), PAR378/12/3, East Hoathly vestry minute, 28 Feb. 1816; *Maidstone J.*, 23 Apr. 1816 (Maidstone scheme); CKS, P40/8/1, Boxley vestry minute, 1 May 1816; ESRO, PAR467/12/1/2, Rye vestry minute, 4 Dec. 1816.



MAP 1. Location of parish farms in southern England, 1793–1832.

Source: Gill Alexander/Carl Griffin. For sources see appendix.

social policy importance. The accounts for the 499-acre parish farm at Cranbrook, hired at a rental of £448 a year, were 'so blended together' with the 'general expenses' of the parish as to make the profit, or loss, of the operation impossible to discern. As noted above, it was thought that the annual saving to the poor rates was £1,850 a year. Much of this profit came from the 23-acres of hop gardens, which were 'attended with great expense' and were occasionally 'extremely unproductive'. Notwithstanding the inherent risks, in the first six years of operation the farm had generated enough money to pay off the sums borrowed for its establishment. 'At a time when so many farms are ... unoccupied in several parts of the kingdom', reckoned the editor, 'and when such numbers of industrious labourers also complain that they can find no work, it is [a policy] well worth consideration'.[54]

The cultivation of hops, so Sinclair reckoned, was not essential to the parish farm system, which could be successfully operated on the basis of arable cultivation alone. Instead, post-1815, the ready number of unoccupied farms, low rents and 'moderate' stocking costs would allow the system to be established beyond the immediate area.[55] Early adopting parishes, so the archive would suggest, were indeed much more modest in their approach compared to Cranbrook. That two of the most ambitious schemes – at Rye (1816) and Staplehurst (1817) – occurred in the vicinity of the pre-existing parish farms suggests a confidence born out of direct knowledge of the successes of the Benenden and Cranbrook farms.[56] Most early schemes though, instead of hiring already productive land, sought to enclose, clear and cultivate commons and wastes. Typically, only small areas were so taken over by the parish: 'some waste' at Boxley; 'part' of the waste at Westerham; eight acres on Barming Heath; the same amount on Leybrook Common in Ringwood; and ten acres of Titchfield Common.[57]

The adoption of parish farms beyond the Weald suggests a range of influences beyond the two early Wealden farms, most probably Board of Agriculture-generated support in the 1790s for the cultivation of wastes. As had been the case during the grain crises that decade, the provincial press proved eager advocates of waste cultivation.[59] The *Reading Mercury* even went as far as to state that the government ought to be able to offer grants to employ those out of work in enclosure and cultivation of 'unproductive lands', whilst, as noted, the *Maidstone Journal* favourably reported in April 1816 on a scheme to enclose 15 acres of Barming Heath to employ the Maidstone poor.[60] The uptake of these schemes though was dependent on three

[54] *Kentish Gazette*, 27 and 31 Dec. 1816. Whilst the Cranbrook vestry could have paid off the farm's borrowings in January 1801, they instead used the money to relieve the poor 'until the next assessment'. CKS, P100/8/2, Cranbrook vestry minutes, 11 Apr. 1794 and 6 Jan. 1801.

[55] *Kentish Gazette*, 27 and 31 Dec. 1816.

[56] ESRO, PAR467/12/1/2, Rye vestry minute, 4 Dec. 1816; CKS, P347/8/1, Staplehurst vestry minute, 15 Oct. 1817.

[57] CKS, P40/8/1, Boxley vestry minute, 1 May 1816; CKS, P389/8/1, Westerham vestry minute, 16 May 1817; *Maidstone J.*, 23 Apr. 1816; HRO, 95M95 PV2, Ringwood vestry minute, 13 Jan. and 2 Mar. 1817; HRO, 37M73 PV1, Titchfiewld vestry minute, 1 Apr. 1817.

[59] The Kent Agricultural Society, for instance, readily adopted this as policy, recommending the move to members as being 'of the highest public utility', the pronouncement duly being publicised in the Kentish press: *Maidstone J.,* 12 Jan. 1796; *Kentish Gazette,* 19 Feb. 1796.

[60] *Reading Mercury*, 28 Apr. 1817; *Maidstone J.*, 23 Apr. 1816. Intriguingly, less than a month after the *Reading Mercury* report Reading St. Lawrence vestry resolved to hire 2½ acres of land adjacent to the workhouse on which to employ the poor: BRO, D/P 97/8/3, Reading St. Lawrence vestry minute, 20 May 1817.

factors. First, the parish had still to contain wastes, thus such schemes were more possible in upland parishes than low-lying arable districts. Second, such plans were necessarily reliant on the approval of the Lord of the Manor. If the Lord was also a resident farmer, then the promise of using wastes to lower the poor rates would be favourably received, representing both a direct saving and also the possibility of charging higher rents to tenants.[61] Third, the cost of enclosing and bringing into cultivation wastes meant that as cereal and land prices declined, such schemes were no longer (relatively) as cost-effective as renting previously cultivated land. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, I have found no references after 1819 of vestries undertaking the cultivation of wastes.[62] Parish farms created from wastes were never actually given statutory support. Indeed, it was not until the 1831 'Inclosures of Waste Act' that enclosing wastes to employ the poor was legally supported, albeit in the form of up to 50 acres of allotments rather than a parish farm.[63]

V

That many rural vestries decided to utilize the poor rates for the foundation of parish farms, even before they were sanctioned by law in 1819, suggests that they were neither obscure or novel. On the passing of the Act, a slew of further vestries adopted parish farming, some clearly inspired by the Act's provisions. For instance, at Westbourne on the West Sussex-Hampshire border the vestry resolved on 28 May 1819 that land of 'no more than twenty acres' be hired to employ the poor upon, evidently an instance of a parish clearly wanting to stick to the letter of the law.[64] Westbourne was not alone. Kingston (Kent), Boldre, Fawley, Romsey and Steep (all Hampshire) also established parish farms for the first time in the months following the passing of the Act.[65] Burchardt's claim (though understandable given the disparate nature of the archive) that the clauses in the second Sturges Bourne Act were 'little noticed at the time, and were evidently rarely acted on', requires some revision.[66]

[61] The level of poor rates was a major factor in determining farm rents. As Broad has shown in relation to Buckinghamshire, major landowners had a great incentive to intervene in parish governance: to attempt to effect a reduction in poor rates so that they could increase their rents: 'Parish economies of welfare', p. 995.

[62] The scheme adopted by the combined parishes of Salisbury may offer an exception to this rule, though the report in the *Hampshire Telegraph* (17 Jun. 1822) is a little ambiguous. The downlands 'which command a view of Salisbury' were now cultivated by the Guardians of the Poor 'employing on it, or some other beneficial work, every able-bodied pauper' in preparing the ground for vegetables, thus suggesting that the ground was either previously uncultivated or had fallen out of cultivation in recent years. Interestingly, those so employed were allowed four times the relief of others who refused to labour for their money. The scheme had also run at 'no expense to the City'.

[63] 1 and 2 William IV (1831) c.42 and c.59 also allowed for, with Treasury approval, up to 50 acres of crown land to be so enclosed. See also J. Burchardt, 'Land, labour, and politics: parliament and allotment provision, 1830–1870', in J. Wordie (ed.), *Agriculture and politics in England, 1815–1939* (2000), p. 104.

[64] On 28 Dec. it was also resolved to appoint a supervisor for the new parish farm: West Sussex Record Office (WSRO), PAR206/9/1, Westbourne vestry Minutes, 28 May and 28 Dec. 1819.

[65] Canterbury Cathedral Archives, U3/168/12/A1, Kingston vestry minute, 29 Oct. 1819; HRO, 10M58 PV2, Romsey vestry minute, 15 Apr. 1819; HRO, 84M70 PO2, Boldre vestry minute, 30 Sept. and 9 Dec. 1819; HRO, 74M80 PV1, Steep vestry minute, 20 Dec. 1819; HRO, 25M60 PV1, Fawley vestry minute, 13 Apr. 1820.

[66] Burchardt, 'Land, labour, and politics', p. 100.

Parish farms continued to be an important rural social policy in the 1820s. From the start of 1821 to the end of 1830, the extant archive details the establishment of at least a further 24 parish farms with a further seven farms – for which we have no precise founding date – formed by the spring of 1832. The geography essentially remained the same (see Map 1). The Weald, stretching down to the Romney Marsh and its fringe, remained the heartland of parish farming, though significant clusters of parishes existed around the New Forest and in south Hampshire. There was, however, something of an extension in the 1820s, with parish farms also being established in Berkshire – at Abingdon (1822), Hungerford and Wokingham (1824) and Bucklebury (1828) – and farms at Corsham (1825), Lacock (1829) and Bradford upon Avon (1830) joining the previously sole Wiltshire farm at Calne (1817).[67]

Outside of the High Weald where a significant proportion of vestries practised parochial farming – this concentration being a function of the initial local example, the ready availability of small farms, and the peculiarly deep nature of the rural depression in the Weald – parish farms were also frequently adopted by market town vestries. Whilst the exact reason for this pattern is unclear, some points are worth speculating upon. The wider community of small ratepayers in market parishes would offer a more powerful resistance to farmer-benefiting roundsmen schemes than in purely agricultural parishes. The cost per ratepayer of establishing a parish farm would also be considerably lower for such parishes than less populous, entirely agrarian parishes, though, as noted, most such farms were small.

In terms of size, most of the new farms established in this period were less than 20 acres, though the Woodchurch (Kent) farm, established in 1821 at an annual rent of £130 and with an annual income of £1,805 for 1822, suggests a far higher acreage.[68] The 20-acre stipulation in the second Sturges Bourne Act was clearly a factor, as was cost. In practice, parishes paid little heed to the formal stipulations of the statute in relation to farm size. As the Appendix shows, the size of parish farms varied from the 499 acres at Cranbrook to a solitary acre at Cookham. In fact, it is impossible to discover the size of many parish farms, including those only known from the parliamentary papers, but it would appear that the average parish farm was of about 20 acres, similar to the average allotment site in the period. Perhaps more pertinent though was the fact that most such establishments complemented other employment schemes. Small farms were useful in that they enabled the 'residual' unemployed to be constantly engaged, whilst other schemes, most notably road working, could cope with both year-on-year and seasonal variations in unemployment levels. In this sense, whilst many parish farms operated on a scale similar to allotment sites, they fulfilled a very different function in the polity of the parish.

The case of Twyford (Hampshire) is instructive. At a meeting on 22 March 1821, the vestry agreed to a major shift in parish policy: an association was formed to protect property and detect offenders; an assistant overseer was appointed; and a committee was established to

[67] BRO, D/P 1/8/1, Abingdon St. Helen's vestry minutes, 23 Jan. and 24 July 1822; BRO, D/P 71/8/4, Hungerford vestry minute, 8 Sept. 1824; BRO, D/P 154/8/1, Wokingham vestry minute, 6 Apr. 1824; BCRO, D/P 28/8/1, Bucklebury vestry minute, 26 Dec. 1828; WSHC, 1812/9, Corsham vestry minute, 16 Sept. 1825; WSHC, 173/3, Lacock vestry minute, 18 Nov. 1829; WSHC, 77/18, Bradford on Avon vestry minute, 1 Feb. 1830.

[68] CKS, P400/12/2, Woodchurch parish farm accounts, 1821–36.

'employ the parish funds' to purchase any raw materials 'which may be thought necessary to employ the poor in work'. All other unemployed individuals were to work on the roads. The policy was refined a fortnight later. The assistant overseer was now not only to employ the poor on the roads but also in cultivating 'any land the parish may hire'. The 'Visiting Committee' were also to provide 'a quantity of silk from Winchester … to employ the poor in winding', with other women and children engaged in other work as deemed 'proper' by the Committee. Further revisions were soon deemed necessary, due to the problem of work discipline amongst the parish labourers: all the 'idle and refractory young men' were to join the 'aged and impotent men' in the House of Industry at Winchester.[69]

VI

Given the geographically uneven uptake of parish farming beyond the Weald, it is fair to assert that such farms were not a universal panacea for high poor rates and rural unemployment. As with all other attempts to 'solve' these problems by setting the jobless to work, the biggest problems were vestry support and cost. Notwithstanding the paucity of detail in the archival record relating to the agricultural practices of parish farms, the emphasis on spade cultivation suggests that most parish farms were used for cereal production and, in the case of farms established in parishes with large pre-existing workhouses, vegetables. Low cereal prices post-1815 therefore meant that, as with 'private' farms, it was difficult to cover costs, though not having to pay poor rates certainly gave parish farms an advantage. Occasionally the archive reveals a case where a parish considered establishing a farm but decided against it – as at Speldhurst (Kent) in September 1830 – or where it was agreed to give up the parish farm – as at Charing in 1825 and neighbouring Egerton (both Kent) in 1828.[70] Cost was certainly decisive at Ticehurst (Sussex) when in June 1822 it was resolved to give up the 'parish wood' after a failed attempt to reduce the rent.[71]

Clearly, there were significant barriers to success. For all but the largest farms where parishes had made considerable investments, or in cases where long-term leases had been taken out, the unstable parochial unemployment policy landscape of the time meant that small parish farms were unlikely to be persisted with by vestries if losses were made. The farm would be wound up, the effects sold, and another policy adopted. Indeed, given the time, and attendant costs, necessary for effective supervision, it meant they were particularly susceptible to being abandoned for a lower cost alternative. Farms that were not effectively supervised, such as that, according to the 1834 Poor Law Report, on the Isle of Wight, were inefficient and those so employed reportedly lacking work discipline. The parish farm at Hambledon (Hampshire) reportedly even had 'shamefully corrupted' the 'morals' of the labourers. The farm had become

[69] HRO, 21M83 PV2, Twyford vestry minutes, 22 Mar., 5 Apr. and 24 May 1821.

[70] CKS, P344/8/2, Speldhurst vestry minute, 12 Sept. 1830; CKS, P78/8/6, Charing vestry minute, 22 Sept. 1825; CKS, P78B/8/3, Egerton vestry minute, 8 Feb. 1828.

[71] ESRO, PAR 492/12/1/4, Ticehurst Select vestry minute, 6 Jun. 1822. A less sober judgement was made ten years later in response to the 'Rural Queries' of the Commission on the Poor Laws. The farm, so Courthope reckoned, had been 'found to be attended with many evil consequences' and duly abandoned in favour of 'billeting' those out of work on the farmers. What the 'evil consequences' were was not disclosed. BPP, 1834, XLIV, p. 4323.

a 'school of idleness', and in the words of overseer William Harrison, 'a disgrace' that had led to the formation of working gangs upon whom 'hardly a respectable person could pass them in the parish without their making some observation upon them'.[72] Both farms were central to protest mobilizations: the Isle of Wight farm labourers at least twice during Swing, the Hambledon farm workers, in the afterglow of Swing in late 1831 and early 1832 and also against the imposition of the New Poor Law.[73]

In the vast majority of cases the archive does not detail how the farms were managed. There are, however, some exceptions. The Cranbrook farm was managed by a bailiff 'under the direction of a committee of the neighbouring gentlemen'. At Ash-next-Sandwich (Kent), the poor were simply 'set to work' on the farm by the overseer, whilst the farm at Margate (Kent) was reported to be under 'immediate superintendence' by the 'able management of the guardians and governor', the parish being operated under Gilbert's Act.[74] The longevity of the farms at Cranbrook and Margate, as well as others elsewhere, attests to the fact that large, well-run parish farms could convince vestries to continue their support. Indeed, Cranbrook managed to keep their parish farm until 1855 when the Poor Law Board finally won a long battle to force the vestry to abandon the farm. After liabilities had been discharged, the parish was left with a balance of over £3,000.[75]

Beyond (rarely recorded) vestry judgements and the loaded, ideologically driven critiques of the 1834 Poor Law Report, analyses of the effects of parish farms necessarily rest upon two interrelated factors: their profitability and impact upon the poor rates, and their effect on unemployment. Judging the success of parish farms in terms of profit or loss though is fraught with complication. For most parish farms there is no financial record of their operation. Some were only accounted for in general overseers' account books, whilst a small minority were recorded in (notionally) separate accounts. When surveying Hampshire parishes in 1834 prior to forming New Poor Law unions, Assistant Poor Law Commissioner A'Court found the issue almost impossible to assess. At Mottisfont the '16 to 18 able bodied men on the parish books' were employed both on the three-acre parish farm in spade husbandry and also upon the roads, thus making it impossible to ascertain the cost of their labour to the farm. The 70-acre farm at Eling was also cultivated by spade husbandry by 'the paupers'. Those with small families were put to work for only four or five days in the week, whilst those with large families had to work 'the full six days' to gain their full maintenance. Their work was remunerated half in bread and half in cash. The accounts in this large, well-run parish were, according to A'Court, very regular. 'Nothing', he claimed, 'can appear more regular'. And yet, upon investigation, the stated profit of £46 15*s*. 8*d*. in the year ending at Lady Day 1834 did not

[72] BPP, 1834, XLIV, pp. 26–7; BPP, 1837, XVII 'Third report from Select Committee on the Poor Law Amendment Act', p. 26.

[73] Isle of Wight: *Southampton Mercury*, 20 Nov. 1830; *Portsmouth, Portsea and Gosport Herald*, 28 Nov. 1830; *Hampshire Chronicle*, 29 Nov. 1830. For an analysis of this incident see: C. Griffin, *The rural war: Captain Swing and the politics of protest* (forthcoming), ch. 4. Hambledon: C. Griffin, 'Swing, Swing redivivus and something after Swing? On the death throes of a protest movement, December 1830-December 1833', *International Rev. of Social Hist.* 54 (2009), pp. 492–3.BPP, 1837, XVII, p. 30.

[74] BPP, 1817, VI, pp. 164–5; BPP, 1834, XLIV, p. 498; Labourers' Friend Society, *The labourer's friend*, p. 246. Margate parish was run under Gilbert's Act.

[75] Webbs, *The Old Poor Law*, p. 228.

allow for labour. This appeared to amount to 'nearly £400' resulting in a loss to the parish of 'very little short of £358'.[76]

Such analyses are hardly surprising for the Poor Law Commission was ideologically predisposed to find fault with parish farms. Indeed, whilst it is easy to criticize the accounting methods discovered by A'Court, he failed to appreciate that parish farm employees would need to be relieved anyway. Besides, was being employed rather than being relieved in 'idleness' not in keeping with the ethos of the New Poor Law? Whether the cost of 'pauper' labour should be included when assessing profitability was perhaps a moot point, but any assessment of 'profitability' of parish farms as commercial enterprises is necessarily dependent upon the rate of wages paid to those employed on the farm.

Again, precise information is hard to find, but there are a few examples. At Woodchurch on the fringe of the high-wage Romney Marsh, labourers during the early summer of 1830 were being paid 2*s*. 6*d*. a day, in line with the local norm. In early 1832, wages paid on parish farms at Ash-next-Sandwich (2*s*. 0*d*. a day) and Shipley (Sussex: from 5*s*. 5*d*. per week for single men to 10*s*. 5*d*. for married labourers with two children) were also in line with local norms. At Eastbourne though, labourers with large families could earn up to 16*s*. 0*d*. per week, whereas the standard local wage was 12*s*. 0*d*. before parish allowances. Wages on the Brenchley (Kent) parish farm were reportedly also high enough to prevent two labourers so employed taking alternative – and independent from the parish – work offered them 2*s*. 6*d*. a day in a local wood. This case, reported in the 1834 Poor Law Report, might be apocryphal, a semi-fictional story mobilized in support of the Commission's belief that labourers preferred 'lingering on the parish farms, and trusting to the pay they can wring from the parish' than working independently. Some vestries did, however, use parish farms as deterrents. For instance, the able-bodied male relief applicants at Poole (Dorset) sent to work on its farm soon found themselves alternative employment, whilst at the 'model' reforming parish of Cookham (Berkshire), Newman noted those employed on the farm received 'the lowest wages in the parish'.[77]

Perhaps the most transparent account comes from Woodchurch where separate parish farm accounts, which included both rent and labour costs, were kept. In the first year of full operation – ending 22 February 1823 – the farm made a loss of £7 17*s*. 7½*d*. on revenues of £1,805 0*s*. 11½*d*. Thereafter, the farm went from generating either small losses – the greatest being £36 13*s*. 0*d*. for the year ending Michaelmas 1825 – or small profits, until the year ending Michaelmas 1832 after which the farm consistently turned a profit. The greatest profit was £83 8*s*. 5¾*d*., made in the year ending Michaelmas 1834. Even so, in so large and populous a parish, the farm made only a small impact upon the level of poor rates.[78] At Cranbrook, as noted, the farm did lower the poor rates. Between 1815 and 1820 alone, it paid some £1,192 in profits to the general parish account, whilst by 1832 it was reckoned that on average £165 a year accrued to the parish from the farm. The net impact on poor rates was calculated in 1817 at a saving to

[76] TNA, MH 32/1, Correspondence of Assistant Poor Law Commissioner A'Court.

[77] CKS, P400/12/2, Woodchurch parish farm accounts, 1821–36; BPP, 1834, XLIV, pp. 26–7, 295–6, 498, 830 and 1159; Neuman, *Speenhamland county*, p. 189.

[78] CKS, P400/12/2, Woodchurch parish farm accounts, 1821–36.

the ratepayers of £1,650 a year, this figure taking into account the profit of the farm and the fact that labour was now supported by the farm rather than the rates.[79]

Notions of profitability are therefore loaded, for not all parish farms operated on equal terms – or on a level footing with commercial farms – in relation to wages paid or the costs of superintendence. Besides, to make such a simple calculation would be to ignore the many unquantifiable benefits that some commentators attached to well-run parish farms: cultivating otherwise fallow or waste land; the skills learnt by young lads and girls so employed; and, perhaps most importantly, keeping labourers at meaningful agricultural work rather degrading work on the roads or in gravel pits.

Another important factor determining their feasibility was the size of the risk that the parish was willing to take, and the number of individuals who needed employment. The viability of parish farms was also dependent upon local landowners being prepared to let land to the parish rather than to farmers, although post-1815 there was often no real competition. Frustratingly, the archive is slight in relation to the impulses of lessors. There are, however, exceptions. At Cranbrook, the farm was taken at the 'reduced rent' of £302 (as of 1832) from Lord Cornwallis, whilst the annual rent of £80 paid to landlord Blount for the 300-acre farm at Shipley was clearly well below market rates even in a depressed year like 1832.[80] Of arguably even greater importance in determining the success of parish farms though was the willingness of the vestry to administer the scheme consistently. Given that most adopting parishes deployed parish farms in tandem with other employment strategies and only ever farmed in a modest way, this will was often decidedly weak.

VII

Were parish farms a solution to the problem of rural unemployment in the post-Napoleonic years? That so many parishes, especially in the Weald and market towns, chose to follow the lead of Cranbrook suggests a belief amongst parochial administrators that they were at least a partial solution, or rather had a positive ameliorative effect. That the evidence presented to the 1817 Poor Law Committee directly led to the passage of a law supporting their adoption is also proof that, at least for a while, poor law reformers and parliament were also convinced by their potential. Somewhat contradictorily, even the Poor Law Commission, in a list of 'the most eligible modes of providing out-door employment for able-bodied paupers' to be employed in anticipation of the establishment of 'an efficient workhouse', noted the popularity of parish farming by spade husbandry as an alternative to 'the evils attendant on the employment of paupers on the roads'. This is perhaps a reflection that the favoured parish of Cookham rented an acre of 'barren ground' on which the able-bodied claiming relief were 'compelled' to dig for, as noted, 'the lowest wages in the parish'.[81]

[79] CKS, P100/8/5, Cranbrook parish farm committee minutes, 1830–57; BPP, 1817, VI, pp. 163–5.

[80] BPP, 1834, XLIV, pp. 489–90, 830.

[81] BPP, 1837, XVII, 'Second report from Select Committee on the Poor Law Amendment Act', p. 53; BPP, 1834, XLIV, p. 25; Neuman, *Speenhamland county*, p. 189.

This advice followed that issued by Assistant Poor Law Commissioner Hawley to Chailey parish in November 1834 prior to the formation of a local poor law union. Here the workhouse was 'under used', so, Hawley recommended, those currently employed on the roads should be 'offered the house' and then set to work 'on some land which they have near the house'. In forming what would become the Uckfield Union, Hawley also suggested that if a workhouse was created at Maresfield, 13 acres of 'ancient enclosures' and 'any amount of [contiguous] waste' in Ashdown Forest could similarly be used 'for the purpose of outdoor employment'.[82] Parish farms could, at least in the minds of the Poor Law Commission, act as quasi-'workhouse tests'. Yet to claim that parish farms were universally successful would be far from the mark. That many parishes abandoned parish farms after a short period of experimentation is testament to the fact that they did not always deliver the outcomes vestries had desired. Indeed, poorly run and ill-supervised parish farms could be inefficient and have, at least according to A'Court, a deleterious impact upon the work discipline of those so employed.

Clearly there was little future for parish farming under the auspices of the New Poor Law. That the Cranbrook farm survived was in large part a function of the fact that it was technically administered by a group of trustees on behalf of the parish rather than directly by the parish itself. The dramatic post-1830 rise in the provision of allotments was also of some importance in parish farming's demise. Paternalistically-minded landlords, and vestries, by providing allotments, were able to circumvent the policies of the Poor Law Commission in offering *de facto* relief to the poor. Allotments were not though a 'solution' to rural unemployment, something the Labourers' Friend Society itself acknowledged in 1833 when, as noted earlier, it published a letter detailing the positive effects of the Margate farm.[83]

The adoption and role of parish farms perfectly illustrates the complexity of parochial administration under the old poor laws, a makeshift that formed part of a policy patchwork framed by the statute and local experiment. They were also emblematic of poor law administration before the imposition of the New Poor Law in that, as with all policy expedients of the time, they were no panacea. If parish farms did not solve the problem of rural unemployment or even offer a universally applicable (though partial) palliative, they did work for some parishes at some points in time. That parish farming filled a niche role in the response to unemployment cannot be denied, but in the dying days of the Old Poor Law it was a well-known and far from novel response to intractable difficulties.

[82] TNA, MH 32/1, fos 23 and 68–71, Assistant Poor Law Commissioner A'Court to the Poor Law Commission, 20 Nov. and 31 Dec. 1834.

[83] Labourers' Friend Society, *The labourer's friend,* pp. 244–6.

APPENDIX: Size of parish farms[a] (at greatest extent), 1793 – Spring 1832

Parish	*County*	*Size (at greatest extent/if known)*	*Reference (first known)*
Cranbrook	Kent	499 acres	CKS, P100/8/2, Cranbrook Vestry Minute, 11 Apr. 1794
Shipley	Sussex	'near' 300 acres	BPP, 1834, XLIV, p. 830
Rye[b]	Sussex	100–150 acres	ESRO, PAR467/12/1/2, Rye Vestry Minute, 4 Dec. 1816
Hellingley	Sussex	94 acres	ESRO, PAR375/12/4, Hellingly Vestry Minute, 10 Sept. 1821
Benenden	Kent	86 acres	BPP, 1817, VI, pp. 163–5
Woodchurch	Kent	Rent of £130 p.a. (1823)	CKS, P400/12/2, Woodchurch parish farm accounts, 1821–36
Staplehurst	Kent	Rent of £100 p.a. (1823)	CKS, P347/8/1, Staplehurst Vestry Minute, 15 Oct. 1817
Wye	Kent	72 acres	BPP, 1834, XLIV, pp. 492–3
Eling	Hampshire	70 acres	HRO, 4M69 PV1, Eling Vestry Minute, 10 Sept. 1829
Margate	Kent	62 acres	BPP, 1834, XLIV, pp. 445
Hambledon	Hampshire	'about' 50 acres	BPP, 1837, XVII, p. 26
Titchfield	Hampshire	50 acres	HRO, 37M73 PV1, Titchfield Vestry Minute, 1 Apr. 1817
Ash-next-Sandwich	Kent	40 acres	BPP, 1834, XLIV, p. 498
Battle	Sussex	'farm'	ESRO, PAR236/12/1/2, Battle Vestry Minute, 26 Apr. 1824
Goudhurst	Kent	'Glassenbury Farm'	CKS, P157/8/1, Goudhurst Vestry Minute, 24 Apr. 1822
Mayfield	Sussex	'farm'	ESRO, PAR422/12/1, Mayfield Vestry Minute, 27 Oct. 1820
Aldington	Kent	'parish farm'	CKS, P4/8/3, Aldington Vestry Minute, 6 Apr. 1830
Appledore	Kent	'parish farm'	CKS, P7/8/1, Appledore Vestry Minute, 2 Aug. 1830
Mersham	Kent	'a farm'	CKS P248/8/1, Mersham Vestry Minute, 11 Feb. 1829
High Halden	Kent	'parish farm'	CKS, P164/8/2, High Halden Vestry Minute, 31 Mar. 1821
Boughton Malherbe	Kent	Rent of £40 p.a. (1830)	CKS, P38/8/1, Boughton Malherbe Vestry Minute, 1 Oct. 1830.
Lacock	Wiltshire	25 acres	WSHC, 173/3, Lacock Vestry Minute, 18 Nov. 1829
Bradford-upon-Avon	Wiltshire	20 acres	WSHC, 77/18, Bradford-upon-Avon Vestry Minute, 1 Feb. 1830

Parish	*County*	*Size (at greatest extent/if known)*	*Reference (first known)*
Westbourne	Sussex	'no more than 20 acres'	WSRO, PAR206/9/1, Westbourne Vestry Minute, 28 May 1819
Maidstone	Kent	15 acres	*Maidstone J.*, 23 April 1816
Abingdon	Berkshire	12 acres	BRO, D/P 1 8/1, Abingdon St. Helens Vestry Minute, 23 Jan. 1822
Droxford	Hampshire	10 acres	HRO, 66M76 PV3, Droxford Vestry Minute, 21 Nov. 1818
Thatcham	Berkshire	10 acres	Newman, *Speenhamland county,* p. 189
Bucklebury	Berkshire	6 acres	BRO, D/P 28/8/1, Bucklebury Vestry Minute, 26 Dec. 1828
Calne	Wiltshire	6 acres (at least)	WSHC, 2238/23, Calne Vestry Minute, 19 Dec. 1817
Lydd	Kent	5 acres	CKS, P237/8/1, Lydd Vestry Minute, 8 Oct. 1821
Mottisfont	Hampshire	3 acres	TNA, MH 32/1
Reading St. Lawrence	Berkshire	2.5 acres	BRO, D/P 97/8/3, Reading St. Lawrence Vestry Minute, 20 May 1817
Eastbourne	Sussex	2 acres	ESRO, DE/A1/3, Eastbourne Vestry Minute, 5 Nov. 1827
Corsham	Wiltshire	'a few acres'	WSHC, 1812/9, Corsham Vestry Minute, 16 Sept. 1825
Eling	Hampshire	'a few acres'	HRO, 4M69 PV1, Eling Vestry Minute, 29 Oct. 1829
Cookham	Berkshire	1 acre	Newman, *Speenhamland county*, p. 189
Amport	Hampshire	'Sarson land'	HRO, 43M67/PV2, Amport Vestry Minute, 15 Nov. 1820
Hartfield	Sussex	'part of the forest'	ESRO, PAR360/10/2/1, Hartfield Vestry Minute, 23 Sept. 1821
Ticehurst	Sussex	'wood'	ESRO, PAR 492/12/1/4, Ticehurst Select Vestry Minute, 6 Jun. 1822
Boxley	Kent	'some waste'	CKS, P40/8/1, Boxley Vestry Minute, 1 May 1816
Westerham	Kent	'waste'	CKS, P389/8/1, Westerham Vestry Minute, 16 May 1817
Ringwood	Hampshire	'waste'	HRO, 95M95 PV2, Ringwood Vestry Minute, 13 Jan. 1817
Steep	Hampshire	'waste land'	HRO, 74M80/PV1, Steep Vestry Minute, 20 Dec. 1819
Fawley	Hampshire	'parish allotments'	HRO, 25M60 PV1, Fawley Vestry Minute, 13 apr. 1820
Bishopstoke	Hampshire	'piece of land'	HRO, 145M82 PV1, Bishopstoke Vestry Minute, 4 May 1829

Parish	*County*	*Size (at greatest extent/if known)*	*Reference (first known)*
Boldre	Hampshire	'land'	HRO, 84M70 PO2, Boldre vestry Minute, 30 Sept. 1819
Romsey	Hampshire	'land'	HRO, 10M58 PV2, Romsey Vestry Minute, 15 Apr. 1819
Twyford	Hampshire	'land'	HRO, 21M83 PV2, Twyford Vestry Minute, 5 Apr. 1821
Hungerford	Berkshire	'piece of land'	BRO, D/P 71/8/4, Hungerford Vestry Minute, 8 Sept. 1824
Chartham	Kent	'field'	CCA, U3/54/12/1, Chartham Select Vestry Minute, 13 Jul. 1829
Kingston	Kent	'land'	CCA, U3/168/12/A1, Kingston Vestry Minute, 29 Oct. 1819
New Romney	Kent	'field'	CKS, P309/8/8, New Romney Vestry Minute, 3 Dec. 1815
East Hoathly	Sussex	'field'	ESRO, PAR378/12/3, East Hoathly Vestry Minute, 28 Feb. 1816
Biddenden	Kent	Unclear	CKS, P26/12/10, Biddenden Parish Farm Accounts, 1 Mar. 1826
Wokingham	Berkshire	Unclear	BRO, D/P 154/8/1, Wokingham Vestry minute, 6 Apr. 1824

[a] see Map 1 for the location of these parish farms.
[b] This was a very short-lived scheme, the old barracks at the centre of the scheme soon being sold off: ESRO, PAR467/12/1/2, various vestry minutes 1816 and 1817.

Kinder Scout and the legend of the Mass Trespass*

by David Hey

Abstract

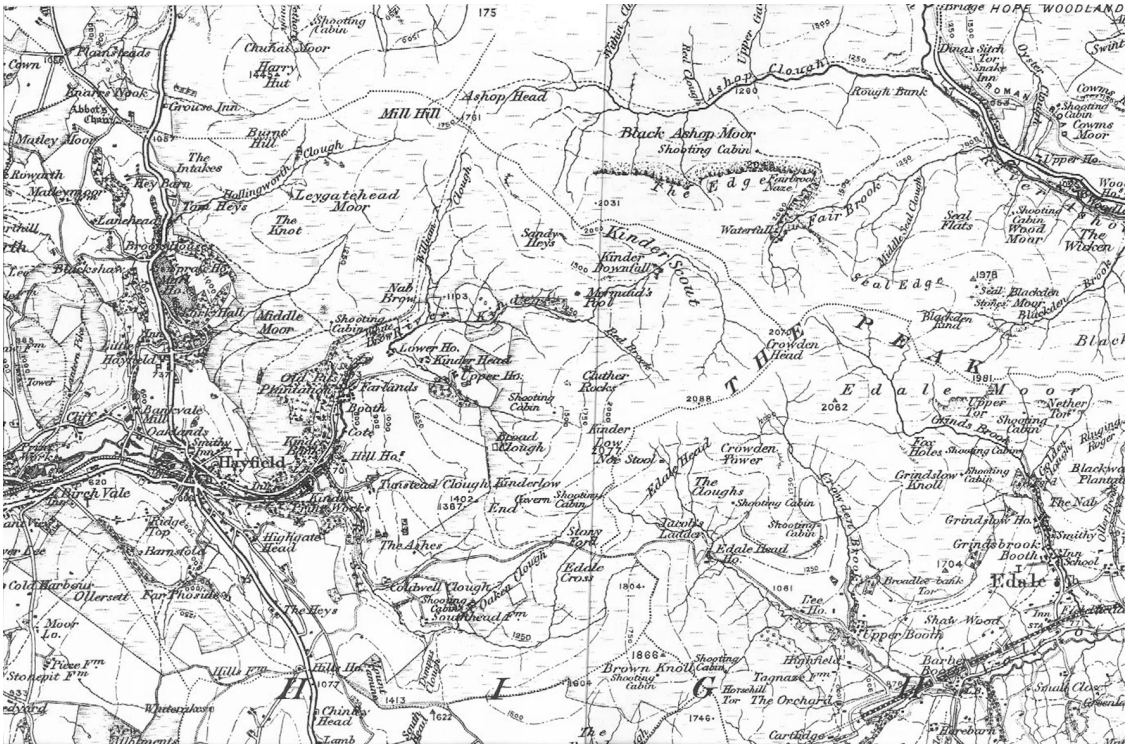
For many years Kinder Scout was the scene of bitter conflict over public access to moorland. The Mass Trespass from Manchester in 1932 is now credited by every journalist and even by some historians as the turning point in the battle for 'the right to roam' over forbidden lands. In reality, the story is far more complicated than the legend that has grown up around this single afternoon stunt. The Mass Trespassers were totally ignorant of the achievements of the previous generation; they did not continue their demonstrations; and it was the persistence of the long-established rambling associations that eventually achieved success.

The Mass Trespass of 1932 is regularly offered as a simple explanation of the triumph of the 'right to roam' movement. Even the Ramblers' Association, whose members strongly opposed it at the time, now joins in every anniversary with loud praise for Benny Rothman and the hundreds of Mancunian youths who accompanied him up the western edge of Kinder Scout on a Sunday afternoon in springtime, forcing their way past a small group of gamekeepers armed with sticks. The harsh prison sentences on five of the leaders were headlined in national and local newspapers and, amidst widespread sympathy for these youths, a legend was born that this 'direct action' brought success to what had been a feeble, ineffective campaign led by middle-aged and middle-class men. But another 68 years were to pass before the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) enshrined the 'right to roam' in law. An alternative view, held by many seasoned ramblers at the time, was that the Mass Trespass was a one-off stunt organized by the Communist Party, which did far more harm than good.

The Kinder Scout plateau looms large on the Peak District horizon. Together with Bleaklow to the north, it is the ultimate challenge to local ramblers. It can be seen from parts of Manchester and from the moorland edges of the city of Sheffield, yet at the beginning of the twentieth century public footpaths skirted it but did not provide routes over the top, which was preserved for the rearing and shooting of grouse. The etymology of Kinder is unknown, but this obscure hill name is thought to be of pre-English origin.[1] The hamlet of Kinder within the township of Hayfield was recorded in Domesday Book, but it shrank to a single farm and is now submerged under a reservoir. The 'Scout' part of the name is derived from an Old Norse word for the 'overhanging cliff' on the western side of the plateau, where spray from

* I thank two anonymous referees and the editor for their helpful comments on the first draft.

[1] Kenneth Cameron, *The place-names of Derbyshire* (3 vols, 1959), I, pp. 114–15; Paul Brotherton, 'Celtic place-names and archaeology in Derbyshire', *Derbyshire Archaeological J.*, 125 (2005), pp. 100–37.



MAP 1: A section of the Ordnance Survey one-inch map 99 as revised in 1906, showing Kinder Scout and the route taken by the Mass Trespassers from Hayfield to Sandy Heys, Ashop Head and back down William Clough.

the stream is often blown by the harsh winds back over the edge. Kinder Scout – or simply Kinder – is now the term for the whole of the extensive moor that was once divided between the townships of Hayfield, Edale, Hope and Hope Woodlands. Rising to 2,088 feet above sea level, the blackened peat groughs of this desolate area pose a formidable challenge to ramblers in wet, misty weather, but on a sunny day when the heather is in bloom, few walks are more rewarding (Map 1). It was not until 1958 that the public was allowed to roam unchallenged across the whole of this moor, even though it was never in the first rank of those that were managed for shooting grouse.[2]

I

In the middle years of Victoria's reign, long before working-class rambling societies were formed, middle-class people could usually walk across the Peak District moors without too

[2] The question of the struggle for access to moorlands, with some comments on the experience of the Peak District, has also recently been discussed by R. W. Hoyle, 'Securing access to England's uplands: or how the 1945 revolution petered out', in Rosa Congost and Rui Santos (eds), *Contexts of property. The social embeddedness of property rights in historical perspective* (2010), pp. 187–209.

much trouble, especially if they tipped the gamekeepers. On a ramble in 1880, Louis J. Jennings wrote that the 'Bradfield and Derwent Moors lie away to the north, Abney Moor to the south, and the Hallam Moors to the east, all with good paths over them in various directions'. These paths had not yet been closed by the landowners. But when he walked up Kinder Scout from the Snake Inn, Jennings found that his path was:

> soon lost amid the heather and furze, and the traveller must make out a track for himself as well he can ... The first discovery which my inquiries brought to light was that the Kinder Scout is regarded as strictly private property, and that it is divided up among numerous holders, almost all of whom are at loggerheads with each other and with the public ... There are said to be certain public rights of foot-way, but they do not appear to lead to the best points, and even in regard to these are constant disputes. Moreover, they are hard to find amidst a labyrinth of heath and ferns. It is not unusual for the gamekeepers to turn strangers back even when they are upon the paths which are supposed to be fairly open to all ... You get permission from three or four different holders, and find that there is still another who bars the way ... personally I experienced no inconvenience whatever.[3]

Disputes over rights of way increased when the grouse-shooting moors were managed more carefully in the late Victorian era.[4] In 1877 the ancient path from Hayfield to the Snake Inn via William Clough, around the northern side of Kinder Scout was closed by landowners in an illegal action that was nevertheless approved by the Derbyshire quarter sessions three years later. On 29 July 1894 an anonymous letter in the *Manchester Guardian* pointed out that the forbidden access to Kinder Scout was part of a larger problem. More and more stretches of moorland were being closed to ramblers and no organization existed to preserve old-established rights of way. Five days later, W. H. Chadwick of Gorton convened a meeting in the Piccadilly Restaurant, Manchester 'to consider the best means of securing the public rights of way over Kinder Scout from Hayfield to the Snake Inn'. It was resolved 'That a society be formed to preserve public rights of way within 50 miles of Manchester and such society be called "The Manchester and District Footpaths Preservation Society"'. The name was soon changed to the Peak District and Northern Counties Footpaths Preservation Society, a body that flourishes to this day and whose characteristic green signposts can be seen on the local moors.[5] Members of the new society met with the Duke of Devonshire and asserted the right of walkers to the William Clough passage over his moors; they offered to prove this at law, but sought a compromise that would satisfy the sporting interest, for they recognized that grouse shooting was the only value of properties on the bleak plateau of Kinder Scout.

[3] Louis J. Jennings, *Rambles among the hills in the Peak of Derbyshire and the South Downs* (1880), pp. 106–8.

[4] David Hey, 'The grouse moors of the Peak District', in P. S. Barnwell and M. Palmer (eds), *Post-Medieval landscapes: landscape history after Hoskins* (2007), pp. 68–79.

[5] <www.peakandnorthern.org.uk/about-us/history.htm>. The new society benefited from the remaining funds of the defunct Manchester Society for the Preservation of Ancient Footpaths, founded in 1826, which was concerned with local paths but not those within the Peak District. For the history of early footpath societies and the growth of rambling see Harvey Taylor, *A claim on the countryside: A history of the British outdoor movement* (1997). On p. 54 Taylor notes that 'Rambling as a distinct recreational activity emerged during the period of widespread anti-industrialism in the last quarter of the nineteenth century'.

On 24 September 1896 the *Manchester Guardian* reported that the society had:

> happily succeeded in its first enterprise. The favourite route over Kinder Scout, from Hayfield to the Snake Inn, has been secured for ever to the public. All that remains to be done is to form a path, erect signposts, and build a small bridge over the Lady Brook near the Snake Inn. Everyone will then be able to take this delightful walk through some of the finest and wildest scenery in the Peak District without let or hindrance. This peaceful victory over the landowners, who threatened for a time to close the path, although within the memory of man the public had always enjoyed the right of way, speaks volumes for the energy and tact displayed by the officials of the Society. The appeal the Society now makes for £500 to pay the legal and other costs incurred in securing the footpath, will gain a ready response.

The path was formally re-opened on 29 May 1897 by the President, Sir William H. Bailey, the Salford engineer who lived at Sale Hall (Cheshire), and the occasion was attended by a large body of subscribers and friends.

The PD&NCFPS soon discovered that the newly formed reservoir companies were as hostile to ramblers on their water-gathering grounds as were the grouse moor owners. For instance, when the reservoirs in the Upper Derwent Valley were constructed, protracted negotiations were necessary before all the threatened paths were secured or satisfactory substitutes were created. Ramblers were turned back on the eastern side of the reservoirs from Slippery Stones until the Society took up the matter with the owner and enforced the right of way.[6]

II

In 1900 George Herbert Bridges Ward (Figure 1) formed what he described as 'the first Sunday workers' rambling club in the North of England', the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers. It was to become the most active group in the access movement during the first half of the twentieth century and Ward became widely known as the vociferous 'King of the Ramblers'. His group took their name from the socialist weekday paper, *The Clarion*, which Robert Blatchford, a Manchester journalist, had founded four years earlier. Its socialism was of the William Morris rather than the Karl Marx variety and it was popular with members of the outdoors movement. Numerous Clarion Cycling Clubs, Clarion Glee Clubs and Clarion Cafés were set up in various parts of the country; in 1919 the Manchester Clarion Café (opened eleven years earlier) was where the Manchester Ramblers' Federation was formed. Bert Ward inserted an advertisement in *The Clarion*, inviting local readers to join him on a strenuous 20-mile ramble around Kinder Scout on Sunday 2 September 1900, meeting at Sheffield Midland station to catch the 8.30 am train to Edale. Eleven men and three women took up the invitation; they probably already knew each other.[7]

[6] <www.peakandnorthern.org.uk/about-us/history.htm>.

[7] This account of Ward is based on his writings in the various handbooks of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers, which he edited. See David Sissons (ed.), *The best of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers' Handbooks: 'Ward's Piece'* (2002). I have also benefited over the years from the personal reminiscences of ramblers who knew Bert Ward.



FIGURE 1: G. H. B. (Bert) Ward, founder of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers, as a young man.
Photo: PictureSheffield.com

The choice of travel by rail was significant, for the line through the Hope Valley to Manchester (with a station at Edale) had been opened in 1894. Now, ordinary people from the industrial cities on either side of the Pennines had quick and cheap access into the heart of the Peak District, including Kinder Scout. The first ramble (a hard walk which Ward had reconnoitred the week before) followed the ancient footpath along the southern side of Kinder Scout, past Barber Booth and Upper Booth farms, up Jacob's Ladder to Edale Cross, and down to lunch and a sing-song at Hayfield. The party returned via the William Clough footpath around the northern side of Kinder Scout to the Snake Inn, the path that had been re-opened three years earlier. Tea for 14 was ordered at the inn, to the surprise of the staff – who had to bake fresh bread and cakes – and after another sing-song and long walk the return train was caught at Hope, arriving back in Sheffield at 8 pm. 'What a day!' Ward kept repeating, 'Pioneers, oh pioneers'. He was asked to organize five more walks the following year. From such modest beginnings a mass movement was created.

Bert Ward was born in 1876 in Sheffield, where his ancestors had long been employed in the local metal trades. Bert's father, who was also named George Bridges Ward, was a lasting influence who introduced the boy to the joys of rambling and writing poetry. Bert also followed his father in becoming a Sunday School teacher, but in his twenties he turned from religion to politics and became attached to the growing socialist movement as an active trade unionist with the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. From 1903 to 1911 he served as the secretary of the newly formed Sheffield branch of the Labour Representation Committee, the forerunner of the Labour Party. Later, he became distrustful of politicians, but he kept his moderate, non-violent socialist beliefs all his life. These beliefs were reinforced by those of another socialist who had settled near where Ward and his wife had gone to live on the edge of the moors in 1915: Edward Carpenter, the radical thinker of Millthorpe.[8]

[8] Ward and other Clarion Ramblers used to meet in a shed by the Royal Oak, close to Carpenter's house; Sheila Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter: A life of liberty and love* (2008), p. 311.

An unusual aspect of Bert Ward's early life was his trip as a young man to the Canary Islands, an exotic destination in those days. It seems to have been paid for by small legacies from his father and maternal grandfather. This stimulated a great interest in Spain and Spanish politics. He became fluent in Spanish, befriended two Spanish politicians, and in 1911 published a book entitled *The truth about Spain*. The considerable collection of books that came to light when his daughter died a few years ago shows that he was a well-read man with wide interests.[9]

The year that his book was published, he changed career in an unexpected direction. He became a civil servant at the Sheffield and Brightside Labour Exchange. Then, during the First World War, he was posted to the Ministry of Munitions in Whitehall. Upon his return in 1919 he became a conciliation officer in industrial disputes. This seems a far cry from his days as an active socialist and, indeed, it brought scorn from many who had known him when he was young, but he seems to have been effective at the job. So we have a curious picture of a man who spent his working life trying to reach peaceful agreements, who accepted his wife's control of domestic arrangements, but who then strode purposefully through his front gate out on to the moors in search of an aggressive argument with a gamekeeper. It was well known amongst ramblers that Bert Ward could be 'a cantankerous old so-and-so'.

Rambling was not just a leisure pursuit for Bert Ward. To him, looking and thinking as he walked were as important as the physical exercise. He spoke of 'the trinity of legs, eyes and mind'. Vigorous walking across the moors, battling with the elements, was manly and character building. His slogan 'A rambler made is a man improved' appeared on the front of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers' publications from 1906 onwards. Another favourite one was 'The man who never was lost never went very far'. Exceptionally long, arduous walks were organized under the slogan, 'To be a Clarion Rambler, and learn to be a man'.[10] Ward issued an annual prospectus for the group in 1902 and by 1912 these had grown into what are now a famous series of handbooks, each of which contained about 100 pages of notes, essays on the history and natural history of the local landscape, local lore, poems, stories and anecdotes, maps and photographs, advertisements, and articles about walking in other parts of Britain. Ward believed that the leaders of every ramble should have interesting information to pass on about the local and natural history of the countryside. He spent many hours in the archives section of Sheffield Central Library searching for historical evidence to support his campaign to get moorland paths reopened, and in 1912 he founded the Hallamshire Footpath Preservation Society to further this sort of work. His involvement in ascertaining rights of way broadened into a wider interest in the historical landscape. He was an active member of the Sheffield-based archaeological and local history society and he was a prominent founder member of what was to become the Sheffield and Peak District Branch of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England.

[9] David Sissons, 'A Sheffield Rambler: some aspects of the life and work of G. H. B. Ward (1876–1957)' (unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Sheffield, Centre for English Cultural Tradition, 1992). A selection of Ward's library is now housed in Sheffield Central Library.

[10] See also Melanie Tebbutt, 'Gendering an upland landscape: masculinity and place identity in the Peak District, 1880s–1920s' in I. D. Whyte and A. J. L. Winchester (eds), *Society, landscape and environment in upland Britain* (2004), pp. 141–62.

III

The Sheffield Clarion Ramblers were always to the fore in the long campaign for access to mountain and moorland. They held their first trespass, which Ward organized in 1907, with an overnight ramble over Bleaklow, the forbidding moor at the summit of the Snake Pass, just north of Kinder Scout. Ward walked where he wanted and was strong enough and sufficiently fierce-looking to deter assault by all but the most hostile gamekeeper. He sought the moral high ground, convinced that the landowners were acting illegally in stopping ancient paths and bridleways across the moors. He was undaunted by the rank of the landowner, on one occasion accepting an invitation to put his case to the Duke of Norfolk in Derwent Hall. He was always one of the speakers – and usually the most forceful – at the rallies held in Winnats Pass, the limestone gorge near Castleton, from 1926 every year until the outbreak of war in 1939, which were jointly organized by the Manchester and Sheffield Ramblers' Federations in support of Trevelyan's Access Bills in parliament.[11] At first Ward's favoured course was to negotiate limited access agreements with landowners, such as that over the Dore to Hathersage bridleway, which was agreed in 1928. Where there was no evidence of a former right of way, he was prepared to accept a permit allowing him to cross a moor, as a first step in the wider campaign for the 'right to roam' over uncultivated land. Now that cheap travel by rail into the heart of the Peak District had made the forbidden lands accessible to ramblers, they demanded not just the restoration of old rights of way but the freedom to wander at will over some of the wildest terrain in England.[12]

In the 1920s trespassing on the forbidden summits of the grouse moors was far more common than is now generally realized, though rambling clubs were wary of doing this as organized groups for fear of legal action. The minutes of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers for 1921, for example, record (ungrammatically) that it was:

> Agreed that there be two Midnight Rambles, despite some fears that the Kinder and Bleaklow tops, thanks to the Club's years of propaganda and practical education were now constantly trodden by Sheffield and Manchester ramblers, that since the end of the war the gamekeepers were keeping strict watch and public opinion, if steadily growing, was not sufficiently pronounced for an officially organised club party to go with importunity and defy the consequences.[13]

The fiercest and most persistent enforcer of injunctions against trespassers was James Watts of Cheadle, a Manchester businessman who owned that part of Kinder Scout which included the Downfall.[14] His concern was that uncontrolled access would mean that the moor would

[11] Taylor, *Claim on the countryside*, p. 85, observes that the most important and active campaigning federations in England were those in Manchester and Sheffield. On p. 122 he notes 'an influential Liberal parliamentary lobby, which introduced access bills on nine occasions between 1884 and 1909'.

[12] Ibid., ch. 4. Ward insisted that the 'right to roam' should be accompanied by responsibility. Throughout his life, this former Sunday School teacher continued to offer character-building advice with commandments such as 'New members should not defile moor or field with paper or orange peel or leave gates open'.

[13] Sheffield Clarion Ramblers' minute books. I am grateful to Terry Howard for access to these.

[14] Roger Redfearn, 'The Bad Old Days', in Roly Smith (ed.), *Kinder Scout: Portrait of a mountain* (2002),



FIGURE 2: G. H. B. (Bert) Ward (centre, with white shirt) and fellow members of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers pose in a peat grough on Kinder Scout during a trespass on 13 January 1924. The photograph belongs to the family of Willis Marshall (second right) and is copyright of Ann Beedham, *Days of Sunshine and Rain: Rambling in the 1920s* (2011).

'soon lose its entire sporting value', a fear that has not been realized on grouse-shooting moors since 'the right to roam' was established in 2000. In 1923 Watts procured an injunction against Ward forbidding him from trespassing there or inciting others to do so. The Sheffield Clarion Ramblers formally placed on record its 'detestation at the selfishness, arrogance and lack of public spirit shown by Mr Watts and expressed their deepest sympathy to Ward, accepting that no other course was open to him but to sign the undertaking'. A fund was opened to defray his legal expenses and a subsequent meeting:

> voiced its indignation at the arrogant manner in which a landowner in the year 1923, by means of obscure Acts of Parliament, had contrived to secure a legal victory at the expense of our public-spirited Hon. Secretary and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society at that.

Despite the injunction, Ward was photographed with a group of young Sheffield Clarion Ramblers in a peat grough on Kinder Scout a few months later on 13 January 1924 (Figure 2).[15] In the *Sheffield Clarion Ramblers' Handbook* for 1928–29 he observed that there was 'no secret concerning the fact that ramblers do traverse Kinder Scout now', despite 'the late Mr James Watts's efforts to prohibit access to the plateau summit'.

Four years later, just before the Mass Trespass from Manchester, Ward noted that Watts's reward was that the 'alluring peat-trenched summit of Kinder Scout' was 'overrun with ramblers of all types'. In the same handbook he reported 'Another search on Kinder Scout' on Sunday 22 November 1931, when a group of ramblers variously estimated at between 600 and 1,000, under the leadership of the Manchester Ramblers' Federation, looked for a missing 17-year-old youth. Guided by the sectional leaders, who clearly knew the summit well, they

Note 14 *continued*
pp. 100–15. Watts threatened injunctions against ramblers, inserted advertisements with photos of ramblers in the Manchester newspapers (an example of which is reproduced by Redfearn), and offered a reward of £5 for their names and addresses.

[15] Ann Beedham, *Days of sunshine and rain: Rambling in the 1920s* (Sheffield: privately published, 2011); the photographs are displayed at the Castleton Visitor Centre in the Peak District.

made a 'thorough search of the top and sides of the plateau'. Even if the estimates were too high, it is likely that the number of ramblers involved in the search was greater than that of the Mass Trespass in the following year.

The historian, A. J. P. Taylor and some colleagues at Manchester University were amongst the regular trespassers. In his autobiography, Taylor recalled:

> We managed at least one all-day walk each weekend, trespassing on Kinder Scout or Bleaklow. I remember one such walk when Ray Eastwood (Professor of Law) made us creep along under a wall for half a mile on the alarm that gamekeepers were on the watch for us. It turned out that there were no gamekeepers and that Ray was playing a prank on Bullock, the Professor of Italian, also with us, who was extremely law abiding.[16]

The Sheffield Clarion Ramblers were long involved in a struggle over the moorland route from near the summit of the Snake Pass to Glossop, known since at least the seventeenth century as Doctor's Gate, which had been closed illegally by Lord Howard. In 1909 they walked the full length of the path; then the Manchester Rambling Club (which had been founded in 1907) did the same for the next five years. In 1911 Lord Howard agreed to re-open and repair the route, but he refused access during the breeding and shooting seasons. The campaign was renewed after the First World War and in 1921 Ward led a joint walk of Sheffield and Manchester ramblers along the route and gave the address. The protracted battle over this ancient right of way ended in victory for the ramblers in 1927.

In the same year, the Duke of Rutland, who had long been actively hostile to ramblers, had to sell his 11,533-acre moorland estate to pay for death duties. The 747-acre park around his shooting lodge at Longshaw, seven miles west of Sheffield, was treated separately in the sale and a 'Longshaw Committee' was immediately formed to raise funds to purchase the park and to hand it over to the National Trust. In the words of G. H. B. Ward, it was 'in effect, a ramblers' committee; for the names of [its members] bring to mind the doers of many doughty deeds and walks, and one is proud to be associated with them'. They comprised several Sheffield industrialists and professionals, Ethel Gallimore of the CPRE (as Secretary), a representative from the Peak District and Northern Counties Footpaths Preservation Society, and Phil Barnes and Stephen Morton, two young activists in the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers. By January 1928 over £9,000 of the £14,000 that was needed to complete the purchase had been raised. The handover of the deeds eventually took place before a large crowd that assembled in front of the Lodge in 1933.

In these early disputes the rambling organizations were well served by officers who were lawyers and who knew how costly legal action would be. It was not until 1929 that the Peak District and Northern Counties Footpaths Preservation Society resorted to a court case. This involved a footpath dispute at Benfield, where the local council refused to take any action to establish the public right of way. Several demonstrations were arranged over a five-year period, including one that involved more than 200 people, but the obstructions were always replaced by the farmer until a member took out a summons against him and won the case in court.

In the later 1920s and 1930s cheap rail and bus fares encouraged many more working-class

[16] A. J. P. Taylor, *A personal history* (1983), p. 155.

people to walk for pleasure in the British countryside. Rambling became a mass activity, encouraged by such bodies as the Holiday Fellowship, the Co-operative Holidays' Association and the Youth Hostel Association. It has been estimated that about 10,000 people visited the Peak District each summer weekend.[17] Federations of rambling clubs were formed in several provincial cities, led by Manchester (1919), Liverpool (1922), and Sheffield (1926; a union of fifteen clubs which Ward was instrumental in creating). In 1927 representatives from many parts of the country met at Hope in a historic first meeting, chaired by the President of the PD&NCFPS. It was becoming apparent that the outdoor movement needed a national body to represent the interests of ramblers. This came about in September 1931 when delegates from around the country attended a meeting at Longshaw Lodge, as a result of which the National Council of Ramblers' Federations (the forerunner of the Ramblers' Association) was established. This meeting was convened by Bert Ward and Stephen Morton, the young Sheffield Clarion Rambler who was the Secretary of the Sheffield Ramblers' Federation. Together with Tom Stephenson, a Lancashire man who had been imprisoned as a conscientious objector in the First World War and who was now a part-time agent for the Labour Party, and Phil Barnes, a young draughtsman whom Stephenson described as 'a dedicated Sheffield rambler and persistent trespasser', these working men were the chief campaigners for access to the forbidden moors. Yet, the legend of the Mass Trespass of 1932 has it that the early rambling clubs consisted of middle-aged, middle-class, easily cowed people who achieved nothing.

IV

The man who organized the Mass Trespass in 1932 was a likeable, stocky fellow, well under five feet tall, called Benny Rothman. He was born on 1 June 1911, the middle of five children of Jewish Romanian parents who had come to Britain via America at the turn of the century. His father ran hardware stalls at Glossop and Shaw markets. Rothman won a scholarship to the Central High School for Boys in Manchester, but had to leave at the age of fourteen to earn his living as an errand boy at a city garage. He soon saved enough money to buy a bike and cycle to north Wales, where he climbed Snowdon. 'I was the only person up there', he said. 'It just hit me, that great open view with the sea all around.' As a teenager he joined the Young Communist League and was once arrested and fined a week's wages for chalking a slogan on the pavement outside a police station. He was a regular attender at the Sunday night debates at the Manchester Clarion Café, where Independent Labour Party members, Trotskyists, socialists and communists of all kinds harangued each other.[18]

As the Secretary of the British Workers' Sports Federation, a subsidiary of the Young Communist League, Rothman organized a camp for the London section at Rowarth in the High Peak over Easter 1932, where he attempted to lead a small group up on to Bleaklow but was turned away by abusive and threatening gamekeepers. This was the spark that ignited

[17] Taylor, *Claim on the countryside*, ch. 7; John Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside' in F. Gloversmith (ed.), *Class, culture and social change: A new view of the 1930s* (1980), pp. 258–80.

[18] Benny Rothman, *The 1932 Kinder Trespass* (1982). Obituaries of Rothman were published in *The Independent* (2 Feb. 2002), *The Guardian* (25 Jan. 2002), and *The Daily Telegraph* (25 Jan. 2002).

the Mass Trespass a few weeks later. 'Back at the camp', Rothman recalled, 'we decided that if, instead of six or seven, there'd been 40 or 50 of us, they wouldn't have been able to do it'.

The Mass Trespass, and the reactions to it, can only be understood in the political context of the times. The British Workers' Sports Federation had no previous interest in the access movement, and after 1932 it played little, if any, part in the campaign. It had been formed as a result of a split within an earlier organization that had been established in 1923 under the auspices of the Clarion Cyclists. Its stated goal was international unity and peace through sport, but the organization was infiltrated by the Communist Party, whose members advocated a more militant approach. In 1930 Labour Party members and trade unionists left the organization and regrouped; the BWSF became the Communist Party's sporting organization with sections covering most sports, especially football, cycling and rambling.[19] The various ramblers' federations feared a take-over by Communists – and indeed by Fascists who were also trying to infiltrate the outdoor movement – and they believed that their recent gains, such as at Doctor's Gate and Longshaw, would be imperilled by militant action. By his own admission, Benny Rothman knew nothing about the history of the access movement and he acknowledged later that it had been a mistake to antagonize the main body of ramblers, who should have been useful allies rather than opponents. In his own words, 'We were newcomers to rambling'.[20]

In mid-April the twenty-year-old Rothman went to the offices of the *Manchester Evening News* where he was interviewed about his proposal for 'direct action', beginning with a demonstration at Hayfield recreational ground at 2 pm on Sunday 24 April. The Manchester and District Ramblers' Federation condemned it and the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers refused their support. Rothman duplicated leaflets to hand out at railway stations. One given out at Eccles read: 'If you've not been rambling before, start now, you don't know what you've missed. Come with us for the best day out that you have ever had'.[21] The 'Mass Trespass', as it was called even before the demonstration was held, was to be a political statement, a merry jaunt, not a strenuous hike lasting all day. Seasoned ramblers must have sniffed at the idea of a two o'clock start and a return before nightfall, covering a mere six miles.

It is difficult for a historian to make sense of the varied accounts, both at the time and later, of what took place on the day and at the subsequent trial, for even the recorded dates of the court cases and the names of those involved are sometimes contradictory.[22] The Mass Trespass attracted support from 15 Lancashire branches of the BWSF and two from Sheffield. Estimates of the numbers involved vary considerably, as they always do on public occasions.

[19] See S. G. Jones, 'Sport, politics and the labour movement: the British Workers' Sports Federation, 1923–35', *International J. History of Sport*, 2 (1985), pp. 154–78; Alun Howkins, 'Class against Class: The political culture of the Communist Party of Great Britain, 1930–35', in Gloversmith (ed.), *Class, culture and social change,* p-40–57.

[20] Rothman, *1932 Kinder Trespass*, p. 48: 'We should never have antagonised the leadership of the Ramblers' Federation and those rambling leaders who had worked hard over a long period of time'.

[21] <radicalmanchester.wordpress.com/2009/11/24/benny-rothman-and-the-1932-kinder-scout-mass-trespass>.

[22] This is particularly evident on the numerous websites devoted to the Mass Trespass. Rothman, *1932 Kinder Trespass,* p. 7: 'Even at the time of the trespass itself, there were as many versions as there were newspaper reports, and since 1932 many and often contradictory accounts have been written'.



FIGURE 3: William Clough. The footpath on the north-western side of Kinder Scout which was re-opened in 1897 after a prolonged campaign. The Mass Trespassers returned to Hayfield by this route in 1932. Photo: Author.

Benny Rothman claimed that 600–800 followed his lead, but the *Manchester Guardian*, whose reporter accompanied the trespassers, guessed 400–500; other claims were lower. The police were out in force at Manchester London Road and other railway stations, where they intended to serve an injunction procured by Hayfield Parish Council on Rothman, but he went on his bicycle. (The Hayfield Parish Council at its meeting on the previous Tuesday had taken steps to stop the protest meeting on its recreation ground, in accordance with its by-laws.) The Deputy Chief Constable of Derbyshire, the clerk of the Parish Council, and a large body of policemen were also there to enforce the law. The protesters therefore abandoned the speeches and set off in fine weather in the direction of Kinder Scout, singing as they marched. One press report claimed that they sang 'The Red Flag' but Benny Rothman remembered several renditions of 'It's a long way to Tipperary'. The protesters were overwhelmingly young men; a few young women were kept to the rear in case violence broke out.

It was only when they arrived at Hayfield that the leaders decided which route to take. They were warned off trespassing on the water-gathering grounds of Stockport Corporation's reservoir below Kinder, which had been opened in 1911, and decided not to complicate matters by protesting against this institution as well. They proceeded along the lane to a quarry, where Benny Rothman was lifted on to a protruding rock to give an inspiring speech. Then off they went along the footpath to William Clough, oblivious of the history of the earlier struggle to keep this way open (Figure 3).

Having passed the reservoir, they turned off the path and began the ascent of Sandy Heys on the western edge of the Kinder plateau. At the top of the first steep bit, 40 or 50 of the trespassers were confronted by eight gamekeepers. One of the trespassers recorded that:

> the keepers had sticks, while the ramblers fought mainly with their hands, though two keepers were disarmed and their sticks turned against them. Other ramblers took belts off and used them, while one spectator at least was hit by a stone. There will be plenty of bruises carefully nursed in Gorton and other parts of Manchester to-night, but no-one was at all seriously hurt except one keeper, Mr. E[dward] Beaver, who was knocked unconscious and damaged his ankle. He was helped back to the road and taken by car to Hayfield and to Stockport Infirmary. He was able to return home to-night after receiving treatment. After the fight the police chiefs, who had accompanied the Mass Trespassers, left them alone to their great though premature relief. The fight over, we continued up-hill, passing on the way a police inspector bringing down one rambler, who was subsequently detained at Hayfield Police Station.[23]

Another trespasser recalled that, 'The keepers offered little or no resistance and we just walked past them'.

Benny Rothman, who had not been involved in the short fight, claimed that, 'We were then on the top of Kinder Scout'. In fact, they had only reached the north-western tip of the plateau. It seems that, unlike the numerous ramblers who had trespassed on Kinder Scout before them, they had little idea of where they were. They needed to turn right towards Kinder Downfall, the most famous place on the escarpment, and to proceed on to the moor itself. Instead, they turned left and then descended to Ashop Head, where they held a jubilant victory meeting. It is ironic that this took place on the public footpath that had been re-opened in 1897. Tom Stephenson claimed that the Manchester trespassers never got on to Kinder Scout.[24] Tom Stephenson was right.

At Ashop Head the Manchester trespassers were joined by a party of about thirty from Sheffield, who had walked up the public footpath known as Jacob's Ladder from Edale and who must have been bewildered when the main party moved off in the opposite direction. Having been congratulated by Rothman, the trespassers were warned that some of them might be unfortunate enough to be fined, and to meet any costs the hat was passed round.

The group then returned along the public footpath to Hayfield, where a policeman suggested that they followed his car in procession, still 200 strong, and singing triumphantly until five men, identified by a keeper, were arrested; as we have seen, another man had been detained earlier. One of the trespassers wrote later, 'The rest of the now doleful procession was carefully shepherded through Hayfield while, as the church bells rang for Evensong, the jubilant villagers crowded every door and window to watch the police triumph'.[25]

This was not a matter of social class, as has sometimes been suggested, for Hayfield was an

[23] Ibid., pp. 55–6; David Howlett, *The Pioneer Ramblers, 1850–1950* (2002), pp. 186–8.

[24] Tom Stephenson, *Forbidden land: the struggle for access to mountain and moorland* (1989), pp. 153–64, where he notes that at the 50th anniversary of the Mass Trespass Benny Rothman and Ewan MacColl both agreed with him that on reaching the top of Sandy Heys the party turned towards Ashop Head for their celebrations.

[25] <www.derbyshireuk.net/kinder_trespass.html>.

industrial village consisting largely of workers' cottages. Rather, it was the ancient antagonism between town and country. The villagers were delighted that the rowdy Manchester youths had got their 'come-uppance'. Those arrested were aged between 19 and 23: John Anderson (21), Jud Clynes (23), Tony Gillett (19), Harry Mendel (23), David Nassbaum (19), and Benny Rothman (20). The youthful militancy and exuberance of the Mass Trespassers was to become an important part of the legend. On 11 May they were brought before a court at New Mills on a charge of riotous assembly and were sent to await trial at Derby assizes. There the jury consisted of military officers and country gentlemen who had nothing in common with the young Manchester communists, half of whom were Jewish (as the judge pointed out). The jury had no hesitation in finding five of the defendants guilty of riotous behaviour, but the other was released on lack of evidence. John Anderson was sentenced to six months imprisonment for occasioning bodily harm on the keeper, Benny Rothman was put in Leicester gaol for four months, and the other three received shorter sentences. One of the six, Tony Gillett, was a university student who came from a wealthy banking family; he was offered the chance to apologize but he refused and so was sent to prison.[26]

Before the trial the trespassers had not received much public support. The mainstream rambling bodies, which had used organized trespass before in defence of footpaths, were angry that these young Manchester communists had, as they saw it, ruined their patient lobbying work. Philip Daley of the Manchester Ramblers' Federation (and later a member of the Ramblers' Association Executive) spoke for many when he said that it was 'a positive hindrance and deterrent to the discussions and negotiations to secure the freedom of the hills'.[27] The turning point came with widespread disgust at the harsh sentences, which were out of all proportion to the crimes; the *Manchester Guardian* captured the public mood when it said that the trespass had resembled a university rag and should have been treated as such.[28] By trying to teach these Manchester youths a lesson, the military men and country gentlemen on the jury had shot themselves in the proverbial foot. The sentences received national publicity, nearly all of it hostile. At a gathering for the seventieth anniversary of the Mass Trespass in 2002, the eleventh Duke of Devonshire (1920–2004) said that the decision to prosecute 'was a great shaming on my family and the sentences handed out were harsh'.[29]

While awaiting the trial at Derby, the BWSF sent members to the annual Winnats Access Rally on the last Sunday in June, where they heckled the speakers, C. E. M. Joad, the philosopher and broadcaster, and the MP for the Blackley Division of Manchester, P. M. Oliver.[30] Nevertheless, the Manchester Ramblers' Federation made an appeal for clemency to the Home Secretary, which fell on deaf ears. Stephen Morton thought that the Mass Trespass was 'entirely political' and achieved nothing. Tom Stephenson was dismissive of the whole affair. 'The Mass Trespass', he wrote, 'was dramatic, yet it contributed little, if anything, to the access campaign'.[31] He

[26] His account of the Mass Trespass appeared in *The Student Vanguard*, 1 (i) (Nov. 1932).

[27] Howlett, *Pioneer Ramblers,* p. 193.

[28] Ibid., p. 193.

[29] *The Guardian*, 29 Apr. 2002; for an earlier expression of the Duke's sympathy for ramblers, David Sissons (comp.), *Right to roam, A celebration of the Sheffield Campaign for Access to Moorland* (2005), pp. 14–17.

[30] It is commonly claimed that 10,000 people attended that year's rally, because of the public reaction to the sentences, but photographs taken on the occasion show that this figure is wildly exaggerated.

[31] Stephenson, *Forbidden land*, p. 153.

claimed that public interest soon faded and that perhaps the best thing to stem from the episode was Ewan MacColl's song, 'The Manchester Rambler', whose stirring chorus went:

I'm a rambler, I'm a rambler from Manchester way,
I get all my pleasure the hard, moorland way,
I may be a wage slave on Monday,
But I'm a free man on Sunday.

At the time of the trespass MacColl was 17-year-old Jimmie Miller from Salford. Unlike many of the others, he had been on previous moorland rambles and he was involved with the publicity before the event. He went on to become a well-known actor, singer, and writer of protest songs, but he did not take an active part in the continuing campaign for access.[32]

Far from being the start of a mass movement for access to the moors, the demonstration from Manchester was not repeated. When he was released from gaol, Benny Rothman had no job to return to, so he became a full-time political activist for the Young Communist League, further north in Burnley. There, he helped to organize a prolonged but unsuccessful strike of textile workers at Moor Loom, before returning to Manchester, where he worked as a garage mechanic, then in an aircraft factory and at Metropolitan Vickers in Trafford Park. He helped to organize anti-fascist demonstrations and trade union activities but was no longer involved in trespassing. The British Workers' Sports Federation proved to be an ephemeral organization and the Manchester youths who had taken part in the Mass Trespass were not called upon to repeat their experience.

The initiative passed back to the older rambling organizations that were grouped together within the Manchester and Sheffield Ramblers' Federations. A second mass trespass, this time across the Bradfield Moors, was organized for 18 September 1932. This route had long been championed by Bert Ward, who had undertaken much historical research to show that this public right of way from the Upper Derwent Valley to Bar Dyke had been laid out in the Bradfield Enclosure Award of 1826 and had since been closed illegally. Ward chaired the meeting of the Sheffield Ramblers' Federation that discussed the proposal and suggested that the representatives of the majority of the clubs that favoured it should go ahead and organize it; he provided advice and wished them well but did not take part as he was opposed to violence. About 200 people walked from the Middlewood tram stop on the northern outskirts of Sheffield on to the moors at Bar Dyke and along 'The Duke of Norfolk's road' to the escarpment overlooking Abbey Brook, where about 100 permanent and temporary gamekeepers, armed with pick shafts, were gathered down in the valley below, expecting the ramblers to come from the opposite direction. With them were about half a dozen police who were determined to keep the occasion low-key. After a two-mile uphill walk the gamekeepers

[32] MacColl changed his name when he emerged from hiding as a deserter from the Army at the end of the Second World War. His parents were Scottish and he had a great interest in Scottish literature and song. He wrote 'The Manchester Rambler' a few months after the trespass. See Ben Harker, *Class act: the cultural and political life of Ewan MacColl* (2007), which devotes only a few pages to the trespass, as not being of lasting significance in MacColl's career, apart from his song. On p. 32, in a discussion of the size of the crowd on the trespass, Harker notes that 'MacColl, with characteristic hyperbole, usually put the figure at 3,000, but on occasion went as high as eight or 9,000'.

engaged in a brief scuffle with the ramblers, who having made their point, sat down and ate their sandwiches before returning to Bar Dyke. The gamekeepers were furious with the police, who declined to make any arrests, but the wisdom of this strategy ensured that the event was relatively peaceful and therefore starved of publicity. A smaller attempt at trespassing along Stanage Edge on 16 October was stopped by mounted police and foot police with Alsatian dogs, and a planned trespass along Froggatt Edge never materialized; according to Stephen Morton, it 'died from apathy'. Winter set in and nothing more was heard about mass trespassing. Nor had any gains been made by the access movement.[33]

V

In 1935, the National Council of Ramblers' Federations changed its cumbersome name to the Ramblers' Association on a motion proposed and seconded by two prominent members of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers, Stephen Morton and Phil Barnes. In the first year of its life, the Ramblers' Association had almost 1,200 individual members and over 300 affiliated rambling clubs, though the Manchester Federation did not join until 1939. It was the RA that continued the access campaign once most of the Mass Trespassers had lost interest. Their objective was to obtain an act of parliament that would allow 'the right to roam' over mountains and moorland.

In 1934 Phil Barnes, who had been involved in the Sheffield-organized Abbey Brook trespass, published a booklet, with Ward's enthusiastic endorsement, in which he showed that the owners of the 17 Peak District moors where access was refused comprised three dukes, one earl, two knights, two army officers, eight industrialists and one local authority. Barnes argued that: 'No true hill lover wants to see more footpaths in the wild heart of the Peak each nicely labelled with trim signposts and bordered by notices telling one not to stray. What he does want is the simple right to wander where fancy moves him'.[34] Meanwhile, in 1933 Tom Stephenson (1893–1987) had become a journalist, writing about the countryside for the Labour-supporting newspaper, the *Daily Herald*. He addressed the annual Winnats Pass rally the following year, then in 1935 he wrote about his inspired idea of a 'Pennine Way', stretching from Edale and Kinder Scout to Scotland. From 1948 Stephenson was the Secretary of the Ramblers' Association, although the post did not become a full-time salaried position until 1952. He was a tireless campaigner for walkers' rights and he personally organized well-publicized treks in the Pennines for influential Labour MPs, lobbying their support.[35]

The Access to Mountains Act (1939), introduced as a private member's bill by Arthur

[33] Howard Hill, *Freedom to Roam: the struggle for access to Britain's moors and mountains* (1980), pp. 69–73. Hill was an active trespasser and the only Communist on Sheffield council, though he had been elected as a Labour candidate and lost his seat in 1946 when he stood as a Communist; C. Binfield *et. al.*, *The history of the City of Sheffield, 1843–1993* (3 vols, 1993), I, *Politics*, p. 105.

[34] Phil Barnes, *Trespassers will be prosecuted: Views of the forbidden moorlands of the Peak District* (1934), pp. 9–11. Barnes later became the Lancashire secretary of the CPRE.

[35] Following continuing pressure from the Ramblers Association, the Pennine Way Association, and other walkers' groups, the Pennine Way was designated as Britain's first official long distance footpath in 1951 and was opened on 24 April 1965, 30 years after Stephenson's original article. It was soon followed by other trails, many of which were based on routes proposed and surveyed in detail by the Ramblers' Association.

Creech Jones, the Labour MP for Shipley, on behalf of the Ramblers' Association, proved a great disappointment for it was savaged by Conservative MPs, with numerous amendments and clauses that limited access and penalized trespassers.[36] The lobbying on behalf of the bill included an RA deputation to the Parliamentary Secretary, consisting of four prominent members: Bert Ward, Phil Barnes, Alfred J. Brown and C. E. M. Joad.[37]

In fact the act was a dead letter, being overtaken by the war. The access campaign was in one sense put on hold during the war years, but during these same years the Ramblers forged strong links with the Labour Party and acquired some well-placed and prominent supporters. It was a reflection of changed attitudes that John Dower's report on the new national parks (1945) proposed a legal right to roam over all uncultivated land in England and Wales.

The election of a Labour government in 1945 brought a new impetus to the lobbying by the RA, the CPRE and other bodies for the implementation of Dower's recommendations, which, although somewhat watered down, culminated in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949). Ten national parks were created in the upland parts of Britain, starting with the Peak National Park in 1951, but the act also provided for the establishment of agreements for public access to the forbidden moorlands.[38] From Easter 1954 the 11th Duke of Devonshire allowed the public to roam over his part of Kinder Scout, and four years later agreement was reached on access across the remaining part of the Kinder plateau after the Peak Park Planning Board had threatened to issue orders on 15 owners. Meanwhile, in 1957 the Duke of Devonshire allowed access over Bleaklow, which was soon to be crossed by the Pennine Way.[39] Important as these concessions were, they did not lead to outright victory for the ramblers. The water companies, concerned about possible pollution of their reservoirs, sometimes issued permits to ramblers, but other landowners continued to refuse access. It was not until the end of the twentieth century, 68 years after the Mass Trespass, that the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, passed by another Labour government, granted everyone the 'right to roam' in open countryside.[40]

Bert Ward died long before the battle was won and his influence declined as he grew old. A reward for his achievements came on 8 October 1945 when the Sheffield and District Federation of Ramblers' Associations presented him with the deeds to the 54½ acres of 'Ward's Piece' on the summit of Lose Hill, across the Edale valley from Kinder Scout, which he immediately handed over to the National Trust. On 6 July 1957, shortly before he died, he was presented with the honorary degree of MA by the University of Sheffield, when the Public Orator said: 'no

[36] John Sheail, 'The Access to Mountains Act: An essay in compromise', *Rural Hist.* 21 (2010), pp. 59–74, demonstrates the severe limitations of a private members' bill. Previous access bills, introduced by Labour MPs and supported by rambling organisations and the YHA, had been rejected by parliament in 1924, 1930, 1931 and 1937.

[37] Gordon E. Cherry, *Environmental Planning, 1939–1969*, II, *National Parks and Recreation in the Countryside* (1975), p. 22. Joad was Head of the Philosophy Department at Birkbeck College, University of London, and a well-known member of *The Brains Trust* on the BBC. Brown was the author of *Striding through Yorkshire* (1938 and later editions) and a vociferous critic of moorland owners (see, for instance the comments reproduced in Hoyle, 'Securing access', p. 192).

[38] Hoyle, 'Securing access', pp. 193–5.

[39] <http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/visiting/crow/crow-timeline>.

[40] For later developments, see John Blunden and Nigel Curry (eds), *The Changing Countryside* (1985), Marion Shoard, *A Right to Roam* (1999) and Sissons, *Right to roam*.

man could have worked more tirelessly for the preservation and accessibility of our countryside heritage and especially of the incomparable Peakland. No man, in the last half century, could have done more, by precept and example, to foster the true spirit of rambling'. Finally, on 29 September 2009, Ward's Croft was opened as a garden at the educational resource, the Moorland Discovery Centre at Longshaw, by Linda Raby, his granddaughter.

In the 1960s and 1970s left-wing intellectual and political interest in the historical struggles of the working classes, starting with the writings of E. P. Thompson[41] and leading to confrontational politics, stimulated the growth of the legend of the Mass Trespass in which 'direct action' by working-class groups (preferably those inspired by Marxism) was regarded as the triumphant way forward. At the same time, 'The Manchester Rambler' became a great favourite in the folk song revival.[42] But Ewan MacColl's energies were concentrated on theatre and folk song[43] and little more was heard of Benny Rothman in the campaign for access before 1982, when he was invited to join the 50th anniversary commemorations organized by the Ramblers' Association, whose new generation of members seemed to be unaware that their organization had once bitterly opposed Rothman.[44] The truth had been forgotten and, thanks to the great publicity it received at the time, the legend took over. So much so, that nowadays it is common to read on websites that the Ramblers' Association was founded in 1935 as a result of the Mass Trespass! In fact, on 1 January of that year it merely changed its name from the National Council of Ramblers' Federations, which, as we have seen, had been founded at Longshaw in 1931. Yet in the 1980s David Beskine, the RA's access campaigner, was pleased to use this charismatic figure from the past: 'You can always rely on Benny for a bus-load of demonstrators', he said. Rothman was encouraged to publish his account of the trespass for the 50th anniversary and to use his talents as a speaker at rallies and on radio and television. The Mass Trespass certainly played an important part in publicizing the struggle for access, but the 50th anniversary celebrations elevated it to the status of a media icon. Tom Stephenson's opinion of the 'spate of press publicity' was that much of it was 'misinformed and contrary to authentic available records'.[45] Subsequent anniversaries have re-enforced the legend as a slick and simple explanation of how the 'right to roam' was won.[46] No doubt the 80th anniversary celebrations in 2012 will mislead us further.

[41] E. P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class* (1963). Bill Keen, who was on the Mass Trespass from the Sheffield side, said in retirement that the event was forgotten for about 40 years until it was taken up by a younger generation (David Sissons, pers. comm.).

[42] It was recorded, for instance, by the Spinners, one of the most popular folk groups of the time. One is reminded of Tom Lehrer's satire of the protest song movement in 'The Folk Song Army' on the LP record, 'Tom Lehrer: That was the year that was' (1965): 'Though he [Franco] may have won all the battles, we had all the good songs'.

[43] With his first wife, Joan Littlewood, MacColl founded Theatre Workshop and after many years of touring moved to London. He became a prominent figure in the folk song revival of the 1950s and 1960s. His later songs included 'The ballad of Stalin' and 'The ballad of Ho Chi Minh'. See Harker, *Class act*.

[44] In fact, the fiftieth anniversary marked the emergence of a new militancy amongst the Sheffield ramblers: Sissons, *Right to roam*.

[45] Obituary of Benny Rothman in *The Independent*, 2 Feb. 2002; Stephenson, *Forbidden land*, p. 157.

[46] New Mills Central Station has a mural that was commissioned by Northern Rail and Hope Valley and High Peak Transport to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Mass Trespass, and the former New Mills police station has a commemorative plaque.

Science, organic husbandry and the work of Dr David Hodges*

by Philip Conford

Abstract

The organic agriculture movement has often been criticized for its supposedly anti-scientific perspective. This article argues that it has always demonstrated an interest in the scientific exploration of organic methods and that a significant number of scientists have supported the case for farming organically. It surveys the work of various British scientists active in the movement from the 1950s to the 1990s and then focuses on the work of Dr David Hodges of Wye College. Drawing on Dr Hodges' papers, it examines his work for the International Institute of Biological Husbandry and as editor of the journal *Biological Agriculture and Horticulture*.

That the organic movement is 'anti-science' has been a criticism levelled by its opponents since its earliest days. 'Muck and magic' (or 'mystery' or 'mysticism') is the most familiar of the phrases which proponents of 'progressive', 'efficient' industrial agriculture have used to dismiss organic husbandry's claim to any serious consideration. Indeed, one could argue that in a sense the organic movement was deemed unscientific before it even existed, the use of artificial fertilizers being intimately identified with scientific progress. In his noted Presidential Address to the British Association given in September 1898, Sir William Crookes (1832–1919) stated his belief that the progress of civilization depended on the ability to fix nitrogen from the atmosphere in order to guarantee continued and increased wheat production. 'It is through the laboratory', he declared, 'that starvation may ultimately be turned into plenty'. This was the antithesis of the view later held by the agricultural botanist and organic pioneer Sir Albert Howard (1873–1947), who wrote scathingly of 'laboratory hermits' and believed that the key to plenty lay in creating a humus-rich, fertile soil.[1]

By the 1920s, the fixation of atmospheric nitrogen through the Haber-Bosch process was

* The author is most grateful to Dr David Hodges for entrusting him with his archive (hereafter cited as HP), which in due course will be lodged with the Museum of English Rural Life at the University of Reading.

[1] *The Times,* 8 Sept. 1898, p. 5. Howard referred to himself as having been 'a laboratory hermit' when working as a mycologist in Barbados from 1899 to 1902 (*Farming and Gardening for Health or Disease* [1945], p. 15). He came to believe that agricultural science must be based on the study of the actual conditions in which cultivators grew their crops. Howard was Imperial economic botanist to the Government of India from 1905 to 1931, ran research stations at Pusa and Quetta and in the state of Indore, and claimed that he had learned most from the peasant farmers with whom he worked and whose methods he (not uncritically) admired. See A. Howard, *An agricultural testament* (1940) and his entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

fulfilling Crookes's hopes and the fertilizer industry was keen to present itself as an outstanding example of the application of science. The development of artificial fertilizers and their use 'on scientific lines' would ensure that Britain could grow more of its own food and rely less on imports. One can faintly discern in such writings the implication that to oppose the use of artificial fertilizers would be both unpatriotic and morally callous; 20 years later, during and shortly after the Second World War, this implication became more explicit. In the intervening period, the organic movement, inspired by Howard's writings and his work in India, had begun to coalesce and to articulate opposition to the rapidly increasing and near-universal use of artificials in British agriculture, which was enforced by government policy through the County War Agricultural Executive Committees. In response to the organicist criticisms, Fisons and ICI launched advertising campaigns in the farming press, identifying their products with the onward march of science and presenting their opponents as advocates of the most primitive and superstitious farming techniques. Such backward attitudes potentially endangered the nation's security in wartime, and would, if accepted, hamper post-war attempts to overcome severe food shortages. The fertilizer companies were therefore able not merely to represent themselves as scientifically vibrant, but as securely occupying the moral high ground.[2]

This emphasis on agricultural progress through the application of industrial technology intensified after the war. The threat of world food shortages, and Britain's economic problems, meant that home production had to be increased and made more efficient, the criterion of efficiency being output per worker. In 1947, the government announced a plan for raising the UK's agricultural output by a further 20 per cent over the next five years. In such daunting circumstances, it seemed clear that traditional methods were inadequate or irrelevant. According to an advertisement for the Westminster Bank Ltd, 'The Farm of the Future!' would dispense with much of the nation's agricultural inheritance, which was 'more picturesque than effective', and replace it with 'modern structures designed to fit a purpose'. An advertisement for the Pegson-Marlow Pump showed a farmer looking out over prairie-like fields and fiddling with a knob on a long panel of dials and gauges. 'Farming from a control tower' was on the way, with the Pegson-Marlow Pump a staging post for it. Since the organic movement was interested in the potential of traditional agricultural systems, it was easy to misrepresent it as opposed to science and progress. In fact, the organic movement's attitude to scientific research was more sympathetic than its opponents were willing to admit.[3]

A similar situation applies today, *mutatis mutandis,* with regard to the organic movement's opposition to genetically modified (GM) crops. Lord Taverne, a prominent supporter of biotechnology and spokesman for the organization Sense About Science, which promotes an evidence-based approach to scientific issues, has criticized the organic movement in the

[2] *The Fertiliser and Feeding-Stuffs J.,* 28 Mar. 1923, p. 319. On the wartime advertising campaigns by fertilizer companies, see P. Conford, 'The myth of neglect: Responses to the early organic movement, 1930–1950', *AgHR* 50 (2002), pp. 89–106.

[3] For the Westminster Bank and Pegson-Marlow Pump advertisements, see R. George Stapledon (ed.), *Farming and mechanised agriculture, 1946* (1946), pp. 36, 26. This volume provides a good picture of the dominant agricultural approach in the immediate post-war years. On the Soil Association's complex and ambivalent relationship to scientific research, particularly in its early years, see the judicious account by Erin Gill in her unpublished doctoral thesis 'Lady Eve Balfour and the British organic food and farming movement' (Aberystwyth University, 2011), pp. 215–31.

following terms: '[It] has murky origins; its basic principle is founded on a scientific howler … it is steeped in mysticism and pseudo-science; and, whenever it seeks to make a scientific case for itself, the science is shown to be flawed'.[4]

Criticism of the organic movement's supposedly anti-scientific stance is not confined to its enemies, however. In a complex attack on aspects of the North American organic industry, Mischa Popoff, an organic farmer and farms inspector, has condemned the transatlantic organic movement for its neglect of Sir Albert Howard's ideas in favour of those of Rudolf Steiner: that is, its predilection for the mystical and esoteric, rather than for the empirical scientific approach which Howard's work demonstrated. Popoff sarcastically heads one section of his book 'Organics *plus* Science (yes, it once existed)'.[5] Popoff's criticism of the organic movement for supposedly ignoring Howard is also, though, by implication, a reproach to those who claim that the organic movement is anti-scientific. Given Howard's central importance as the movement's begetter in the English-speaking world, it is surely significant that an outstanding agricultural scientist played such a role.

A study of the relationship between the organic movement and science is worthy subject matter for an entire book, requiring not only historical analysis, but also discussion of more theoretical issues. How should 'science' be defined: as an approach to phenomena, or a body of knowledge, or a world view? To what extent can we distinguish between 'pure' science, technology, and profit-driven application of scientific discoveries? What are the merits and limitations of the 'reductionist' approach, which organicist writers have so persistently criticized from their own 'holistic' standpoint? Is there any reason – theoretical or practical – why the techniques of organic farming should not be scientifically analysed and developed? If not, then why have so many resources been committed to technological agriculture and so few to organic systems? The answers to these last questions may prove to lie more in the realms of politics and economics than in those of pure, detached scientific enquiry. The aim of this article is inevitably far more modest than an attempt to deal with such issues. It seeks to demonstrate that, in Britain, in the half-century between 1945 and 1995, there was a markedly pro-scientific strain to be found in the organic movement. This is not to deny that there was also a markedly 'mystical' or esoteric strain as well, nor that associated with the movement could be found an outlook strongly opposed to Enlightenment values and to faith in technological solutions to social and environmental problems. But the interest in science was considerably more prominent than either its adherents or its opponents might now be aware.

We shall first consider, necessarily briefly, the role of scientists during the movement's formative years, and the attention the Soil Association paid to scientific issues. The article will then consider five scientists who were prominent in the organic movement during the period from the 1950s to the 1980s, before concentrating on the work of Dr R. D. (David) Hodges (b. 1934). Hodges was for many years simultaneously a lecturer at the University of London's agricultural college at Wye, near Ashford in Kent, and a central figure in the organic movement. He ceased being actively involved in the mid-1990s, but during his retirement has collected and organized his historically valuable archival papers, on which this article draws substantially. His work for the organic cause was based on a firm belief that a respectable

[4] Dick Taverne, *The march of unreason* (2005), p. 62.

[5] Mischa Popoff, *Is it organic?* (2010), pp. 122–4.

scientific case could be made for organic cultivation, and his position at the heart of the movement during the 1980s in particular indicates that the movement had plenty of room for a pro-scientific approach.[6]

I

This article takes for granted the central importance for the organic movement in the English-speaking world of Sir Albert Howard. Although the case cannot be argued here, in the present author's view the movement would not have existed without Howard's influence. Despite the fact that the Steiner-inspired Biodynamic Agricultural Association was founded in Britain in 1928, eighteen years before the Soil Association, and despite the active involvement of biodynamic farmers and gardeners in the latter organization, the esoteric nature of Steiner's philosophy – about which Howard himself was robustly sceptical – ensured that biodynamic cultivation could never have enjoyed the public profile which the wider organic movement did during the 1940s.[7] Conversely, there seems good reason to suppose that the wider movement would have flourished without the presence in it of the biodynamic strain: indeed, the absence of this more 'mystical' element might well have proved advantageous.

The organic movement in the English-speaking world therefore had as its founding father an outstanding agricultural scientist. We should also note the sympathetic, albeit slightly more detached, support of Sir George Stapledon (1882–1960), another agricultural scientist of international renown as plant breeder, ecologist and authority on grassland; and of Viscount Bledisloe (1867–1958), one of the outstanding agriculturalists of his time and President of the Royal Agricultural Society of England in 1946. The movement soon won the enthusiastic support of Professor R. Lindsay Robb (1885–1972), who had worked overseas as ICI's expert on grassland and during the Second World War had been the Director of Agriculture for the British military in North Africa.[8]

Some eminent medical scientists played key roles in helping establish the organic movement, chief among them being the nutritionist Sir Robert McCarrison (1878–1960). The dental scientist Sir Norman Bennett (1870–1947) was an important supporter during the movement's formative years, as was Sir Cedric Stanton Hicks (1892–1976), who remained active in its cause

[6] In the light of my interviews with Prof. A. J. Biddlestone, Dr N. P. Burman, Dr A. Deavin, Dr K. R. Gray, Dr R. D. Hodges and Dr V. I. Stewart, I mean by the phrase 'a respectable scientific case could be made for organic cultivation' that these scientists believed that, given adequate funding for long-term experiments, it should be possible to establish that organic methods of cultivation could stabilize and enrich the soil; that as soil fertility increased, so would the production of disease-resistant crops; and that wider environmental benefits would accrue from the application of methods which paid attention to ecological systems. They saw no reason why scientific techniques involving systems approaches should not be developed and refined in order to test these hypotheses, though they were of course aware of the complexities involved. Professor Colin Spedding of the University of Reading, although not a supporter of the organic movement, has encouraged the study of agricultural systems, among which organic farming takes an important place. See Colin R. W. Spedding, *Agriculture and the citizen* (1996), p. 240.

[7] Howard, *An agricultural testament*, p. ix.

[8] On Stapledon, see R. Waller, *Prophet of the new age* (1962). On Robb, see the October 1972 issue of the *Journal of the Soil Association*, a memorial number celebrating Robb's life and achievements.

until his death. Hicks held the post of Professor of Human Physiology and Pharmacology at the University of Adelaide from 1926 to 1958; from 1942 to 1952 he was Director of Army Catering for the Allied Land Forces, and from 1952 to 1973 served as Scientific Food Consultant to the Australian Army. Whereas today the organic movement might be associated with various 'alternative' or complementary forms of treatment, in its earlier decades it attracted many conventionally trained medical doctors. One of the Soil Association's three founders was the doctor George Scott Williamson (1884–1953) and, while his approach to studying health was unconventional, his background was in orthodox medicine, in which he had excelled.[9]

It is also important to bear in mind that the Soil Association itself grew out of Eve Balfour's desire to investigate what was essentially a scientific question: to what extent was the health of plants, animals and human beings affected by the nature of the soil in which the plants grew? Her exposure to the ideas of Howard and McCarrison in the late 1930s inspired her to establish what became known as the Haughley Experiment at her Suffolk farm. This was a complex long-term project whose aim was to study the effects on crop growth and animal health of different types of soil treatment. The Experiment proved cripplingly expensive and its data were very difficult to interpret; when it was wound up at the end of the 1960s it had produced little in the way of clear conclusions. The point to be noted, though, is that it was a scientific project based on the study of empirical data, and that the leading scientific journal *Nature* considered it an important venture worthy of support.[10] Similarly, the agricultural scientist and critic of the organic movement, D. P. Hopkins, thought Haughley significant and urged an expansion of the sort of work taking place there.[11]

The Soil Association was essentially a body with a scientific purpose, a statement that may well surprise both its contemporary supporters and its opponents. Its objects said nothing about the 'organic': they were, 'To bring together all those working for a fuller understanding of the vital relationships between soil, plant, animal and man[; t]o initiate, co-ordinate and assist research in this field [and to] collect and distribute the knowledge gained so as to create a body of informed public opinion'.[12] The title of the Association's journal, *Mother Earth,* was suggested by Scott Williamson, who considered it to express a literal truth; but plenty of Association members were unhappy about its sentimental overtones. In the mid-1950s there was an unsuccessful attempt to rename it.[13]

Regardless of the journal's title, though, its content was strongly scientific. In its first five years, from 1946 to 1951, it published articles on ammonia, antibiotics, bacteria, calcium, carbon dioxide, composting, insecticides, isotopes, lime (application of), mycorrhiza, nitrogen, potash, proteins, rotations in farming, soil structure, sulphuric acid, trace elements, viruses and vitamins. During the 1960s, subjects discussed included the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy, algae, blister blight, cancer, coddling moths, entomology, hydroponics, Lysenko's genetic theory, nitrogen, organo-phosphorous sprays, pollination, the rumen, soil fungi,

[9] The other founders of the Soil Association were the farmers Eve Balfour (1898–1990) and Friend Sykes (1888–1965).

[10] *Mother Earth*, Oct. 1957, p. 1001.

[11] On Haughley, see Lawrence Woodward's introduction to the Soil Association's 'Organic Classics' reprint of Eve Balfour's *The living soil* (2006). *Mother Earth*, Oct. 1957, p. 1001; Apr. 1957, pp. 830–1. See also D. P. Hopkins, *Chemicals, humus, and the soil* (1945).

[12] *Mother Earth,* Autumn 1947, p. i.

[13] *Mother Earth*, Jan. 1957, pp. 737–8 and 742–4.

superphosphates, warble fly and water pollution. These are not topics one would expect to find in 'mystical' publications, and perusal of the book reviews provides plenty of additional evidence that *Mother Earth* took an interest in scientific developments. In 1964 two Australian readers objected to an article by Rolf Gardiner about the connection between agriculture and religion, on the grounds that *Mother Earth* was 'a basically scientific journal'.[14]

In its early years, the journal debated the philosophy of science, arguing, for instance, that the study of agricultural biology was no less a scientific task than the study of agricultural chemistry. The Soil Association's Editorial Secretary Jorian Jenks suggested that when 'knowledge crystallizes into set formulae and techniques ... it begins to lose some of that vital dynamism which is one of science's most cherished characteristics'. Within the scientific world a battle was proceeding between the dynamic and the statistical interpretation of natural processes: a battle evident at the annual meetings of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, whose proceedings *Mother Earth* monitored. Some of the scientists shared the Soil Association's general outlook in their concern about the possible harm which agricultural chemicals might inflict on the insect population, and in their insistence that much more biological experimentation was essential. Jenks pointed out that official agricultural scientists admitted to complete ignorance of the field of soil ecology, and he denied that the organic movement was rejecting scientific research: on the contrary, it was demanding more of it. The following year, the Association's Secretary C. D. Wilson, a former industrial chemist, wrote a lucid summary of its position vis-à-vis scientific research. He argued that the Association had every right to criticize an established hypothesis, patiently collecting facts that might point in another direction, just as defenders of that hypothesis had a right to criticize its potential successor.[15]

For Scott Williamson, the problem was how the concept of science should be defined. He had regarded his work at the Pioneer Health Centre as a scientific investigation into the nature of health, but the surgeon Sir Ernest Rock Carling had visited the Centre and declared that its methods did not represent science as he knew it. Scott Williamson addressed the issue in a review article on Anthony Standen's book *Science is a Sacred Cow*, drawing a distinction between the practice of science and the use to which technologists and commercial interests put its results.[16] Following Scott Williamson's review, philosophical discussion of science disappeared from *Mother Earth* for many years, but coverage of scientific issues remained consistent. As we shall see, these continued to be a major concern of the organic movement over a long period.

[14] *Mother Earth,* July 1964, p. 250.

[15] *Mother Earth,* Autumn 1950, p. 1; Spring 1951, pp. 55–9.

[16] Interview (2 Feb. 2007) with Joanna Ray, daughter of Dr K. E. Barlow. Her father worked at the Centre and was a close colleague of Scott Williamson. *Mother Earth*, Oct. 1952, pp. 39–44. Carling, a member of the Medical Research Council, believed that atomic radiation would prove valuable as a means of reducing human fertility levels (*Health and Life*, Sept. 1955, p. 325). Scott Williamson was more interested in encouraging life. It is worth noting that Sir William Crookes, who looked to the creation of a scientific means of fixing atmospheric nitrogen to use as a fertilizer, exemplified the blurring of scientific enquiry and commercial advantage. His entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* states that science and business were integrated activities throughout his life, and that the possibility of commercial reward was a prime motivation for his research.

II

We shall now narrow our focus to examine the work of some scientists who believed that the case for organic methods at the very least merited scientific investigation and might well be strengthened through scientific research. This survey will show that the work of Dr David Hodges was no eccentric aberration, but took place within a well-established context of organicist scientific commitment. First, let us look at the career of Dr Norman Burman (b. 1915).

Burman entered employment as a hospital laboratory technician and was required to remain in that post during the Second World War. He then joined London's Metropolitan Water Board (MWB) as a bacteriologist, later being promoted to Senior Bacteriologist and then Scientific Assistant to the Director. When the MWB became the Thames Water Authority, Burman was appointed Manager of Scientific Services. He obtained his doctorate, on the survival of E. coli, in 1954. His interest in organic cultivation stemmed from his love of gardening: he read about the benefits of composting, and was led to the work of Howard and Balfour, attending the Soil Association's inaugural meeting in 1946. As a microbiologist, he was attracted to the 'living soil' approach to cultivation, though he appreciated that there was no scientific proof of the superiority of organic methods, and no properly conducted research into them: for this reason, the Haughley Experiment interested him. He did not believe that scientists would be convinced by the proposed model organic farms that Howard appeared to favour over the work at Haughley. Unlike some of his fellow scientists in the organic movement, Burman did not consider the Haughley Experiment misconceived, but he had no doubt that it needed to be long-term if its findings were to have any significance.[17]

Burman contributed regularly to *Mother Earth* during the 1950s and '60s, writing chiefly on the science of composting and reviewing a wide range of books on biology and ecology. He was at various times a member of the Soil Association's Advisory Panel, its Editorial Board, its Council and its Standards Committee. His colleagues at the MWB were sceptical, regarding the organic movement as unscientific, and he had to tread carefully in order to avoid harming his professional reputation. He never accepted his colleagues' view, regretting that so little research into the effects of organic methods was undertaken and that too much of the organic case had relied on hearsay evidence rather than recognized scientific procedures. He also regretted that the Soil Association, which had originally gathered evidence and sought out relevant research, turned increasingly to campaigning.

Burman was particularly interested in municipal composting, as were two scientists of a later generation, Dr Ken Gray and Dr, later Professor, A. J. (Joe) Biddlestone, both of the University of Birmingham. The use of wastes to create fertility is integral to the organic approach; but the problem was (and is) how to produce sufficient quantities of compost, given that Howard's example in India, where agriculture was the primary occupation and there was an extensive pool of cheap labour, could not be followed in Britain. The conversion of urban wastes and the use of sewage were investigated by some pro-organic municipal engineers, including J. C. Wylie in Dumfries and J. L. Beckett of Leicester.

[17] Interview with Dr Burman, 26 June 2006.

From the mid-1960s onwards, Gray and Biddlestone undertook important work in Birmingham's Department of Chemical Engineering. Gray had trained at Esso's huge refinery on the Solent before taking up his academic post in 1963. Like Burman a keen gardener, he had been drawn to the organic philosophy by H. J. Massingham's book *This Plot of Earth* (1944), so the opportunity to develop a composting project at Birmingham was ideal for him and drew him into the orbit of the Soil Association, which invited him to initiate some research at Haughley into the effects of toxic metals. He had contacts with the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service (ADAS) and with some senior staff at Rothamsted Experimental Station, and got on well with both the organic and the orthodox camps, trying to act as a mediator between them. In the winter of 1969–70 the Agricultural Research Council awarded Gray a grant of £7,592 – a curious but substantial sum – to investigate farm waste disposal. It was around this time that Biddlestone joined him.

Following his doctorate, Biddlestone had worked for ICI and then helped build and run a polymer plant for Dunlop. In 1965 he was invited back to Birmingham University, his alma mater, to lecture in his old department. He knew Gray and shared his interest in how wastes might be put to productive use. This was not through any background in farming, but because of a scientific interest in systems and processes, biological as well as chemical. The department at Birmingham favoured this sort of research and was enrolling an increasing number of environmentally aware postgraduate students, so Biddlestone was able to team up with Gray: the start of a long friendship and productive academic partnership. Unlike Gray, Biddlestone never joined the Soil Association. His training in orthodox science and industry, though, makes his interest in the Association's research all the more significant, and he remains convinced that it was a worthwhile area in which to experiment.[18]

Frequent contributors to the Soil Association's journal from 1970 onwards, Gray and Biddlestone provide further evidence of the Association's continued interest in scientific research and are also among the comparatively rare instances in the history of organics, of people who could mix comfortably in both organic and orthodox circles. They were involved in the design, construction and operation of various large-scale municipal composting plants in both Britain and overseas, in Teheran, Libya and Hong Kong. In the 1970s they built a composting unit that won first prize at Stoneleigh's Royal Agricultural Show. Another project on which they worked, during the 1980s, was for the agricultural machinery company, ARM Ltd. of Rugeley in Staffordshire, improving the design of elevators and spreading-machines. They also had links with India, and wrote the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's Soils Bulletin no. 56, *Soil management: Compost production and use in tropical and subtropical environments* (1987). The Bulletin's object was to promote the use of locally available organic wastes both as a source of plant nutrients and as a means of increasing humus content in order to combat soil

[18] Interview with Dr Gray and Prof. Biddlestone, 21 Oct. 2008. For examples of their publications, see for instance K. R. Gray and A. J. Biddlestone, 'Composting – process parameters', *Chemical Engineer* Feb. 1973, pp. 71–6; K. R. Gray, A. J. Biddlestone and R. Clark, 'Review of composting, Part 3: Processes and products', *Process Biochemistry* 8 (10) (1973), pp. 11–15, 30; K. R. Gray and A. J. Biddlestone, 'Agricultural uses of composted town refuse' in *Inorganic pollution and agriculture*, MAFF Reference Book 326 (1980), pp. 279–305, and K. R. Gray and A. J. Biddlestone, 'The composting of agricultural wastes' in B. Stonehouse (ed.), *Biological husbandry* (1981), pp. 99–111.

erosion. It went out to more than 150 Ministries of Agriculture around the world. Like David Hodges, Gray and Biddlestone were also active in David Stickland's initiative, the International Institute of Biological Husbandry (IIBH), of which more below.

In Wales, the organic movement was responsible for another excursion into applied science, the Bryngwyn Project, which was under the direction of Dr Victor Stewart (b. 1924) of the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. Stewart, a soil scientist, had studied agricultural chemistry at Bangor under the tuition of the noted authority G. W. Robinson. He gained his doctorate for ecological research into the connection between soil development and types of tree, and came to share the organic movement's view of the importance of fungi, which linked trees and soil in an ecological community. His 1956 appointment as Aberystwyth's first lecturer in soil science rather than just soil chemistry enabled him to pursue further ecological research, looking at problems of hill farming and drainage, and at the role of earthworms in restoring soil fertility. This work led him to the Soil Association, and he spoke at the Association's conference weeks held at Ewell Technical College, Surrey, during the 1970s. He was also an authority on the quality of sports pitches, reporting on Test Match wickets for the MCC.[19]

The experiment at Bryngwyn in South Wales stemmed from conversations Stewart had with Eve Balfour, and from the fact that E. F. Schumacher (Soil Association President from 1971 until his death in 1977) had been Economic Adviser at the National Coal Board (NCB). In August 1977, the Soil Association entered into a five-year agreement with the NCB to restore 64 acres of land lying derelict on a farm near Llanelli after opencast mining. The experiment aimed to devise techniques of accelerating the rehabilitation process and monitoring the effects of organic cultivation on the soil. It was hoped that the work at Bryngwyn would provide 'visible evidence, backed by scientific observation, that organic farming methods [could] restore a filled-in open-cast site to grade one farming land much more quickly than orthodox methods that ha[d] so far been tried, and failed'.[20] In 1984, responsibility for the farming operation was transferred to the university at Aberystwyth, and a doctoral student, J. Scullion, offered various preliminary conclusions on its data. (The farm was eventually reinstated in 1995 and later won recognition as a showpiece of environmental enrichment.)

Stewart was also significant as a link between different generations of organic activists: Nic Lampkin, who produced the first academic textbook on organic agriculture, was one of his doctoral students.

The courses at Ewell Technical College, referred to above, were organized by another scientist active in the organic movement during the 1970s: this was Dr Anthony Deavin (b. 1936), a rather more complex figure than those already discussed. His scientific background, however, was impeccable: first-class honours in Chemistry at Queen Mary College, leading to a doctorate at King's College, London; research at Heidelberg and a lectureship in biochemistry at St. Thomas's Hospital Medical School. In tandem with this career, Deavin developed more esoteric interests, and, on first coming across *Mother Earth* in the 1960s, perceived in it the philosophy of a 'natural order' to be found in the land reform movement: the belief in a need to

[19] Interview with Dr Stewart, 8 June 2005.

[20] This quotation comes from a typed paper headed 'The Soil Association. Project Bryngwyn – Progress Report', marked 'Item 6c, 4/78', passed to the author by Dr Victor Stewart.

work in harmony with nature. Although Deavin believed natural law theory to be an attitude to life rather than a scientific hypothesis, he was struck by the thought that the data produced at Haughley might provide support for it.[21]

In 1969, Deavin was appointed Research Director in the Department of Biological Sciences at Ewell; he joined the Soil Association the same year. During the 1970s he concentrated on research into soil fertility, some of it conjunction with Rothamsted Experimental Station. He described this work in scientific papers published in Germany. He also published several articles in the *Soil Association Quarterly Review*, on soil fertility, nitrogen fixation, plant growth and associated matters, though he became sceptical of the value and scientific rigour of what had been studied at Haughley. He was an Association Council member, an architect of organic standards, scientific advisor to the Henry Doubleday Research Association (HDRA), and, like Gray, Biddlestone and Hodges, was active in the IIBH. He was also interested in the work of the Biodynamic Agricultural Association, and undertook experiments in chromatography, exhibiting some of his results in an exhibition on soil fertility for the Scientific Section of the Chelsea Flower Show. From the mid-1980s onwards he moved increasingly towards alternative medicine, and trained in Polarity Therapy. Such a career would hardly recommend itself to Lord Taverne and his associates, but our purpose here is to demonstrate that the organic movement was capable of appealing to minds trained in the ways of orthodox science, and Deavin's work for it offers further evidence that this was so.

III

Having given an outline of the organic movement's interest in science, and identified some of the scientists who were sympathetic towards its ideas, we can now look in more detail at the work of David Hodges. Hodges sought to provide scientific respectability for the organic case, and was centrally involved in two initiatives to this end. His papers provide an insight both into his ideas and into the problems he faced.

Hodges was a zoologist gifted in anatomical work, who undertook his doctoral research at a specialist London hospital, St. Paul's, and worked at the Harwell Atomic Energy Establishment during his period of national service. There he tested the effect of radiation on goats: a 'ghastly' business which helped turn him into a pacifist and, later, a member of the Society of Friends. In 1962 he took up a lecturing post at Wye College, in the poultry research section, which led to him writing his *magnum opus*, *The histology of the fowl* (1974). He also worked on intensive poultry research; he did not entirely regret this, as it opened his eyes to what was happening in the world of industrial food production. This experience, plus reading Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, sparked an interest in the changes being brought about by intensification, and their detrimental effects on the environment and the animal kingdom. Hodges' response was both intuitive and intellectual: he was convinced that the industrial approach was morally wrong and that in practical terms it would generate more problems than it would solve. Although he did not join the Soil Association until 1973, he was sympathetic to its work from the mid-1960s onwards and was regarded as eccentric by his colleagues for being so. In his view, agricultural

[21] Interview with Dr Deavin, 6 Apr. 2005.

chemistry and, especially, agricultural economics, were distorting the nature of farming. Together, these disciplines treated a complex biological system as a sort of factory floor from which products were turned out conveyor-belt fashion.[22]

Hodges came to know Cdr. Noel Findlay, who since 1949 had farmed organically at Hastingleigh, near Wye. Findlay persuaded Hodges to support him in a televised debate on organic farming, which was followed by a debate between Hodges and an agricultural officer from ADAS. Hodges was also in demand with the Soil Association, being persuaded to stand for its Council, on which he served from 1976 to 1993. Following the inter-generational upheavals of the early 1980s, he became a member of the *Soil Association Quarterly Review*'s editorial board and regularly contributed a column of technical abstracts summarizing relevant research, as well as writing book reviews and articles, these latter chiefly on soil.[23] With Charles Arden-Clarke, he produced a detailed review for the Soil Association titled *Soil Erosion in Britain* (1986). In addition to his full-time job and his Soil Association work, Hodges – a keen gardener – was a member of the HDRA Council from 1982 to 1994, and from 1975 until 1987 was prominent in the IIBH, working as a colleague of its founder David Stickland. It should be clear from these facts that Hodges was at the heart of the organic movement for a considerable period. Before we look at Hodges' contribution to the activities of the IIBH, a word about David Stickland is essential.

One of the most controversial figures in the history of the British organic movement, David Stickland (1930–2010) trained on a dairy farm in Oxfordshire, worked for Dunn's Farm Seeds and then gained further commercial experience with East Kent Packers, a large (non-organic) co-operative dealing in fruit. Wanting to farm again, he emigrated to New Zealand in 1961, taking up organic dairying and vegetable growing. His support for the organic approach was the result of reading the work of Frank Newman Turner (1913–1964), a Somerset farmer, journalist and pioneer of organic co-operatives. Stickland had a tough time in New Zealand and moved on to the Canadian province of British Columbia. He worked for farm co-operatives and established a journal, *Canadian Agriculture and Horticulture*, in the face of considerable hostility from the agricultural chemical companies. This editorial experience served him well when he returned to England in the early 1970s and made contact with the Soil Association, which was seeking a new editor for its journal. (Formerly *Mother Earth*, the journal had been re-named the *Journal of the Soil Association* in the late 1960s.) Stickland took over in the winter of 1972–73, re-designed the journal and made it more relevant to those in the business of producing and marketing organic goods. He was also strongly supportive of the

[22] Interview with Dr Hodges, 17 June 2008.

[23] During the early 1980s, a younger generation of organic activists, impatient with what they saw as the cosy ineffectiveness of their elders in the Soil Association, staged what amounted to a coup, dominating the Association's Council and seizing control of the quarterly journal, which they made more visually striking, aggressively campaigning and generally informative. Prominent in this group were Francis Blake (West Country grower), Patrick Holden (West Wales farmer and later the Association's Director), Ginny Mayall (grand-daughter of Shropshire farmer Sam Mayall), Peter Segger (West Wales grower and entrepreneur), Charles and Carolyn Wacher (West Wales growers), Lawrence Woodward (Director of the Elm Farm Research Centre in Berkshire) and Richard Young (Cotswold farmer). One of their chief concerns was the effective marketing of organic produce, but the quarterly journal also gave considerable coverage to environmental and scientific issues.

Association's co-operative marketing initiative Organic Farmers and Growers Ltd (OFG). There is much obscurity and debate about the exact nature of events, but by 1975 Stickland had left the Soil Association and was running OFG as his own enterprise, provoking a resentment that lasted for many years in certain quarters. During his time at the Soil Association, Stickland, an energetic and ambitious man, began to develop the idea of the IIBH.[24]

Stickland preferred the term 'biological' to 'organic' because of the associations of crankiness he believed the latter term carried; but for our purposes here the two terms can be regarded as interchangeable. He had grown tired of being an object of mockery or hostility on account of his support for organic methods, and wanted to make a case for them as both scientifically respectable and practically efficacious. He approached David Hodges in June 1974, writing from Haughley to ask him help arrange a meeting with potential members of a Research Committee.[25] The Committee's first meeting was held on 24 September that year; in addition to Stickland and Hodges it was attended by Gray and Biddlestone, Deavin, Dr Bernard Stonehouse of Bradford University, and L. P. Brunt, an engineer who was an authority on municipal composting. It was agreed that the Committee would be 'under the auspices of the Biological Farmers and Growers Ltd. [sic]', so that it could be 'geared to practical farming'. 'It is quite obvious', the meeting's minutes declared, 'that there is a tremendous amount of work to do in practical and theoretical research', and that this should involve international co-operation. Stickland invited his colleagues to submit articles on the scientific aspects of biological husbandry for publication in the *Journal of the Soil Association*. Hodges was concerned – with reason – that the IIBH's establishment would cause friction, but believed that the risk must be taken.[26]

Stickland was in any case soon to leave the Association and, during 1975, he was busy establishing OFG and the IIBH, though both bodies featured prominent Soil Association members on their boards. The latter's first management meeting was held in December 1975, with Stickland as Director. The founder members were Hodges, Deavin, Stonehouse, R. Chetwynd, J. Miller, George McRobie (a close associate of E. F. Schumacher) and Hugh Coates, a farmer and miller who played an important role in the Soil Association, OFG and other organic bodies. Hodges, Deavin and Stonehouse were asked to collaborate on preparing a journal to circulate amongst prospective scientific members; along with Ken Gray, they formed the editorial committee. It was to be some time before the journal materialized, and we shall look at Hodges' work on it later.

Hodges and Deavin drafted a statement of the Institute's aims, which was published in a brochure in 1976. The body's purpose was 'to bring together all scientists and others throughout the world who are interested in Biological Husbandry … and by mutual discussion, study, communication and promotion of research, to raise the level of credibility of biological methods of farming to that of orthodox agriculture'. The particular objectives were to set up channels of communication and to act as a centre 'for the collection, classification, storage and

[24] Interview with David Stickland, 8 Nov. 2007.

[25] HP, Letter, Stickland to Hodges, 19 June 1974.

[26] HP, Minutes of meeting, 24 Sept. 1974. A letter to Hodges from A. W. Vickers, General Secretary of the Soil Association, dated 28 Sept. 1976 (also in HP), says that the IIBH was set up 'surreptitiously' in circumstances 'offensive' to the Association.

dissemination of literature and information on all aspects of Biological Husbandry'. (These aims are in fact substantially the same as those of the Soil Association, given earlier.) Hodges and Deavin noted that biological husbandry had been unable to mount research projects 'to obtain information and to solve the problems which are constantly arising in any system of agriculture'. The Institute intended to liaise with government institutions, universities and private research organizations to develop integrated research programmes and would give 'considerable priority' to work in the Developing Countries.[27]

In May 1976, the Board meeting could report that the Institute's preliminary advertising had aroused substantial interest and attracted various offers of support. In order that the Institute should be seen to be making a more public impact, it organized an inaugural lecture at Agriculture House, Knightsbridge in London, on 24 March 1977. This was given by Dr Tilo Ulbricht of the Agricultural Research Council on the topic: 'Western thought, farming systems and the world food problem'. The attendance was apparently somewhat disappointing, but the occasion gained sympathetic coverage from *Times* journalist Hugh Clayton, who believed that the ideas of organic farming were 'being taken more seriously', and pointed out that as the movement had little money, it 'had little opportunity to demonstrate its usefulness through research'. Another important event that month was the IIBH day conference that Ken Gray organized at Birmingham University, on the theme of 'A more biological approach to agriculture and horticulture in Europe'. Speakers included Charles Aubert of the French organicist organization, Nature et Progrès, and Dr Hartmut Vogtmann. In November 1977, Hodges addressed an international conference on 'Granular Fertilizers and Their Production', organized by the British Sulphur Corporation, and boldly asked delegates, 'Who needs inorganic fertilizers anyway?' He brought forward scientific evidence that biological agriculture was fully capable of competing with orthodox agriculture in productivity. Although Hodges felt like Daniel in the lions' den, his lecture was treated with respect, and the conference organizer Alexander More wrote to congratulate him on his 'admirable and most important contribution'.[28]

By the early summer of 1977, the IIBH had forged links with the Centre for Agricultural Strategy at Reading University; with Dr Nigel Scopes, an authority on biological pest control at the Glasshouse Crops Research Institute in West Sussex; and, through Hodges, with the Department of Soil Science at Wye College. A draft report on the first AGM, held on 31 May 1977, recorded that the Board of Management was looking at 'the possibility of a scientific meeting of a higher calibre than normal in the organic movement to try and initiate research into solving some of the major problems of biological farmers'. At the same time that the Institute was making progress in attracting scientific support, though, there were appearing signs of the tensions which would, much later, lead to Hodges resigning from the Institute's work. Stickland was developing an 'alternative' organic standard for OFG, and thought that the Institute's proposed Scientific Committee might prove invaluable for recommending 'products that could be used for the alternative grade'.[29] It might also come up with ideas for projects that could be financed by, for instance, the Agricultural Research Council.

[27] HP, *The International Institute of Biological Husbandry* (1976), p. 7.

[28] HP, Alexander More to Hodges, 23 Nov. 1977.

[29] HP, Minutes of IIBH Board meeting, 13 Sept. 1977.

Hodges undertook to organize the formation of the Committee in the autumn of 1977. In a letter to Ken Gray, he wrote that he saw its remit as giving scientific advice to OFG; liaising with other scientific organizations; initiating and overseeing research projects, and publishing the results of the IIBH's work. Hodges invited various people to join the Committee, including Gray, Deavin and the horticulturalist Lawrence Hills (1911–90). In his correspondence with Hodges, Hills expressed his support for the Institute's approach and, like many of the movement's critics, deplored its 'semi-occult' elements, which in his view were 'increasing all the time'. He hoped that the Committee would secure some concrete achievements of value to organic farmers. There needed to be 'straight organic and inorganic experiments'. The work at Haughley, he believed, had ended up by becoming increasingly irrelevant as it drifted further and further from actual farm practice.[30]

Hodges, too, was concerned by the Soil Association's 'cranky fringe'. In a letter to Mr. G. Williams, a Cornish farmer, he wrote that this fringe had led to the Association as a whole having 'a poor image in scientific circles'. The IIBH had therefore decided to take 'a truly scientific approach … and to steer clear of any statements which [were] not … scientifically verifiable'. Hodges considered this the only way to convince the opposition that the organic movement had a case, and he believed that the case had to be made by 'a truly scientific organization completely divorced from any taint of crankiness'. He wanted to fight vested interests on their own ground, 'that of logical, scientific proof'.[31]

The Institute continued to make slow but steady progress. Its second Annual Lecture was given on 25 May 1978 by Dr G. R. Potts, Director of Research at the Game Conservancy, who examined the effects of chemicals on ecosystems. This meeting was chaired by Sir Emrys Jones, Principal of the Royal Agricultural College – a fact that indicates that Stickland and Hodges were succeeding in forging links with establishment agriculturalists. By this time they also had the support of Dr Steve Lisansky, a research scientist with Tate and Lyle. Lisansky wanted to make the Scientific Committee 'a conduit of information and questions between the scientific community and organic farmers'. David Astor had joined the Institute's Advisory Council, which provided another link with the world of orthodoxy: his brother Jacob was Chairman of the ARC from 1968 until 1978. As always, Stickland had plenty of projects in mind, including a plan for a Compost Research Centre and the publication of a practical handbook on biological agriculture. The Institute was also attracting overseas members: one of them, the Australian K. A. Handreck, was Scientific Assistant to the Chief of the Soils Division at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization.[32]

Perhaps the high point of the Institute's fortunes was its August 1980 conference, 'An agriculture for the future', which was organized by David Hodges and held at Wye College. The promotional material proclaimed it 'the first of its kind in Britain', consisting of reviews 'by recognized authorities of many aspects of agriculture and horticulture in which scientific comparisons of conventional and biological methods will be made'. It was hoped that the conference would accelerate the process by which biological methods of husbandry would replace the more expensive and unsustainable techniques of intensive agriculture. Hodges

[30] HP, Hodges to Gray, 4 Nov. 1977, Hills to Hodges, 10 Nov. 1977, 17 Nov. 1977 and 13 Apr. 1978.

[31] HP, Hodges to G. Williams, 18 July 1977.

[32] HP, IIBH newsletter, Aug. 1978, p. 2; July 1979, p. 2.

pointed out that Wye College was a suitable venue for such an event, as Sir Albert Howard had once been a member of staff there, and the college was pursuing studies in compost science thanks to the support of Dr W. E. Shewell-Cooper, a Wye graduate and a leading exponent of organic horticulture. Wye was also involved in other projects relevant to the development of biological husbandry, including the investigation of biological pest control, examination of soil structures after the use of artificial fertilizers, and stimulation of legume root nodulation to reduce the use of nitrogen fertilizers. Hodges hoped that Wye College would play 'a major role in assessing in an objective and scientific manner the role of biological husbandry in tomorrow's agriculture'.[33]

Hodges, who gave the keynote lecture at the conference, lined up an impressive array of speakers: among them were Stewart, Gray and Biddlestone, Deavin, Scopes, Lisansky, Ulbricht, the soil scientist Professor R. P. Moss, and Professor Colin Spedding of Reading University. Although not a supporter of the organic movement, Spedding was, like Biddlestone, particularly interested in how systems operated, and considered biological husbandry a worthwhile subject of study. The topics covered included soil-plant relationships, composting, biological pest control, a comparison of biological and orthodox growing under glass (by the leading tomato grower Douglas Blair), energy utilization, and Third World conditions. There was even a case made for the judicious use of agro-chemicals in biological husbandry.

Hodges received warm congratulations for all his efforts from an unlikely source: this was G. W. Cooke of Rothamsted and the Agricultural Research Council, who was a long-term opponent of the organic movement. But he was impressed by what he experienced at the Wye College conference, and wrote to Hodges to tell him so. 'I found the whole of the meetings to be very useful indeed. The subject matter of many of the papers was new to me; others, on topics I am more familiar with, were excellent reviews. I was glad to meet so many who are concerned with agriculture's future, here and overseas'. Cooke displayed, in other words, the open-mindedness that should be a scientist's hallmark.[34]

In September 1984, the IIBH held its second conference, also at Wye: this was on 'The role of micro-organisms in a sustainable agriculture'. Hodges organized the event with his colleagues Dr Joe Lopez-Real and Dr Tony Scofield, and drew speakers from the USA, Canada, Egypt, Russia, Brazil and Australia, among other countries. The conference started from the premise that developing nations, with limited access to high-energy inputs for producing food and fibre, needed to ensure that traditional biological methods of agriculture and horticulture were as effective as possible. The preliminary announcement for the conference stated that the IIBH was sponsoring the event because it recognized the central role of micro-organisms in non-chemical systems and wished 'to bring together research workers actively engaged in agricultural microbiology to discuss the future role that micro-organisms will play in a less energy-intensive and more sustainable agriculture and horticulture'. The papers presented dealt, for instance, with the microbiology of soil structure, the function of mycorrhiza, disease control through beneficial micro-organisms, and nitrogen fixation in sustainable agriculture.[35]

[33] HP, IIBH leaflet, 'An Agriculture for the Future' (1980).

[34] HP, Cooke to Hodges, 1 Sept. 1980.

[35] HP, IIBH pamphlet listing papers for conference.

Three years later, Hodges was involved in arranging an even more ambitious conference, this time at the University of Reading; but it was never held, and the circumstances of its cancellation were one of the major factors in the collapse of the IIBH a few months later, in the spring of 1987. Hodges' papers throw considerable light on the various disagreements and tensions that brought about the Institute's demise, but these are not our concern here. The important point to note is the continued commitment of the Institute's Scientific Committee to making a reasoned case in favour of organic cultivation. In association with Reading's Centre for Agricultural Strategy, the IIBH announced an international conference on 'Effective farming systems': that is, systems which were effective biologically (maintaining soil fertility); economically (ensuring farmers reasonable prosperity); technically; with regard to energy (increasing yield on energy input); environmentally (enhancing the quality of the landscape); socially (with reference to human considerations in the rural sector), and in other respects. The conference would have included, for the first time in the UK, an exhibition of commercial products, equipment and services relevant to biological husbandry, the purpose of which was to emphasise that biological alternatives to chemical agriculture already represented a significant agricultural effort, and that they were supported by a growing range of technical inputs. Sessions on advances in relevant applied research were timetabled.

Hodges invited Dr G. F. Wilson to be the keynote speaker at the conference. Wilson, an agronomist at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture in Nigeria, swiftly accepted the offer, promising to 'endeavour to maintain the high standards of the [IIBH]'.[36] Wilson's fellow speaker on the theme of biological effectiveness was to have been Sir Henry Plumb, former President of the National Farmers' Union; while Professor Colin Spedding was due to address the conference on energy effectiveness.

The surviving correspondence among Hodges' papers indicates that a failure in publicizing and promoting the conference resulted in a disappointing response; as a result, the conference had to be cancelled at short notice. This was a bitter disappointment to Hodges, who blamed Stickland for taking on too many projects and not giving them the attention they demanded. Stickland resigned as Chairman of the Institute, evidently piqued by various criticisms of his management, and the organization disintegrated amid a welter of recriminations and legal complexities.[37]

Both Hodges and Dr Lisansky were dissatisfied on scientific grounds with Stickland's approach, having become increasingly unhappy about the extent to which the Scientific Committee was being used to work on the intermediate, or 'Conservation' grade of commercial grain which Stickland had developed for OFG. Hodges had resigned as Scientific Director of the Institute in the summer of 1985.[38] With twenty years' hindsight, he felt that Stickland had

[36] HP, Wilson to Hodges, 18 Feb. 1986.

[37] Hodges believes that Stickland was hard hit by the failure of the Reading conference, though at the time of the cancellation he did not, as Hodges recalls, communicate directly with Hodges and his fellow-organizers. 'Cracks had been appearing in the IIBH over the previous year or so and I feel that he had hoped that a successful conference would be a feather in his cap … Unfortunately the warnings that the conference organization was falling further and further behind as the deadline appeared fell on deaf ears, and the final outcome must have come as a considerable blow to him.' (E-mail from David Hodges to the author, 21 Aug. 2011.)

[38] A document among Hodges' papers on 'Responsibilities of Members of the Board of Management of the

simply over-reached himself. As late as March 1986, Stickland was proposing a large-scale organic farm research project (shades of the Haughley Experiment), drawing on a variety of scientific disciplines and involving the farms at Reading University and Wye College.[39] The aim would have been to examine ways of improving organic farming, both economically and in terms of crop yields. Nothing came of it, but the urge to lend scientific respectability to organic methods still persisted.

IV

One indirect offshoot of the IIBH long outlived the Institute itself: this was the journal *Biological Agriculture and Horticulture* (*BAH*), which has survived for nearly thirty years and which owed its establishment and early survival to David Hodges, its editor for thirteen years from its inception in 1982. David Stickland had intended from the beginning of the Institute's existence to establish a scientific journal, but it was not until 1980 that the idea began to take practical shape. Hodges had placed in *The Ecologist* an advertisement for the 1980 conference, which was seen by J. F. Burnett of A B Academic Publishers (ABA). Burnett already published the journal *Environmental Studies* and was interested in publishing the conference proceedings. He had recently discussed with Edward Goldsmith, editor of *The Ecologist*, ideas for an international journal in the field of agricultural education, with specific reference to biological agriculture. Hodges was already negotiating with the publishers Butterworth about the conference proceedings, but was interested in the journal proposal, and Burnett visited him at Wye College in February 1980. Burnett saw the need for 'a sound academic journal in the field of Biological Agriculture and Horticulture', and Hodges agreed that 'the scientific integrity of the journal must always be paramount over all other considerations', insisting that he would rather postpone an issue than include second-rate material.[40]

The board of the IIBH was keen to be responsible for the project, with the journal's editorial staff drawn from the Institute's membership to ensure full editorial control. The publication would be called *Biological Agriculture and Horticulture: An International Journal. The Official Journal of the IIBH.* In the event, the connection with the IIBH soon became 'relatively tenuous', as all the work on the journal was undertaken at Wye College by Hodges and his deputy editors Tony Scofield and Joe Lopez-Real. Much the greatest burden fell on Hodges, who years later described the journal as a one-man band.[41]

Note 38 *continued*
IIBH', undated, but attached to minutes of the Board's meeting of 20 Sept. 1984, says that Dr Lisansky should be in charge of the Scientific Committee, and that anything the Institute did with the scientific side of pure Organic or Conservation Grade must be correctly carried out. Hodges' papers also include material on the Conservation Grade crops, including a letter from Hodges to Stickland (7 Feb. 1984), which is quite critical of Stickland's approach. The minutes of the Board of Management meeting on 20 June 1985 indicate Hodges' resignation as Scientific Director because he could not reconcile having to support the Conservation Grade while supporting pure organic in other associations (i.e. the Soil Association and the Henry Doubleday Research Association).

[39] The minutes of the Board of Management meeting for 19 Mar. 1986 include discussion of David Stickland's proposal for this project.

[40] HP, J. F. Burnett to Hodges, 4 Feb. 1980, 15 Feb. 1980; Hodges to Burnett, 30 Apr. 1980.

[41] HP, Hodges to Ena Adam, 20 May 1983. Interview with David Hodges, 17 June 2008.

Hodges rapidly recruited members of an international advisory board, including scientists from the USA, New Zealand, Australia, Brazil, West Germany and Nigeria, and put out a leaflet calling for papers. *BAH*, said the leaflet, was 'the first scientific journal to focus on the development of biological husbandry as a viable form of agriculture'. It aimed to publish 'work of a sound scientific or economic nature in the form of original research reports, review papers, and reports of trials and experience' in both temperate and tropical conditions. The first issue of *BAH* was eventually published in December 1982, and in September 1984 the scientific journal *Nature* monitored the journal's early progress. In his review, Professor Leonard Broadbent reflected that *BAH*'s aim of raising the credibility of biological systems reflected sadly on the 'blinkered outlook of so many "academic" scientists'. He also noted the tendency of supporters of eco-agriculture to 'peddle prejudice as solid scientific fact', and warned the editors of *BAH* against this danger; but he described the advisory board as 'prestigious' and saw ample opportunity for *BAH* to improve its standing among agronomists and other scientists.[42]

Broadbent was more optimistic about the journal's prospects than Dr Tilo Ulbricht had originally been. In correspondence with Hodges during the autumn of 1980, Ulbricht expressed his view that the proposed journal would be a waste of time, because only the already converted would read it. Implicitly damning orthodox agricultural scientists for their narrow-mindedness, he said that they would 'quite unfairly doubt that the same standards of refereeing [would] be applied as in recognized scientific journals'. Ulbricht changed his mind about the journal's viability, but his employers proved his view of orthodox agricultural scientists correct by refusing to allow him to join the journal's editorial advisory board. Dr Ralph Riley, the ARC's Secretary, wrote in supercilious fashion to Hodges: 'I believe that Dr Ulbricht's relationships with the many people with whom the Agricultural Research Council has to deal would be best served were he not to be associated with your journal'.[43]

Surviving correspondence about *BAH* among Hodges' papers reinforces the view that the organic movement contained a strongly pro-scientific tendency. We can take just two examples. First, Willie Lockeretz, an American agricultural scientist with a Harvard doctorate in physics, supported Hodges' rigorous approach to material submitted for *BAH*, writing of 'the problem of scientific acceptability' that had 'plagued' investigation of organic agriculture. Secondly, Dr James Coombs, an expert on biomass and biotechnology with wide experience of both the academic and the commercial world, had resigned from the IIBH in 1983 because he felt that David Stickland's claims for his intermediate grade of produce were not scientifically substantiated. Coombs wanted to see 'an active farm, run in a scientific way, carrying out objective trials, with results substantiated and then published in reliable journals such as *BAH*'.[44]

On account of various legal niceties, *BAH*'s survival was unaffected by the collapse of the IIBH in 1987, and Hodges took advantage of the Institute's demise to make changes to the journal's editorial board, asking some members to stand down, and bringing in new figures like Dr Nic Lampkin of Aberystwyth, who had become prominent in the organic movement

[42] *Nature*, 27 Sept. 1984, p. 317.

[43] HP, Ulbricht to Hodges, 14 Nov. 1980; Riley to Hodges, 23 Jan. 1981.

[44] HP, W. Lockeretz to Hodges, 2 May 1980; J. Coombs to Hodges, 30 Oct. 1983.

by the mid-1980s. The journal had gained an international reputation, and Hodges was able to create an editorial board that included agricultural scientists from Switzerland, France, Germany, India and Japan. From Pennsylvania State University, Patrick Madden, Professor of Agricultural Economics, wrote to Hodges praising the 'superb quality' of the journal. In addition to articles on agricultural science, *BAH* occasionally published pieces on the philosophy and history of biological agriculture and horticulture. Hodges was also open to articles critical of organic cultivation, provided that they were based on sound data, and he considered that there was much of value to be found in 'conventional' agricultural journals, which should be referred to and discussed in *BAH*.[45]

Hodges' achievement in establishing the journal and keeping it afloat for thirteen years was remarkable, the effort involved being not just mental and physical, but emotional. Pursuing the cause of organic agriculture meant treading a lonely path, but Hodges proved himself resilient and also a shrewd academic politician, carrying out his work for the organic movement without jeopardising his post at Wye. He resigned as editor of *BAH* in 1995, and from all active involvement in the organic movement, having devoted more than twenty years to it.[46]

V

To study the contribution David Hodges made to the organic movement from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s is to realize that the movement's early interest in science did not evaporate with the passing of the pioneers. Plenty more evidence could be adduced from elsewhere: we have not touched here on another long-term and still-surviving initiative, the Elm Farm Research Centre (now the Organic Research Centre) at Hamstead Marshall in Berkshire, founded in 1980 with the support of David Astor and with Lawrence Woodward as Director. The Soil Association's quarterly journal was very different in the 1980s from its present-day consumerist incarnation; there were regular contributions from David Hodges and from Nigel Dudley, an ecologist and authority on pesticides. Hodges, Dr Ken Gray, Dr Norman Burman and Dr Victor Stewart have all expressed their disappointment at the way in which the scientific case for organic husbandry has been eclipsed by an emphasis on campaigning and marketing.

One also gains from Hodges' papers the sense that orthodox agricultural scientists may not always be as dispassionate as they like the public to imagine. It is not clear, otherwise, why Hodges and Scofield had to tread so carefully in their dealings with the Principal of Wye

[45] HP, P. Madden to Hodges, 12 June 1987; Hodges to D. Bourgeois, 7 Nov. 1980; Hodges and Tony Scofield to Prof. J. D. van Mansvelt, 16 Sept. 1983.

[46] Hodges resigned for two main reasons. Firstly, he believed that the organic movement needed a degree of evolution if it was not to stagnate. Younger blood and new ideas are essential for any movement to remain fresh, and older figures should make way. Secondly, he did not have a strong constitution and was feeling the strain of his many commitments: in the organic movement alone, these included the Soil Association, the IIBH, *Biological Agriculture and Horticulture*, the Henry Doubleday Research Association and the British Organic Standards Committee. His intuition that he was overdoing things proved justified when he was diagnosed with heart disease. Hodges believes that the agricultural and environmental developments of the past 16 years make the need for an organic, sustainable approach to food production more urgent than ever. (E-mail from David Hodges to the author, 21 Aug. 2011.)

College, or Burman with his colleagues at the Metropolitan Water Board; or why the Secretary to the ARC felt he had the right to rebuke Hodges so loftily on the matter of Dr Ulbricht's possible involvement with *BAH*.

The fact is that the organic movement has never commanded the financial resources to undertake scientific experiments on anything remotely like the scale of conventional, technological, chemically reliant agriculture. In 1978 Hodges expressed the problem as follows:

> [It was] essential that an objective examination of the merits and de-merits of both systems [i.e. biological and orthodox/chemical] should be made. Such a comparative examination could only be undertaken on the basis of an extensive programme of research, and so far no serious attempt has been made by official, semi-official or corporate bodies to consider a programme of this nature.

Hodges was left to wonder what progress organic agriculture would have made if only a fraction of agribusiness resources had been made available to it.[47] More than thirty years later, his call for thorough scientific investigation remains unanswered.

[47] R. D. Hodges, *Who needs inorganic fertilizers anyway?* (1978), unpaginated but p. 20 (copy in HP).

Demesne lordship and rural society in early modern East Central and Eastern Europe, *c*.1500–*c*.1800

Edited by Markus Cerman and Richard Hoyle

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Demesne lordship and rural society in early modern East Central and Eastern Europe: comparative perspectives

by Markus Cerman

Abstract

The original concept of East-Elbian 'demesne lordship' (*Gutsherrschaft*), coined more than a century ago, provided the basis for later interpretations that assumed the existence of a fundamental divide between the early modern agrarian systems of Western and Eastern Europe. Within this 'agrarian dualism', East Central and Eastern Europe became associated with the rise of a commercial demesne economy and a strengthening of landlord powers over the rural population. While not ignoring the negative consequences of demesne lordship, recent approaches deal with the experience of lordship at the village level and point to the variety of agrarian structures within East Central and Eastern Europe. The results challenge traditional images of a general imposition of a 'second serfdom' and long-term economic stagnation and backwardness. The research focus has recently shifted to a reassessment of the social and legal conditions of the villagers and of the performance of the demesne and the tenant economic sectors in a comparative European perspective, casting further doubt on the existence of uniform 'agrarian systems' and 'agrarian dualism'.

New approaches to European rural history have resulted in a revived interest in the phenomenon of early modern East Central and Eastern European rural societies that in English used to be called 'second serfdom'. The use of this term in English-language studies has recently been challenged as a misnomer. By contrast, most historical writing in Central and Eastern Europe abandoned the idea of a uniform agrarian system in the early modern period and its characterization as 'serfdom' quite some time ago, tentatively in the 1970s and decisively, after a paradigmatic shift of research, in the early 1990s.

Originally, the theory of 'demesne lordship' (which may serve as an approximate translation for the terms used elsewhere: German *Gutsherrschaft*, Czech *velkostatek*, Polish *ustróy folwarczno-pańszczyźniany*) assumed a set of rural institutions that set apart forms of lordship in these areas from the ancien régime types of the seigneurial system in Central, Western and Southern Europe which were primarily based on the extraction of cash rents. Legally and socially, demesne lordship was associated with strong landlord rights, including elements of jurisdiction, which were used to impose restrictions on tenant mobility, to undermine tenant property rights and to exploit villagers in terms of rents and market monopolies. Economically, it was marked by the rise of a commercial demesne economy of directly managed farms and

other enterprises such as seigneurial breweries or distilleries. Demesne farming is particularly associated with the existence and use of high labour rents (corvée, forced labour services), which tenant farmers, smallholders and cottagers were obliged to supply.

None of these features has remained exempt from qualification and revision by the detailed empirical research undertaken since the mid-1980s and, particularly, the 1990s. This is also illustrated by the articles that follow. As relatively little of this more recent research by Czech, Danish, Estonian, German, Hungarian, Polish, Russian and Swedish historians, all of which questions the existence of a uniform system of demesne lordship, has entered either English-language historical syntheses of European History or specialized studies of (Western) European rural history (despite the availability of excellent, well-informed English-language surveys and first-hand empirical research[1]), some of the following pages are devoted to outlining the major challenges to traditional understanding that have emerged from this research. This survey then sets the context for a discussion of the conclusions of the individual case studies published in this part of the *Review*.[2]

I

Ever since the term 'demesne lordship' (*Gutsherrschaft*) was coined by Georg Friedrich Knapp in 1887 to explain the differences in agricultural patterns in the nineteenth-century German Empire,[3] it has been used to describe the specific seigneurial regime emerging in East Central and Eastern Europe during the later middle ages and the early modern period. In later studies, the approximate border line of demesne lordship along the river Elbe became associated with a more general European 'agrarian dualism', backed in rare unanimity by such diverse historical approaches as German writing on the 'agrarian constitution' after 1945, world-system theories of development and 'underdevelopment', or theories focusing on social property relations, by Malthusian, Marxist and Smithian readings of European pre-modern economic history alike. Pending further research on this phenomenon, this

[1] See W. W. Hagen, 'How mighty the Junkers? Peasant rents and seigneurial profits in sixteenth-century Brandenburg', *Past and Present* 108 (1985), pp. 80–116; id., 'Seventeenth-century crisis in Brandenburg: the Thirty Years' War, the destabilization of serfdom, and the rise of absolutism', *American Historical Rev.* 94 (1989), pp. 302–35; id., 'Village life in East-Elbian Germany and Poland, 1400–1800: subjection, self-defence, survival', in T. Scott (ed.), *The peasantries of Europe, from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries* (1998), pp. 145–89; id., *Ordinary Prussians. Brandenburg Junkers and Villagers, 1500–1840* (2002); E. Melton, 'Gutsherrschaft in East Elbian Germany and in Livonia, 1500–1800: a critique of the model', *Central European Hist.* 21 (1988), pp. 315–49.

[2] The papers were originally contributions to a session entitled 'The development of the rural economy and the 'demesne lordship' (*Gutsherrschaft*): East-central Europe, *c.*1500–*c.*1800' presented at the XVth World Economic History Congress at the University of Utrecht in 2009. The author is indebted the editors of the *Agricultural History Review* for the opportunity to publish this collection and in particular wishes to thank Richard Hoyle for his generous support. Three further contributions to the session, organized by Markus Cerman and William W. Hagen, are not included in this collection. Two authors withdrew and C. P. Rasmussen's paper was published as 'Innovative feudalism. *Gutsherrschaft* and *Koppelwirtschaft* in Schleswig-Holstein in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', *AgHR* 58 (2010), pp. 172–90. Publication was made possible thanks to the financial support of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research and the Scouloudi Foundation.

[3] G. F. Knapp, *Die Bauernbefreiung und der Ursprung der Landarbeiter in den älteren Teilen Preußens* (2 vols, 1887).

agreement may well have fitted the contemporary Iron Curtain divide as a master narrative, because while criticism of the idea of a structural 'dualism' was latently present in Eastern European research undertaken after 1945 and was repeated explicitly in the 1970s and 1980s by, for instance, some East German authors,[4] the critique of dualism was only really taken up by Western researchers close to or after 1989.

There is no definite agreement about the factors causing the rise of demesne lordship during the later middle ages and after, although there is a broad understanding that lower population density and the effects of the late medieval crisis, the secular rise of grain prices during the sixteenth century and the relatively stronger position of noble Estates vis-à-vis territorial princes and towns (paired with lower levels of urbanization) were influential. Disagreement arises as to whether domestic developments or the rise of export markets for agricultural goods were of greater importance. While some areas such as Poland or Brandenburg participated as exporters in the emerging international grain market in the sixteenth century,[5] others, like the Czech Lands or Hungary, either did not, or exported goods not primarily associated with demesne farming. A comparative empirical approach does not only question the 'export hypothesis' but also reveals problems with regard to the other general factors mentioned. For instance, there were areas and territories in East Central Europe such as Lower Silesia, Upper Lusatia, Bohemia, Moravia and areas of Little Poland in which there was a dense urban network, rates of urbanization were high and population density approached Western European levels. These characteristics could not prevent the establishment of demesne lordship and of a demesne economy.[6]

Leaving aside, for reasons of brevity, older traditions of legal and territorial history, research on demesne lordship has been carried out almost continuously over the last 120 years. The concept of 'demesne lordship' consists of two separate features, first, the lordship aspect, i.e. the exercise of strong seigneurial rights over tenants and villagers, and secondly the 'demesne economy', the seigneurial involvement in managing farms often worked by tenant labour. Studies following the approach of 'agrarian constitution' have mainly concentrated on the first aspect, landlord power, and emphasized that aspect of demesne lordship over its commercial elements.[7] Alternative approaches emerged with the interest in economic, social and rural history in the Eastern European people's republics after 1945. Challenging the broadly Malthusian interpretations mainly interested in norms and types of landlordship, these schools concentrated on concrete empirical case studies and issues such as the development of social structure; the extent, organization and importance of the

[4] See G. Heitz, 'Wirtschafts- und sozialgeschichtliche Aspekte der "zweiten Leibeigenschaft"', in V. Zimanýi (ed.), *Studien zur deutschen und ungarischen Wirtschaftsentwicklung* (1985), pp. 43–51.

[5] For Poland see the contribution of Piotr Guzowski, pp. 312–27.

[6] For a more detailed discussion of theories explaining the rise of demesne lordship and their shortcomings see M. Cerman, 'Explaining the rise of the early modern demesne economy (*Gutswirtschaft*) in East-central Europe: a critique of existing models', presented at the annual conference of the Economic History Society, University of Warwick (2009). This will appear as ch. 3 in a textbook on the agrarian development in East-central and Eastern Europe: M. Cerman, *Villagers and lords in Eastern Europe, 1300–1800* (forthcoming).

[7] F. Lütge, *Geschichte der deutschen Agrarverfassung vom frühen Mittelalter bis zum 19. Jahrhundert* (1963); id., 'Grundherrschaft und Gutsherrschaft', *Handwörterbuch der Sozialwissenschaften*, (12 vols, 1959–65), IV, pp. 682–8; F. W. Henning, *Landwirtschaft und ländliche Gesellschaft in Deutschland* (1979).

commercial demesne economy, both for seigneurial income and economic development; levels of rents and levies; arable yields; tenant property rights and property transfer patterns; rural economic development; and on villagers' resistance and unrest, including everyday conflicts or 'lower forms' of class struggle. In a sense, the post-war schools in Eastern Europe were more interested in the economic consequences of demesne lordship than, for instance, those in West Germany, and so the economic, social and legal aspects of the villagers' situation received greater attention. Throughout there was still a tendency to understand them as victims of powerful social structures and forces rather than as active participants in shaping local conditions.[8]

Comparative efforts by Eastern European research also resulted in a rising awareness of greater regional differentiation in the model of demesne lordship.[9] Not everywhere in Eastern Europe, for instance, was a commercial demesne economy established to its fullest extent. It was found that there was considerable variation in the legal status or property rights of the villagers between individual territories. More attention was given to the economic elements of the system that could help to differentiate between individual manifestations of demesne lordship but also between demesne lordship and other types of seigneurial regimes mainly or purely based on the extraction of cash rents.

Despite a relatively undisputed understanding of the general characteristics of demesne lordship and the demesne economy, the different approaches disagree over the importance of its individual features. Four elements seem to be central to any characterization of demesne lordship in early modern East Central and Eastern Europe: (i) the existence of a commercial demesne economy under direct seigneurial management; (ii) the establishment of mobility restrictions for the rural population; (iii) the quality of villagers' property rights; and (iv) the existence of labour rents.[10]

[8] Cf., e.g., H. Harnisch and G. Heitz (eds), *Deutsche Agrargeschichte des Spätfeudalismus* (1986); G. Heckenast (ed.), *Aus der Geschichte der ostmitteleuropäischen Bauernbewegung im 16.–17. Jahrhundert* (1977); P. Horváth, *Poddaný l'ud na Slovensku v prvej polovici XVIII. storočia* (1963); St. Inglot (ed.), *Historia chłopów polskich* (2 vols, 1970), I; J. Kahk, *Peasant and lord in the process of transition from feudalism to capitalism in the Baltics* (1982); A. Klíma, *Manufakturní období v Čechách* (1955); A. Mączak, H. Samsonowicz and P. Burke (eds), *East-central Europe in transition. From the fourteenth to the seventeenth century* (1985); L. Makkai (ed.), *Jobbágytelek és parasztgazdaság az örökös jobbágyság kialakulásának korában* (1966); A. Míka, *Poddany lid v Čechách v první polovině 16. století* (1960); Zs. P. Pach, *Die ungarische Agrarentwicklung im 16.–17. Jahrhundert. Abbiegung vom westeuropäischen Entwicklungsgang* (1964); J. Petráň, *Poddany lid v Čechách na prahu třicetileté války* (1964); J. Varga, *Jobbágyrendszer a magyarországi feudalizmus kései századaiban, 1556–1767* (1969). For historiographical surveys see H. Kaak, *Die Gutsherrschaft. Theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Agrarwesen im ostelbischen Raum* (1991); M. Cerman, 'Agrardualismus in Europa? Geschichtsschreibung über Gutsherrschaft und ländliche Gesellschaften in Mittel- und Osteuropa', *Jahrbuch für Geschichte des ländlichen Raumes* 1 (2004), pp. 12–29; Hagen, 'Village life'.

[9] H. Harnisch, 'Probleme einer Periodisierung und regionalen Typisierung der Gutsherrschaft im mitteleuropäischen Raum', *Jahrbuch für Geschichte des Feudalismus* 10 (1986), pp. 251–74; Heitz, 'Aspekte'; W. Rusiński, 'Some remarks on the differentiation of agrarian structure in East Central Europe from the 16th to 18th century', *Studia historiae oeconomicae* 13 (1978), pp. 83–95.

[10] H. Harnisch, 'Die Gutsherrschaft. Forschungsgeschichte, Entwicklungszusammenhänge und Strukturelemente', *Jahrbuch für Geschichte des Feudalismus* 9 (1985), pp. 189–240; R. Sundhaussen, 'Zur Wechselbeziehung zwischen frühneuzeitlichem Außenhandel und ökonomischer Rückständigkeit in Osteuropa. Eine Auseinandersetzung mit der Kolonialthese', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 9 (1983), pp. 544–63.

As this list already clearly shows, the existence of 'serfdom', or 'second serfdom' for that matter, was not constitutive of demesne lordship. In fact, most European historiographies now avoid the term in the context of the early modern rural history of East Central and Eastern Europe. Together with the rising awareness that demesne lordship did not represent a uniform 'agrarian structure' throughout the area, studies also made it clear that Eastern Europe was certainly not a homogenous area of a single '(second) serfdom'. Even so-called 'Marxist' approaches, which referred to the term first coined by Friedrich Engels in a letter to Karl Marx,[11] tended to question the applicability of the concept, although there were supporters as well. As a result, a rigid distinction prevails between the limited number of regions in which early modern serfdom occurred and all others where rural power relations were not characterized by personal bondage. Serfdom of the rural population developed during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century in the Duchies of Schleswig-Holstein (particularly in the south-eastern parts, where a commercial demesne economy was established), Mecklenburg, Pomerania and individual districts of the Electorate of Brandenburg (Uckermark, New Mark and the area of Cottbus).[12] With regard to the situation in Estonia, Livonia and Russia, where harsh manifestations of demesne lordship existed in certain regions, the status of the rural population as 'serfs' is questioned by some of the recent literature. For instance, by the time of peasant emancipation in Russia (1861), less than half of the rural male population lived in subjection on noble and church estates and only half of this group (i.e. less than a quarter of all village households in Russia) was obliged to render labour rents.[13] The fact that the practice of serfdom varied greatly over time adds a further objection to those authors who assume a general institutionalization. Serfdom, even where it was legally sanctioned, was not established by a single act and, once established, did not last unchanged until the agrarian reforms and peasant emancipation. On the contrary, serfdom was the result of a gradual development; it was only installed for a very limited period of time and underwent constant change in its concrete consequences.

In all the other Eastern European territories serfdom was never established. Instead, contemporary sources as well as modern historical studies use variants of the concept of 'subjection' (German *Untertänigkeit*; Czech/Slovak *poddanství*; Polish *poddaństwo*; Hungarian *jobbágyság*), which stresses that the relationship between demesne lord and villagers was primarily tenurial (i.e. based on the tenure of land and holdings, as in the west, and not on personal bondage).[14]

[11] K. Marx/F. Engels, *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: collected works*, (50 vols, 1975–2004), XLVI, p. 400; compare also XXXV, p. 706.

[12] J. Klußmann (ed.), *Leibeigenschaft. Bäuerliche Unfreiheit in der frühen Neuzeit* (2003).

[13] E. Melton, 'The Russian peasantries, 1450–1860', in Scott (ed.), *Peasantries of Europe*, pp. 227–66; id., 'Gutsherrschaft'; A. Stanziani, 'Serfs, slaves or wage earners? The legal status of labour in Russia from a comparative perspective, 17th–19th centuries', *J. Global History* 3 (2008), pp. 183–202. For Livonia see also L. Arbusow, 'Das Bauernrecht des sog. Budberg-Schraderschen Landrechtsentwurfs von 1740 in ursprünglicher Gestalt', *Mitteilungen aus der livländischen Geschichte* 25 (1937), pp. 377–404.

[14] L. Enders, *Die Uckermark. Geschichte einer kurmärkischen Landschaft* (1992); L. Enders, 'Brandenburg', in J. Klußmann (ed.), *Leibeigenschaft. Bäuerliche Unfreiheit in der frühen Neuzeit* (2003), pp. 40–62: 48; Hagen, *Ordinary Prussians*, pp. 36–7; Melton, 'Gutsherrschaft', p. 332; T. Scott, 'Wandel und Beharrung der Untertänigkeit. Die südwestdeutsche Leibherrschaft/Leibeigenschaft in komparativer Sicht', in M. Cerman and R. Luft (eds), *Untertanen, Herrschaft und Staat in Böhmen und im 'Alten Reich'* (2005), pp. 299–321.

Hence, the terms demesne lordship or subjection, as used by local historiographies, are far more appropriate than '(second) serfdom'. Due to some of the consequences of stronger forms of subjection, such as mobility restrictions, a clear distinction between a tenurial relationship and personal bondage is not always straightforward. Nevertheless, to confuse the two would be wrong. For instance, a comparative analysis shows that the introduction of mobility restrictions was not based on the understanding that the rural population was in personal bondage, but evolved out of the economic considerations of lords who were confronted with deserted farm holdings and the unpaid rent of villagers who left.[15]

II

Research in the past three decades has strengthened the doubts expressed in the historical schools of the former people's republics that Eastern European agrarian structure could be understood as a uniform system of rural repression and enserfment. A greater emphasis on aspects of the history of everyday life based on micro-historical approaches since the late 1980s has helped to re-evaluate the nature of demesne lordship and how it operated in a local context. Studies identified and addressed aspects of the independent decision-making by villagers and their institutions that were formerly all but ignored due to the assumption of a general oppression by the seigneurial powers. The drive of empirical case studies since the 1950s to investigate the actual economic organization of the demesne economy and the development of the demesne and subject economy, that is, to question the image derived from normative sources only, has been continued and now includes a much greater consideration of social historical aspects.[16]

This new research has established that large 'full' tenant farm holdings, those of between 20 and 40 ha. of land (50 to 100 acres) or more, displayed a marked commercial orientation. It refutes the prevailing image of a wretched 'peasant economy' whose development was undermined by seigneurial intervention and exploitation, and instead emphasizes successful market participation.[17] Apart from the favourable development of grain markets, e.g. during the sixteenth or eighteenth centuries, long-term stagnation (and reduction in real terms) of

[15] See here the discussion in Cerman, *Villagers and lords*. For a survey of measures id., 'Venkovské společnosti a agrárně-dějepisecké tvoření modelů v nové perspektivě. Srovnávací analýza středo- a východoevropských agrárních struktur od 14. do 17. století', *Časopis Matice moravské* 120 (2001), pp. 337–95.

[16] Cerman, 'Agrardualismus'; M. Cerman and H. Zeitlhofer (eds), *Soziale Strukturen in Böhmen. Ein regionaler Vergleich von Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft in Gutsherrschaften, 16.–19. Jahrhundert* (2002); Hagen, 'Village life'; H. Kaak, 'Vom Erbzinsrecht zur Leibeigenschaft – Entstehung agrarischer Zwangsformen im frühneuzeitlichen Brandenburg', *Zeitschrift für Weltgeschichte* 8 (2007), pp. 71–103; Melton, 'Gutsherrschaft'; J. Peters (ed.), *Gutsherrschaft als soziales Modell. Vergleichende Betrachtungen zur Funktionsweise frühneuzeitlicher Agrargesellschaften* (1995) including his introduction, 'Gutsherrschaftsgeschichte in historisch-anthropologischer Perspektive', pp. 3–21; id. (ed.), *Gutsherrschaftsgesellschaften im europäischen Vergleich* (1997); id., 'Gutsherrschaftsgeschichte und kein Ende. Versuch einer Auskunft zu aktuellen Ergebnissen und Schwierigkeiten in der Forschung', in E. Münch and R. Schattkowsky (eds), *Festschrift für Gerhard Heitz zum 75. Geburtstag* (2000), pp. 53–80.

[17] Hagen, 'Village life'; H. Harnisch, 'Die Gutsherrschaft in Brandenburg. Ergebnisse und Probleme', *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 4 (1969), pp. 117–47, esp. pp. 125–6; Harnisch, 'Probleme', p. 266; Melton, 'Gutsherrschaft', pp. 341–9.

rents in cash and kind supported the economic position of tenant agriculture.[18] In several regions, successful proto-industrialization developed and was integrated into the demesne economy rather than being obstructed by it.[19] In addition, studies reveal other forms of highly successful livelihood diversification strategies, for instance, in those Russian regions less favourably placed for continuous agriculture,[20] or in participation in small-scale trade or commercial agricultural specialization.[21] The results of systematic research on the living standard of the rural population[22] not only undermine traditional assumptions but should encourage comparative approaches of rural history between Western and Eastern Europe on the lines of the general reflections in Hagen's paper in this issue. Existing studies comparing Western and Eastern European rent levels of the tenant agricultural sector have already brought to light surprising results that deserve a closer investigation.[23]

The assumption of a general 'backwardness' in Eastern European agriculture due to the establishment of demesne lordship determined that agricultural innovations were long overlooked or did not receive the level of attention necessary to call into question the overall idea. In more recent research, both demesne and tenant agriculture have been painted in a more favourable manner and found to reveal greater dynamism and innovation than previously thought. For one thing, demesne farming adapted to market conditions and often alternated between direct management and leasing. There is also a new interest in the professional

[18] Enders, *Uckermark*; P. Guzowski, *Chłopi i pieniądze na przełomie średniowiecza i czasów nowożytnych* (2008); Hagen, 'How mighty'; id., 'Village life'; id., *Ordinary Prussians*; H. Harnisch, *Bauern-Feudaladel-Städtebürgertum. Untersuchungen über die Zusammehänge zwischen Feudalrente, bäuerlicher und gutsherrlicher Warenproduktion und den Ware-Geld-Beziehungen in der Magdeburger Börde* (1980); id., 'Peasants and markets. The background of the agrarian reforms in feudal Prussia East of the Elbe', in R. J. Evans and W. R. Lee (eds), *The German peasantry. Conflict and community in rural society from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries* (1986), pp. 37–70; H. Kaak, *Eigenwillige Bauern, ehrgeizige Amtmänner, distanzierte fürstliche Dorfherren. Vermittelte Herrschaft im brandenburgischen Alt-Quilitz im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (2010), pp. 331–7; Melton, 'Gutsherrschaft', pp. 341–9; J. Peters, *Märkische Lebenswelten. Gesellschaftsgeschichte der Herrschaft Plattenburg-Wilsnack, Prignitz 1500–1800* (2007), pp. 231–51.

[19] M. Cerman, 'Gutsherrschaft und untertäniges Gewerbe: die Herrschaften Frýdlant und Liberec in Nordböhmen', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 47 (1999), pp. 2–19; id., 'The organization of production and trade in proto-industrial textile production in early modern East-central Europe. The role of seigneurial influence and sub-contracting', in F. de Guy and J. W. Veluwenkamp (eds), *Entrepreneurs and institutions in Europe and Asia, 1500–2000* (2002), pp. 215–36; K. Gestwa, *Proto-Industrialisierung in Rußland. Wirtschaft, Herrschaft und Kultur in Ivanovo und Pavlovo, 1741–1932* (1999); E. Melton, 'Population structure, the market economy, and the transformation of Gutsherrschaft in East Central Europe, 1650–1800. The cases of Brandenburg and Bohemia', *German Hist.* 16 (1998), pp. 297–327.

[20] E. Melton, 'Proto-industrialization, serf agriculture and agrarian social structure: two estates in nineteenth-century Russia', *Past and Present* 115 (1987), pp. 69–106; id., 'Russian peasantries'.

[21] Cf. the studies of Erich Landsteiner and Alexander Panjek in this issue.

[22] Cf. P. Guzowski, 'A changing economy: models of peasant budgets in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Poland', *Continuity and Change* 20 (2005), pp. 9–26; W. Hagen, 'Working for the Junker: the standard of living of manorial laborers in Brandenburg, 1584–1810', *J. Modern History* 58 (1986), pp. 143–58; id., 'How mighty'; id., 'Village life'; id., *Ordinary Prussians*; Melton, 'Gutsherrschaft'; D. Štefanová, 'Ökonomie der Altenteiler in einer gutsherrlichen Gesellschaft, Herrschaft Frýdlant 1558–1750', in S. Lesemann and A. Lubinski (eds), *Ländliche Ökonomien. Arbeit und Gesellung in der frühneuzeitlichen Agrargesellschaft* (2007), pp. 251–86.

[23] Guzowski, 'Changing economy'; F. W. Henning, *Dienste und Abgaben der Bauern im 18. Jahrhundert* (1969).

management of the demesne economy, which, at least for larger estates, emerged in the sixteenth century at the latest.[24] For instance, case studies of magnate estate complexes in Bohemia highlight the success of seigneurial investment in a commercially profitable demesne economy in the second half of the sixteenth century.[25] On the basis of his Brandenburg research, Hagen has identified two periods of demesne expansion, one extensive (in the sixteenth century), another intensive (in the eighteenth century), based on the adoption of new techniques, management practices and forms of operation that helped to lift the Brandenburg demesne and tenant agriculture to amongst the most productive in the area.[26] In sixteenth-century Schleswig-Holstein and early eighteenth-century Mecklenburg, demesne farming started a pronounced change of agricultural techniques and field systems by introducing convertible husbandry in the form of *Koppelwirtschaft*. Originally designed for the more dairy-oriented Holstein demesnes, the system was adapted to the more grain-based Mecklenburg environment and produced dramatically improved yields. From there it spread into Brandenburg during the eighteenth century in yet another form.[27] Apart from more systematic and partly state-led projects of agricultural reform and settlement expansion,[28] we know of many smaller measures, particularly on princely estates, to improve management practices and techniques in demesne farming. Their effects need to be studied in greater detail.[29]

The existence of labour rents (corvée) was one of the main justifications for generally declaring agriculture to be 'traditional' and 'backward' in regions of demesne lordship. Labour rents were identified as a serious burden for tenant agriculture, obstructing its development and, by their assumed lower productivity (which yet awaits conclusive empirical testing),[30] holding back the demesne sector as well. However, just as Eastern Europe was never a compact zone of a 'second serfdom', there is also reason to doubt that forced labour services were always the only – or even the dominant – source of labour for the demesne economy. Demesnes

[24] J. Čechura, *Adelige Grundherrn als Unternehmer. Zur Struktur südböhmischer Dominien vor 1620* (2000); Enders, *Uckermark*; Hagen, *Ordinary Prussians*; Kaak, *Bauern*; Peters, *Lebenswelten*; D. Schleinert, *Die Gutswirtschaft im Herzogtum Pommern-Wolgast im 16. und frühen 17. Jahrhundert* (2001); A. Vári, 'Der Großgrundbesitz als Konfliktgemeinschaft. Herrschaftsbeamte ungarischer Großgrundbesitzer im späten 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert', in J. Peters (ed.), *Gutsherrschaftsgesellschaften*, pp. 253–73.

[25] Čechura, *Grundherrn*.

[26] Hagen, *Ordinary Prussians*; id., 'Two ages of seigniorial economy in Brandenburg-Prussia: structural innovations in the 16th century, productivity gains in the 18th century', in P. Janssens, B. Yun Casalilla (eds), *European aristocracies and colonial elites* (2005), pp. 137–53.

[27] H. Dade, *Die Entstehung der mecklenburgischen Schlagwirthschaft* (1891); H.-H. Müller, *Märkische Landwirtschaft vor den Agrarreformen von 1807. Entwicklungstendenzen des Ackerbaues in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (1967); Rasmussen, 'Innovative feudalism'; G. Schröder-Lembke, 'Die mecklenburgische Koppelwirtschaft', *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie* 4 (1956), pp. 49–60.

[28] See the discussion of the classic Oder- and Warthebruch enterprises in eighteenth-century Brandenburg-Prussia in Heinrich Kaak, 'Ländliche Bevölkerung in Brandenburg zwischen Anpassung und Offensive – Wege der sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Behauptung von Dörfern im zentralen Oderbruch zwischen 1720 bis 1850', *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie* 52 (2004), pp. 84–102 and id., *Bauern*.

[29] W. Eckert, *Kurland unter dem Einfluß des Merkantilismus. Ein Beitrag zur Staats- und Wirtschaftspolitik Herzog Jakobs von Kurland (1642–1682)* (1927), pp. 101–2, 106–7; Enders, *Uckermark*, pp. 496–7; Schleinert, *Gutswirtschaft*, p. 57.

[30] Methodological considerations make any analysis difficult. Cf. a judgement in favour of a productivity gap in D. Stone, 'The productivity of hired and customary labour: evidence from Wisbech Barton in the fourteenth century', *EcHR* 50 (1997), pp. 640–56.

operated on the basis of a mix of (mostly unpaid) forced labour services and wage labour (partly also compulsory).[31] The balance between the two was subject to enormous variation between regions and periods.[32] While, generally speaking, levels of labour rent were a function of the proportion of demesne land (the amount of which varied enormously chronologically and regionally), even neighbouring estates would adopt different labour practices due to local conditions or structural differences. Thus, the number of tenant farms was higher on Mecklenburg princely estates during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century than on noble ones. To cope with the workload and to avoid overburdening the few remaining tenants, noble demesne farms were, on average, better equipped with hired farmhands and draught animals.[33] Short-term swings between wage labour and forced labour services were possible due to market downturns and a reduction of demesne farmland, which rendered existing services superfluous and promoted cash payments in lieu of services. This was the case, for instance, on early seventeenth-century East Prussian princely estates or in Schleswig-Holstein during the early eighteenth century.[34] Despite the introduction of serfdom and heavy labour rents, a large number of demesnes in Swedish Pomerania were operated with wage labour in the seventeenth and eighteenth century due to the lack of tenants.[35]

In regions of a fully developed arable demesne economy, in which actual labour rent requirements could be high, there can be no doubt that forced labour usually represented a major burden for tenants and could have serious implications for how tenant farms were operated. Rather than constantly stressing the unbearable nature of labour rents as previous studies have done, and far from ignoring possible negative effects, the recent literature concentrates on the more interesting question of how tenant farms and smallholders actually coped with the demands. The finding that they could, and did so by various means, should not surprise. To begin with, decision-making in this respect was largely left to the farmers and their families. Full holdings could usually afford to hire a day-labourer and send him to work for the lord. Another possibility was that they sent one of the co-resident servants.[36] From the late seventeenth century, an increasing number of rural households were able to commute labour rents into cash payments (see below). At least some tenant farms were large enough to maintain an additional team of draught animals or farmhands to carry out the necessary obligations and work their own farms at the same time.[37] In one case of conflict, farmers in

[31] Melton, 'Gutsherrschaft', p. 329; Zs. P. Pach, 'Zur Problematik der osteuropäischen Gutswirtschaft: Fronarbeit und Lohnarbeit auf den ungarischen Herrengütern im 16.–17. Jahrhundert', in *Studia historica in honorem Hans Kruus* (1971), pp. 154–75.

[32] See for a more systematic discussion, M. Cerman, 'Constrained labour in early-modern rural East-central and Eastern Europe: regional variation and its causes', in A. Stanziani (ed.), *Labour constraints in Europe and Asia* (in press).

[33] T. Rudert, *Gutsherrschaft und Agrarstruktur. Der ländliche Bereich Mecklenburgs am Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts* (1995).

[34] Kaak, *Gutsherrschaft*, p. 279; M. North, 'Lohnarbeit und Fronarbeit in der ostpreußischen Landwirtschaft vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie* 36 (1988), pp. 1–22; id., 'Die frühneuzeitliche Gutswirtschaft in Schleswig-Holstein. Forschungsüberblick und Entwicklungsfaktoren', *Blätter für Deutsche Landesgeschichte* 126 (1990), pp. 223–42, at pp. 234–40.

[35] R. Schilling, *Schwedisch-Pommern um 1700. Studien zur Agrarstruktur eines Territoriums extremer Gutsherrschaft* (1989).

[36] See Cerman, 'Constrained labour'; Melton, 'Gutsherrschaft', pp. 328–41.

[37] Harnisch, 'Probleme'; Henning, *Dienste*, pp. 46–70, 116–19.

Holstein in 1706–07 stated that they could only render heavy labour services as long as it was guaranteed that they could hold farms large and profitable enough to supply them.[38] While, in some regions, farms had difficulties meeting demesne labour demands in peak seasons, in others they seem to have had sufficient manpower.[39] As a rule, the burden of labour rents meant that product and cash rents were very low by European comparison and strongly declined in real value during the late sixteenth and eighteenth century, which again suggests that future research should pay attention to comparative studies of rent and tax burdens between Eastern and Western Europe.[40]

The older literature failed to appreciate that the introduction of labour rents could actually meet the rent preferences of tenants. In periods of low agricultural prices, farms and smallholdings would have difficulties raising the profits necessary to meet cash rent obligations whose real value had increased because of the depressed price level. Thus, it was logical for tenants to trade cash rents for newly introduced or increased forced labour services. In periods of higher grain prices, on the other hand, tenants would seek to avoid higher product rents and would have an incentive to retain as much production as possible for their own commercial sale and thus agree to labour rents. This reasoning points in the direction of the general conclusions of recent research. The initial increase of labour rents in the later middle ages and during the sixteenth century may have been based on negotiation and trade between lords and villagers to a much larger degree than once suspected. This means, and case studies of Brandenburg confirm this point, that lords had to offer something in return for villagers to agree to take up labour obligations (which may have been commuted for many decades) or to perform new ones. Amongst forms of compensation were reductions in cash and product rents, grants to add or lease additional land to tenant farms, or access to other agricultural resources. On several estates in sixteenth-century southern Bohemia, lords demanded new or increased existing labour rents, even if they had no immediate use for them and converted them to cash payments right away. In return, villagers secured the right of hereditary tenure. In case of a gradual extension of the demesne economy, they would start to call on them.[41] Throughout all territories, however, it seems to be the case that once labour rents were introduced (with growing state backing of landlord powers), it could be increasingly difficult for villagers to defend their position against ever rising demands, all too often backed by threats and force. It would be wrong, however, to forget that the rural population maintained a bargaining position in this respect and could resort to acts of resistance and insubordination.

There were considerable changes over time in the weight of labour rents. After the Thirty Years' War, lords were largely unable to draw on their rents or increase them because of the

[38] S. Göttsch, *"Alle für einen Mann ...". Leibeigene und Widerständigkeit in Schleswig-Holstein im 18. Jahrhundert* (1991), pp. 106, 113–14, 122–3; see Melton, 'Gutsherrschaft', pp. 341–49; H. Ch. Steinborn, *Abgaben und Dienste holsteinischer Bauern im 18. Jahrhundert* (1982).

[39] E. Dunsdorf, *Der große schwedische Kataster in Livland, 1681–1710* (1950), p. 169; S. Hoch, *Serfdom and social control in Russia: Petrovskoe, a village in Tambov* (1986); J. Kahk, *Peasant*, pp. 36–8, 44–8, 50–1, 57; J. Kahk, H. Ligi and E. Tarvel, *Beiträge zur marxistischen Agrargeschichte Estlands der Feudalzeit. Neue Ergebnisse, neue Probleme, neue Methoden* (1974), pp. 82–8, 115–17; D. Moon, *The Russian peasantry, 1600–1930. The world the peasants made* (1999), pp. 73–4.

[40] Harnisch, 'Die Gutsherrschaft in Brandenburg'; Hagen, 'Village life'; Hagen, *Ordinary Prussians*; Guzowski, 'Changing economy'; Henning, *Dienste*.

[41] Cerman, 'Venkovské společnosti', p. 381.

lack of tenants, for instance in Mecklenburg, or in the Brandenburg districts of Prignitz and Uckermark. In the eighteenth century, by contrast, rising grain demand and the increasing tenant population formed the background of a new seigneurial push to increase corvée to allow an expansion of demesne farming, whose demand for labour would increase also due to the spread of more labour-intensive agricultural techniques. Villagers stubbornly resisted labour rents, often refusing to perform any labour services at all as long as the dispute lasted. They were willing to enter long and costly legal battles with their lords to prove that new services were against long-standing custom and therefore illegal.[42] In response to this, demesne lords increasingly opted out of forced labour services and turned to employing servants and wage labourers, whose supply rose and whose real wages declined due to the strong population increase after the Thirty Years' War. Population growth also automatically inflated the number of available service days even if lords did not increase labour rent levels per tenant farm, smallholding or cottage. Then they commuted excess services into payments in lieu, the proceeds of which were used to pay wage labourers. Recent studies confirm the older hypothesis of a gradual abandonment of corvée even before the state agrarian reforms and 'peasant emancipation', but its extent needs to be studied more systematically.[43] If this were a general trend, it would deal another significant blow against the view of an unchanging 'feudal' demesne sector. To recap: with regard to labour rents, but not only in this respect, 'serfdom' and subjection were far more determined by processes of negotiation and local bargaining than traditional approaches, which painted villagers as helpless victims of powerful overlords, were willing to acknowledge.[44]

The fact that lords had difficulties in raising labour rents unilaterally after the Thirty Years' War indicates a further weakness in traditional interpretations of demesne lordship, which held that the war formed a turning point in the formation or intensification of a corvée-based demesne lordship in the seventeenth century.[45] This view was based on the assumption of an alignment of interests between the (noble) Estates and the newly emerging absolutist princely rule after 1648 at the expense of the interests of the rural population. It was adopted, among others, by two influential survey studies for Brandenburg-Prussia[46] and formed the mainstream interpretation for developments in Bohemia and Moravia.[47] For Brandenburg, thorough research by Hartmut Harnisch and Lieselott Enders showed, by contrast, that the rise of demesne lordship and of the demesne economy was complete by 1600–20. Even

[42] Hagen, 'Village life', p. 181; id., *Ordinary Prussians*; H. Harnisch, *Die Herrschaft Boitzenburg. Untersuchungen zur Entwicklung der sozialökonomischen Struktur ländlicher Gebiete in der Mark Brandenburg vom 14. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert* (1968), p. 195; id., 'Probleme', pp. 263–5; Kaak, *Gutsherrschaft*, pp. 274–5; Kaak, *Bauern*, pp. 167–200, 291–304, 338–40; Peters, *Lebenswelten*, pp. 641–2; G. Vogler, 'Die Entwicklung der feudalen Arbeitsrente in Brandenburg vom 15. bis 18. Jahrhundert. Eine Analyse für das kurmärkische Domänenamt Badingen', *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 1 (1966), pp. 142–74, esp. pp. 156–62.

[43] Cerman, 'Constrained labour'.

[44] J. Peters, 'Eigensinn und Widerstand im Alltag. Abwehrverhalten ostelbischer Bauern unter Refeudalisierungsdruck', *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 2 (1991), pp. 85–103, here p. 91.

[45] See in detail Cerman, 'Explaining the rise'; Cerman, *Villagers and lords*.

[46] F. Carsten, *The origins of Prussia* (1954); H. Rosenberg, *Bureaucracy, aristocracy and autocracy. The Prussian experience, 1660–1815* (1958). See also Hagen, 'Seventeenth-century crisis'.

[47] M. Hroch and J. Petráň, *17. století – krize feudální společnosti?* (1976).

before 1600, demesne farming was the dominant sector of landlord income and labour rents and legislation to restrict the mobility of the rural population and to force teenage children into seigneurial agricultural service were in place.[48] Demand incentives for an extension of demesnes were also far stronger before than after 1620–50, when grain prices were low and stagnated.[49] William Hagen's studies, too, argue persuasively that lords had massively lost authority due to the upheaval caused by the war; the situation was aggravated by further wars in the 1650s and 1670s. Although there were attempts to re-establish the pre-war order of demesne lordship with the help of the absolutist state in the 1650s, landlord extraction had to compete with that of the state (a 'postwar crisis in distribution'). Bargaining power was on the side of the villagers who had to be attracted, by lower rents, for example, to take over vacant holdings and render rents and forced labour. Villagers used their temporary strength in bargaining after the Thirty Years' War to avoid the growing pressure for labour rents. Brandenburg farmers took the opportunity – and paid a great deal of money – to be freed from labour rents once and for all.[50] Arable demesne farms had to be operated with wage labour or were leased, because the necessary labour rents were not available and burdens could not be increased.[51]

Case studies and surveys for Bohemia and Moravia have occasionally acknowledged the importance of the sixteenth-century tightening of seigneurial relations and the emergence of demesne farming after 1550 for post-1650 developments.[52] The seventeenth-century system of 'demesne lordship based on labour rents' (*robotní velkostatek*), therefore, cannot be regarded as a qualitatively new development. After all, a comparative framework of analysis shows that Czech demesne lords must have faced similar problems – villagers' bargaining positions after the war, resistance and competition with state taxes – preventing the unilateral increase of burdens. Detailed, recent regional case studies show a strong diversity of war impact and patterns of recovery, which undermines the idea that there was a uniform implementation of state legislation supporting the demands of demesne lords.[53]

[48] Harnisch, 'Gutsherrschaft in Brandenburg', p. 134; id., 'Probleme', pp. 253–5, 260–1; Kaak, 'Erbzinsrecht'; see, for similar arguments, Kaak, *Gutsherrschaft*, pp. 97–103, 361–2.

[49] Enders, *Uckermark*, pp. 342–3, 358, 372, 380–3; Harnisch, 'Probleme', pp. 253, 260–1.

[50] L. Enders, 'Individuum und Gesellschaft. Bäuerliche Aktionsräume in der frühneuzeitlichen Mark Brandenburg', in Peters (ed.), *Gutsherrschaft als soziales Modell* (1995), pp. 155–78, here p. 170.

[51] Hagen, 'Seventeenth-century crisis'; Hagen, *Ordinary Prussians*, pp. 69–122; Enders, *Uckermark*, 343–7, 355–7; Kaak, 'Erbzinsrecht', 84–5; Melton, 'Gutsherrschaft', 314; Peters, *Lebenswelten*, pp. 366–87, 617–33.

[52] V. Ledvinka, 'Rozmach feudálního velkostatku, jeho strukturální proměny a role v ekonomice českých zemí v předbělohorském období', *Folia historica Bohemica* 11 (1987), pp. 103–32; F. Matějek, *Feudalní velkostatek a poddany na Moravě s přihlédnutim k přilehlému území Slezska a Polska* (1959); id., *Cesta poddaného lidu na Moravě ke zněvolnení* (2000); E. Maur, 'Genese a specifické rysy českého pozdněfeudalního velkostatku', *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – phil. et hist.* 1 (1976), pp. 229–58; id., 'Poddanská otázka v předbělohorských Čechách', *Folia historica bohemica* 11 (1987), pp. 133–59; A. Míka, 'Feudální velkostatek v jižních Čechách 14.–17. století', *Historicky sborník* 1 (1953), pp. 122–213. See for a more detailed discussion, M. Cerman, 'Gutsherrschaft vor dem "Weißen Berg". Zur Verschärfung der Erbuntertänigkeit in Nordböhmen 1380 bis 1620', in Peters (ed.), *Gutsherrschaftsgesellschaften,* pp. 91–111; id., 'Venkovské společnosti'.

[53] M. Cerman, 'Bohemia after the Thirty Years' War: some theses on population structure, marriage and family', *J. Family History*, 19 (1994); pp. 149–75; Cerman and Zeitlhofer (eds), *Soziale Strukturen*; J. Grulich, *Populační vývoj a životní cyklus venkovského obyvatelstva na jihu Čech v 16. až 18. století* (2008);

Both these revisions – the bargaining background of labour rents and the probable stalling of the seigneurial push in the first decades after the Thirty Years' War – must be included when discussing the wider implications of recent research on the nature of power relations within demesne lordship. Far from wielding nearly absolute power over rural subjects, 'demesne lordship as a social model' (a phrase coined by the Max Planck research group, 'Demesne lordship as a social historical phenomenon', at the University of Potsdam in the 1990s[54]) emerges as a set of relations shaped by persistent negotiation and conflict between villagers and lords. The possible influence of villagers on the concrete manifestation of demesne lordship forms the basis for a more positive assessment of their rights and autonomy vis-à-vis their landlords but also of the function of village institutions. This new picture is backed firmly by the evidence presented for individual aspects of this relationship in micro-histories carried out for various territories and regions of demesne lordship, including also some of those in which outright serfdom was established after 1600.[55]

New approaches thus explicitly address the degree to which the concrete character of subjection and serfdom were subject to local conditions, power relations, custom, cooperation, negotiation and conflict and the nature of these continuous processes in a local context. Other recent assessments try to dismiss these advances. Yet, the accusation that the new research is 'revisionist' and plays down the consequences of subjection and serfdom seems unfounded.[56] The results quoted do not deny that the conflicts arising from these localized processes were costly, and that villagers would certainly have preferred to do without them, but the important point is that there was scope to influence local conditions, that is, that the active participation of both sides is finally acknowledged. This result is best exemplified by what the population of the Brandenburg village of Stolpe, part of a royal estate near Berlin, achieved. On 15 December 1764, the whole village went to see the administration of the royal estates located in the city of Potsdam and suggested that they take the village's demesne sheep farm on a hereditary lease for a rent of 220 Talers per year (about the value of a small tenant farm). They further indicated that they would be ready to receive their own farms, which they held in lease, in hereditary tenure, if the estate administration gave them the buildings and equipment for free. Consequently, the people of Stolpe did nothing less than to apply for a complete change

Note 53 *continued*
E. Maur, *Gutsherrschaft und 'zweite Leibeigenschaft' in Böhmen. Studien zur Wirtschafts-, Sozial- und Bevölkerungsgeschichte (14.–18. Jahrhundert)* (2000), pp. 189–214; D. Štefanová, *Erbschaftspraxis, Besitztransfer und Handlunsspielräume von Untertanen in der Gutsherrschaft. Die Herrschaft Frýdlant in Nordböhmen, 1558–1750* (2009); H. Zeitlhofer, *Besitztransfer, Generationenbeziehungen und sozialer Wandel im südlichen Böhmerwald, 1640–1840* (in press).

[54] Arbeitsgruppe Gutsherrschaft der Max Planck-Gesellschaft (University of Potsdam). Cf. Cerman, 'Agrardualismus'; J. Peters, 'Gutsherrschaft. Ein Jahrzehnt Potsdamer Forschungserfahrungen', *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie* 53 (2005), pp. 77–85; id. (ed), *Gutsherrschaft*.

[55] Cf. as collections of studies, Cerman and Zeitlhofer (eds), *Soziale Strukturen*; Cerman and Luft (eds), *Untertanen*; Peters (ed.), *Gutsherrschaft*; id., *Konflikt und Kontrolle in Gutsherrschaftsgesellschaften* (1995); id., *Gutsherrschaftsgesellschaften*. For surveys see: Cerman, 'Agrardualismus'; Hagen, 'Village life'; Kaak, 'Erbzinsrecht'; J. Peters, 'Neue Ansätze zur Erforschung der Geschichte der ländlichen Gesellschaft', in L. Enders and K. Neitmann (eds), *Brandenburgische Landesgeschichte heute* (1999), pp. 33–68; id., 'Gutsherrschaftsgeschichte'.

[56] L. Enders, 'Grundherrschaft und Gutswirtschaft. Zur Agrarverfassung der frühneuzeitlichen Altmark', *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie* 55 (2007), pp. 95–112, here p. 109.

of the whole agrarian system in their village: abolishing demesne farming and receiving full and hereditary ownership of their tenant farms. And their mission was a success! The royal administration finally agreed to their proposal in 1769. The only condition was that the village established plots for four new cottage households.[57]

Recent empirical research also shows clearly that even under conditions of 'harsh' demesne lordship and serfdom, serfs and subjects could call upon custom to hold in check pressures that were regarded as violating their rights. By means of such resistance, Holstein villagers defended the customary tenures of their holdings or resisted further increases of labour rents. There was certainly no uniform idea of serfdom among demesne lords and legal scholars and contemporary attitudes varied tremendously. Nevertheless, a certain basic understanding that the system carried mutual obligations prevailed.[58]

Village, seigneurial and state courts could be important means of conflict resolution. The engagement of serfs and subjects alike in long, tedious and very expensive court battles has been noted in rare agreement in the literature. In most territories, villagers retained the right to petition the territorial prince or turn to state courts to uphold their rights or interfere in case of unjustified seigneurial demands. Journeys, like those of Livonian subjects who travelled all the way to in Stockholm to address the high court and the king about their grievances towards their demesne lords,[59] occurred frequently all over the area. In certain territories, the ruling of state courts in favour of villagers' rights has been regarded as decisive in limiting the consequences of demesne lordship. This was the case in the Electorate of Brandenburg, where the chamber court was frequently engaged to resolve conflicts about villagers' property rights, their duties or their access to common resources or lakes.[60]

Contrary to previous accounts, secure property rights of the subject population seemed to have been the rule in East Central and Eastern European demesne lordship.[61] Older research concluded that the expropriation of tenant farms and the forceful confiscation of subject land (German *Bauernlegen*) to increase demesne farmland had traditionally been overstated. The extent of secure property rights, the existence of *de facto* security of tenure even in cases of restricted tenurial rights – such as tenures for a limited number of years – and the ways in which tenants could dispose over their properties and holdings, have been the subject of recent empirical investigations, for instance, in Bohemia, Brandenburg, Moravia and Poland.[62]

[57] H. Zückert, 'Vielfalt der Lebensverhältnisse in unmittelbarer Nachbarschaft. Die "Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen" in brandenburgischen Dörfern', in Peters (ed.), *Gutsherrschaftsgesellschaften*, pp. 311–21, here pp. 316–17.

[58] Examples in S. Göttsch, *Leibeigene*; H. Kaak and M. Schattkowsky (eds), *Herrschaft. Machtentfaltung über adligen und fürstlichen Grundbesitz in der Frühen Neuzeit* (2003); J. Klußmann, *Lebenswelten und Identitäten adliger Gutsuntertanen. Das Beispiel des östlichen Schleswig-Holsteins im 18. Jahrhundert* (2002); id. (ed.), *Leibeigenschaft*.

[59] J. Kahk and E. Tarvel, *An economic history of the Baltic countries* (1997), p. 62.

[60] Cf. Enders, *Uckermark*, pp. 182–4, 193–201, 344–51, 359, 384–6, 392–8; Kaak, *Gutsherrschaft*, p. 101; id., 'Erbzinsrecht', p. 83; Kaak, *Bauern*.

[61] Cf. M. Cerman, 'Social structure and land markets in late medieval Central and East-central Europe', *Continuity and Change* 23 (2008), pp. 55–100, pp. 78–82.

[62] For instance, Cerman and Zeitlhofer (eds), *Soziale Strukturen*; Cerman and Luft (eds), *Untertanen*; B. Chocholáč, *Selské peníze. Sonda do finančního hospodáření poddaných na západní Moravě koncem 16. a v 17. století* (1999); Grulich, *Vývoj*; Guzowski, *Chłopi*; Hagen, *Ordinary Prussians*, pp. 136–48, 245–59; Štefanová, *Erbschaftspraxis*; A. Velková, *Krutá vrchnost, ubozí poddaní? Proměny venkovské rodiny a společnosti v 18.*

The results show that the villagers and their families had considerable autonomy in property transactions. Although seigneurial intervention did occur, it was limited to rare instances and systematically related only to cases in which the economic viability of holdings (meaning: the ability to pay rents and services regularly) was potentially in danger. Other cases involved individuals calling upon seigneurial interference for assistance to enforce contracts where they felt that agreements had been broken or the conditions of transfer remained unfulfilled and thus needed the intervention of a third party.[63]

Cases of conflict with demesne lords and the handling of property transfers also shed light on village courts and their responsibilities and actions with regard to conflict resolution and a range of legal affairs. In a more general perspective, this is part of a growing interest in the role of village institutions and of the village community within demesne lordship. Studies of this area also confirm that lords had to rely on village-level cooperation to enforce their power.[64] Yet, the traditional opinion that village communities did not exist as institutions, that the powers of the privileged village officials (village headmen) had been cut and downgraded to make them mere seigneurial representatives at the village level has again been challenged by detailed empirical research. Village communities controlled considerable common resources, either on their own authority or (sometimes) in agreement with their lords. Research has revealed cases in which villages systematically enlarged common resources, for instance by acquiring deserted land, or made village land available for the settlement of cottagers, or sold individual pieces of common pastures to alleviate debt or extraordinary burdens (such as in wartime). Their function was particularly important in the event of conflicts with demesne lords, when village officials acted as representatives in negotiations. In short, in much the same way as there was an important sphere of autonomous action for individual villagers (over labour rents, market linkages, property transfers), there was also autonomy for village communities and village institutions. The denial of the existence of village communities has long prevented the analysis of everyday practice. With new micro-historical case studies, their role now gradually emerges.[65]

Taken together, recent studies support existing criticism of traditional interpretations of the

Note 62 *continued*
v 18. a první polovině 19. století na příkladu zapadočeského panství Šťáhlavy (2009); Zeitlhofer, *Besitztransfer*.

[63] P. O. Christiansen, 'Die vertrackte Hofübernahme. Zur gutsherrlichen Rekrutierung von Bauern in der ländlichen Gesellschaft des östlichen Dänemark im 18. Jahrhundert', *Historische Anthropologie* 3 (1995), pp. 144–65; Hagen, *Ordinary Prussians*, pp. 136–48, 245–59; A. Pazderová, 'Gutsherrschaft und Untertanen in der Herrschaft Reichenau an der Kněžna', in Cerman and Luft (eds), *Untertanen*, pp. 177–201; Štefanová, *Erbschaftspraxis*; A. Velková, *Krutá vrchnost*.

[64] Cf. e.g. Hoch, *Serfdom*; P. Himl, *Die ‚armben Leüte' und die Macht. Die Untertanen der südböhmischen Herrschaft Český Krumlov im Spannungsfeld zwischen Gemeinde, Obrigkeit und Kirche (1680–1781)* (2003); E. Melton, 'Household economies and communal conflicts on a Russian serf estate, 1800–1817', *J. Social History* 26 (1993), pp. 559–85; S. Ogilvie, 'Communities and the "second serfdom" in early modern Bohemia', *Past and Present* 187 (2005), pp. 69–119.

[65] L. Enders, 'Die Landgemeinde in Brandenburg. Grundzüge ihrer Funktion und Wirkungsweise vom 13. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert', *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 129 (1993), pp. 195–256; id., *Uckermark*; Th. Rudert, H. Zückert (eds), *Gemeindeleben. Dörfer und kleine Städte im östlichen Deutschland (16.–18. Jahrhundert)* (2001); Štefanová, *Erbschaftspraxis*; H. Zückert, 'Die brandenburgische Landgemeinde bis zum Dreißigjährigen Krieg. Ihre Organe und Kompetenzen', in H. S. Schmidt, A. Holenstein and A. Würgler (eds), *Gemeinde, Reformation, Widerstand* (1998), pp. 25–43.

theory of demesne lordship, against the concept of a fundamental 'dualism'[66] of early modern agrarian structures in Western and Eastern Europe. Theoretical and methodical innovations within social history make possible a long overdue 'view from the village' within highly diversified societies of demesne lordship.[67] Demesne lordship appears to be regionally strongly differentiated and the concrete manifestations of the system are regarded as the result of a process of everyday 'bargaining', which was often accompanied by conflict. The aim of recent research has been to identify the concrete scope of action and decision-making by villagers. This has clearly resulted in a new picture of demesne lordship, which differs considerably from those earlier studies that took a purely or predominantly seigneurial perspective. The effort to overcome the notion of an 'agrarian dualism' also resulted in research that considered a comparative perspective of societies with ancien régime structures of landlordship in Western and Southern Europe.[68]

III

The studies presented here contribute to the effort to reinterpret the character and the consequences of demesne lordship. Aleksander Panjek's article relates to the growing uneasiness with the idea of a European agrarian 'dualism' and poses the question of whether it makes sense to analyse developments in early modern western Slovenia in the context of the original theory. While several of the features of demesne lordship were present, such as relatively large, territorially compact noble estates and seigneurial powers of legal jurisdiction, others developed only in a rudimentary manner or were checked by the existence of secure tenant property rights or by villagers' resistance. The article's detailed analysis of estate valuations shows convincingly that income from villagers' customary rents in cash and kind represented more than 50 per cent of the total landlord income and were supplemented by proceeds derived from functions of banal lordship. With regard to possible elements of demesne lordship, the conversion of unused labour rents to cash payments formed a significant share of rents in cash and kind only on individual estates. Moreover, the profit from or value of the demesne economy remained relatively marginal. Panjek argues that the relatively poor agricultural conditions were responsible for the marginal role of the demesne economy here. Also with regard to economic characteristics of the original model – the dominance of demesne farming – the analysis shows that the case does not fit.

Despite finding different causes for the development, the results correspond very well to those of Erich Landsteiner's paper on Lower Austria discussed below, where a demesne economy did not emerge to its fullest extent, either. Panjek also refers to the tenant sector, which relied on additional extra-agricultural economic activities, in this case trade rather than viticulture. Slovenian lords supported these forms of by-employment vis-à-vis town or territorial intervention because the diversification of livelihoods secured the continuous flow of

[66] Cf. Peters (ed.), *Gutsherrschaft;* and recently L. Enders, 'Grundherrschaft und Gutswirtschaft'.

[67] Hagen, 'Village life'.

[68] Cf. H. Wunder, 'Das Selbstverständliche denken. Ein Vorschlag zur vergleichenden Analyse ländlicher Gesellschaften in der Frühen Neuzeit, ausgehend vom "Modell ostelbische Gutsherrschaft"', in Peters (ed.), *Gutsherrschaft als soziales Modell,* pp. 23–49.

rents and dues in a poor agricultural environment. This finding relates to the discussion about the relationship between demesne lordship and proto-industrial development in early modern Eastern Europe. As mentioned before, and contrary to views expressed in the original theories of proto-industrialization, recent findings have established that a demesne-based seigneurial economy and proto-industrial activities could co-exist and form an integrated economic system.

As Panjek indicates in the introduction to his article, debates about the classification of individual territories one way or another may ultimately prove to be futile. Even though some authors give greater weight to factors concerning seigneurial powers (typical of approaches of 'agrarian constitution'), and others to economic conditions, such as the role of a commercial demesne economy, attempts to classify whole areas or territories invariably result in ignoring local or regional conditions to a certain degree. Traditional readings of demesne lordship thus appear less flexible than they ought to be.

The same general question as discussed for western Slovenia – which way to classify the experiences within a particular territory in a general east-west divide of agrarian structure – forms the starting point for Erich Landsteiner's essay on Lower Austria, the north-eastern province of the Austrian Lands proper. Acknowledging that the development towards demesne lordship and a commercial demesne economy was never fully completed, Austrian agrarian historians coined the concept of an intermediary form (which they called 'economic lordship', *Wirtschaftsherrschaft*) drawing on the characteristics of seigneurialism in the provinces of Upper and Lower Austria. Landsteiner sets his case study in the comparative context of recent empirical research critical of the notion of a 'dualism' of European agrarian structures. He refers to the background of sixteenth-century population growth and economic development in Lower Austria. To question the existing interpretations on the causes of change in Lower Austria – the structure of lordship rights, princely intervention to preserve the legal status of the villagers or the lack of commercialization – his analysis proposes an alternative by linking the push of the Estates for higher rents and income from their rural properties to the financial constraints faced by the territorial prince who was engaged in continuous warfare with the Ottoman Empire in Hungary and consequently desperate to increase tax revenue. The approach sheds new light on the standardization of labour rent levels in Lower Austria during the sixteenth century, which was accompanied by intensive conflicts and outright peasant uprisings. The author interprets the move as an opportunity to increase income from princely estates: as demesne farming remained very limited in most parts of the country, the newly introduced labour rents were not needed and were thus automatically commuted into cash payments in lieu. Additional labour rents thus increased direct (money) income, but also the value of estates when they were mortgaged.

Rather than the factors outlined by the previous literature, Landsteiner suggests that it was the specific agro-system of Lower Austria, in particular the relatively prominent presence of a highly commercialized viticulture meeting the demand of Vienna, the army garrisons in Hungary and export markets in Germany, which limited the landlords' option of introducing a commercial demesne economy based on labour rents. On the one hand, seigneurial viticulture was based on a different organization of work from that of demesne arable agriculture. The use of low-quality forced labour could damage the plants and thus the viability of this particular type of agriculture. If services were used, they were confined to transport duties, such as hauling

wine to markets. Specialized tenant viticulture, on the other hand, provided villagers with a strategy to undermine services, because it made draught animals unnecessary and allowed the sub-partition of holdings (and thus a reduction of labour rent levels per holding, which were geared to full farm holdings). Despite seigneurial interference and attempts at regulation, there was a pronounced growth in the number of smallholdings over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which were unable to provide the draught services that would have been required to extend demesne arable farming in Lower Austria.

In his analysis of demesne grain production on royal estates in Poland, Piotr Guzowski revisits the role the international market played in the development of the Polish demesne economy and demesne lordship during the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. While the influence of cereal exports has always been acknowledged by Polish research, the early modern 'east-west division of labour' postulated by world system theories, which relied on the influential studies of the Polish economic historian Marian Małowist,[69] identified them as major cause of the emergence of a commercial demesne economy in East Central and Eastern Europe. General criticisms of this theory were discussed earlier. There has been some debate in Poland about the real effect of exports on the Polish economy, but there is now agreement that during the period of peak exports, they formed only about five per cent of the total grain production during the sixteenth century, rising to a possible maximum of 10 to 17 per cent before 1650. Exports may have reached as much as 25 per cent of *commercial* grain production during the sixteenth century, but even the higher bound estimates suggest that domestic consumption played a much greater role than the 'export hypothesis' would acknowledge.

Following a seminal study by Stanisław Mielczarski,[70] Guzowski's paper investigates the price effects of grain exports in the individual parts of the kingdom. In this period, rye for exports was mainly supplied from the regions of Royal Prussia and Masovia, which were favourably located for access to the main port, Gdańsk. According to this analysis, grain exports were therefore an incentive for demesne farming only in some regions. In others the sector was geared to different markets. It would thus be incorrect to assume that a uniform type of export-led demesne farming emerged. Outlining some of its basic characteristics, Guzowski concludes that the domestic market must receive greater attention as a factor in the establishment of demesne lordship in Poland.

William Hagen's paper is a call to step up efforts to analyse the development of the early modern rural society and economy within a unified, comparative framework that includes all parts of Europe. For him, the 'yeoman farm' might usefully form the research focus, because it was the unit of agricultural production dominating the sector to a varying degree all over early modern Europe. Based on his own research on the commercial grain production and the livelihood of tenant farms and smallholdings under Brandenburg and Polish demesne lordship[71] as well as other recent empirical research questioning the 'decline' of the peasantry in early modern Western Europe, Hagen's 'yeomanry' model stresses the flexibility and

[69] M. Małowist, 'Die Getreidehandelspolitik des Adels in den Ostseeländern', *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 75 (1957), pp. 29–47; id., 'The economic and social development of the Baltic countries from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries', *EcHR* 12 (1959), pp. 177–89.

[70] S. Mielczarski, *Rynek zbożowy na ziemiach polskich w drugiej połowie XVI i pierwszej połowie XVII wieku* (1962).

[71] See Hagen, *Ordinary Prussians*.

dynamics of tenant farmers ('agrarian entrepreneurs', whether on hereditary or non-hereditary tenures), their market involvement and their reliance on the wage labour of servants and day labourers to run their farms along with the family labour. He argues for comparative studies of rural living standards across early modern Europe. The substantial area cultivated by full farm holdings in some parts of Europe (20 to 40 ha or up to 100 acres) also questions the artificial separation between 'peasant agriculture' and 'capitalist agriculture' based on the size of farm units.

The paper focuses on characteristics common to most or all parts of Europe, such as the obligation of tenants to pay rents and taxes, and, far from imposing a uniform structure, outlines differences, such as personal legal status, tenurial and property rights or the seigneurial regime and degree of commercialization individual societies experienced. The persistence of a large group of substantial tenant farm holdings, according to Hagen, is a sign of their flexibility, adaptability and economic success. He refers to available evidence of the agrarian innovations and productivity gains achieved by the yeomanry but also by smallholdings, questioning the long-standing belief in 'peasant stagnation' and its alternate, that progress was solely restricted to 'consolidated farms'. This question of the development of productivity will demand more attention in future research in a comparative perspective. As with many of the recent comparative research efforts – see, for instance, the CORN or the COST A 35 publication series – this paper strengthens the case for questioning and overturning conventional master narratives of all forms of agricultural 'exceptionalism' in early modern Europe.

IV

For the time being, the term 'demesne lordship' continues to be used as an analytical tool in European rural history, but it is no longer understood to describe a distinct 'agrarian constitution' or to justify the case for a European 'agrarian dualism'. Rather, it represents a form of umbrella term for regionally differentiated rural power relations and economic structures in early modern East Central and Eastern European rural societies. Along with current efforts to make available for international debate the results of recent empirical investigations into economic and social development in these regions, this research discusses long-term processes of change in European-wide comparison. Naturally, existing differences must not be ignored, but certainly they must not be interpreted in the context of a mere deterministic narrative of distinct 'agrarian constitutions' or 'agrarian exceptionalism'.

The studies published here represent a further step towards this aim. The pieces by Panjek and Landsteiner on western Slovenia and Lower Austria, as well as Hagen's call for a unified approach towards early modern European rural history, all question the fragile and inconclusive nature of the idea of an 'agrarian dualism'. Guzowski's analysis sheds light on the functioning and differentiation of forms of demesne lordship by means of a regional comparison of the demesne economy in sixteenth-century Poland. All the papers contribute further to the undermining of the received understanding of early modern rural societies in East Central and Eastern Europe.

Panjek's paper indicates that occupational diversification of villagers and the presence of non-agricultural income have been overlooked in previous research on the area. This probably

holds true, to at least some extent, for early modern East Central and Eastern Europe as a whole. How far the economic pursuits of villagers could, on the contrary, influence and frustrate seigneurial economic strategies becomes obvious from Erich Landsteiner's contribution. The highly commercialized environment of viticulture and its impact on social structure may have determined, among other factors, that the landlord push to extend the demesne economy more systematically remained futile in Lower Austria. That a uniform pattern of demesne farming did not exist in sixteenth-century Poland is the conclusion to be drawn from Guzowski's careful study of the influence of grain exports on demesne farming in royal estates. The view that the export stimulus was the sole or even primary factor in the rise of Polish demesnes is not supported by his analysis. Instead, the regional context seems more important. This is a common theme in all the papers presented here: all support the need to acknowledge regional variations in the character of lordship. Together, they support William Hagen's argument that the idea of structural divides should be put to one side and comparative investigations of rural living standards should be encouraged, as one of the most important ways in which our understanding of European rural history can be developed. And so these papers not only illuminate, but also offer an agenda for the future.

European yeomanries: a non-immiseration model of agrarian social history, 1350–1800*

by William W. Hagen

Abstract

The neo-classical and political economy literatures view the European peasantry's post-medieval history as one of economic dispossession and legal disability. Here I propose a model of early modern European village history concentrating on the maintenance and reproduction of the self-sufficient family farm. Its proprietors figure as householders only marginally dependent on wage labour and capable of developing their holdings into small-scale engines of market production. European villagers were everywhere subject to seigneurial lordship or landlordism. They were universally subject to rents and taxes, and occupied their farms under widely differing tenures, with varying property rights. Some may think the English word 'yeoman' to be non-exportable. Here it signifies not only the politically enfranchised freeman agriculturist but family farmers across Europe (whatever their legal disabilities) living, in good times, in rustic sufficiency, engaged in market production and surplus accumulation in one or another form. The present article offers, in an exploratory spirit, an ideal–typical model.

The neo-classical and political economy literatures view the post-medieval European peasantry's history as one of economic dispossession and legal disability. In this perspective, the beneficiaries of long-term commercialization were landlords and their allies, an emergent rural bourgeoisie. Family farmers and smallholders widely suffered removal from the land or reduction to wage-labourer status. Village communalism dissolved into entrepreneurial atomism, or into class polarization and conflict. East of the Rhine, a semi-feudal neo-serfdom ruled the countryside to the villagers' cost. In Mediterranean and Western Europe, free status was of little avail against rent and tax oppression and Malthusian down-cycles. In England alone did individualized property rights, free labour, and free markets combine to sustain a long-term development only fitfully advanced elsewhere (as in the Netherlands), to

* The present text is, in the historically concrete Weberian sense, a theoretical venture, not an analysis of newly generated empirical research. It engages widely familiar issues in early modern European economic and social history, if also ones concerning Central and Eastern Europe, which the Anglophone literature has, both at the empirical and analytical level, persistently misunderstood. I have refrained from citing from what is, essentially, a limitless scholarship on the subject. For my own approach to the East Elbian German case, see William W. Hagen, *Ordinary Prussians: Brandenburg Junkers and villagers, 1500–1840* (2002), with extensive citation of relevant economic history literature. Useful both interpretively and historiographically is Tom Scott (ed.), *The peasantries of Europe from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century* (1998). On the English case see Keith Wrightson, *Earthly necessities: economic lives in early modern Britain* (2002).

lay the basis for a revolution in agricultural productivity and breakthrough to factory-based industrialization. Yet, the price of Britain's advance was the death of the historic landed peasantry.

Against this vision, which is shared by both the neo-classical and political economy schools despite disagreements over its causal explanation, this article proposes a model of early modern European rural history that concentrates foremost on the maintenance and reproduction of the medium-sized or large, partly self-sufficient (though also market-integrated) family farm. Its proprietors figure here, ideal-typically, as working farmers employing as labourers a mix of family members, farm servants, and wage labourers. Such farms must be conceptualized in an historical setting in which European villagers were everywhere subject to seigneurial lordship or landlordism, whether as serfs, manorial subjects, or freemen; in the words of a widely familiar legal adage: 'no land without a lord' (*nulle terre sans seigneur*).

Landholding family farmers were universally, if variously, subject to rents (whether market or feudal rents), taxes, and often conscription too. They occupied their farms under widely differing tenures, with correspondingly varying property rights, though never altogether without some degree of ownership in fixed capital, farm stock, or other mobile goods. Everywhere, individualism and collectivism co-existed in locally distinctive proportions.

These pages aim to delineate a sphere of comparative history within which such family farms, despite the many ways they differed across Europe, figure as a major stratum of European society which, in the post-medieval half-millennium, did *not* disintegrate under the advancing tread of capitalism. Instead, many family farmers themselves became successful agrarian entrepreneurs, while others managed to survive through market production. In political life, although they inhabited widely differing legal and institutional settings, landed villagers – whether juridically free or feudally hobbled – stubbornly (and communally) pursued their self-interest, preferring judicial to armed solutions, though (like any human group) not foreign to violence's temptations. Such a stratum of family farmers (or, if the traditional terminology is preferred, 'landed peasants') remained, despite early modern rural society's turbulent fortunes, a *major structural feature* of European society into the nineteenth century and beyond. This truism of social history has often disappeared into economic history's shadows.

Some may think the English word 'yeomanry' non-exportable. But, if we take the word in a broad sense to refer to a medium- or large-holding family farmer (whatever his legal disabilities) living – in times free of war, epidemic disease, and famine – in socially customary sufficiency, and engaged in market production with opportunities for surplus-accumulation (in one or another form), then we can launch a train of thought which others may find it helpful to follow and develop.

I

At the medieval millennium's pre-plague end-point in the early fourteenth century, the European landscape displayed a virtual universality of family-farm tenure by conditionally hereditary leasehold under noble, ecclesiastical, or princely lordships. These authorities collected from their subject villagers feudal rents in kind and cash, though often, where large

seigneurial demesne farms existed, they demanded labour service (or labour rent) as well. In principle, and often in practice, these three basic forms of feudal rent were *interchangeable*.

Family farmers' personal legal status varied from free to servile, but this did not in itself determine economic well-being. This varied instead with population, where a low land-to-labour ratio worked to villagers' advantage (*even if* – despite venerable hypotheses to the contrary – landlords sought to corral them in serfdom). Important, too, was the larger society's degree of commercialization. For the more prosperous the urban-based cash economy and the array of goods available in its markets, the higher the landlords' standard and cost of living, and the heavier their demands on their village subjects, who were obliged to monetize their surpluses in the market towns so as to pay cash rents (or whose surpluses were skimmed in levies *in natura* which the landlords' agents themselves marketed). But commodity prices were highest in the richest and most heavily urbanized regions, and local family-scale market farmers benefited from this.

The ideal-typical high medieval village based on open-field mixed arable farming and pasturage comprised principally full-holding farmers (with one or more hides or virgates of land, or roughly 25 to 100 acres [10 to 40 ha] or more of fallowed arable, together with access to meadows and woodland). Only farms of such size could maintain the draught teams necessary for ploughing and haulage, both on the farmer's own account and in manorial service for his lord.

Yet, as high medieval seigneurial land was leased to villagers for rents rather than demesne farmed with peasant labour services, the lordship's interest in sustaining the indivisibility of village full holdings waned. The villagers' preference for partible over impartible inheritance practices, so as to favour several or all heirs with portions of land, asserted itself. Still, communally organized open-field agriculture set lower-end limits to the resultant fragmentation of peasant farms, since small farms could not afford the necessary draught teams. Nor could the village farm balloon in its size and labour inputs without limit. Many full holders kept their farms intact by imposing on successive new household heads payments to departing sibling or in-law heirs.

Nevertheless, as seigneurial lordship contented itself with land rents and other exactions from its villagers, rents that derived from their subject status (whether freemen or not), a pattern emerged in the late middle ages which persisted to the French Revolution and beyond. The countryside, though still seigneurialized, became a patchwork of small, medium, and large peasant holdings, which changed hands according to individual families' fate and fortune, some maintaining themselves or rising into full holder status (and beyond), others falling down out of it. Princely or state power might take an interest in village farms' size if it wished to maintain the peasant full holding as a unit of taxation or conscription. But such considerations were peripheral before the emergence of the absolute monarchies in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The late medieval social crisis, triggered by catastrophic population collapse resulting from the arrival of bubonic plague in the mid-fourteenth century, enabled the peasantries of the Mediterranean, Western European, English, and western German regions to shed (or, at any rate, greatly loosen) the legal bonds of medieval serfdom. Mostly this was a negotiated process, but in part it entailed peasant revolt (as in the late fifteenth-century Catalan revolt, or the

German Peasant War of 1525 and its regional antecedents). Seigneurialism in these regions of Europe slowly turned into a landlordism that itself underwent commodification, falling frequently through sale or lease into non-noble bourgeois or gentry hands.

Henceforth, across the early modern era, from roughly 1500 to 1800, the central question in the villages in these regions – that is, in Western, Central, and South Western Europe – was how well family farmers could hold their land in the face of agriculture's advancing commercialization. Could they, in the demographic recovery of the long sixteenth century, maintain sufficient market share to enable them to pay rising rents and new state taxes, on terms of trade that – in the silver-inflated economy – were basically favourable to agricultural producers?

In the long seventeenth century, while taxation to support standing armies sometimes ruined villages, it was more often war itself that had this effect, for the absolutist state's self-interest depended on husbanding its villages as sources of revenue and recruits. The greater long-term early modern threat to the family farmer emanated from entrepreneurial rivals in the landlord class. The case of the so-called 'second serfdom' in eastern Germany, and Eastern Europe generally, comes first to mind. Here, private noble lords as well as administrators of princely (or state) demesne land imposed heavy new labour rents on subject villagers so as to construct entirely new large-scale, market-driven manorial farms. The standard literature of western provenance displays rampant confusion over this process's legal and economic dimensions.

Crucial to the present argument is the circumstance that, because of its need for village draught teams, such commercialized manorialism *preserved* (while degrading) the full-holding family farm. It also placed a brake on population growth in the lands it came to dominate, an effect favouring the survival of the larger holdings. The hard-fisted interplay of seigneurial, princely, and village interests enabled peasant farms of full holders and half-holders, both of them continuing to engage on their own account in arable farming with draught teams, to survive in very large numbers until the abolition of neo-manorialism in the 'peasant emancipations' of the nineteenth-century. Despite its inequities, emancipation secured the continued existence of a massive family-farming class until the revolutions of the twentieth century, and even to the present day.

Outside the realm of central and east European commercialized manorialism – that is, in France, England, the Low Countries, western Germany, Switzerland, Scandinavia, Spain, Italy, and the Balkans – the post-medieval family farmer possessed the advantage, ideal-typically, of having escaped servile status's worst economic disabilities and vulnerabilities. In many cases he had attained a personal freedom upon which landlordly powers could impinge only through the exploitation of local monopolies, as of lower court jurisdiction, milling, or hunting. To village lands formerly held under longstanding customary, often servile, tenure, a regime of fixed money rents now commonly applied, whose long-term erosion through price and monetary inflation favoured tenants. Sometimes these farmers gained virtual allodial (or undivided) property rights in such holdings, as widely occurred in France and England, though in law they qualified only (though still favourably) as hereditary leaseholds. The danger facing them was to fall into debt or otherwise falter in the early modern market economy, leaving them, despite their advantageous status as post-feudal freeholders or relatively unencumbered hereditary tenants, no choice but to sell out to a rich village neighbour, or to an entrepreneurial, capitalist-minded landlord, whether noble or bourgeois.

The consequence of such misfortune might – as in central Italy and south-west France – be the farmer's reduction to sharecropping, or his eviction and replacement by a sharecropper. It might be his farm's conversion into a short-term tenancy under a landlord imposing 'rack rents', that is, market rents, as happened massively in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It might entail the enclosure of his land into a larger farm, withdrawn from the system of village communalism, and cultivated by a market-oriented tenant farmer (often an upwardly mobile peasant) employing whatever technology contemporary best practice mandated, as happened widely in northern Italy and northern France, and in England and the Low Countries.

Post-medieval western and southern European freeholders suffered these various fates to such an extent that, as in France and England, *ownership* of most village land had, by the eve of the 1789 Revolution, come into the hands of the entrepreneurial nobility and gentry and the urban bourgeoisie.

Yet the family farmer did not disappear from these and neighbouring countries. For the early modern commercialized (though still, in a legal sense, seigneurialized) landlordism that superseded full-blooded feudal lordship *depended vitally* on finding tenant farmers willing to pay market rents and take their own entrepreneurial risks. It remains common to imagine such cultivators as a small rural elite consisting of the legendary English 'capitalist tenant farmer', or as northern France's *grand fermier* or the short-term leaseholding 'bourgeois farmers' of Italy's Po valley and elsewhere. But the full-holding or large-holding family farmer survived in large numbers everywhere in Europe, including, as we have seen, within the realm of east European neo-manorialism.

Moreover, in varying measure he possessed those qualities characteristic of the English family farmer, whether yeoman or tenant. He lived, to a varying but important degree, on proceeds from the market. He worked his land himself, or closely supervised its cultivation by servants and labourers, often his own children. His mentality and tastes were not aristocratic, but demotic, separated by rural culture from the truly bourgeois. He consumed most of his net profit, or distributed it in legacies, but was receptive to profit-enhancing opportunities, whether through adoption of new agricultural practices (limited in open field communities) or entry into specialized market farming (as in vegetable gardening, grazing, dairying, or milling).

Such full-holding family farmers might be *de facto* freeholders, subject to only residual, minor landlordly rents, or perhaps none at all, though liable like anyone else to such direct taxes, conscription, ecclesiastical levies, excises and interest on borrowed money, as fate decreed. They were the dominant rural social group in Switzerland and Scandinavia. Across the countryside of western, central, and southern Germany, post-Reformation state policy sought to maintain such farms as the pillars of their fiscal systems, tolerating a residual and fossilized noble landlordism, but blocking the path to the bourgeois purchase of village farms.

What proportion of Europe's landed peasantry belonged to such a yeomanry or large-holding family farmer stratum on the eve of 1789? In East Elbian Europe, including Russia, probably half the villagers holding arable farms possessed full holdings yielding them and their dependents, in peaceful times, a socially acceptable standard of living and liquid assets or otherwise transferable surpluses (as of livestock and other farm capital) adequate to launch

the next generation into marriage and house-holding. There were many village patriarchs who died with coin-filled strongboxes and long lists of debtors.

In Balkan Europe, heavy post-sixteenth century Ottoman taxation and local power struggles among elites, both Muslim and Christian, converted increasingly numerous village farmers into hard-pressed and vulnerable tenants of *chiftlik* (market-supplying) landlords. Yet surplus-harvesting full holders and independent, market-oriented pastoralists, alongside a politically protected frontier peasantry, were nonetheless numerous.

In France, the fissiparous effect of partible inheritance worked against the yeomanry, yet virtually every village displayed its well-to-do *laboureurs*, while entrepreneurial tenant farmers of mainly rural, often peasant origins were a dominant presence in the Paris basin and the north. In England, most of the famous 'capitalist tenant farmers' were, by continental standards, big peasants, farming, with servants and wage labourers, rented landholdings of some 40–120 acres. Alongside them were the yeomanry proper, also with mostly rented farms of similar or smaller extent. If, as in France, the mass of post-medieval family holdings had disappeared, or shrunk to wage-labouring cottager status, this had occurred *simultaneously* with the *regrouping of a large-holding tenant class* of rural origins whose presence across the European landscape this article highlights.

II

It may be objected that, in the end, what matters most are the agricultural preconditions of industrialization, which – as is commonly claimed – were achieved uniquely in England. But it is as mistaken to overestimate productivity gains in English agriculture before the late seventeenth century as it is to overlook them in the agriculture of Italy, the Low Countries, and western Germany both before and after that date. In East Elbian Germany too – especially in proximity to riverine and Baltic trade lanes – the eighteenth century witnessed major output and productivity gains through widespread conversion of large estate and state demesne open field cultivation to fallow-free convertible agriculture.

Taking the broad, world-historical view, European industrialization, if first launched by steam and coal in Britain, spread very rapidly across the European continent. Nor is industrialization, strictly speaking, the vital prerequisite for the higher living standards the concept of economic modernity evokes. Capitalist development in nineteenth-century agriculture and related light industry and trade, accompanied by public schooling and public health improvements, achieved the same living standards in such continental regions as west Germany, Denmark, parts of France, and the Netherlands, often with less proletarian misery than in Britain.

Moreover, people's lives and fates in the pre-industrial past are not uniquely measureable by a teleology of industrialization, any more than ours should be by a future that genetic engineering may revolutionize. The question here has been whether, in the post-medieval half-millennium, a market-integrated yet also more or less self-sufficient large-holding peasantry or village farmer class survived in large numbers throughout Europe. The argument, which lends itself to massive documentation, is that such a broadly conceived European yeomanry did – despite much internal social turmoil – evolve and survive. Doubtless its existence was a *structural necessity*, deriving from its social and economic functions in a transport system dependent on

draught animals, and in supplying the needs of the very large non-landed rural population and the countryside's myriad small market towns.

It is a question that neither the neo-classical literature, with its emphasis on market forces and property rights, nor the political economy scholarship, with its stress on late-feudal extra-economic coercion, has thought necessary to raise. But to affirm the yeomanry's European character and perseverance is more than a debt owed to empiricism. It is essential to an understanding of modern politics and culture. Nor does acknowledging its presence on the social landscape throw into eclipse the often hard fate of the proletarianized smallholding peasantry of early modern and modern times.

But in asking how European agriculture so widely succeeded in sustaining the continent's cumulatively great post-1648 population growth, and in tracing beyond England's borders the crucial role of rural consumer demand in capitalist development (for the family farmer purchased many manufactured goods, if in small lots), as also in analysing post-1789 rural political mobilizations, the importance of Europe's village yeomanry must burst the bonds of a social science that mistook it as little more than the victim of early capitalism (or late feudalism).

Demesne lordship and the early modern state in Central Europe: the struggle for labour rent in Lower Austria in the second half of the sixteenth century

by Erich Landsteiner

Abstract

When historians construct models of opposed societal trajectories through time, and try to locate them in space, they usually end up with a transition zone in between. The hereditary lands of the Austrian branch of the Habsburg dynasty, particularly the provinces of Lower and Upper Austria and Styria (as well as Bavaria and some other West Elbian territories), have been analysed in this respect as hybrid forms, where most of the preconditions for the formation of *Gutsherrschaft* were present in the sixteenth century but where further development was blocked for one reason or another. The paper analyses the transition of the Lower Austrian seigneury from a predominantly rent-taking (in money and kind) lordship to a form of lordship showing characteristics of *Gutsherrschaft* more closely than it has been done previously, by concentrating on the question of labour services. The supposed role of the early modern state in blocking the development of a demesne economy is revised and the question of serfdom is addressed by pointing to the use made of the term *Leibeigenschaft* by the actors – peasants, lords, and state agencies – themselves. Finally, the article explores a factor previously neglected in attempts to explain why the Lower Austrian seigneury did not develop into a full-fledged *Gutsherrschaft*, with the typical features of regional agro-systems in this part of Central Europe.

According to the image of an agrarian dualism in early modern Central Europe, with *Gutswirtschaft* in the regions east of the Elbe (and Leitha) and *Grundherrschaft* in the regions to the west of this supposed structural borderline, the Habsburg Monarchy is usually seen as a dynastic state composed of territories where either one or the other type of lordship prevailed.[1] The lands of the Kingdom of Bohemia are usually counted among the regions of *Gutsherrschaft*, at least since the end of the Thirty Years' War.[2] Those parts of the Kingdom of Hungary not under Ottoman rule, according to Sz. P. Pach, 'branched off from the western European development path' during the second half of the sixteenth century.[3] Tyrol and the very

[1] See R. J. W. Evans, *The making of the Habsburg Monarchy* (1979) and Thomas Winkelbauer, *Ständefreiheit und Fürstenmacht. Länder und Untertanen des Hauses Habsburg im konfessionellen Zeitalter*, (2 vols, 2003), for the general background.

[2] Eduard Maur, *Gutsherrschaft und 'zweite Leibeigenschaft' in Böhmen* (2001), esp. pp. 59–83, 189–214.

[3] Szigmund P. Pach, *Die ungarische Agrarentwicklung im 16.–17. Jahrhundert. Abbiegung vom westeuropäischen Entwicklungsgang* (1964).

fragmented other western territories, where the peasantry had extensive political rights, clearly belonged to the area of *Grundherrschaft*. Much less clear is the position of the eastern Austrian hereditary lands of the Habsburgs (Upper and Lower Austria and Styria). For Upper Austria, Alfred Hoffmann coined the term *Wirtschaftsherrschaft* ('economic lordship') to summarize the way in which, here, lords developed entrepreneurial activities, often based on monopoly rights, but did not establish large demesne farms cultivated mainly with the labour services of their tenants.[4] The status of the province of Lower Austria is puzzling since here the deterioration of the status of rural subjects during the early modern period cannot be overlooked, and there is considerable evidence showing that in some regions, seigneuries developed in the direction of *Gutsherrschaft* without ever attaining a level of demesne production or the labour service obligations of the subject population comparable to East Elbian Germany or the Bohemian Lands.[5] Herbert Knittler has defined Lower Austria as a territory 'between East and West' where 'demesnes "got stuck" on their way to *Gutsherrschaft*', considering the concept of *Wirtschaftsherrschaft* a more appropriate description of the course Lower Austrian lordship took during the early modern period.[6] The same pertains to the situation in Styria.[7]

The divergent paths taken by lordship in the territories of the Habsburg Monarchy during the early modern period are indicated by data from the end of the eighteenth century, especially the results of the cadastral survey of the 1780s, which show the division of agricultural land between lords and peasants, and the nearly contemporaneous measures taken by the state to fix the labour duties of the lordly subjects, the *Robotpatente* of the 1770s.

The tax assessment rolls[8] show significant differences in the shares of land classified as belonging to demesnes or to peasant holdings, and even more when land use is considered (Table 1). The proportion held as demesne corresponds loosely with the limits set on the labour dues of those peasant subjects liable to hauling and plough services (*Zugrobot*) in these territories in the 1770s: in Lower Austria 104 days per year, and in Bohemia, Moravia and Styria, 156 days per year. Owners of smallholdings without draught animals, cottagers, and

[4] Alfred Hoffmann, 'Die Grundherrschaft als Unternehmen', in his *Staat und Wirtschaft im Wandel der Zeit* (1979), pp. 294–306 (first published in *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie* 6 [1958], pp. 123–31).

[5] In the early modern period, the relationship in which lords held dominion over their tenants in the Austrian Lands was constituted through the tenure of landed estates. Since landlords in most cases also held jurisdiction rights over their tenants, the latter were regarded as 'subject' to their lords. For lack of a better word in English, I shall use the terms 'subject' (*Untertan*) and 'subjection' (*Untertänigkeit*) to designate the tenants and their relationship to the lords. My thanks to Markus Cerman for this advice, and see also his comments in the introduction to these essays.

[6] Herbert Knittler, 'Between East and West. Lower Austria's noble *Grundherrschaft*, 1550–1750', in Charles W. Ingrao, *State and society in early modern Austria* (1994), pp. 154–80, here p. 168. (See, too, the extended German version under the title 'Zwischen Ost und West. Niederösterreichs adelige Grundherrschaft 1550–1750', in *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 4 (1993), pp. 191–217.) Since this paper owes a lot to the work of Herbert Knittler, one of my former academic teachers, I dedicate it to him who, in his modesty, has until today refused all other kinds of honour.

[7] See Helfried Valentinitsch, 'Gutsherrschaftliche Bestrebungen in Österreich in der Frühen Neuzeit. Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der innerösterreichischen Länder', in Jan Peters (ed.), *Gutsherrschaft als sozialer Modell* (1995), pp. 279–97.

[8] In the middle of the eighteenth century, demesne shares were slightly higher for arable land (10%) and vineyards (6%) in Lower Austria. In Bohemia it amounted to 30% for arable land.

TABLE 1. Shares of agricultural land held by demesnes and peasant holdings in Lower and Upper Austria, Styria, Bohemia and Moravia, *c.*1785.

	Arable		*Pasture*		*Vineyards*		*Woods*	
	Demesnes	*Peasantry*	*Demesnes*	*Peasantry*	*Demesnes*	*Peasantry*	*Demesnes*	*Peasantry*
Lower Austria	9	91	20	80	4	96	62	38
VUWW	10	90	32	68	4	96	59	41
VOWW	5	95	11	89	5	95	64	36
VUMB	9	91	14	86	4	96	56	44
VOMB	8	92	14	86	10	90	56	44
Upper Austria	2	98	5	95	12	86	60	40
Styria	12	88	22	78	80	20	46	54
Bohemia	24	76	34	66	50	50	77	23
Moravia	12	88	22	78	3	97	86	14

Note: Lower Austria was divided in four parts (*Viertel*) for administrative purposes: VUWW: *Viertel unter dem Wienerwald* (south of Danube to the east); VOWW: *Viertel ober dem Wiener Wald* (south of Danube to the west); VUMB: *Viertel unter dem Manhartsberg* (north of Danube to the east – also called *Weinviertel*); VOMB: *Viertel ober dem Manhartsberg* (north of Danube to the west – also called *Waldviertel*).
Source: Knittler, 'Between East and West', p. 158.

lodgers had much lower limits set at 56, 26, and 12 days per year respectively in Lower Austria (in Bohemia and Moravia partly higher according to their tax assessment).[9] In Upper Austria, where the limit for labour services was fixed at the very low level of 14 days per year in 1597, there was no need for further regulation. For Lower Austria the data points to important regional differences, with the south-western part (VOWW) having a division of land between demesnes and peasant holdings similar to that of Upper Austria. It is evident that lords preferred to have arable land and pastures rather than vineyards. (Styria and Bohemia seem to be exceptional, but this is not quite conclusive since, in Styria, although most vineyards were classified as demesne land, they were nevertheless overwhelmingly in the hereditary possession of peasants and townspeople, whereas in Bohemia viticulture was a kind of noble hobby. Vine growing was an important part of the rural economy in Lower Austria, Moravia and Styria. In Bohemia and Upper Austria it occupied only a tiny fraction of the agricultural land.) Demesne shares were highest for woodland since lords had more or less unilaterally abolished peasant use rights in woodland and had appropriated to themselves a good part of the woodland formerly in the possession of their subjects.

Since the labelling of large parts of Central and East Central Europe as 'in-between regions',

[9] Ferdinand Edler von Hauer, *Praktische Darstellung der in Österreich unter der Enns für das Unterthansfach bestehenden Gesetze* (3 vols, 1824), I, pp. 78–146, contains a detailed treatment of the *Robotpatent* for Lower Austria (1772) and the following amendments. For Bohemia and Moravia (1775) see Karl Grünberg, *Die Bauernbefreiung und die Auflösung des gutsherrlich-bäuerlichen Verhältnisses in Böhmen, Mähren und Schlesien* (2 vols, 1894), II, pp. 237–70.

'transition zones' or 'semi-periphery'[10] is not really satisfying, attempts to explain why the development of demesne lordship in the eastern Austrian Lands got 'stuck' also have a long tradition.[11] Three factors have been addressed in this respect: first, the changing power balance between lords and princes in the single territories in question, or, more generally, their political constitution;[12] second, the existence of a policy of 'peasant protection' (*Bauernschutz*) by the territorial prince or state;[13] and third, the degree of access to supra-regional markets for the sale of goods produced on seigneurial demesnes.[14] The revisionist research of the last 20 or 30 years into the supposed dualism of agrarian structures in Central and East Central Europe has shown that the structure and development of lordship in the single territories and regions was much less monolithic than hitherto supposed. There were islands of *Grundherrschaft* within the regions of *Gutsherrschaft* and *vice versa*; the image of an enserfed peasantry, subject to grim exploitation by their lords, had been exaggerated by earlier research, not least for ideological reasons.[15] In short, the famous Elbe river borderline seems to have vanished with the Iron Curtain – so much so that younger colleagues from East Central European countries often tend to deny (or to ignore) all differences in the status of the subject tenants and the rights and powers of their lords.

In what follows I analyse the transition of the Lower Austrian seigneury from a predominantly rent-taking (in money and kind) lordship to a form of lordship which showed characteristics of *Gutsherrschaft* (the obligation to perform unregulated labour services, and the compulsory service – *Gesindezwangsdienst* – of orphans and the sons and daughters of peasants on demesne farms) more closely than it has been done so far by historians concentrating on the question of labour rent. This development was accompanied by fierce struggles between lords and peasants culminating in an outright peasant uprising at the end of the sixteenth century. I further try to question the supposed role of the early modern state or the prince in blocking the development of a demesne economy by drawing on Lower Austrian sources concerning the introduction of – in principle – unlimited labour services. I go on to address the tricky question of serfdom and what it could have meant to contemporaries by pointing to the use made of the term

[10] Immanuel Wallerstein, *The modern world-system*, II, *Mercantilism and the consolidation of the European World Economy, 1600–1750* (1980), p. 201, has adopted the term *Wirtschaftsherrschaft* to characterize manorial structures in the 'more semi-peripheral zones of central Europe'.

[11] That this problematic is not confined to the Austrian territories, but pertains as well to territories west of the Elbe river (Saxony, Thuringia, Magedeburg, and the Altmark) has been discussed recently by Lieselott Enders, 'Grundherrschaft und Gutswirtschaft. Zur Agrarverfassung der frühneuzeitlichen Altmark', *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie* 55 (2007), pp. 95–112.

[12] Joseph Redlich, 'Leibeigenschaft und Bauernbefreiung in Österreich', *Zeitschrift für Social- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 3 (1895), pp. 258–9; Jerome Blum, 'The rise of serfdom in eastern Europe', *American Historical Rev.* 42 (1957), pp. 807–36, here pp. 822–3; Knittler, 'Between East and West', p. 165.

[13] Grünberg, *Die Bauernbefreiung und die Auflösung*, I, p. 125; Erna Patzelt, 'Bauernschutz in Österreich vor 1848', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 58 (1950), pp. 37–55; more generally Friedrich Lütge, *Geschichte der deutschen Agrarverfassung vom frühen Mittelalter bis zum 19. Jahrhundert* (1963), pp. 134–52.

[14] Władysław Rusiński, 'Some remarks on the differentiation of agrarian structure in east-central Europe from the 16th to the 18th century', *Studia Historiae Oeconomicae* 13 (1978), pp. 82–95, Knittler, 'Between East and West', pp. 165–6.

[15] As Markus Cerman provides a short overview of the more recent developments in the historiography in the introduction to these essays, I omit any further citations.

Leibeigenschaft by the actors – peasants, lords, and state agencies – themselves. Finally, I will assess the importance of a factor hitherto nearly completely neglected in attempts to explain why the Lower Austrian seigneury did not develop into a full-fledged *Gutsherrschaft*, by which I mean the specific character of the regional agro-systems of this part of Central Europe.

I

A short description of the agrarian characteristics of the province of Lower Austria, the size and development of its population, and the distribution of tenant peasant holdings between noble and ecclesiastical lords on the one hand, and the prince on the other hand, as well as a short account of changes in prices and wages, is necessary as background to my analysis of the change.

The division of the country into four districts (*Viertel)* (as in Table 1) corresponds more or less to the ecological conditions of farming.[16] The two eastern parts (VUWW and VUMB) are favoured by climate and soil. Here conditions for arable farming were much better than in the western parts of the country. Most of the wine production took place in this sub-region, with a concentration around and south of the city of Vienna, itself a major vine-growing and wine-trading centre until the middle of the seventeenth century, whereas the VUMB was marked by a general spread of vineyards throughout the countryside.[17] Low levels of rainfall in the north-eastern part (VUMB), on the other hand, severely limited the amount of pasture and meadow available for animal husbandry. Cattle farming was of little importance in the early modern period since Lower Austria was amply supplied with meat from the great Hungarian plain.[18] The north-western region (VOMB), geomorphologically a part of the Bohemian plateau, is a more wooded area with a much lower agricultural potential, which declines from east to west. Vine growing in this part of the country was limited to a narrow stretch of the Danube valley. Differing in nearly all aspects of agrarian production is the south-western part of the country (VOWW) whose southern half belongs to the alpine region, where cattle farming combined with cereal cultivation prevailed.[19] To the west, the processing of iron was economically important whereas viticulture played only a very limited role in the agrarian economy. This area was settled by colonists from Bavaria in the Carolingian period, whereas the other parts of the country were thoroughly colonized only during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Single, but substantial farmsteads marked the settlement pattern of the south-west, whereas in the other three districts nuclear villages prevailed.

Due to the different timing of colonization by German settlers, seigneuries pertaining to

[16] For the division of Austria into four *Viertel*, see the note to Table 1.

[17] See Erich Landsteiner, 'Weinbau und Gesellschaft in Ostmitteleuropa' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Vienna, 1992).

[18] At the end of the sixteenth century, 150,000–200,000 head of cattle for slaughter passed the border between Lower Austria, Styria and Hungary annually. Most of them were driven further west to South Germany (or south to Venice), with only 25–30% remaining in Lower Austria. See Harald Prickler, 'Wieviele Ochsen wurden um 1570/90 aus Ungarn nach dem Westen exportiert?', *Burgenländische Heimatblätter* 66 (2004), pp. 21–53.

[19] Herbert Knittler, *Nutzen, Renten, Erträge. Struktur und Entwicklung frühneuzeitlicher Feudaleinkommen in Niederösterreich* (1989), pp. 120–1, provides a concise description of ecological features.

TABLE 2. Number of 'houses' (tax units) in the four *Viertel* of Lower Austria, 1610–84.

	VOWW		*VUWW*		*VOMB*		*VUMB*		*Lower Austria*	
	'houses'	*index*	*'houses'*	*index*	*'houses'*	*index*	*'houses'*	*index*	*'houses'*	*index*
1610	23514	100	12760	100	17300	100	16158	100	69732	100
1632	23224	99	11925	93	12715	73	12888	80	60752	87
1648	19618	84	9315	73	10542	61	5109	32	44584	64
1655	20971	107	10199	80	10478	61	8041	50	49689	71
1682	23670	113	11855	93	17786	103	15701	97	69012	99
1684	13012	55	4281	34	17476	101	12970	80	47739	68

Notes: for the four *Viertel* see the note to Table 1.
Sources: Franz Stundner, *Die Verteidigung des Landes Österreich unter der Enns im Dreißigjährigen Krieg* (1949), p. 202; NÖLA, S. A., G 2–17/1; B 1–9; G 5–13/1, fo. 2.

the (arch)dukes of Austria were unevenly distributed over the country. They were uncommon in the VOWW (Austria south of the Danube to the west), but were substantial in the other three *Viertel*. The share of the archduke in the overall number of subject tenants amounted to 13–14 per cent in about 1590. At that time about 77,000 subject tenants ('houses') were counted as belonging to the seigneuries of the nobility, divided between barons and knights, and the abbeys, whereas the tenants of the archduke's chamber estates and those under the advocacy (*Vogtei*) of the archduke numbered around 12,000.[20] If we add the 3,560 houses in smaller towns and market places under the direct lordship of the archduke, and the city of Vienna with its suburbs (possibly *c*.1,800 houses) as well as several other towns with special status, we arrive at a total number of perhaps 90,000–92,000 houses, which corresponds to an estimated population figure of 580,000 to 600,000.[21] Because of severe population losses during the Thirty Years' War, mainly in the parts of the country north of the Danube,[22] and in the last major attack of Ottoman forces on Vienna in 1683, which in turn caused heavy population losses in the parts south of the Danube, that figure was only achieved again around 1700 (see Table 2).

[20] Advocacy (*Vogtei*) in this sense refers to the powers exercised by the archduke over the tenants of parish churches and clerics who were considered incapable of exercising jurisdiction over their tenants.

[21] Anton Eggendorfer, 'Das Bereitungsbuch von 1590/91', *Unsere Heimat* 47 (1976), pp. 59–73; Kurt Klein, 'Der Häuserbestand Niederösterreichs um 1590', *Unsere Heimat* 47 (1976), pp. 74–90; Kurt Klein, 'Die Bevölkerung Österreichs vom Beginn des 16. bis zur Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts', in Heimhold Helczmanovski (ed.), *Beiträge zur Bevölkerungs- und Sozialgeschichte Österreichs* (1973), pp. 47–112. For the number of houses under the lordship of the archduke and his chamber see Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv (NÖLA), Ständische Abteilung (SA), B 9/19, fo. 14.

[22] The contention that the Austrian Lands suffered no important population losses during the Thirty Years' War, going back to Günter Franz, *Der Dreißigjährige Krieg und das deutsche Volk* (1940, 4th edn, 1979), p. 15, and since than constantly repeated in the relevant literature, is certainly wrong. See Erich Landsteinera and Andreas Weigl, '"Sonsten finden wir die Sachen sehr übel aufm Landt beschaffen …". Krieg und lokale Gesellschaft in Niederösterreich (1618–21)', in Benigna von Krusenstjern and Hans Medick (eds), *Zwischen Alltag und Katastrophe. Der Dreißigjährige Krieg aus der Nähe* (Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Institutes für Geschichte 148, 1999), pp. 229–71, here pp. 231–5.

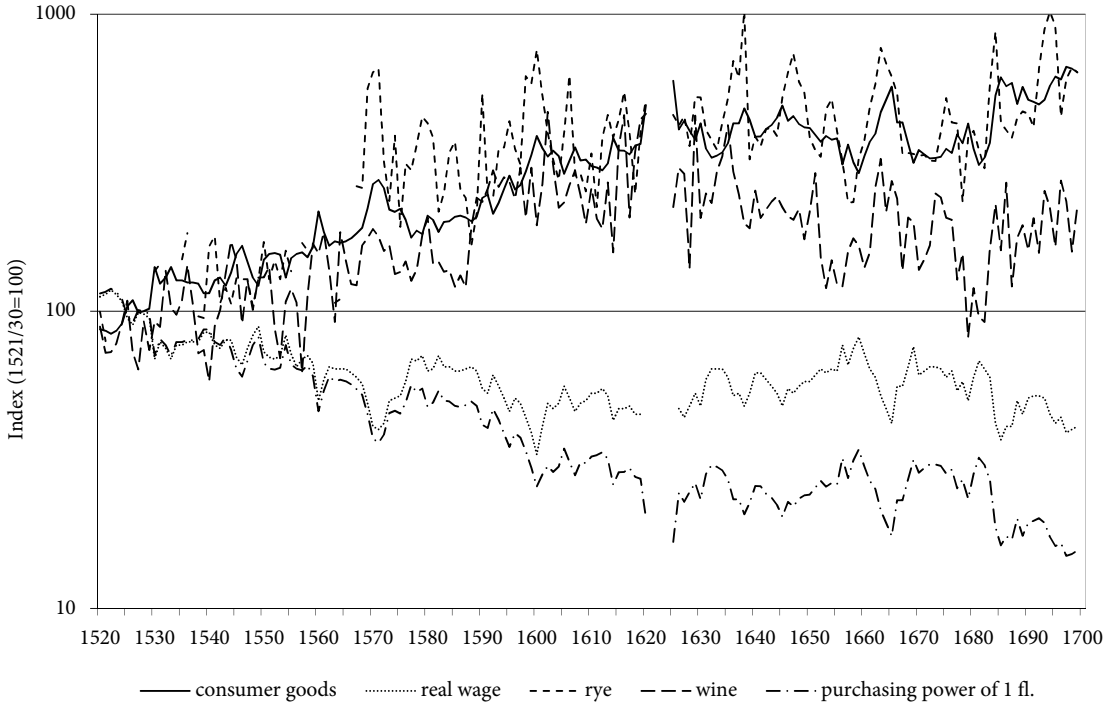


FIGURE 1: Prices, wages and purchasing power of currency, Lower Austria 1520–1700

Sources: H. Phelps Brown/ S. Hopkins, *A perspective on wages and prices* (1981), pp. 78–98, Table 1 (consumer goods, real wage); A. F. Pribram, *Materialien zur Geschichte der Preise und Löhne in Österreich* (1938), series 398, 474, supplemented with further data (rye, wine).

It is evident that these disruptions and population losses changed the balance of power between the social classes. After the Thirty Years' War and, again, after the siege of Vienna by Ottoman troops, land for the expansion of seigneurial demesnes was easily available, whereas the labour to cultivate it was in short supply.

This is reflected by the movement of prices and wages (Figure 1). The secular trend of rising prices for consumer goods, especially for cereals, and declining real wages, was reversed by the beginning of the Thirty Years' War (the hyperinflation caused by currency manipulation during the years 1620–23 is omitted). Prices declined between 1625 and 1680, whereas real wages rose until about 1670. The terms of trade of the two most important products of the agrarian economy of Lower Austria underwent a marked change as well. The price of wine declined much more than the price of rye, the most important bread grain, during this period of deflation. This tendency had already set in during the last third of the sixteenth century, but was masked by the fact that wine prices rose steeply after 1585 due to a series of very small vintages caused by adverse weather conditions. If we go further back into the century, price and wages indices suggest that after the relatively calm period between 1530 and 1560, all exchange relations began to change drastically during the 1560s. With the severe subsistence crisis which hit all parts of Central Europe around 1570, caused by several very small grain

harvests,[23] much more difficult times began for wage earners, vine-growers, and all those living on fixed money rents.

II

Here we turn to the struggle for labour rent, starting with a review of previous writings and the theoretical literature before turning to consider the politics of the demand for labour in the mid- and late sixteenth century.

(a) Labour rent and lordship

The long-lasting and lively discussions about agrarian dualism and the origins and characteristics of *Gutsherrschaft* in German historiography have produced two competing definitions, which, after World War II, became identified with East and West German historical scholarship respectively.[24] Historians of the GDR insisted, in the tradition of Georg Friedrich Knapp, that any definition and regional delimitation of *Gutsherrschaft* should be based on the amount of labour services imposed on the peasant subjects, the existence of commercially oriented demesne farms cultivated with the labour force, draught animals, and implements of these subjects in conjunction as well as the legal status of the peasant population ('second serfdom') and character of tenancy rights. Hartmut Harnisch, the author of some of the most refined and logically consistent texts in this respect, proposed a threshold of more than two or three days of draught service (*Spanndienst*) per week as the essential criterion for deciding if the social relations of production in a certain region should be classified as *gutsherrschaftlich* or *grundherrschaftlich*.[25] Friedrich Lütge, although concurring with Harnisch on the opinions of Georg Friedrich Knapp, opposed what he considered an erroneous economic definition of *Gutsherrschaft*, based on the existence of demesne farms (*Gutswirtschaft*), and developed an alternative concept in his numerous studies of the agrarian constitution (*Agrarverfassung*) of the German-speaking areas of central Europe. He insisted that the concept of *Gutsherrschaft* should be based on the 'social fact of lordship'. Only where lordship over land (*Grundherrschaft* in the narrower sense) was fused with judicial lordship (*Gerichtsherrschaft*) in closed districts would *Grundherrschaft* be transformed into *Gutsherrschaft*.[26]

Lütke based his interpretation on the concept of lordship developed by Otto Brunner

[23] See Erich Landsteiner, 'Trübselige Zeit? Auf der Suche nach den wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Dimensionen des Klimawandels im späten 16. Jahrhundert', in *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* 12 (2001), pp. 79–116.

[24] Heinrich Kaak, *Die Gutsherrschaft. Theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Agrarwesen im ostelbischen Raum* (1991), pp. 299–364.

[25] Hartmut Harnisch, 'Die Gutsherrschaft. Forschungsgeschichte, Entwicklungszusammenhänge und Strukturmerkmale', *Jahrbuch für Geschichte des Feudalismus* 9 (1985), pp. 189–240, here p. 215. See also id., 'Probleme der Periodisierung und regionalen Typisierung der Gutsherrschaft im mitteleuropäischen Raum', *Jahrbuch für Geschichte des Feudalismus* 10 (1986), pp. 251–74.

[26] See Lütge, 'Geschichte der deutschen Agrarverfassung', p. 102, for a concise formulation of his concept of *Gutsherrschaft*. Lütge developed this in a study on *Grundherrschaft* in Saxony and Thuringia: Friedrich Lütge, *Die mitteldeutsche Grundherrschaft und ihre Auflösung* (Quellen und Forschungen zur Agrargeschichte 4, sec. edn, 1957), esp. 291–7.

in his highly influential book on *Land and Lordship* in the late medieval Austrian lands.[27] Brunner had defined medieval – 'Germanic' – lordship as a personal and ethical relationship of reciprocity between lord and subject. 'The reciprocal relationship between lord and subject involved a whole set of rights and obligations on both sides. … [D]ues were not simply equivalent to a rental in the modern sense … but were also an exchange for the continuous protection that the lord provided'.[28] He saw labour services as one kind of 'extraordinary aid' going to the lord who held protective power over his subjects.[29] Since this concept of lordship is devoid of any idea of economic exploitation, labour services in the context of *Gutsherrschaft* could only be conceived as degeneration of lordship: 'the original justification for labour services, the peasant's obligation to provide aid, was blatantly exploited for purely economic ends'.[30]

Lütge was well aware that in many territories of central and southern Germany as well as in the Austrian lands, lordship over land and juridical lordship was often unified in the hands of the same lord, and that districts of unified lordship[31] existed not only in the East Elbian territories. He therefore resorted to the argument of peasant protection by territorial overlords and princes to explain why several West Elbian territories (mainly Bavaria and the eastern Austrian lands), where the conditions considered necessary by him for the development of *Gutsherrschaft* were perfectly met, did not further develop in this direction but 'got stuck half way on this path'.[32]

It seems to me that if one accepts the propositions that the demand of the lord for services and rents from his subjects was based on lordship – conceived as the exercise of power over land and people – and that these rents and services always *also* had the function of providing the lord with his material necessities, the difference between the two competing conceptions of *Gutsherrschaft* (and lordship in general) melts into air. One-sided definitions of (feudal) lordship as either a primarily economic or juridical relationship are not able to grasp the essence of the social relations of production incorporated in it. In a society where the direct producers were in possession of their means of subsistence or production, surplus could only be extracted from them by means of lordship – via 'extra-economic coercion', as Marxists would say,[33] but even this formula implies the distinction (or separation) of economic and

[27] Otto Brunner, *Land and Lordship. Structures of governance in medieval Austria* (1939, English translation, 1992, based on the revised fourth edition of 1959, from which Brunner eliminated all allusions to the Nazi regime so prominent in the first three editions of the book.)

[28] Ibid., p. 218. See the important critique by Gadi Algazi, *Herrengewalt und Gewalt der Herren im späten Mittelalter* (1992).

[29] Brunner, *Land and Lordship*, pp. 224–5.

[30] Ibid., p. 246.

[31] According to Lieselott Enders, *Die Uckermark. Geschichte einer kurmärkischen Landschaft vom 12. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert* (1992), p. 609, the share of villages with one lord having all lordship rights in this part of the Brandenburg electorate rose from 69% in 1624 to 86% in 1800. In the Lower Austrian *Waldviertel* (VOMB), 48% of all villages had only one lord in about 1590, and measures of further territorial consolidation through sales and exchanges of subject houses were taken during the eighteenth century. See Stephanie Brunner, 'Zwei Herrschaftskarten des Waldviertels', in Eduard Stephan (ed.), *Das Waldviertel*, VII, (1937), pp. 280–96.

[32] Lütge, *Geschichte der deutschen Agrarverfassung*, pp. 136–46.

[33] See Karl Marx, *Capital*, (3 vols, Penguin Classics edn, 1993), III, 925–7, for the *locus classicus*, and Robert Brenner, 'Feudalism', in John Eatwell, Murray Milgate and Peter Newman (eds), *Marxian Economics* (1990), pp. 170–85, for a concise exposition by the most prominent exponent of this theoretical tradition today.

political power that emerged only with the abolition of (feudal) lordship.[34] For the same reason Hoffmann's concept of *Wirtschaftsherrschaft*, intended to lay stress on the entrepreneurial activities of lords, misses the point that lordship always implied the extraction and transfer of a surplus from the direct producers to the lord – in one form or the other. It remains to be seen if and how the form mattered, but it has been argued that it 'determines the relationship of domination and servitude'.[35]

(b) Lower Austria

As in other central European territories,[36] labour services in Lower Austria had virtually disappeared as a form of feudal rent or, if still in existence, had acquired a purely symbolic value in the later middle ages.[37] Evidence for this comes primarily from the important collection of manorial extents (*Urbare*) of the chamber estates of the Habsburg dukes preserved in the Austrian State Archives.[38] If there are any labour services mentioned in these extents, and there usually are, they appear as either limited to duties such as hauling firewood or tithe to the lord's castle, ploughing for one, two or three days, or harvesting grain or grapes on the lord's demesne.[39] Or, in cases where they were not clearly specified, the extent of the demesne farmed by the lord himself was often so small that they could not have been a heavy burden for the subjects.[40] But this evidence could be misleading since the chamber estates might have constituted a special case given that the chamber administration was not interested in the production of large quantities of agrarian goods but in raising as much revenue as possible out of its seigneuries by leasing or mortgaging them to nobles for a lump sum corresponding to the capitalized value of the rents and revenues.[41]

[34] The prospect changes, however, within the framework of Wallerstein's *Modern world-system* where labour services of subject tenants appear as one of several forms of 'coerced cash-crop labour' producing commodities for a 'world-market'.

[35] Marx, *Capital*, III, p. 927.

[36] See, for example, Szigmond Pál Pach, 'The development of feudal rent in Hungary in the fifteenth century', in *EcHR* 19 (1966), pp. 1–14; and, more critically, Markus Cerman, 'Gutsherrschaft vor dem "Weißen Berg". Zur Verschärfung der Erbuntertänigkeit in Nordböhmen 1380 bis 1620', in Jan Peters (ed.), *Gutsherrschaftsgesellschaften im europäischen Vergleich* (1997), pp. 91–111.

[37] I leave open the question of whether this was an effect of the dissolution of an older manorial system with extended demesnes (*Villifikationssystem*), indeed, whether such a system had ever existed in Lower Austria, given the fact that most of the country was colonized by German settlers only during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. See Werner Rösener, *Grundherrschaft im Wandel. Untersuchungen zur Entwicklung geistlicher Grundherrschaften im südwestdeutschen Raum vom 9. bis 14. Jahrhundert* (Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Institutes für Geschichte 102, 1991), pp. 14–54, for a recent discussion of this old war horse of medieval economic and social history. The fiercest opponent of this thesis was Alfons Dopsch, *Herrschaft und Bauer in der deutschen Kaiserzeit* (Quellen und Forschungen zur Agrargeschichte 10, 1938, 2nd edn, 1964). Michael Mitterauer, 'Formen adeliger Herrschaftsbildung im hochmittelalterlichen Österreich', in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 80 (1972), pp. 265–338, provides an extensive overview and a typology of the medieval formation of seigneuries in Lower Austria.

[38] Austrian State Archives, Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv (HKA) – Urbare.

[39] See also HKA, Niederösterreichische Herrschaftsakten (Nö. HA) R 72, fos 5–37; Johann Wöhrer, 'Robot-Verhältnisse im Viertel unter dem Wienerwald' (Ph.D thesis, Univ. of Vienna, 1930), pp. 45–6; Knittler, *Nutzen, Renten, Erträge*, pp. 44–6.

[40] According to Knittler, *Nutzen, Renten, Erträge*, pp. 31–3, the extent of demesne arable land on 42 chamber estates amounted to 44 ha on average in *c.*1570, and only one estate had more than 100 ha.

[41] See Herbert Knittler, 'Habsburgische "Domänen".

Source material for the seigneuries of the nobility and abbeys is unfortunately much scarcer, but the few examples we have give a similar impression to that of the chamber estates. When the lordly possessions of Georg von Eckartsau – two seigneuries in the Lower Austrian *Weinviertel* (VUMB) with 580 subject tenants – were divided among his five daughters, new extents were drawn up in 1497.[42] These extents document that the arable fields of two demesne farms (172.5 ha) as well as two smaller demesne farms, each composed of 27 ha of arable land, were all leased out for rather low rents in kind. A further demesne farm had completely decayed, so that the clerk who drew up the extents had to rely on the 'sayings of old people'[43] to locate it. Only 16.5 ha of demesne vineyards were still farmed directly with salaried labourers. We can also measure the amount of land lying waste and the number of deserted tenancies of these two seigneuries through the loss of rents resulting from them: 15 per cent of all money rents and between 15 per cent (wine) and about 30 per cent (wheat, rye and oats) of rents in kind.[44] The accounts drawn up by the stewards of the seigneuries of the Puchheim family scattered over the two quarters of Lower Austria north of the Danube (VOMB and VUMB) from the years 1444–68 document labour services only for one seigneury, but even here, a good part of this obligation was commuted into money payments. In the two other seigneuries, with only a small demesne production of grain and wine, all cultivation was done by wage labourers. The greater part of the demesne fields were leased out, as was the case of the seigneuries of Georg von Eckartsau.[45] The extent for the seigneury of the Cistercian abbey of Zwettl in the Lower Austrian *Waldviertel* (VOMB) from 1457 mentions the labour duties of the abbey's subject tenants in only six villages out of 192, all in the vicinity of the monastery. The tenants possessing full holdings had to perform between three hours (!) and five days of ploughing and harvesting. Hauling services were already commuted into a money rent.[46] This is also confirmed by the extents of Upper Austrian monasteries from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Hauling services predominated, but were often commuted into money payments; when other labour duties appear, it is mostly in locations situated in the vicinity of the monasteries and amounted to no more than a few days of field labour per year; demesne farms were mostly leased out for rents in kind.[47]

Note 41 *continued*
Das Fallbeispiel Österreich unter der Enns im 16. Jahrhundert', in Walter Leitsch and Stanisław Trawkowski (eds), *Polen und Österreich im 16. Jahrhundert* (1997), pp. 64–89.

[42] Helmuth Feigl and Thomas Stockinger (eds), *Die Urbare der Herrschaften Maissau und Sonnberg anlässlich der Teilung des Erbes nach Georg von Eckartsau im Jahre 1497* (Fontes rerum austriacarum [hereafter FRA], Fontes Iuris, 20, 2008)).

[43] Ibid., 99.

[44] Ibid., 104. This accords well with general estimates of the quantity of deserted tenancies in Lower Austria which range between 10% and 40% of all housed tenancies. Grain-growing areas were much harder hit than wine-growing areas. See Kurt Klein, 'Quantitative Informationen zu den Verödungserscheinungen des 14.–16. Jahrhunderts in Niederösterreich', in Helmuth Feigl and Anton Kusternig (eds), *Mittelalterliche Wüstungen in Niederösterreich* (1983), pp. 55–74.

[45] Herbert Knittler, *Vom Leben auf dem Lande. Die Rechnungen der Herren von Puchheim zu Horn und Göllersdorf, 1444–1468* (Studien und Forschungen aus dem niederösterreichischen Institut für Landeskunde, 41, 2005), pp. 31–3.

[46] Günther Schneider (ed.), *Das Urbar des niederösterreichischen Zisterzienserklosters Zwettl von 1457* (FRA, Fontes Iuris, 18, 2002), pp. 158–9, 223ss., 320ss., 346ss.

[47] Konrad Schiffmann (ed.), *Die mittelalterlichen Stiftsurbare des Landes ob der Enns* (Österreichische Urbare, III Abt., Bd. 2, Teil I-IV, 1904–25).

This situation began to change in the middle of the sixteenth century. We have clear indications that in the 1550s, 12 days per year was considered to be the usual amount of labour service according to the custom of the province (*Landesbrauch* – the traditional, yet not codified, constitution).[48] Courts applied this rule at least until the middle of the 1560s. Therefore it is highly significant that in their grievances, presented at the diet of 1556,[49] the Estates protested against a decision pronounced by the Lower Austrian government in 1552 concerning a complaint brought by several subjects against their lord for forcing them to perform unusually high labour services. The noble Estates complained that one of their members had had to account for his demands at the princely court, they insisted that the land marshal's court[50] was the place for settling such disputes, and refused to accept the decision that labour services should be limited to 12 days per year. They argued that rents were so low in Lower Austria ('twelve shillings for an amount of land leased for what in other countries the subjects have to pay ten florins and more', about seven times as much as in Lower Austria) that the lords had to rely on the income from their demesnes and the labour services of their subjects.[51] This point was certainly correct since money rents were indeed very low and fixed, and the more substantial rents in kind had been mostly commuted to money payments. It is also clear that the effects of the rising price level on the value of fixed money rents had began to be felt.

In his response, Ferdinand I referred to a previous decision in this dispute made by the land marshal's court and insisted on the limit of 12 days, adding that he considered this level too high rather than too low.[52] He also refused to accept the demand of the estates that their subjects should be denied the right to address the Lower Austrian government with their complaints.[53]

[48] See Bernhard Walter, 'De emphyteusi. Von denen dienstparn und zinsparn Gründten und Guetern' (1552), in Max Rintelen (ed.), *Bernhard Walthers privatrechtliche Traktate* (1937), pp. 3–29, here pp. 19–20. Walter, a university-trained jurist, was councillor of the Lower Austrian government from 1547 onwards and became chancellor in 1556. He wrote a series of treatises on the traditional Lower Austrian constitution, which became of importance in the protracted process of the formulation and enactment of a written constitution for the country that continued until the publication of the so-called 'Tractatus de juribus incorporalibus' in 1679 (*Codex Austriacus*, 2 vols, 1704, I, pp. 581–607). See Fritz Wisnicki, 'Die Geschichte der Abfassung des Tractatus de juribus incorporalibus', *Jahrbuch für Landeskunde von Niederösterreich* 20 pt 2 (1926/27), pp. 69–91.

[49] For the procedure see Josef Pauser, 'Gravamina und Policey. Zum Einfluß ständischer Beschwerden auf die landesfürstliche Gesetzgebungspraxis in den niederösterreichischen Ländern vornehmlich unter Ferdinand I', in *Parliaments, Estates and Representation* 17 (1997), pp. 13–38.

[50] This was the court of the nobility and the court of appeal for its subjects in cases of dispute with the lord. See Arnold Luschin von Ebengreuth, *Österreichische Reichsgeschichte* (1896), p. 457.

[51] Johann Baptist Suttinger, 'Der niederösterreichischen Landschaft Gedenkbuch, aus denen denkwürdigen Landtagshandlungen von Anno 1521 biß 1581 alles Vleißes in nachfolgende Ordnung zusammen getragen (1657)', NÖLA, SA, Ms 242. I have consulted a copy of the manuscript reproduced in the so-called *Sammlung Chorinsky*, a collection of legal documents in facsimile mainly drawn from Lower Austria. This multi-volume collection, named after Count Carl Chorinsky, who initiated it at the end of the nineteenth century, has no fixed number of volumes because academic libraries have bound the single parts into volumes at will. I am citing the copy set held by the library of the Faculty for the History of Law of the University of Vienna (under the class mark: *Gesetzessammlung* B 350) which consists of 38 volumes. See here vol. XXII, pp. 194–7. See also Georg E. Friess, *Der Aufstand der Bauern in Niederösterreich am Schlusse des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (1897), pp. 66–7.

[52] *Sammlung Chorinsky*, XXII, pp. 198–203.

[53] Ibid., pp. 349–53.

Since the Estates insisted on their protest, a resolution promulgated on 30 October 1558 stated that when a lord could prove his right to demand more days of labour service, his subjects would have to comply, but in the event that the subjects were able to prove that they had been accustomed to perform less, the lord would not be allowed to exact additional days of service from them.[54] But, at the diet of 1563, when the same complaints were raised by the Estates, the government stated in its resolution that the emperor (still Ferdinand I) had taken the decision not to set a limit on the subjects' duty to perform labour services at the demand of their lords and to leave the latter in possession of their old usage.[55] This was decisive since later regulations of labour service obligations always referred to this resolution, which was interpreted as a permission to demand unlimited labour services (*ungemäßigte* or *ungemessene Robot*).[56] Only in 1772 was new legislation promulgated with the *Robotpatent* setting the limit at 104 days per year for full and half holdings.

The same happened with regard to another institution traditionally considered as an index of *Gutsherrschaft*, the so-called *Gesindezwangsdienst* (the obligation of the children of subject tenants to perform one or more years of – remunerated – service as farmhands for their lord). A first request by the estates in this respect was denied at the diet of 1546.[57] To a second request made by the landlords in 1547, where they stated that they were concerned only with those children intending to leave the parental household 'to be free and to live as day-labourers',[58] Ferdinand I answered that he considered such practice to be an aspect of serfdom,[59] but nevertheless conceded that the lords might use their subjects' children older than 15 years for a single year as farmhands if their parents, relatives, and neighbours had no need for them and if they had no intention of learning a craft.[60] In 1564, the lords tried to get rid of these restrictions by demanding that their subjects should be obliged to present their children of age every year at Christmas to the lord for inspection of their suitability for service. That was conceded with the sole provision that lords had to pay them the same wages as they, the youths, could get from other employers.[61]

This change of policy by the government, and the pressure of the lords on it clearly evident in the proceedings of the diets, had an immediate effect on the social climate. All over the

[54] Ibid., pp. 207–9. In a decree of 27 Nov. 1557, Ferdinand I ordered that labour services on the chamber estates mortgaged to the nobility had to accord to the 'old usage' and should not automatically be set at 12 days per year (HKA, Nö. HA, R 72, fos 2–3).

[55] *Sammlung Chorinsky,* XXIV, pp. 898–9.

[56] See title 5, § 4, of the constitution published in 1679 ('Tractatus de juribus incorporalibus'), in *Codex Austriacus*, I, pp. 581–607. See also Francisus Josephus Greneck, *Theatrum jurisictionis Austriacae* (1752), pp. 158–75, here p. 165; Ferdinand Edler von Hauer, *Praktische Darstellung der in Österreich unter der Enns für das Unterhansfach bestehenden Gesetze* (third edn, 1824), pp. 79–80 ('1363' is a misprint for '1563'). Advocates of the thesis of a policy of peasant protection performed by the prince insist that Ferdinand I did not give permission to the estates of the nobility and the clergy to demand unlimited labour services, but only that he did not set a limit, which is probably correct. It did not, however, make any difference to further developments in this matter. See Erna Patzelt, *Bauernschutz in Österreich*, pp. 646–7.

[57] Suttinger, 'Gedenkbuch', repr. in *Sammlung Chorinsky* XXII, pp. 328–30.

[58] Ibid., pp. 330–3, here 332.

[59] Ibid., pp. 334, (…) *damit aber dannocht der unterthanen künder nicht alß leibeigen leuth und knecht gehalten werden.*

[60] Ibid., pp. 333–8.

[61] Ibid., pp. 340–4. By 1679 the duration of service had risen to three years. See title 4, § 7, of the constitution published in 1679 ('Tractatus de juribus incorporalibus'), in *Codex Austriacus*, I, pp. 581–607.

country disputes arose about the amount of labour service lords could demand. In a protocol of three sessions of the land marshal's court held in 1565–66, seven such disputes and the resolutions of the court are documented. The short notices reflect a pronounced sensibility of the subjects against any attempt to raise their labour duties whereas the lords did not refrain from harsh measures, including imprisonment, to compel them. It is also interesting to see that in its deliberations the court still adhered to the idea that the custom of the land prescribed only 12 days of labour service.[62] Such sources are unfortunately very rare. Material for the better-documented chamber estates provides more information on the struggle over labour services. During the reform of this part of the princely domain from 1569 onwards, intended to raise the income of these estates so as to be able to mortgage them for higher sums to the nobility and other investors, commissioners were sent out to investigate, among other things, the usage of labour services and the possibility of imposing a uniform duty of 12 days of service per year on the subject tenants.[63] The idea behind this enquiry was to calculate the monetary value of the labour services, if not to commute them into a money rent, and thereby to raise the estimated income of these seigneuries. It turned out that the situation was far from uniform, with many subject tenants performing no labour services at all, and others complaining that the lords in possession of the seigneuries were pressing them to provide more and unusual services. In some parts of the *Waldviertel* (VOMB), villagers complained that they had to perform as much as 50 days of labour service.[64] Others protested against hauling obligations over long distances.[65] Studies of single chamber estates suggest that the pressure to provide more labour services was omnipresent, and conflicts between the subject tenants and the possessors were therefore the order of the day.[66]

In 1596–97 these disputes acquired a new quality with the rebellion of the tenant subjects in the two western parts of the country (VOWW and VOMB), which was closely connected with similar disturbances in Upper Austria. In respect of their dimensions, the fierceness of the struggle, and the measures of repression, these uprisings qualify as 'peasant wars'.[67] In their grievances, the rebels complained about constantly rising labour rents (*Robot)*, the harsh treatment of those liable to *Gesindezwangsdienst* as well as mounting tax pressure, recruitment for war, the exercise of pre-emption rights by the lords as well as rising fines in case of sales or inheritance transactions.[68] Whereas the Upper Austrian rebels succeeded, at least in respect to labour services, insofar as they managed to secure an order from the Emperor Rudolf II

[62] 'Protocoll des Landrechtes in Österreich unter der Enns vom 22. Jänner 1565 bis 6. Juli 1566', in *Sammlung Chorinsky* XVII (a transcription of Mss 15,150 of the Austrian National Library).

[63] This material has been collected in HKA, nö. HA R 72.

[64] Ibid., fol. 215r.

[65] Ibid., fol. 223r–v.

[66] See Landsteiner, 'Weinbau und Gesellschaft', pp. 223–5; Thomas Winkelbauer, *Die Untertanen der Waldviertler Grundherrschaften Gföhl und Altpölla zwischen feudaler Herrschaft und absolutistischem Staat* (1986), pp. 95–8; Hans P. Schad'n, *Geschichte der Stadt Zistersdorf im Zeitalter der Reformation und des Dreißigjährigen Krieges, 1500–1650* (n.d.), pp. 50–2; Stephan Fordinal, 'Bauern und Grundherrschaft', in Marktgemeinde Krumau am Kamp, *Ein Heimatbuch* (1995), pp. 103–28.

[67] Georg E. Friess, *Der Aufstand der Bauern in Niederösterreich am Schlusse des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (1897); Helmuth Feigl, *Der niederösterreichische Bauernaufstand, 1596/97* (Militärhistorische Schriftenreihe 12, 1972); Albin Czerny, *Der zweite Bauernaufstand in Oberösterreich, 1595–1597* (1980).

[68] The central list of grievances is reproduced in Friess, *Aufstand*, pp. 244–7.

which limited their service duties to 14 days per year and which, although intended to be only provisional, remained in force until 1848,[69] the Lower Austrian subjects were brutally repressed without realizing any of their goals. Labour duties kept rising during the seventeenth century alongside the expansion of demesnes. They remained a constant source of conflict until the end of the seigneurial system.

(c) Trading tenant rights for taxes

What caused the remarkable change of policy by the ruler and his government towards the seigneurial demands for more labour services during the 1550s and 1560s? The most plausible hypothesis is that it was motivated by financial constraints. Like other territorial princes, the rulers of the Austrian lands were confronted with the manifold problems arising out of the protracted transition from domain-state to tax-state. Tax levies still had to be negotiated with the Estates, from one year to the next, at the diets, whereas the defence against the expanding Ottoman Empire and the frequent wars fought with this mighty competitor required ever greater resources as the century progressed. The rulers had to rely on credit from merchants and the nobility to cover the rising costs of the army and the court. The loans were founded on, serviced by, and paid off with the income from the princely domain (mainly customs, tolls, regal rights in mining, and the chamber estates). These sources of income were permanently overburdened with debt, and the administration was constantly seeking to increase its income.[70] The actions undertaken in this respect and the concessions granted to the Estates, mainly the nobility, to gain their consent for higher tax levies were, chronologically as well as causally, closely connected with the struggle for labour rent.

Direct taxes doubled in the first years of the 1550s in response to events in Hungary (Figure 2). After ambitions to re-conquer those parts of the Hungarian kingdom under Ottoman domination had been abandoned and a truce signed in 1547, whereby Ferdinand I agreed to pay a heavy tribute to the sultan, a new chance to regain Transylvania appeared after the death of Johann Zàpolya, the rival of Ferdinand I backed by the Ottomans, in 1551. Since the Porte favoured his son Johann Sigismund as a successor, war broke out again, and Suleyman II threatened to invade the Austrian lands. Besides the doubling of the ordinary direct tax and the levy of extraordinary subsidies for the war, the Estates of the Austrian Lands agreed on a series of indirect taxes in 1556, of which only the doubling of the consumption tax on alcoholic beverages was implemented.[71] After a new truce had been signed in 1562, Ottoman troops conquered the important fortress of Sziget in 1566, which led to a further increase in taxation. During this period, pressure on the Estates to pay large

[69] Georg Grüll, *Die Robot in Oberösterreich* (1952), pp. 97–121.

[70] Peter Rauscher, *Zwischen Ständen und Gläubigern. Die kaiserlichen Finanzen unter Ferdinand I. und Maximillian II. (1556–1576)* (2004), is currently the best treatment of the state finances of the Austrian Habsburgs in the second part of the sixteenth century. On the costs of defence against the advance of the Ottoman Empire see Géza Palffy, 'Der Preis für die Verteidigung der Habsburgermonarchie: Die Kosten der Türkenabwehr in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts', in Friedrich Edelmayer, Maximillian Lanzinner and Peter Rauscher (eds), *Finanzen und Herrschaft. Materielle Grundlagen fürstlicher Politik in den habsburgischen Ländern und im Heiligen Römischen Reich im 16. Jahrhundert* (2003), pp. 20–44.

[71] Liselotte Seeger, 'Die Geschichte der ständischen Steuern im Erzherzogtum Österreich unter der Enns, 1500–1584' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Vienna, 1995), pp. 211–15.

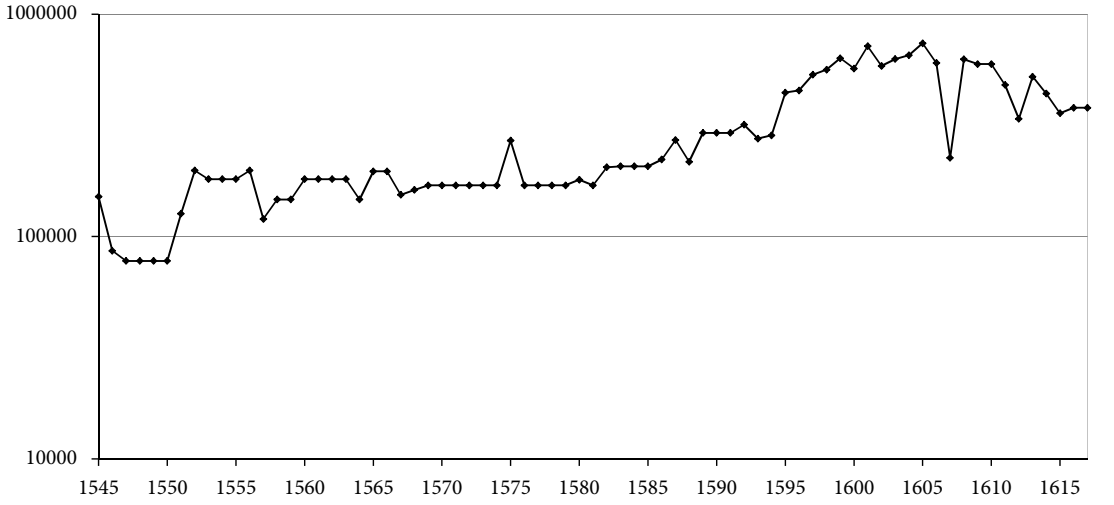


FIGURE 2: Lower Austria: Direct taxes (ordinary and extra-ordinary) 1545–1617 (in fl.)

Source: NÖLA, S.A., B 4–17/1–2.

sums directly to the court or to take over the service and repayment of debts incurred by the court rose constantly. Between 1558 and 1583 these payments amounted to nearly 3,000,000 florins (fl.) – twice as much as the overall sum of the ordinary direct tax collected by the Estates in these years.[72] When Maximilian II urged the Lower Austrian diet in 1568 to accept responsibility for 2,000,000 fl. of debts inherited from his father, a poll tax was introduced together with an extraordinary levy of 10 per cent of lordly income, and the consumption tax on alcoholic beverages was raised once more by 33 per cent.[73] All that was, however, just a foretaste of further developments. With the beginning of the so-called Fifteen Years' War (1592–1606), direct taxation more than doubled again, which, with lordly exactions, led to the uprising of the peasantry in 1596–97.

Since the rulers had to offer something in exchange for these heavy tax burdens, previous research has usually interpreted the concessions made to the nobility in religious matters – such as the free exercise of Protestant worship conceded by Maximilian II in 1568 – as the necessary price of securing the consent of the Estates. The hot-tempered disputes over labour rent and other obligations of the subject tenants to their lords have, so far, been completely overlooked in this context.

That was, however, just one aspect of the role played by the 'state' in opening the gate to the increase of labour service obligations. After Ferdinand I had conceded to both the nobility and the abbeys the right to demand unlimited labour services from their subjects in 1563, the chamber administration began to ponder plans for the introduction of a standardized labour rent among the subject tenants of the chamber estates as well as those under advocacy of the prince. An attempt was made in the second half of the 1560s to impose a fixed monetary duty, a so-called 'labour rent-tax' (*Robotsteuer*), on those tenants under advocacy who paid land

[72] Ibid., pp. 301–2.

[73] Ibid., pp. 216–22.

rents to the priest and parish churches in Upper Austria. Since older officials warned that this would be a highly unusual measure, given the fact that these subjects had either never paid such a duty or were liable to perform labour services for their landlords, and since the officials obliged to collect the duty encountered manifold resistance by the subject tenants, the project was dropped.[74] The re-evaluation of the income of the chamber estates pawned to nobles and other investors, beginning in 1569, provided a further occasion to introduce a standardized labour rent of 12 days a year or an equivalent monetary duty in this part of the princely domain. That was at least partly a success since payments for commuted labour services were implemented on some of the estates, but the intention to impose it uniformly on all estates had to be abandoned.[75] It is evident that the chamber administration did not intend to provide the possessors of these estates with more labour service, but to raise the calculated income of the estates so they could be mortgaged for higher sums. In several cases the archduke's agents calculated that it would have been economically more rewarding to farm out the demesne lands and collect commutation payments for the labour service obligations.[76]

The third attempt to raise the income of the court chamber through the introduction of a labour rent-tax (*Robotgeld*) was more successful. It was triggered by the lieutenant (*Vizedom*, an official who administered the collection of taxes and dues from the subjects under the direct lordship of the archduke) of the Lower Austrian princely domain. In 1578, Wolf Fuerter, the holder of this office, complained that he was so overburdened with the costs of his office and repayment of his debts that he saw himself no longer able to meet his obligations. He therefore proposed to impose a labour rent-tax on all those under advocacy of the archduke (mainly those paying land-rents to parish priest and churches, and several market centres under direct lordship of the archduke) and the subjects of chamber estates not actually mortgaged.[77] An investigation of the numbers liable to pay this duty came to the conclusion that it concerned 6114 subject tenants (including 1912 tenants of the western Hungarian seigneuries of Eisenstadt und Forchtenstein administered by the Lower Austrian chamber), of which 2387 had not yet done any labour service, and that by imposing a labour rent-tax of 12 shillings (one and a half fl.) on all of them, this measure could yield nearly 10,000 fl. per year.[78] Although it provoked massive protests by both priests (as landlords who had partially profited from the labour services of the tenants concerned) and subjects, it was pushed through after the concession of substantial reductions of the tax quota for poor tenants and negotiations about the payment of a lump sum for several market centres.[79] Thereby the institution of the so-called 'chamber labour service' (*Kammerrobot*) was created, which lasted until 1750, when these subjects were sold to the estates.[80] Since most of the chamber demesnes had been sold to the nobility by 1630,[81] this action created two groups of subject tenants: those under noble lordship liable to unregulated labour service at the demand of their lords on one side, and those under advocacy or direct lordship of the archduke

[74] NÖLA, SA, R 72, fos 38–95.
[75] Ibid., fos 97–120.
[76] Ibid., fos 6–9, 207–08.
[77] HKA, nö. HA R 72, fos 154–9.
[78] Ibid., fos 145–7, 195–204.
[79] See the patent, dated 31 Mar. 1581, introducing the labour service-tax of 12 shillings, in *Codex Austriacus*, II, p. 255.
[80] Hauer, *Praktische Darstellung*, pp. 89–94.
[81] See Knittler, 'Habsburgische "Domänen"', p. 80.

paying the labour rent-tax on the other side, with the subjects of (some) abbeys performing only 12 days a year somewhat in between.[82]

In the light of the conflicting opinions on the origins of *Gutsherrschaft* mentioned before, it is interesting to see that Fuerter, to legitimize his idea of imposing a standardized labour rent-tax on those subjects under the advocacy of the archduke, resorted to the argument that the archduke had the right to demand taxes and labour rent from them by virtue of his advocacy rights. At first sight this would confirm the position of Friedrich Lütge (and Otto Brunner). An undated (pre-1563) draft for a Lower Austrian constitution indeed mentions labour services only in the chapter on advocacy, but it is also said there that it is commonly assumed that the landlord is also the advocate of his subjects.[83] The distinction between mere *Grundherrschaft* and *Gerichtsherrschaft* (or *Schutzherrschaft* in the case of Brunner) on which Lütge insisted so thoroughly, is therefore discernable here, but it had no practical consequences except for those subjects of priests and churches under the advocacy of the archduke.[84] And it should also be clear now that Lütge's conviction that it was the policy of peasant protection by the princes and territorial lords which blocked the development of *Gutsherrschaft* in those territories where *Grundherrschaft* and *Gerichtsherrschaft* were unified in the hands of one and the same lord (mainly Bavaria and some of the Austrian lands in his eyes), is not supported by the development of these matters in Lower Austria. Pressed by financial needs, the Habsburg rulers contributed their share to the (re-)introduction or increase of labour service duties, although the intention of Ferdinand I might indeed have been to fix them at a uniform standard of 12 days per year. In the end, he and his successors were forced to trade subjects' rights for more taxes and higher incomes from the domain.

(d) Serfdom

Theories of the establishment and evolution of *Gutsherrschaft* have associated this process with the deterioration of the property rights of subject tenants and restrictions on their mobility, or, in Marxist versions, with the introduction of a 'second serfdom', a highly problematic and contested term which has nearly fallen out of use. In purely legal terms, the enforcement of unregulated labour services and of *Gesindezwangsdienst* had no negative consequences for the property rights and the personal status of subject tenants in Lower Austria. Tenants held their holdings as hereditary possessions, which they were able to transfer and to sell, limited only by

[82] That was the case with the abbey of Klosterneuburg with 1,500 to 1,600 subject tenancies according to the rent-accounts (*Rentamtsrechnungen*) in the archives of the abbey. It is not clear to me if this was the uniform measure for all Lower Austrian abbeys.

[83] *So wierdet gemainen Landtsbrauch nach dafür gehalten, welcher bey denen Herrn und Landtleuten die Grundt Obrigkhait habe, dass demselben zugleich auch die Vogtobrigkhait gebüre*. Sammlung Chrorinsky, 5, pp. 25–6 (an undated, pre-1563 draft of a constitution for Lower Austria – *Landtafel des Erzherzogthumes Österreich unter der Enns* – contained in NÖLA, SA, Schönkirchen-Bücher Y, nos 267–8).

[84] Brunner's insistence (*Land and Lordship*, pp. 249–69) on the fact that the right to tax and demand labour services remained an aspect of advocacy rights all over the early modern period in Lower Austria is at odds with all the constitutional documents dating from after the middle of the sixteenth century, which are very vague on the rights of advocates (see for example the 'Tractatus de juribus incorporalibus' (1679), in *Codex Austriacus*, I, p. 585). In the eighteenth century jurists explicitly denied that advocates had any right to demand labour services if they could not prove that they were in possession of such a privilege. See e.g. Greneck, *Theatrum*, p. 159.

the inheritance rights of their offspring. They had to pay entry and exit fines as well as death duties, but their mobility was unrestricted as long as they provided a substitute and honoured their obligations and financial liabilities. Their subject status resulted exclusively from the possession of a subject holding. Eviction of subject tenants was an extremely complicated procedure – although the lord was entitled to do so in cases of prolonged insubordination and refusal of rent-payments by the subject – and therefore very rare.[85] As far as we can see, this favourable status did not change during the seventeenth century,[86] although Lower Austria suffered severe population losses during the Thirty Years' War and during the second siege of Vienna by Ottoman forces (see Table 2), which is highly significant since it was population decline and the penury of the labour force which triggered a further intensification of lordship and severe restrictions on the mobility of tenants in the Bohemian and East Elbian lands.[87] We could therefore say that Lower Austrian subjects were not serfs and pass over to other matters. What is, however, puzzling in this respect is the fact that the subjects themselves and other contemporaries concerned with their status frequently used the term *Leibeigenschaft* and other phrases of similar meaning in conflicts over the increase of labour services and the introduction of *Gesindezwangsdienst*.

'Serfdom' is a very tricky term for which there are nearly as many interpretations as there are authors glossing it.[88] It is not clear to me if *Leibeigenschaft* is a good translation of the English term 'serfdom' and *vice versa*, although this seems to be common practice. At least in one version of its usage, associated with the notion of a feudal mode of production, 'serfdom' has a much broader meaning than *Leibeigenschaft*. Rodney Hilton, in his introduction to a famous collection of contributions to a debate between Paul Sweezy and Maurice Dobb over the transition from feudalism to capitalism, defined serfdom as 'the existence-form of labour in the feudal mode of production' and went on to say: 'Having accepted this broad definition of serfdom as the enforced transfer, either of surplus labour or of the product of surplus labour, many different juridical and institutional forms of serfdom can exist which in many – perhaps most – cases are not necessarily considered to be "servile" in the eyes of the law'.[89]

[85] Helmuth Feigl, *Die niederösterreichische Grundherrschaft vom ausgehenden Mittelalter bis zu den theresianischen-josephinischen Reformen* (1964), pp. 59–107, is the most thorough treatment of the normative situation during the early modern period. See also Walter, *De emphyteusi* (1552), pp. 3–5; 'Landtafel des Erzherzogthums Österreich unter der Enns' [pre-1563], in *Sammlung Chorinsky* V, pp. 33–5; 'Tractatus de juribus incorporalibus', ch. 4.

[86] There were, nevertheless, attempts to restrict the mobility of subjects. See, for example, the instruction given by Gundakar von Liechtenstein to the bailiffs of his estates in Moravia and Lower Austria in 1634 not to permit the leave of any subject tenant without his explicit permission, pr. in Thomas Winkelbauer, *Gundakar von Liechtenstein als Grundherr in Niederösterreich und Mähren, Wien-Köln-Weimar* (FRA, Fontes Juris, 19, 2008), pp. 371–2.

[87] See e.g. Maur, *Gutsherrschaft*, pp. 59–83; Enders, *Uckermark*, pp. 335–8.

[88] See the contributions to Jan Klußmann (ed.), *Leibeigenschaft. Bäuerliche Unfreiheit in der frühen Neuzeit* (2003); and to Paul Freedman and Monique Bourin (eds), *Forms of servitude in northern and central Europe* (2004), to cite only two recent collections of studies.

[89] Rodney Hilton, 'Introduction', in Paul Sweezy *et al., The transition from feudalism to capitalism* (1976), reprinted under the title 'Feudalism and the origins of capitalism', in Rodney Hilton, *Class conflict and the crisis of feudalism* (rev. edn, 1990), pp. 205–21, here p. 209, which is the version I have used. In the German translation (Paul Sweezy *et al.*, *Der Übergang vom Feudalismus zum Kapitalismus*, 1984) 'serfdom' is consistently rendered as *Leibeigenschaft*. See here, pp. 13–14, for Hilton's statement. See also Robert Brenner, 'Agrarian class

Under this umbrella all subject tenants liable to service and (feudal) rents would have to be considered as 'serfs'. The German term *Leibeigenschaft*, when employed in historical studies, has a much narrower meaning related to the personal dependence of the subject or serf on his lord associated with restrictions on mobility and, sometimes, not always, with the liability to undertake unregulated service.

One way out of this conundrum is to see how the historical actors used the term *Leibeigenschaft* since, as has been stated recently in this context, 'what produces the meaning of words is precisely their usage'.[90] It has been noted in several studies that actors used it in a polemical way, as a kind of 'combat-term' (*Kampfbegriff*) in struggles over rights and obligations, to denote the arbitrary exercise of lordship rights during the early modern period.[91] This can be confirmed for Lower Austria as well. When in 1614 the inhabitants of six villages under the lordship of the monastery of Pernegg (VOMB) protested against the increase of labour services, caused by the reconstitution and extension of the demesne of the monastery, and other exactions by the new abbot, an immigrant from Silesia, they stated in their list of grievances that the abbot would 'harass them under the yoke of service in a way conforming to *Leibeigenschaft*'. They added that, hitherto, work on the demesne fields was performed by salaried labourers 'according to the Lower Austrian manner', but now the new abbot tried to introduce 'Silesian manners'.[92] A further complaint of the unruly subjects of Pernegg as well as the insurgents during the uprising of 1596/97 concerned the 'tyrannical' way lords treated those performing *Gesindezwangsdienst*.[93] It has already been mentioned that Ferdinand I, in his first reaction to the demand of lords to be allowed to exercise the right of *Gesindezwangsdienst* over their subjects, considered this practice as an aspect of *Leibeigenschaft*. At a much later date, the association of labour services with subjugation appears again in a response given by the town council of Retz (VUMB) in 1762 to the claim of the inhabitants of the nearby village of Altstadt Retz to have the same privileges in the wine trade as the citizens of the town. The magistrate rejoined that this pretension was absurd since they would have to perform labour services for their lords, which is precisely the 'mark of subjugation' (*Signum der Untertänigkeit*).[94] And when Joseph II, in his famous patent on the abolition of *Leibeigenschaft* in the Bohemian Lands (1 November 1781), came to the matter of labour services, he pointed to the regulations contained in the *Robotpatent* and insisted that no further demands could be made on behalf of the now

Note 89 *continued*
structure and economic development in pre-industrial Europe', in T. H. Aston and C. H. E. Philpin (eds), *The Brenner Debate* (1985), pp. 10–63, here p. 26, who advocates, not surprisingly, a similar interpretation.

[90] Julien Demade and Joseph Morsel, 'Les *Eigenleute* de Franconie aux XIIIe–XVe siècles: essai d'appréhension spatiale et sémantique d'une catégorie social malmenée', in Freedman and Bourin (eds), *Forms of servitude*, pp. 75–114, here p. 78 (my translation).

[91] Hannah Rabe, *Das Problem Leibeigenschaft* (VSWG suppl. 64, 1977), pointed to the polemical use of the term by insurgent subjects during the German Peasant War of 1525; Renate Blickle, 'Leibeigenschaft. Versuch über Zeitgenossenschaft in Wissenschaft und Wirklichkeit, durchgeführt am Beispiel Altbayerns', in Peters (ed.), *Gutsherrschaft als soziales Modell*, pp. 53–79, here p. 1; David M. Luebke, 'Erfahrungen von Leibeigenschaft: Konturen eines Diskurses im Südschwarzwald, 1660–1745', in Klußmann (ed.), *Leibeigenschaft*, pp. 175–97.

[92] Helmuth Feigl, 'Die Pernegger Bauernunruhen 1614/15', in *Unsere Heimat* 52 (1981), pp. 91–108, here p. 100.

[93] Ibid., p. 100, and Friess, *Aufstand*, p. 245.

[94] Landsteiner, 'Weinbau und Gesellschaft', p. 273.

abolished *Leibeigenschaft*.[95] Lower Austrians had a clear vision of the difference in the status of subject tenants between the Austrian and the adjacent Bohemian Lands. To state just one prominent example: Wolf Helmhard von Hohberg, a petty Lower Austrian nobleman famous for his treatise on noble country life, bluntly stated in his *Georgica curiosa* (1682) that 'Bohemian and Moravian subjects are *leibeigen*, which is not common in the German-speaking lands (of the Habsburg Monarchy)', and when he came to the subject of labour services, he associated unregulated service at the demand of the lord with *Leibeigenschaft*.[96]

Recent scholarship on the question of *Leibeigenschaft* in early modern East Central Europe seems to agree that the term should only be applied in respect of those territories where *Leibeigenschaft* had been legally sanctioned by the ruler or the diet and that in all other cases we would be better to speak of (hereditary) subjects or subjugation (*Erbuntertänigkeit*).[97] The vision of the Lower Austrian subjects was obviously different. They associated unregulated labour service and *Gesindezwangsdienst* with the imminent danger of a degradation of their status as subjects, which they coded as *Leibeigenschaft*.[98] The examples cited, which could easily be augmented, testify to vigilance on their side against any increase of duties and services by their lords. If they used the 'combat-term' *Leibeigenschaft* polemically and strategically, they knew what they were taking about since they were aware of the much harder conditions in Bohemia and Moravia.

III

Notwithstanding the struggle over the question of labour services between lords and subjects in the second half of the sixteenth century, and unlike the situation in neighbouring Upper Austria, labour services and the extent of the demesne economy did increase in some parts of Lower Austria over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, two days of labour service per week began to be

[95] The patent is edited in Günter Franz (ed.), *Quellen zur Geschichte des deutschen Bauernstandes in der Neuzeit* (Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte der Neuzeit, 11, 1963), pp. 287–8.

[96] Wolf Helmhard von Hohberg, *Georgica curiosa oder Adeliches Landleben* [….], (1701), pp. 71, 63–4. See Edgar Melton, 'Anpassung und Widerspruch im Herrschaftsverständnis Wolf Helmhard von Hohbergs (1612–1688)', in Heinrich Kaak and Maria Schattkowsky (eds), *Herrschaft. Machtentfaltung über adeligen und fürstlichen Grundbesitz in der frühen Neuzeit* (2003), pp. 67–84.

[97] See the introduction to the papers by Markus Cerman, and, for example, William H. Hagen, *Ordinary Prussians. Brandenburg Junkers and Villagers, 1500–1840* (2002), pp. 25, 35–6.

[98] The association of *Leibeigenschaft* with unregulated service duties points back to the situation in eleventh and twelfth centuries where *homines proprii* were indeed often liable to daily service (*cottidianum servitium*) in the Austrian Lands. See Heinz Dopsch, 'Neue Leibeigenschaft oder alte Hörigkeit? Zu den Beschwerden und Forderungen aufständischer Bauern im Ostalpenraum an der Wende zu Neuzeit', in Freedman and Bourin (eds), *Forms of servitude*, pp. 313–42, here pp. 320–1; and the many examples of the transfer of *mancipia* to the Lower Austrian abbey of Göttweig (VOWW) where it is stated in several cases that if they neglect their duty to pay a monetary rent for three years, they are liable to perform daily services. Wilhelm Karlin (ed.), *Das Saal-Buch des Benedictiner-Stiftes Göttweig* (FRA-2. Abt.: Diplomata et acta, 8, 1855), nos LXXX, LXXXII, CXIV, etc. It would, of course, be absurd to claim that the subject tenants of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had any memory of that situation.

TABLE 3. Average sizes of arable demesnes in Lower Austria in the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries (in ha).

	c.1570 chamber estates		*1600/50 noble lords*		*c.1750 noble lords*	*c.1750 all noble lordships*
	n	*ha*	*n*	*ha*	*ha*	*ha*
VUWW	14	45.7	16	89.2	113.8	70.7
VUMB	7	66.2	24	185.2	241.5	192.0
VOWW	2	23.0	10	61.1	69.2	54.6
VOMB	11	32.2	25	84,.	90.2	84.5

Note: the demesnes in 1750 are the same as those in 1600/50; the number of noble lordships in *c.*1750 is 364.
Source: Knittler, *Nutzen, Renten, Erträge*, pp. 122, 124, 210.

considered as a norm,[99] at least for those subject tenants owning draught animals (*Ganzlehner*, full holders and *Halblehner,* half holders) according to the amount of land attached to their holdings. It is, however, not the case that this amount of labour service became the uniform obligation for all Lower Austrian tenants during this period. Lordly demesnes were simply too small in many estates to make use of such a large amount of service. When the government fixed the labour service obligations at 104 days a year in 1772, many lords tried to use it as a pretext to raise labour services to this level and cash them in through commutation into monetary payments. The government therefore had to issue orders clarifying that the patent was intended to improve the situation of the tenants, not to raise the service obligations of all those who had performed less before the patent was published.[100]

Together with the labour service of the tenants, the extent of the lordly demesnes expanded through the purchase of the domains of the smaller nobles by the aristocracy[101] and the establishment of manorial farms on vacant land, mainly during the course of the seventeenth century. Table 3, reproducing data collected by Herbert Knittler, is intended to give an impression of this expansion by comparing the extent of arable fields farmed by the lords themselves for several samples of lordships during the early modern period. For the late sixteenth century, only data for chamber estates is available. Out of 42 estates inspected after 1569, 34 had rather small arable demesnes with a characteristic regional distribution that can also be seen at later points in time. These values also confirm the impression that chamber

[99] See, for example, Thomas Winkelbauer, 'Haklich und der Korruption unterworfen: Die Verwaltung der liechtensteinischen Herrschaften und Güter im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert', in Evelin Oberhammer (ed.), *Der ganzen Welt ein Lob und Spiegel. Das Fürstenhaus Liechtenstein in der frühen Neuzeit* (1990), pp. 86–114, here p. 108.

[100] Hauer, *Praktische Darstellung*, I, pp. 101–2. To give just one example of this practice, the small estate of Kaya-Niederfladnitz (183 subject tenants and 166 ha of arable demesne) accounted for 3.379 fl. of income from commuted labour services before the issue of the *Robotpatent*, but 19,996 fl. after the publication of the patent. Most subject tenants, mainly smallholders without draught animals, had performed 26 days of labour service. Archives of the Castle of Karlslust (Niederfladnitz, Lower Austria), box 166.

[101] See Thomas Winkelbauer, 'Krise der Aristokratie? Zum Strukturwandel des Adels in den böhmischen und niederösterreichischen Ländern im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert', in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 100 (1992), pp. 328–53.

estates were not at the forefront in the expansion of the demesne economy since the 75 seigneuries documented for the first half of the seventeenth century, mostly noble properties, already had arable demesnes two or three times as large. Expansion seems to have stopped after the middle of the seventeenth century with the notable exception of the north-eastern part of the country (VUMB) which was best suited for grain farming. With 192 ha on average in the middle of the eighteenth century, cultivated by the traditional three-field rotation, demesnes in this part of the country were not as large as those in Bohemia and parts of Moravia, where they could reach 500 or even 1000 ha in size, but they were nevertheless not negligible.

When the new tax assessment rolls were put together in the middle of the eighteenth century, the number of seigneuries with more than 300 ha of arable demesne land amounted to 20, all but one located in the VUMB.[102] One of these, Wilfersdorf, with a large-scale demesne economy (570 ha of arable farming) belonged to the Liechtensteins, an imperial princely family owning a great number of seigneuries in Lower Austria, Moravia and Bohemia and considered as exemplary in the administration of their domains.[103] Detailed instructions from the beginning of the seventeenth century provide a clear picture of how the labour service of the subject tenants was organized here. Services were classified as 'ordinary' and 'extra-ordinary'. Tenants holding horses – mainly those occupying full holdings containing on average 15 ha of arable fields – had to cultivate 2.5 ha of the demesne fields each as ordinary service in 1636. In addition they were obliged to undertake a number of tasks, including reaping, hauling a certain amount of timber and to spinning four pounds of hemp. All the other tenants, having no draught animals, cultivated the demesne vineyards (between 0.125 and 0.05 ha a piece according to the size of their holdings) and had to perform the same sorts of manual tasks.[104] Extraordinary services, mainly hauling tasks, were not specified, and it is therefore not possible to calculate how many days these tenants actually worked on the demesne. The allotment of specific parcels of arable fields and vineyards for cultivation was intended to facilitate supervision, and the village headmen had to control the correct performance of the tasks. These instructions also indicate that the lord tried to bring the extent of demesne fields and vineyards into line with the number of tenants.[105]

When these instructions were issued, the estate of Wilfersdorf had a nearly equal balance between subject tenants able to perform draught services (380, of whom 62 paid a rent in lieu of service) and those obliged to provide manual services (336). The demesne consisted of 818 ha of arable fields (including the fallow) and 36.25 ha of vineyards.[106] Over the course

[102] Werner Berthold, 'Die Einkommensstruktur der adeligen Herrschaften um die Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts. Versuch einer Typologie', in Knittler, *Nutzen, Renten, Erträge*, 204–37, here p. 233. The seigneury with the largest extent of arable demesne land reached 842 ha.

[103] See Evelin Oberhammer, 'Viel ansehnlich Stuck und Güeter. Die Entwicklung des fürstlichen Herrschaftsbesitzes', in Oberhammer (ed.), *Der ganzen Welt ein Lob und Spiegel*, 33–45.

[104] Thomas Winkelbauer, *Gundakar von Lichtenstein als Grundherr in Niederösterreich und Mähren* (FRA – Fontes juris, 19, 2008), pp. 363–7.

[105] Ibid., p. 361 (Instruction concerning the performance of labour services on the Moravian domain of Mährisch-Krumau/Moravský Krumlov, 1633).

[106] Ibid., pp. 363–4. The figures given in the text are based on my own recalculation of the numbers in the instruction. The summary of the demesne field area cultivated by the tenants (284 ha) evidently pertains only to one of the three fields.

of the following century this balance changed massively in favour of the smallholders liable to manual services. In 1732, 645 smallholding tenants far outnumbered the 110 full and half holders. The arable demesne had contracted to about 660 ha, whereas the vineyard area had slightly extended to 39.5 ha.[107] This shift in the structure of subject tenures must have burdened the occupiers of full and half holdings with draught animals and plough-teams who now had to cultivate a larger area of grain fields (6 ha each instead of 2.5 ha in 1636) for the lord, who in turn was forced to reduce his arable demesne to bring it into line with the available servile labour force.

The example of the estate of Wilfersdorf points to the major obstacle, which, if I am not altogether wrong, blocked the further expansion of the demesne economy in this part of Lower Austria. Demesne lordship in East Central Europe was based mainly on large-scale grain farming for supra-regional and international markets. Lords, of course, did engage in other sectors of the (agrarian) economy as well (cattle rearing, dairying, aquaculture, the brewing of beer, timber production, viticulture where it was possible, and in some regions mining and iron production), but labour services were of limited use in these sectors.[108] Flocks of sheep and herds of cattle as well as dairy farms were usually leased out or tended by salaried managers,[109] and ironworks and breweries also needed a specialized and salaried labour force. With the exception of forestry work, labour services could only be used for auxiliary tasks and the hauling of material and products.

Viticulture is of particular interest in this context since it played a major role in the early modern economy of Lower Austria and provided its most important export commodity.[110] Lords participated in this highly commercialized sector by drawing on their pre-emptive rights over the labour power of their subjects to secure for themselves the necessary labour force for the time-consuming cultivation of their vineyards, but, in sharp contrast to cereal cultivation, they paid for these services.[111] The reason for this restraint was the fear that subjects performing labour services would not cultivate the vines correctly since this requires a considerable amount of effort and skill. Negligent pruning would endanger the considerable capital invested in vineyards. Count Ernst von Traun, commander of the imperial army, was forthright on this point when he instructed the bailiff of his seigneury at Bockfliess (VUMB) in 1649 – in a period of labour scarcity in this part of the country due to the devastation brought by the Swedish army at the end of the Thirty Years' War – not to use the labour service of the subject tenants for the cultivation of his vineyards 'because wine-growing requires a lot of care

[107] Winkelbauer, 'Haklich und der Korruption unterworfen', pp. 108–9.

[108] Historians of the early modern rural economy of Hungary have stressed this often over-looked fact for some time – and not by accident, since the kingdom contained several regions of large-scale vine-growing and cattle-ranching. See Vera Zimányi, *Economy and society in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Hungary (1526–1650)*, (1987), pp. 27–49, 78–94, for an excellent summary of this research in English.

[109] Lords played almost no role in the cattle-ranching economy of the Hungarian great plain and only a limited one in the cattle trade. See Zimányi, *Economy and society*, pp. 43–9.

[110] The following paragraphs are essentially based on my dissertation. See Landsteiner, 'Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft'.

[111] This was also the case in the Hungarian wine-growing regions. See Szigmond Pál Pach, 'Corvées et travail salarié dans les exploitations seigneuriales de la Hongrie des XVIe et XVIIe siècles', in Bela Köpeczi (ed.), *Paysannerie française, paysannerie hongroise, XVIe-XXe siècles* (1973), pp. 75–97.

whereas *corvée*, according to experience, is performed with great negligence'.[112] Lords often resorted to another measure to economize on the costs of vine-cultivation. They refused to link the monetary compensations paid to their subjects for vineyard-work to the market wage so that these payments underwent the same evolution as their money rents in periods of inflation. At Wilfersdorf the tenants received four florins for the cultivation of a quarter hectare of vines in 1636 – a duty that was nevertheless perceived as the ordinary labour service obligation of the smallholders – whereas the market wage for the same task amounted to 8–9 fl. in this period.[113] Subjects did not, however, receive any money since these payments were usually set off against dues, taxes and eventually the commutation of labour service obligations. In the late seventeenth century attempts were made here and there to transform this kind of salaried service into an unremunerated service, but this did not lead to an expansion of demesne viticulture due to the problems arising from the use of forced labour in vine growing. In the middle of the eighteenth century demesne viticulture comprised a mere 4–5 per cent of the overall vine-growing area in Lower Austria and only 3 per cent in neighbouring Moravia (see Table 1 above).

The subjects, on the other hand, were eager to grasp the opportunity provided by an engagement in viticulture to evade the mounting lordly pressure for unpaid labour service on the demesnes. Vineyard land had a special status since most of it was not attached to subject tenures. It circulated freely in the form of parcels that could be purchased and sold without restrictions, and its possession did not entail any kind of subjugation (*Untertänigkeit*) under the landlord and therefore no obligation to perform labour services for the lord. What is even more important is the fact that vine cultivation as a hoeing culture (*Hackkultur*) was done manually and did not require the possession of draught animals and ploughing teams by the producer. After the decline of commercial viticulture based in towns and market centres during the first half of the seventeenth century, due to the loss of export markets, adverse price movements, and the destruction of the Thirty Year's War, the rural subject population rushed into this sector during the reconstruction phase of the second part of the seventeenth century. Despite restrictions by the government and protests by the lords,[114] they subdivided holdings and planted their arable land with vines. Gundakar von Liechtenstein, the owner of the Wilfersdorf domain, was well aware of the dangers of this process for his demesne economy. As early as 1601 he had tried to forbid the conversion of arable fields into vineyards. In the same ordinance he protested against the practice of his subject tenants who occupied holdings with arable fields attached to them of selling off their horses since this caused havoc in the provision of the necessary labour services. He ordered his bailiffs to see that all those

[112] Cited in Philipp Hoyos, 'Ernst von Traun, Generalkriegskommissär, und die Abdankung der kaiserlichen Armee nach dem 30-jährigen Krieg' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Vienna, 1970), p. 74.

[113] Winkelbauer, *Gundakar von Liechtenstein*, pp. 361–2. This was also practiced on the Moravian manor of Moravský Krumlov owned by the princes of Liechtenstein.

[114] See the very significant memorial drawn up by Count Verdenberg, owner of the important estate of Grafenegg (VUMB, by 1750 the largest in Lower Austria according to its capitalized value), and signed by nine additional landlords and several towns and market places, in which he protested against these practices and warned of an impending shortage of bread grain. Austrian State Archives, Archives of the seigneury of Grafenegg, box 426, no. 5.

TABLE 4. Percentage shares of full- and half-holdings (liable to draught services) and smallholdings (liable to hand services) in Lower Austria, by region, *c.*1830.

	Full and half holdings	*Smallholdings*
VUWW	27.6	72.4
VUMB	31.5	68.5
VOWW	39.2	60.8
VOMB	42.8	57.2
Lower Austria	35.5	64.5

Source: NÖLA, Regierungsarchiv, Handschrifteninventar, Nr. 85/19 (summary tables of the cadastre).

having full, half, and quarter holdings kept horses and to compel those who did not to hand over their holdings to others provided with draught animals, or force them to pay a monetary compensation for the lost hauling and ploughing services. Furthermore, smallholders without draught animals were not to be allowed to hold more than a single hectare of arable.[115] In 1664, the bailiff of the seigneury of Retz (VUMB), a region with extensive vine-growing, complained that among the 107 subject tenants, there were only nine 'peasants' (i.e. tenants with substantial arable fields holding horses or oxen) cultivating as much as 3 ha of the demesne each. All the rest of the 339 ha of arable fields had to be worked with seigneurial plough-teams or were leased out for rents in kind.[116]

Despite all their protests and the measures taken against this transformation process, which began to change the agrarian social structure of the eastern parts of the country (mainly in the VUMB and the VUWW) and led to the emergence of a distinct smallholder society after the Thirty Year's War,[117] lords who were eager to expand their arable demesnes were not able to stop the tendency to plant vines. Entire villages were transformed into growing agglomerations of small-scale vintners working their plots exclusively with their family labour force and having just one or two cows in their byres. This is clearly visible in the changing structure of the subject tenancies of the Wilfersdorf domain already described. The first modern Austrian cadastre, surveyed during the 1820s in Lower Austria, gives an impression of the outcome of this process of fragmentation of holdings through the intensification of vine-growing activities by the subject population (Table 4).

[115] The policy ordinance is edited in Winkelbauer, *Gundakar von Liechtenstein*, pp. 123–64. See pp. 133 and 135–6 for the relevant paragraphs. Count Ernst von Traun was aware of the same problem and advised his bailiff at Bockfliess in 1649 to see that the tenants possessed horses. See Hoyos, 'Ernst von Traun', p. 74. For a very similar development in the wine-growing regions of Hungary see Zimanyi, *Economy and society*, pp. 82, 86, 91.

[116] Landsteiner, 'Weinbau und Gesellschaft', p. 230.

[117] See Erich Landsteiner and Ernst Langthaler, 'Ökotypus Weinbau: Taglöhner- oder Smallholder-Gesellschaft?', in Institut für Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte (ed.), *Wiener Wege der Sozialgeschichte* (1997), pp. 183–224; and Erich Landsteiner, 'Household, family and economy among wine-growing peasants. The case of Lower Austria in the first half of the nineteenth century', *History of the Family* 4 (1999), pp. 113–35.

It becomes evident through this data that those parts of the country best suited ecologically for large-scale grain production – mainly the VUMB, where the formation of substantial seigneurial demesnes had most progressed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but also the VUWW, the former centre of Lower Austrian viticulture before it was surpassed by the VUMB in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – ended up with the tenancy structure least well suited for the conduct of a lordly demesne economy.

We might therefore conclude that it was not the political constitution (or the structure of lordship), nor a policy of 'peasant protection' conducted by the early modern state (quite the contrary, as I hope to have demonstrated in this article), nor the lack of market opportunities (which existed, either internally through regional specialization and the demographic growth of the city of Vienna, or externally through the provision of the army and border fortresses), nor the violent resistance of the subjects which blocked the further development of demesne lordship in Lower Austria. It is the specific agro-system of the region and the chances it offered for the rural population to evade the strategies and actions of the lords that offers the most plausible explanation of why Lower Austrian demesnes 'got stuck' on their way to *Gutsherrschaft*.

Not demesne but money: lord and peasant economies in early modern western Slovenia

by Aleksander Panjek

Abstract

The paper discusses the feudal economy of the southern apex of the Elbian divide in European feudal history. It provides quantitative evidence that demonstrates how the feudal economy in western Slovenia was characterized by the weakness of the demesne economy, a substantial share of the lord's income coming from manorial rents, and by a high degree of non-agricultural activity among the peasant population. It ends with an explanation of why one path was taken, and others not followed.

With a broad stroke, Ferdinand Braudel saw the 'second serfdom' expanding 'across ample spaces, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, to the Balkans, to the kingdom of Naples, Sicily, and from Moscow … crossing Poland and Central Europe, to the approximate line that connects Hamburg with Vienna and Venice'. The overly simplified east-west divide in feudal development prompted well-founded doubts some decades ago.[1] This article discusses the nature of feudal economy at one of its apexes, namely in western Slovenia, located at the southern end of the divide, 'between Vienna and Venice', to provide the quantitative evidence so far lacking about the feeble role of the demesne economy in the area, and to identify alternative developments. In terms of feudal regimes, the Habsburg lands were characterized by significant differences between those in the west (Tyrol, Salzburg), the east (Upper and Lower Austria, Inner Austria), the north (Bohemia and Upper and Lower Austria) and the south (Inner Austria).[2] While this paper is concerned with western Slovenia, it is also a contribution to our understanding of early modern Central European feudal economies, in the Habsburg lands in particular.

Our analysis concentrates mainly on the Habsburg county of Gorica or Gorizia (*Grafschaft Görz*) with some reference to the duchy of Kranjska/Krain/Carniola, both of which were part of Inner Austria in the late sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries. The area

[1] F. Braudel, *Civiltà materiale, economia e capitalismo (secoli XV–XVIII)*, II, I (1981), pp. 261–2. For some criticism A. Wyczański, 'Le paysan, la tenure et le bail en Pologne au XVIe siècle', *Annales* 33 (1974), p. 772, and M. Aymard, 'L'Europe moderne: féodalité ou féodalités?', *Annales* 36 (1981), pp. 426–35.

[2] H. Valentinitsch, 'Gutsherrschaftliche Bestrebungen in Österreich in der frühen Neuzeit. Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der innerösterreichischen Länder', in J. Peters (ed.), *Gutsherrschaft als soziales Modell. Vergleichende Betrachtungen zur Funktionsweise frühneuzeitlicher Agrargesellschaften* (1995), pp. 279–97.



Map 1. Area of study, showing modern political boundaries.

Drawn by: Katja Ratoša.

bordered Venetian Friuli to the west and Venetian Istria to the south. The closest 'major' towns were the Habsburg towns of Trieste and Gorizia/Gorica and the Venetian ones of Udine, Koper/Capodistria, and Piran/Pirano, although in the early modern period only Udine exceeded 10,000 inhabitants, while Trieste, Gorizia and Koper were about half that size. The countryside was traversed by cross-border, long-distance merchant routes between Austria, Hungary and Croatia on the one hand and Italy and the Adriatic on the other, as well as by interregional north-south trade flows (from the county of Gorizia north to the duchy of Carinthia), and local countryside–town trade connections (Map 1).

In the area under discussion, that is the Soča/Isonzo Valley in the Julian Alps and the Karst plateau on the north Adriatic coast, the economic and administrative structure was marked by relatively large and compact manorial estates (*Herrschaft*) with extensive areas under the jurisdiction of manorial courts (*Landgericht*). Large manors usually possessed judicial authority, which means that the holder of the manorial court would usually be the

largest feudal lord in that area. In the vicinity of towns the pattern of landholding was more fragmented, with a large number of small estates.[3]

With the acquisition of the county of Gorica/Gorizia in 1500, the Habsburgs acquired the large manors and ample forests that became part of the Inner-Austrian 'Court Chamber' (*Innerösterreichische Hofkammer*), which managed the estates and finances of the Habsburg archdukes. In the sixteenth century the Habsburg archdukes would grant the manors in this area in the form of 'pledge' (*Pfand*) to both old and new nobles while in the first decades of the seventeenth century they would sell them.[4] The pledges and sales led to a concentration of administrative, judicial, and economic power in the hands of few noble families, each having control over large portions of the countryside, irrespective of the location of the manors in the county of Gorica/Gorizia or in the duchy of Carniola. The first two centuries of the modern era were therefore marked by a long process of temporary or permanent alienation of administrative, jurisdictional, and economic rights and finally the cameral estates themselves to the benefit of local elites. This means that the institutional preconditions for the development of the demesne economy were present. The necessary preconditions of local, interregional and international markets were also present.

The extant archival material offers two types of sources that provide a relatively integrated picture and are particularly valuable for research into the economic and social conditions of the countryside. These are manorial extents (*Urbar*) and summary statements of the annual income of manors (*Einkommens-Extrakt*). Manorial extents have been extensively used by Slovene and Austrian historians,[5] as have the summaries of annual income, although to a lesser extent in Slovenia.[6] Both sources offer a rather static picture, and from their use only a structural and synchronic view can be obtained. The same is true for this area where the sources available are those found throughout the Habsburg lands generally.[7] There is a lack of annual accounts in sufficiently long series to allow diachronic reconstructions of long- or even medium-term income dynamics on the manors.

The summaries of annual income were created to estimate the value of the manors when

[3] S. Vilfan, 'Zemljiška gospostva', *Gospodarska in družbena zgodovina Slovencev. Zgodovina agrarnih panog* (2 vols, 1970, 1980), II, p. 200; A. Panjek, 'Un contributo per la storia economica e sociale del Carson nel '500. Presentazione di una fonte', *Metodi e Ricerche*, ns, 16/2 (1997), pp. 41–56. Smaller and scattered manors and estates were prevalent in number, for instance, in Carniola, F. Gestrin, *Slovenske dežele in zgodnji kapitalizem* (1991), pp. 39, 72. In the western part of the county of Gorica/Gorizia, that is in Habsburg Friuli, the agrarian structure differed considerably, being much the same as in Venetian Friuli.

[4] The *Pfand* differed from a mortgage because the object of the transaction, that is the manorial complex, did not stay in the possession of its owner and credit-receiver (the archduke), but was transferred into the hands of the subject giving the credit (the nobleman), who would then manage and exploit it.

[5] For the Primorska region, M. Kos, *Srednjeveški urbarji za Slovenijo (Urbaria aetatis mediae Sloveniam spectantia),* III, *Urbarji slovenskega Primorja* II, (1954).

[6] Vilfan, 'Zemljiška gospostva', p. 204; P. Blaznik, 'Podložniške obveznosti do zemljiškega gospostva', *Gospodarska in družbena zgodovina*, II; Gestrin, *Slovenske dežele,* pp. 230–1; most of all E. Umek, 'Reformirani urbarji deželnoknežjih gospostev na Kranjskem', *Zgodovinski časopis*, 23 (1982), pp. 311–20, in Austria, H. Knittler, *Nutzen, Renten, Erträge. Struktur und Entwicklung frühneuzeitlichen Feudaleinkommen in Niederösterreich* (1989), and B. Bastl, *Herrschaftsschätzungen. Materialien zur Einkommens- und Besitzstruktur niederösterreichischer Grundherrschaften 1550 bis 1750* (1992).

[7] See B. Grafenauer: 'Viri in literatura', *Gospodarska in družbena zgodovina*, I, pp. 7–12; Knittler, *Nutzen*, pp. 11–12.

they were given in pledge or sold by the Chamber. Before the first decades of the seventeenth century, all the large manors in the Primorska region (the littoral part of Western Slovenia) were owned by the prince, so these sources allow an examination of a large and compact part of the countryside that extends from the mountainous area of the upper Soča/Isonzo Valley (Julian Alps) to the Karst at its moment of sale. In this paper, we analyse the summaries of income for seven manors in the area: Senožeče (whose income summary was made in the year 1615), Schwarzenegg (1618), Socerb (1620), Reifenberg (1624), Vipava (1624), Tolmin (1633), and Duino/Devin (1637).[8] These represent the greater part of the larger manors existing in the region at that time (except for the manors of Kanal, Novigrad and Prem), and cover most of the territory. Due to the short period of time in which they were compiled and the almost complete geographical coverage they offer, these summaries offer the opportunity to secure a detailed and relatively complete synchronic picture of the structural characteristics of the manorial economy in this area. To the west and to the south, in fact, there were no manors of the kind discussed here, but other institutional forms of tenancy and possession, as well as different forms of production relations, similar to those present in the nearby Republic of Venice.[9] The period in which our summaries were produced, that is the first half of the seventeenth century, corresponds to a time when in Central and Eastern Europe the tendency towards the strengthening of the demesne economy was already underway.[10] This makes our source suitable for our purpose, which is to verify through quantitative indicators whether we can speak, for western Slovenia, about a developing demesne economy.

The summary of annual income is a synthetic list of all the income of the individual manor: it lists the *Zins*, the tithe, different leases, the vineyard tax, income from grazing, *corvée*, and receipts from public law offices and manorial rights (fines, death duties, transfer fees, road tolls, taxes, mills, hunting and fishing fees and so on). In addition, the summary includes the value of demesne property or the revenue generated by the demesne economy. The analysis of this material raises a number of methodological problems. These include reconciling different units of measurement, the value of produce expressed in money (price), the information provided by the *Zins* and tithe, the estimate and calculation of *corvée* and demesne property, the differentiation between revenue and rent, and, last but not least, a correct systematization of the variegated forms of income. All these problems have been discussed elsewhere, so

[8] Senožeče: Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv, Graz, (hereafter StLA), IÖHKS, K. 91, H. 15, fos 10–19 (*Senosetsch*, 1615); Schwarzenegg: StLA, IÖHKS, K. 90, H. 12, fos 1–5, 8–14 (*Schwarzenegg*, 1618); Socerb: StLA, IÖHKS, K. 91, H. 18, fos 1–9 (*St. Serff*, 1620); Reifenberg: StLA, IÖHKS, K. 90, H. 11, fos 29–33 (*Reiffenberg*, 1624); Vipava 1624: StLA, IÖHKS, K. 90, H. 11, fos 17–21 (*Wippach* with *Baumkirchenturn*, 1624); Tolmin: urbar 1633, ASPG, AGP III – Urbari, nr. 49 (*Tolmino*); income summary, StLA, Archiv Lamberg, K. 175, fo. 2 (*Tolmein*, 1651); Duino: StLA, IÖHKS, K. 113, H. 7 (*Tybein*, 1637).

[9] A. Panjek, *Terra di confine. Agricolture e traffici tra le Alpi e l'Adriatico: la contea di Gorizia nel Seicento* (2002), pp. 37–42, 61–6 in particular.

[10] L. Żytkowicz, 'Trends of agrarian economy in Poland, Bohemia and Hungary from the middle of the fifteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century', in P. Burke *et al.* (eds), *East-Central Europe in transition. From the fourteenth to the seventeenth century* (1985), pp. 59–83. In the same publication see also L. Mákkai, 'Economic landscapes: historical Hungary from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century', pp. 24–35; A. Wyrobisz, 'Economic landscapes: Poland from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century', pp. 36–46; I. N. Kiss, 'Agricultural and livestock production: wine and oxen. The case of Hungary', pp. 84–96.

that here only the solutions that emerged from the earlier discussion are briefly presented as necessary.[11]

Drawing on the summaries of manorial income made by the Habsburg Chamber, we first look at the forms taken by the lord's rent. In the following section we examine the scale of the demesne economy before turning to a discussion of the peasant economy. Finally we offer some thoughts as to why some developments did not happen in western Slovenia.

I

In our analysis of the lord's rents, the following categories are used. 'Land-rent income' consists of rents and payments in money and kind that the manorial lord received for the exercise of his rights over cultivated and non-cultivated land and the agrarian activities of the peasant population in general: from farms, plots of land, commons, and forests, from *Zins* and vineyard taxes (*Bergrecht*), tithes, rents, grazing rents and so on. 'Income from public functions' consists of receipts deriving from the lord's public rights and competencies in a broader sense (the manorial court, royal prerogatives, taxes) that were not directly connected with agrarian activities: so court taxes and fines, inheritance and sales taxes on farms, road and bridge tolls, taxes levied on goods entering the area, excise duties, parish fair dues, artisan taxes, and receipts from hunting and fishing. The third category employed here consists of rent in the form of labour services, the value of which is based on their money value as estimated in the sources themselves. This data can then be further divided to distinguish rent paid in money from that paid in kind or in labour services (Table 1).

As Table 2 shows, the pattern of rent receipts differed from manor to manor, but despite the differences, there are similarities, which are discussed here. Among the most salient of the common features there is the high level of income from land and rights which reflects the power in the hands of lords, particularly on the large manorial estates (Tolmin, Duino, Reifenberg, Vipava, Schwarzenegg).[12] Income from these sources formed 50 to 80 per cent of the total rent. As Table 2 shows, the share of rent in kind ranged from one third to two thirds, with the exception of the mountainous manor of Tolmin, where it reached only a fifth of the total value. Although land rent was most often taken in kind, about 15 to 20 per cent was received in money, so that on all manors money income exceeded a fifth of the total rent. In two cases it even formed as much as two thirds, as on the Tolmin manor (in the mountains) and in Socerb (due to the cash payments made at the toll-houses that formed part of the assets of the manor).[13] The proportion of land rent paid as money was large since the lords tended to commute rents in kind (Table 3).

In manors such as Schwarzenegg, Duino, Reifenberg, Vipava and Tolmin, with vast lands and therefore a higher number of *Hube* and *Korb/Keuschler* (farms and cottagers), and

[11] Panjek, *Terra di confine,* pp. 45–66; id., 'Fevdalna renta in agrarno gospodarstvo na Krasu na podlagi cenitev gospostev (1615–1637)', *Acta Histriae* 12 (2) (2004), pp. 3–18.

[12] Within the judicial area of these major estates there were other landlords, too, while the same manors also held farms located beyond the boundaries of their own manorial court. Considerably smaller and fragmented manors also existed; with the exception of the Socerb manor, these are not dealt with in detail in this paper.

[13] StLA, Lamberg, K 175, fo. 2.

TABLE 1. Rent structure across manors: money, kind, labour services[a].

Manor	*Money* %	*Kind* %	*Labour services* %	*Total* %
Senožeče 1615	55.2	41.5	3.3	100
Schwarzenegg 1618	24.0	62.6	13.4	100
Socerb 1620	66.8	31.0	2.2	100
Duino 1637	51.3	32.3	16.4	100
Reifenberg 1624	22.7	59.0	18.2	100
Vipava 1624	26.8	62.5	10.8	100
Tolmin 1633	68.7	22.3	9.1	100

Note: [a] Dues in money include the *Robotgeld* (labour services converted into a payment in money), where collected.
Sources: Panjek, 'Fevdalna renta', p. 47; id., *Terra di confine*, p. 131.

TABLE 2. Rent structure across manors: land-rent, public functions, labour services.

Manor	*Land rent* %	*Public functions* %	*Labour services* %	*Total* %
Senožeče, 1615	57.2	39.5	3.3	100
Schwarzenegg, 1618	77.1	9.5	13.4	100
Socerb, 1620	41.9	55.9	2.2	100
Duino, 1637	54.1	29.5	16.4	100
Reifenberg, 1624	75.2	6.5	18.3	100
Vipava, 1624	82.7	6.2	11.1	100
Tolmin, 1633	47.0	38.7	14.2	99.9

Sources: Panjek, 'Fevdalna renta', p. 47; id., *Terra di confine*, p. 131.

TABLE 3. Money income in the rent of manors.

Manor	*Land-rent in money (gulden)*	*Income from public functions in money (gulden)*	*Total (gulden)*
Senožeče, 1615	235.9	563.6	799.5
Schwarzenegg, 1618	455.8	297.5	753.3
Socerb, 1620	156.3	803.1	959.4
Duino, 1637	1,362.4	1,739.1	3,101.5
Reifenberg, 1624	752.7	304.3	1,057.0
Vipava, 1624	1,152.9	350.0	1,502.9
Tolmin, 1633	2,729.3	4,269.3	6,998.6
Total	6,845.3	8,326.9	15,172.2

Sources: Panjek, 'Fevdalna renta', p. 46; id., *Terra di confine*, p. 130.

TABLE 4. Main forms of natural income in the rent of manors (quantities).

Manor	*Wheat (hl)*	*Oats (hl)*	*Other grain (hl)*	*White wine (hl)*	*Teran wine (hl)*	*Small cattle (head)*
Senožeče 1615	90.1	91.9	39.2	37.5	3.9	81.0
Schwarzenegg 1618	130.9	205.7	219.3	0.00	0.00	359.0
Socerb 1620	17.0	23.7	37.0	38.8	0.00	0.0
Duino 1637	107.1	143.5	15.3	17.6	66.8	318.0
Reifenberg 1624	185.9	186.2	142.4	191.8	97.3	11.5
Vipava 1624	187.2	154.9	156.6	251.6	197.3	150.0
Tolmin 1633	147.4	407.7	253.5	0.00	0.00	118.0
Total	865.6	1,213.7	863.4	537.3	365.2	1,037.5
Total in kg	64,921	45,512	64,753	–	–	–

Sources: Panjek, 'Fevdalna renta', p. 48; id., *Terra di confine*, p. 130.

TABLE 5. Total rent across manors.

Manor	*Total rent (gulden)*	*Lord (gulden)*
Senožeče, 1615	1,427.97	Porzia
Schwarzenegg, 1618	3,146.96	Petazzi
Socerb, 1620	1,436.95	4,583.91
Duino, 1637	5,899.05	Thurn/della Torre
Reifenberg, 1624	4,641.34	Lanthieri
Vipava, 1624	5,683.61	10,324.95
Tolmin, 1633	11,026.01	Coronini
Total	33,261.89	–

Sources: Panjek, 'Fevdalna renta', p. 47; id., *Terra di confine*, p. 132.

consequentially dependent peasants, *corvée* formed a significant portion of the total rent, ranging from one tenth to one fifth of the total; in other cases the economic potential and importance of *corvée* was much lower.

Rent in kind was mostly received as wheat, oats and, where vines could be cultivated, as wine, a prevalence that can be attributed to their being fixed as forms of rent in the tribute registers as much as to the lords' preference. However, as demonstrated by the wide range of grain and other produce, agriculture was essentially mixed, responding to both the nutritional needs of the peasant population and to the harsh natural conditions, typical of karst and mountainous areas.

Those receiving rent in kind were provided with readily vendible market goods that could be sold in the towns of Gorizia and Trieste and along the border with the Republic of Venice. The fact is that the quantities were relatively limited, since it is possible to calculate that the rents in kind from the largest manors in this area (Table 4) would not be sufficient to meet the food needs of a single neighbouring town: the grain from all rents could feed 800 people for one

year while there would be only enough wine for 369 people for a year.[14] In the larger manorial estates the total value of the feudal rent ranged from 3,000 to 6,000 *gulden* a year while in the extensive Tolmin manor it exceeded 10,000 *gulden* (Table 5). The quantities are again relatively modest. The total value of all the rents of all these manors would amount to 33,262 *gulden,* which, at the price commonly used in the manors' own estimates (not far off market prices at the time), could buy 8,316 hl wheat, which could feed 2,848 people for one year.

II

At this point, it is reasonable to ask whether the lords chose to intensify their demesne economy in order to increase the relatively poor incomes they secured through their manorial rents.

The possibilities of estimating the importance of the demesne economy are limited by the scarcity of data on the demesne estates. Most of our estimates from the early seventeenth century include the real property value of demesne estates, but not their revenue. In these cases our methodology is to compare the real property value of the demesne estate and the capitalized values of different groups of rent income of manors. In a few cases it is possible to use figures for demesne revenue as well. Where available, information on the quantity and type of servile labour obligations and the quality of the demesne lands is used in an attempt to interpret the role of demesne economy.

In the instances that allow us to make an estimate of the importance of demesne revenues in comparison with other sources of income, it is possible to see that the value ranges from 3 per cent to slightly more than 5 per cent of the whole (Table 6). The modest role of the demesne economy is confirmed if we use the real property value of the demesne as an indicator: in no case does its value exceed 3.5 per cent of the capital value of the manor (Table 7).

On the other hand, we have noted how in several cases the value of the *corvée* represented a consistent share of the rent at about 15–18 per cent, and that its capitalized value could reach such a proportion of the total value of a manor (Tables 1, 2, 7). It is reasonable to check in a different way whether the lords exploited this resource to such an extent, by examining the dimension and quality of the demesne estates in relation to the peasants' *corvée* obligations.

When it was surveyed in 1624, the demesne estate of the manor of Vipava consisted of one *Maierhof* (a farm incorporated into the demesne[15]), eleven meadows, seven fields, and four vineyards (whose yield was estimated in an earlier survey of 1572 at 655 litres of white wine and 1,035 litres of red). There was then the (unpopulated) Baumkirherturm complex, a tower to which was attached land itemized in a survey of 1572 as a *Maierhof* (with land covering a

[14] The calculation includes average daily consumption of 0.6 kg of grain per person, the weight of 75 kg for one hl of grain, and 37.5 kg for one hl of oats; daily wine consumption was estimated at 0.67 lt. These averages are based on P. Malanima, *Economia preindustriale. Mille anni: dal IX al XVIII secolo* (1995), p. 500, G. Panjek, *La vite e il vino nell'economia friulana: un rinnovamento frenato. Secoli XVII–XIX* (1992), pp. 155–63; A. Fornasin, 'Lontano dal mercato. Prezzi, costi di trasporto e consumi dei cereali nella montagna friulana (secolo XVIII)', in A. Gardi, M. Knapton, F. Rurale (eds), *Montagna e pianura. Scambi e interazione nell'area padana in età moderna* (2001), pp. 56–7; Panjek, 'Fevdalna renta', 49–50.

[15] The *Maierhof* had often been composed of farms that later passed under direct management, F. Tremel, *Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte Österreichs* (1969), p. 240.

TABLE 6. Demesne revenue in relation to the land-rent and income from public functions.

	Land rent		*Income from public functions*		*Robotgeld*		*Demesne revenue*	
	gulden	*%*	*gulden*	*%*	*gulden*	*%*	*gulden*	*%*
Vipava 1572 (without Baumkirchenturm)	2,897	93.1	90	2.9			124[b]	4.0
Reifenberg 1572	2,130	90.4	101	4.3			126	5.3
Tolmin 1633/1651	5,168	50.0	4,272	41.2	568[a]	5.5	350	3.4

Notes:
Values in *gulden* are rounded to the nearest whole unit.
[a] Incomplete sum.
[b] Only the wine demesne production is calculated.
Source: StLA, IÖHKS, K 90/10, fols 9–20, 29–40; Panjek, *Terra di confine*, p. 94.

TABLE 7. Value of the demesne estate in relation to the capitalized income value.

	Capitalized land rent		*Capitalized income from public services*		*Capitalized corvée*		*Real value of property*		*Real property value of forests*		*Total*	
	gulden	*%*	*gulden*	*%*	*gulden*	*%*	*gulden*	*%*	*gulden*	*%*	*gulden*	*%*
Schwarzenegg, 1618	48,456	66.9	5,950	8.2	8,443	11.6	1,880	2.6	7,733	10.7	72,552	100
Socerb, 1620	12,030	38.8	16,062	51.8	647	2.1	294	1.0	1,999	6.4	31,032	100
Duino, 1637	63,879	51.2	34,781	27.9	19,321	15.5	737	0.6	6,000	4.8	124,718	100
Reifenberg, 1624	69,813	72.6	6,067	6.3	16,947	17.6	3,369	3.5	0	0	96,135	100
Vipava, 1624	94,059	80.7	7,000	6.0	12,613	10.8	2,940	2.5	0	0	116,612	100

Note: values in *gulden* are rounded to the nearest whole unit.
Source: StLA, IÖHKS, K. 90, H. 11, ff. 17–21, StLA, IÖHKS, K. 90, H. 10, ff. 29–40, StLA, IÖHKS, K. 90, H. 12, ff. 1–5, 8–14, StLA, IÖHKS, K. 91, H. 18, ff. 1–9, StLA, IÖHKS, K. 113, H. 7.

total of nine *Tagbau*,[16] approximately 3 ha), one garden, three vineyards, and some meadows. At that time the Baumkirherturm demesne was cultivated with the *corvée* of 16 *Huben* (larger farms), each of which had to provide four days of *corvée* with draft animals and eight days of

[16] The sources do not allow a precise definition of the area of a *Tagbau* (meaning 1 day ploughing labour) in this area. One possibility is that they correspond to the *campo goriziano*, that is the 'Gorizia field' (equal to the *campo friulano piccolo*), measuring 0.35 ha. Other sources raise doubts about whether on the stoney Karst soils, the 'field labour day' could be the same as on the Gorizia and Friuli plain. Since most of the pre-metric agrarian surface measures in Europe ranged from 0.3 to 0.4 ha (W. Kula, *Measures and Men* (1986); A. Panjek, *Terra di confine*, p. 76), and given the harder work necessary on karstic and prealpine grounds, we apply here a conversion rate of one *Tagbau* to 0.3 ha.

manual *corvée*. No data concerning the quantity and form of *corvée* is available for the major part of the manor. It is only known that in 1624 *corvée* was compulsory for a total of 196 *Huben* and 220 *Keuschler* (cottagers). The different capacity of the latter is implicitly stated, namely that 'all have to at least help in manual *corvée* activities … so that the *corvée* of each cottager can be calculated with that of another', that is on average or approximately. The 1624 estimate also mentions that the lord had implemented new, 'extraordinary' ploughing services, which amounted to adding 14 days a year to the regular *corvée*, but the peasantry preferred to pay in money (*Robotgeld*) rather than services. The new *Robotgeld* was significantly higher than the value of the 'old *corvée*'.[17]

Based on a valuation of 1624, the demesne estate of the manor of Reifenberg consisted of five meadows (52 *Tagbau* – approximately 18 ha), two uncultivated fields (2.25 Tagbau, less than 1 ha), two *braide*, some gardens, a wine cellar at Štanjel, and some partly derelict facilities (*Maierhof*). *Braide* refer to plots of land cultivated in a variety of ways, including orchards, vines, grain, and vegetables. In this case one *braida* included a vineyard and a cultivated field (2.5 *Tagbau* – a bit less that 1 ha), while the other included one cultivated field (10.3 *Tagbau* – approximately 3.5 ha). There is no data on the extent of the gardens 'situated all around the castle hill'. The manorial lord of Reifenberg could use *corvée* provided by 249 *Huben*, many of which were inhabited by several peasant families, 'all obliged to labour', and 524 *Keuschler*. Although the source does not specify the type of service nor the number of days of labour requested from each peasant, the sum of the *Huben* and cottagers, at 773, which also represents the minimal number of days of labour at the disposal of the lord, allows us to conclude that *corvée* was more than sufficient to cover the necessary activities on the 54.2 *Tagbau* of meadows and 12.8 *Tagbau* of arable land (partly covered with vines and gardens), of which the demesne consisted. It is thus probable that part of the labour force remained unused and that their *corvée* was converted into a money rent. The 1624 valuation does not provide any data on revenue yielded by the demesne economy, while in 1572 the average yield of the *braide* was 13 hl of white wine, 97 hl of *teran* red wine, and 100 *pesenali* of 'various grains' (rye, spelt, millet, and oats, approximately 1,600 kg). In addition, there were two *Maierhof*. In 1572 the one located in Branik, the village near the castle, maintained an independent cultivation function, producing 70 *pesenali* of mixed grain. Another was converted into a stable and winter and summer pasture for a flock of approximately 400 sheep.[18]

At Schwarzenegg the demesne land was larger. In 1618 it consisted of two *Maierhof* of unknown size (one was cultivated as a garden, orchard, and *teran* vineyard), and various fields and gardens, divided into four entire *Huben* for a total of 80 *Tagbau* (about 27 ha). In addition, there were some meadows, their production being estimated at 200 *Fueder* of hay, and forests. As with other demesne estates, no indications are available concerning the income earned from forests; what is known is their estimated real property value, which was significant. The Schwarzenegg summary accurately lists the *corvée* obligations of the subject population: 157 days of carrying services, 81½ days of ploughing, 146½ days of unspecified *corvée*, 367½ days of manual work, 268 *Fueder* of hay and grain to be transported to the

[17] StLA, IÖHKS, K 90/10, fos 9–20, 21–7; StLA, IÖHKS, K 90/11, fos 17–21.

[18] StLA, IÖHKS, K 90/10, fos 29–40, StLA, IÖHKS, K 90/11, fos 29–33.

castle, 30½ days of manuring, 450 days of various forms of manual *corvée* owed by the *Untersassen* (villagers with virtually no land), 36 days of hoeing and reaping of the demesne *braide* situated near the castle by the closest *Hube* (one day each), in addition to the complete maintenance of castle gardens that had to be done by eight *Untersassen* who lived in their vicinity, and construction work at the castle. The records of the demesne do not provide any data concerning the extent of its agricultural land. Nevertheless, a comparison of its size with compulsory *corvée* labour allows a partial estimate of its use in direct production. The delivery of 268 sheaves of hay can be related to meadows whose size was estimated at 200 sheaves, and 81½ days of ploughing is close to 80 *Tagbau* of field area. Considering the low productivity of *corvée*, the quantity and variety of *corvée* obligations as well as the larger size of the demesne estate, it can be deduced that in Schwarzenegg the larger part of the available *corvée* (if not all of it) was utilized. Only when discussing the packing or carting services to the towns of Gorizia, Rijeka/Fiume/St Veit am Pflaum, and Trieste (*Samfahrt*, *Weinfahrt*), do the commissioners explicitly state that unused obligations were to be converted into one *gulden* of *Robotgeld*.

In 1637 the demesne estate of the manor of Duino consisted of one *Maierhof*, several meadows, one garden in front of the walls of Duino borough (*Merkht Tybein*), one vineyard below the castle, two fields, and forests. The former and current owners bred a large number of cattle and horses. Speaking of *corvée*, the estimate states that the Count Thurn used *corvée* for the construction of two mills and that the castle was mostly built using compulsory labour. The accurate quantity and typology of agricultural obligations are not mentioned and data concerning the size of the demesne estate are also absent. Therefore, any conclusions as to the use of *corvée* on demesne land would be uncertain, although the two fields mentioned are not likely to be the basis for a significant demesne economy.

In 1620 the demesne estate at the manor of Socerb was very small. In addition to three gardens and some meadows it mostly consisted of woodland. The description of *corvée* obligations is not complete: only 33 days of labour are mentioned while the type of the majority of obligations remains unstated, but the extent of *corvée* was certainly low.

From a mid-eighteenth century description of the 'manor and district" (*Herrshaft und Hauptmannshaft*) of Tolmin, we know that the old castle hill was surrounded by small demesne fields and meadows (*Acker- und Wiesflegken*), *braide* and *dobrave* (meadows). The tillage of the *braide* was performed by 82 *terrenari* (heads of *Hube*) drawn from nine different villages. Fifty-four *terrenari*, each of whom had to plough 7½ *vaneze* which their women had to sow, were sufficient for the 420 *vaneze* that were cultivated on average each year. In addition, each *terrenaro* had to supply the manorial lord with 15 'two-wheeled *zagotto*' of manure, of which only approximately 30 would actually be used. The reaping, raking, and transporting of hay from the meadows (*dobrave*) was divided among eight communities. One village community was bound to carry hay to the manor 'house', enjoying in return the right to pasture in the *dobrave*, where the manorial lord was only entitled to the 'first grass'. The meadows in the mountains, producing two *mede* of hay a year, were reaped in alternate years by villagers from two communities, who were paid eight Venetian *lire* for each load they transported. The wood needed by the manorial lord 'in his house for burning' had to be delivered free of charge, while it was the duty of the *terrenari* from three villages to supply the castle with the necessary water

and that of the *cossani* (cottagers) from a village to repair the access road to it. In numerous cases the obligations exceeded the needs. Many services were remunerated with meagre payments so that the cost of labour in the *braida*, for instance, amounted to approximately 38 *lire* (about 8½ *gulden*) a year. Transportation activities were included as well: the manorial lord could ask a serf to carry out two carrying services a year extending beyond the boundaries of the manor but still within the county of Gorica/Gorizia, for which he would be paid by the number of horses he used. Carrying *corvée* within the boundaries of the manor would be remunerated based on the daily rate of one *lira* for each man and another for each horse. These *robot*, too, could be converted into money rents. In the Cerkno area (about a third of the manor's territory), all *corvée* services were converted into money.[19] This is what the situation was like in the mid-eighteenth century. For the previous century we only know the value of demesne production and of that *corvée* generally converted into money, based on an estimate made by the Chamber in 1651. Nevertheless, we are unable to estimate either the proportion of *robot* effectively used for production purposes or the proportion used for carrying services. In any case, if compared to total manorial income, the importance of demesne production clearly appears to be marginal; if we could include the share of *corvée* not used for cultivation it would seem even less inportant.

It is therefore possible to say that in western Slovenia, the main feature common to holders of manors was the limited economic role of their demesne economy. Among the manors analysed, the highest demesne contribution to income was from Schwarzenegg manor in the meagre Karst highlands, where land cultivated by means of *corvée* amounted to at least 80 *Tagbau* (approximately 27 ha) of arable land. Conversely, demesne production only contributed to 3.4 per cent of total income in mountainous Tolmin (Table 6). In several cases the demesne partly consisted of former peasant farms, which in Inner Austria were often annexed by lords aiming at the formation of larger demesnes.[20] But in our area there are no indications of any systematic policy of peasant evictions (*Bauernlegen*) that would reveal an ambition to enlarge demesnes. Furthermore, through a comparison of the amount of labour services within the feudal rent and the extent of demesne land, we have observed that an oversupply of compulsory labour was more likely than any need for its full exploitation (with the possible exception of Schwarzenegg). There was also the possibility of a tendency to commutate servile obligations into money rents. Thus, while it is certainly true that, in the manors under discussion, demesne land was an integral part of the feudal production system, it is also necessary to stress that in western Slovenia the availability of *corvée* allowed for the existence of the demesne, but did not necessarily determine its extent and consequential economic importance. Therefore, the causal relation between the possibility of exploitation of compulsory services and the development of the demesne based on compulsory labour, as proposed by Topolski, seems not to be applicable.[21]

This interpretation can be confirmed by previous findings, for instance Blaznik's, that 'in Primorska *corvée* labour in general was very little used', and Vilfan's, that in Slovenia 'efforts

[19] ASPG, SP, II, b 723/VI, fo. 63.

[20] Valentinitsch, 'Gutsherrschaftliche Bestrebungen', pp. 284, 290.

[21] J. Topolski, *La nascita del capitalismo in Europa. Crisi economica e accumulazione originaria fra XIV e XVII secolo* (1979), p. 230.

for the restoration of the demesne economy' were largely absent, being least perceptible in the west but stronger in the east, most so in Prekmurje. Similarly, Slovene and Austrian historians have observed that, with the exception of the manors located in the eastern territories of the present Republics of Austria (Burgenland) and Slovenia (Prekmurje), which belonged to the Hungarian lands at the time, there was a general tendency for the commutation of *corvée* into money rents. This gives no support to any attempt to attribute an important role to the demesne economy. Despite the persistence of the (generally small) demesnes and the presence of *corvée*, we may reasonably conclude that feudal relations in western Slovenia were not developing into a demesne-based economy. On this basis it is possible to associate western Slovenia with Inner Austria, where the phenomenon of large demesnes and *corvée*-based manorial economies was also rare.[22]

III

The peasantry could hold farms either as lifelong tenancies, which tended to be *de facto* hereditary, or on the basis of 'purchase right' (*Kaufrecht*), which legally granted the peasant the right to inherit and sell the farm. This situation was generally found throughout a major part of Inner Austria. Since the 'purchase right' had to be bought by the peasants, the introduction of the *Kaufrecht* was supported by the Chamber, whose aim was, most likely, to increase its incomes, but also to institutionalize what was happening in practice, as the peasants tended to manage the farms as if they were their own. This is made clear by the fact that many of the *Huben*, that is the biggest farms, were actually inhabited and exploited by more families than the estate acknowledged. In the Karst manors, the Chamber's surveyors noticed that many of the *Huben* were 'occupied by four, five or even more' peasants, while in the manor of Tolmin in the eighteenth century there is a case of a *Hube* whose land was divided between 18 different peasant households (who of course had other land, too). The rural population tried to avoid the payment of dues on land transactions and therefore divided the farms secretly. But the division of farms could also be made clear, and fractions of *Huben* (half a *Hube*, a quarter, a sixth etc.) prevailed over whole farms. Apart from this, in early modern times, we also see the growth of smallholdings with little arable land, such as the cottagers and the *Untersassen*.

The size of farms was very small, few of them being larger than 5 ha, unless in the higher mountains, where farms (*Rut/Gereut*) were actually comprised of large alpine meadows. In such a situation, given the meagre conditions that the Karst land offered to agriculture, and given the scarcity of arable land in the Alpine area, it is possible to conclude that the majority of the peasant population could not make its living from agriculture alone.

Although detailed research on the sustainability of peasant farms is difficult to undertake, such an interpretation is confirmed by contemporary sources. Philip Cobenzl, lord of the very small Štanjel manor in the Reiffenberg area, wrote in 1606 that in the village of Štanjel the Karst was:

[22] Blaznik, 'Podložniške obveznosti', p. 265; Vilfan, 'Zemljiška gospostva', pp. 174, 197–9; Gestrin, *Slovenske dežele*, pp. 40, 72, 223–4. For Inner Austria, see Valentinitsch, 'Gutsherrschaftliche Bestrebungen', pp. 279–97.

> barren, wild and stony, without any natural element but the wild wind, with not a fathom of land where to lay the plough for a handful of grain. Not more than two inhabitants of the village can live longer than four or five months on their harvest, while all the others, as the poor cottagers and daily labourers, and even among them a few, manage to live 14 days on their own grain … The gardens are pure naked rock, and it is necessary to bring land from elsewhere.[23]

There is some exaggeration in this account, in the sense that not all the Karst was like this, but broadly speaking, everything it says has been confirmed by recent research. As early as 1552 the provincial estates of Carniola claimed that 'in particular in Carniola and Karst the peasants could not remain on their farms without trade and their carrying activities'.[24] In 1634 the exactor manager of the tollhouse in Tarvisio, Carl Rechpacher (Rechbach), wrote to the Carinthian provincial estates, to whom he was responsible, that the Predel-pass road (near Bovec, along the Soča/Isonzo road that connected Gorizia to Carinthia) was largely 'used by the peasants and cottagers of nearby jurisdictions, with their horses so small and weak that sometimes they could barely carry three or four buckets of wine in order to find some subsistence and satisfy their overlord'.[25] Being a border zone, smuggling and occasional acts of intimidation and violence against the archduke's customs guards, were rife.[26] Even J. W. Valvasor, a member of the Royal Society, on the last page of his monumental description of the Duchy of Carniola at the end of the seventeenth century, mentioned the peasants' need to obtain incomes from outside their farms as one of the striking economic and social characteristics of the region.[27]

Throughout the period examined here, a large part of the population of the western Slovenian countryside continued to trade the produce of their lands on the local and neighbouring markets, carrying them on their shoulders, with donkeys and horses, carts and handcarts, establishing autonomous flows and entering middle-range ones. According to Gestrin, around the year 1600, 'the involvement of the countryside in the market economy and the dependence of a major part of the peasant population on it was such that the process of commercialization could not be stopped'. The activities related to merchant flows leading to Trieste were particularly important and necessary for 'numerous cottagers' between the borough of Postojna and the Adriatic coast (the area we are analysing in this article). Among Slovene historians Gestrin in particular has explored this theme and noticed a contest between the towns and the countryside to gain control of rural trade. In proving the importance of non-agricultural income to the rural population, it is also relevant to recall his observation that demands for rights in trade and transport and complaints about obstructions to them, were a consistent feature of the major peasant uprisings in Slovenian lands.[28]

[23] StLA, IÖHKS, K 90/11, fos 79–81.

[24] Gestrin, Slovenske dežele, p. 252.

[25] Kärntner Landesarchiv, Klagenfurt (hereafter KLA), AS, C I, K 619/4, fos 173r–75v.

[26] A. Panjek, 'Über die südliche Grenze Kärntens in der frühen Neuzeit: Kleinhandel, Schmuggel und Saisonarbeit im Ostalpenraum', *Carinthia I, 190* (2000), pp. 401–13; H. Hassinger, *Geschichte des Zollwesens, Handels und Verkehrs in den östlichen Alpenländern vom Spätmittelalter bis in die zweite Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (1987), pp. 223, 237.

[27] J. W. Valvasor, *Die Ehre des Hertzogthums Crain* (4 vols, Laibach [Ljubljana], 1689), IV, last page.

[28] Gestrin, *Slovenske dežele*, pp. 79–80; id. 'Boj za podeželsko trgovino med mestom in vasjo od konca 15. do srede 17. stoletja', *Jugoslovenski istorijski časopis*,

Let us now have a look at the extra-agrarian activities from the peasant's point of view. What prompted the western Slovenian peasants to adopt what appears to have been a general orientation towards the market? Their involvement in a mixture of commercial and transport activities was undoubtedly a necessity: for the majority of peasants the acquisition of extra-agricultural income represented a strategy whereby they could both achieve a level of subsistence and be able to pay their feudal, provincial, ecclesiastical and state rents and dues. But the fact that it was a necessity does not mean that it was a passively accepted solution. On the contrary, the multiplication of households beyond the level of subsistence provided by land indicates that the rural population counted on and exploited the possibility of access to alternative activities, such as trafficking. In this respect, the proximity of the towns of Trieste and Gorizia and of the border with the Republic of Venice, as well as the existence of a consolidated network of long-distance commercial flows and local streams, legal or illegal, crossing the countryside, represented a sort of promise of employment.

Aymard, in his discussion of the relations between peasant self-consumption and the market, distinguished between peasants who made the minimum possible recourse to the market (Chayanov), farmers who made a direct response to market demands (Labrousse), and the impasse of growth as a consequence of reaching the maximum possible ratio between population and production through technical inertia (Le Roy Ladurie).[29] The solution adopted by the rural population in western Slovenia appears to be a different one still: the recourse to non-agricultural forms of activity that allowed them to exceed the limits set by environmental conditions and the nobility's monopoly over land. New households could develop without access to enough land to grant them subsistence based on self-production only. Given the characteristics of the major part of the territory, which was unsuitable for large-scale agriculture, and the lack of options for specialization (wine and stock-farming partly excepted); given too that such specialization as was present was in many aspects a consequence of the need to supply the produce-rents specified in the tribute registers (*Urbar*) and the extra additional demand for wheat, oats and wine by the lordlord; the peasants' response to market demand was not exhibited by their choosing between crops but by their adoption of extra-farming activities. The quest for money was a response to rent pressure but also represented an element in a more complex and comprehensive economic strategy by the rural population, in which one part of their subsistence was provided by the farms and the other by by-employments, ranging from cross-border smuggling to working as day labourers. Since the phenomenon did not subside throughout the early modern era, and continued even later, it may be considered to be a structural element of the rural economy in this area, but it also shows western Slovenian peasants exploiting their economic 'agency' in the same way as other European peasant populations have been shown to do.[30]

Note 28 *continued*
12 (1973); id., 'Kmečka trgovina kot ozadje kmečkih uporov', *Situla*, 13 (1973), pp. 45–67; P. Blaznik, 'Enote individualne posesti', *Gospodarska in družbena zgodovina*, I, p. 170; Panjek, *Terra di confine*, pp. 161–72.

[29] M. Aymard, 'Autoconsommation et marchés: Chayanov, Labrousse ou Le Roy Ladurie?', *Annales* 38 (1983), pp. 1392–3.

[30] On the economic agency of the early modern European peasants see, for example, G. P. Sreenivasan, *The peasants of Ottobeuren, 1487–1726: a rural society in early modern Europe* (2004).

IV

In this final section, we will try and answer the question, why did lords in western Slovenia not develop the demesne economy, but favoured money rents instead? Despite the absence of research, we can say that the phenomenon of large demesnes based on *corvée* appears to be rarely encountered in Inner Austria, defined here as the provinces of Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, and Gorica/Gorizia.[31] Here the geographical conditions significantly limited the opportunities for large-scale exploitation of compulsory labour.[32] In this respect western Slovenia reflects the environmental conditions in Inner Austria, where the predominantly hilly and mountainous landscape significantly limited the space suitable for demesne complexes oriented toward the production of grain for the market.

Another significant obstacle to the development of the demesne economy can be identified in the legal *status* of the rural population in Habsburg Austria, who were personally free and not bonded to the land. Although the question about the growing personal dependency of the peasants is still largely unresearched, in general, intensifying tendencies are believed to have predominated over reducing ones and personal dependency is supposed to have gradually increased between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. We have already noticed Vilfan's observation that in Slovenia the 'second serfdom … developed to different extents, decreasing from the east toward the west' and that 'serfdom least considerably intensified in the Mediterranean space', the Adriatic littoral we are observing here. In fact, in the Primorska region, no instances of the harsh intensification of compulsory labour services have been found so far, and where labour services were increased, lords demanded additional carrying services, which is in accordance with the tendencies expressed by the manorial lords in Carniola, or simply resulted in the introduction of new money rents, as we have mentioned above in the case of the Vipava manor.[33] The great interest shown by the lords in the carrying services of their peasants is understandable, as this was the method used to get the produce collected as rent to market. In the case of grain, the markets were mostly in the local towns, where demand was strong since the area was not self-sufficient in grain production. The lords' wines were sold not only in the nearby towns, where the local nobility enjoyed consistent monopoly rights on the wine market, but were also exported into other Habsburg provinces, especially Carinthia and Styria. And the lords did not hesitate to use legal as well as illegal routes and paths in their wine trade, just as their peasants did.[34]

In addition, in mountainous areas in particular the peasants were fully aware of their rights and willing to defend the forms and conditions inherited through customs and tradition.[35] The practice of taking legal action to try and affirm their rights against their lords was widely used by the rural population. Furthermore, from the late fifteenth to the eighteenth century, the southern Habsburg lands were disturbed by a succession of local uprisings as well as

[31] Valentinitsch, 'Gutsherrschaftliche Bestrebungen', pp. 279–97.

[32] Tremel, *Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte*, p. 242.

[33] S. Vilfan, 'Kmečko prebivalstvo po osebnem položaju', *Gospodarska in družbena zgodovina*, II, p. 341; Gestrin, *Slovenske dežele*, pp. 298–302.

[34] Panjek, *Terra di confine*, pp. 173–205; Panjek, 'Fevdalna renta', pp. 48–9.

[35] Tremel, *Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte*, pp. 235–6.

peasant movements extending over several provinces at a time. Irrespective of the immediate and contingent results of peasant movements, long-term latent rebelliousness and attention to the preservation of rights limited the freedom of action of manorial lords. Movements of rebellion with strong anti-manorial elements, as well as against new taxes that affected rural trade, occurred in Gorizia county: in the Tolmin manor and district alone the peasants arose some 20 times between the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, and in 1713 they instituted the 'great uprising' known as the 'Tolminski punt' that extended over the whole county and lasted a few months.

This means that even if some institutional pre-conditions were present, since there were large manors with demesnes and entitled to *corvée*, and although there was ready access to the urban markets, interregional and international commercial flows that represented the necessary stimulus for the Topolski's development of the 'demesne based on *corvée* labour', other factors that hindered any such development prevailed.[36] At the institutional level, the pre-existing degree of peasant 'serfdom' was insufficient. It could not be significantly increased for social and cultural reasons, since the peasants would constantly appeal to courts and often rise in support of their 'old rights'. Last but not least, the environmental conditions seriously limited the possibilities for large-scale grain production.

Given the extent of the peasants' extra-agricultural activities, it is important to notice that the illegal trafficking of the peasants was not only tolerated but openly defended by the local manorial lords. The lords of Karst manors, for example, not only claimed the right of first instance for their courts to judge prosecutions of illegal trade but also withheld collaboration from the archduke's toll officials and guards, and openly hindered their control of traffic crossing the countryside, as was claimed by those in charge of the Chamber's tollhouses in the Gorizia area in 1567 and much later in 1691.[37] In defiance of royal and archducal regulations, the judicial bodies of the Karst manors (Reifenberg, Štanjel and Žablje) would not allow the guards of the Gorizia customs office to enquire into and resist contraband. This means that the widespread participation of the rural population in smuggling could rely on the support of the manorial lords. Clearly, these interventions were neither disinterested, nor a mere expression of antagonism between local authorities and officials in the service of the state. When the manorial lords denied the customs officers armed support in the repression of smuggling or hindered their operations, they did so for a reason. The participation of the rural population in the market, whether legal or illegal, represented a form of by-employment to use peasants' less productive time and labour. The toll officials and guards had to cope with the hostility of local lords because the peasants' additional income from these activities increased the fiscal basis at the disposal of the manorial lord.

In this respect the behaviour of the manorial lords in Primorska was entirely in line with what Gestrin noted: 'Without recourse to non-agrarian activities, with only the income from farms, the peasants would not have been able to meet the increased feudal and state burdens. The feudal lords were well aware of this fact'. In the sixteenth century and later, they opposed the attempts of towns to restrict rural commerce as well as the ambitions of the Chamber to

[36] Topolski, *La nascita del capitalismo*, pp. 213–28; A. Panjek, *Človek, zemlja, kamen in burja. Zgodovina kulturne krajine Krasa* (2006).

[37] StLA, IÖHKS, K 122, fo. 6.

TABLE 8. Money income compared to total rent across manors.

Manor	*Money income in the rent of manors*	*Total rent (in gulden)*	*Ratio between money rent and total rent*[a]
Senožeče 1615	799.48	1,427.97	
Schwarzenegg 1618	753.28	3,146.96	
Socerb 1620	959.40	1,436.95	
Duino 1637	3,101.52	5,899.05	
Reifenberg 1624	1,057.00	4,641.34	
Vipava 1624	1,502.91	5,683.61	
Tolmin 1633	6,998.59	11,026.01	
Total	15,172.18	33,261.89	45.6

Note:
[a] Percentage calculated on the basis of the hypothetic sum in the table, therefore representing a rough estimate.
Sources: Data from Tables 3 and 5.

increase fiscal burdens. The statements made by the feudal lords in defence of rural trade and transport activity 'can be synthesized as follows: without commerce the peasants could not survive on their farms nor could we collect tributes from them and demand taxes'. These were indeed self-interested arguments that, however, were not objected to: 'not even the prince, or his provincial officers, the *Vizedomini* in Ljubljana, ever questioned them, despite knowing the situation well'.[38]

Undoubtedly, the manorial lord could only benefit from the trading activities of his peasants, however minute they might have been. The peasant, part of whose subsistence depended on extra-agricultural activities, secured a higher income and his dependence on the produce of his land was reduced. As a result, the recipient of rural rent had a greater possibility of demanding rent as money without breaching the subsistence basis of his peasants. The conditions coincide with those observed in most manors in Carniola, where, throughout the sixteenth century, the rent was becoming more and more monetary in nature, particularly in the manors situated in areas crossed by or close to merchant routes.[39]

Our analysis of the major manors in the Slovenian littoral region allows a rough quantification of this phenomenon: almost half of the lords' rent income was in money (Table 8). Although a part of that came from tolls and fees paid by people who were not subjects of the manors (merchants, traders and so on), such a figure clearly indicates how in western Slovenia the means used by the feudal lords to increase their income from their estates was not by intensifying demesne production, but by directing and supporting their peasants' participation in the market.

[38] Gestrin, *Slovenske dežele*, pp. 250–1.

[39] Ibid., p. 245.

V

In conclusion, it is possible to draw up a list of reasons why the western Slovenian lords did not develop the demesne economy, but favoured rent in money. The reasons are, as we have seen, geographic, legal, socio-cultural and economic in nature. First of all, the geographical conditions significantly limited the space suitable for demesne complexes oriented toward extensive agriculture and large-scale production. Second, the legal *status* of the rural population, who were personally free and not bonded to the land, was an obstacle to a large-scale exploitation of compulsory labour. Third, the peasants' great attention to the preservation of their rights and customs, as well as their willingness to take legal action and tendency to rebelliousness limited the freedom of action of manorial lords. Fourth, the agrarian production of most of the peasant households did not enable them to achieve self-sufficiency, nor did the extension of the cultivated area during the early modern period seem to have significantly changed the population–resources ratio. Lords could not raise their rent-income in kind over a certain limit without risking the disruption of the existing economic balance in the countryside, which would undermine their very own economic basis (by reducing the peasants' solvency). In these circumstances, the resources that were most capable of enhancement were the peasants' trading activities, and it was these, rather than an enlarged demesne economy, which the lords came to exploit for their own profit.

The influence of exports on grain production on Polish royal demesne farms in the second half of the sixteenth century

by Piotr Guzowski

Abstract

In this article the author explores a survey of royal lands produced in 1564 and 1565. This contains data from over 500 royal demesnes situated throughout the Kingdom of Poland, and provides detailed information about types of cereals grown, their yields and prices, animal husbandry, the system of land division, weights and measures, and the system of agricultural management. Here we examine regional differences in the arable economy of royal demesnes and consider how far their production was determined by the opportunities offered by local and international grain markets.

Interest in the Polish grain market of the early modern period dates from the turn of the nineteenth century.[1] It was, however, only after the Second World War that a succession of groundbreaking publications appeared, the results of a noticeable growth in the popularity of research into economic history and especially the economic role of demesne farms. One of the chief areas of interest was the place of the Polish grain market in the international grain trade and the role of Poland as the granary of Europe.[2] The works by Andrzej Wyczański and Stanisław Mielczarski inspired more detailed studies into the problem of the regionalization of grain production in Poland.[3] A book of particular importance in the development of the subject is Mielczarski's *Rynek zbożowy na ziemiach polskich …* (*Grain market in the Polish*

[1] W. Czermak, 'Handel zbożowy gdański w XVII w.', *Sprawozdania Akademii Umiejętności* 3 (5) (1898), pp. 8–9; A. Szelągowski, *Pieniądz i przewrót cen w XVI i XVII w. w Polsce* (1902); S. Kutrzeba, *Wisła w historii gospodarczej dawnej Rzeczypospolitej* (1920); R. Rybarski, *Handel i polityka handlowa Polski w XVI stuleciu* (1920).

[2] A. Żabko-Potopowicz, 'Handel zbożem w Polsce w XVI w.', *Ekonomista* 52 (1952), pp. 125–49; H. Samsonowicz, 'Handel zagraniczny Gdańska w drugiej połowie XV wieku (rejonizacja handlu na podstawie ksiąg cła palowego)', *Przegląd Historyczny* 47 (1956), pp. 283–352; H. W. Rusiński, *Znaczenie rynku zewnętrznego w dziejach gospodarki folwarczno-pańszczyźnianej*, in *VIII Powszechny Zjazd Historyków Polskich*, session VI (1960); A. Wyczański, 'Próba oszacowania obrotu żytem w Polsce XVI w.', *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej* 9 (1961), pp. 23–33; M. Bogucka, *Handel zagraniczny Gdańska w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku* (1970); A. Mączak, *Między Gdańskiem a Sundem. Studia nad handlem bałtyckim od połowy XVI do połowy XVII wieku* (1972); H. Obuchowska-Pysiowa, *Handel wiślany w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku* (1964); K. Chojnacka, *Handel na Warcie i Odrze w XVI i pierwszej połowie XVII wieku* (2007).

lands) of 1962 which, despite the criticism it has received,[4] remains fundamental for its attempt to provide an overall view of the Polish grain market at the time of its greatest prosperity.

In his studies of the regionalization of grain production, Mielczarski focused on two factors: the prices of different grains and their mutual interdependence, and the geographical range of different grain measures. He undertook a detailed analysis of the relationship between the prices of rye and oats, seeing them as commodities whose supply and demand differed considerably. Oats were the cheapest and most readily grown grain, produced throughout the country. Their level of production reflected a constant demand on local markets. Used primarily as forage, oats were characterized by great price stability. They were hardly ever exported. Rye, by contrast, was a popular bread grain, sold on urban markets as well as exported. Its price in any particular market was influenced not only by the interplay between supply and demand, but also by factors such as the cost of transport. In addition, rye prices were much more vulnerable to changes in the overall economic situation. Historians studying grain prices in Cracow and Lvov noticed that the gap between the prices of oats and rye tended to widen as a result of a growing demand for rye, especially in regions where much of it was shipped to Gdansk.[5] Mielczarski considered another factor influencing grain prices, namely the level of supply. He observed that because oats and rye were the most commonly grown cereals, they were ideal subjects for research because, in any analysis of their prices, differences in the quality of local soils did not have to be taken into account. Such an approach resulted in the establishment of an index of grain prices where the price of rye was indexed to the price of oats, taking oats to be 100. By taking this approach, Mielczarski avoided all the pitfalls of dealing with the complex, geographically diversified and far from completely understood system of old Polish dry measures.[6] He used this index to determine the equilibrium price, i.e. the price at which demand and supply reached a state of balance.[7] An important assumption on which the idea of equilibrium price is based is that the market, even if it evolves and fluctuates, has a long-term tendency towards equilibrium. It is an open question, however, whether it is possible in economic reality to reach a complete balance between supply and demand. Therefore, the equilibrium price may be used effectively as an economic indicator only in the analysis of free markets. Of course, grain markets in early modern Poland met this condition.

Mielczarski used the index of rye prices in his analysis of the regional diversification of

[3] A. Wyczański, *Studia nad folwarkiem szlacheckim w Polsce w latach 1500–1580* (1960); S. Mielczarski, *Rynek zbożowy na ziemiach polskich w drugiej połowie XVI i pierwszej połowie XVII wieku. Próba rejonizacji* (1962); J. Małecki, *Studia nad rynkiem regionalnym Krakowa w XVI wieku* (1963); T. Chudoba, 'Warszawski rynek zbożowy w XVI wieku', *Rocznik Warszawski* 6 (1967), pp. 15–47; A. Olejarczuk, 'Towarowość produkcji zbożowej w XVI wieku. Próba rejonizacji', *Przegląd Historyczny* 64 (1973), pp. 729–40; J. Szpak, *Kierunki produkcji dworskiej w ekonomii malborskiej w XVI wieku* (1972); id., *Studia nad stosunkami rynkowymi w ekonomii malborskiej* (1962); id., *Rewolucja cen XVI wieku a funkcjonowanie gospodarki dworskiej w starostwach Prus Królewskich* (1982).

[4] A. Mączak, 'O przydatności modeli ekonomicznych na przykładzie badań wiejskiej gospodarki feudalne', *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 70 (1963), pp. 675–90; L. Żytkowicz, 'Gospodarstwo folwarczne na Żuławach Malborskich', *Przegląd Historyczny* 54 (1963), pp. 671–702.

[5] J. Pelc, *Ceny w Krakowie w latach 1369–1600* (1935), pp. 61–2; S. Hoszowski, *Ceny we Lwowie w XVI i XVII wieku* (1928), p. 75.

[6] K. Skupieński, 'Struktury systemowe polskich miar zbożowych w XVI wiek', *Przegląd Historyczny* 69 (1978), pp. 623–46.

[7] Mielczarski, *Rynek zbożowy*, p. 39.

grain markets. He determined the equilibrium price at 191 on the basis of the mean of prices in Gdansk between 1500 and 1655. He proposed the following standards for comparison between demand and supply: where the index is ≤ 169, supply exceeds demand; where it falls between 170 and 199, supply is slightly greater than demand; where it falls between 200 and 229, there is a balance between supply and demand. An index of between 230 and 259 indicates that demand is slightly greater than supply and a figure of ≥ 260 shows that demand exceeds supply.[8] Assuming that there is a relationship between the equilibrium price of individual grains and a balance between their supply and demand, it may be understood that each time the index increases, it reflects a growth in demand over supply on a given market. By the same token, when it goes down, it reflects a growth in supply over demand.

Mielczarski also tried to assess grain production in Poland by determining the percentage share of bread grains (rye and wheat) and non-bread (barley and oats). The basis for his assessment was the amount of grain left on the demesne after the deduction of seed corn. He assumed this surplus to be a commodity set aside for sale. He divided the demesnes he analysed into three categories: (i) those with a small supply of bread grains (no more than 45 per cent of total surplus by volume), (ii) farms with a medium supply of bread grains (46–55 per cent) and, finally, (iii) those with a large supply of bread grains (more than 56 per cent).[9]

This article aims to expand Mielczarski's earlier studies by offering a detailed analysis of the production of, and market for, wheat and barley. Mielczarski treated bread grains, wheat and rye, jointly, while data concerning barley was used only to test the price indexes of the other crops. Meanwhile, both wheat and barley played a vital role in the domestic market because, apart from being processed into flour and groats, they were also key ingredients in the production of beer.

The data employed in the study comes from a survey of royal demesnes made in 1564–65.[10] This provides detailed information about the quantity of grain produced and its prices for 523 farms scattered throughout Poland. The documents were compiled by a number of special commissions established by parliament to assess the value of royal estates. The commissions consisted of members of both houses and representatives of the monarch. They travelled the length and breadth of the country recording the extent, composition and value of royal estates.[11] Unlike the source material adopted by Mielczarski, the survey provides more

[8] Ibid., p. 45.

[9] Ibid., p. 60.

[10] The database was created from the following publications: for Little Poland, J. Małecki (ed.), *Lustracja województwa krakowskiego, 1564* pts 1 and 2 (1962–64), A. Wyczański (ed.), *Lustracja województwa lubelskiego, 1565* (1959) and ed. W. Ochmański (ed.), *Lustracja województwa sandomierskiego, 1564–65* (1963); For Greater Poland, A. Tomczak, C. Ohryzko-Włodarska and J. Włodarczyk (eds), *Lustracja województw wielkopolskich i kujawskich, 1564–1565*, pt 1 (1963) and A. Tomczak, *Lustracja do województw wielkopolskich i kujawskich, 1564–65*, pt 2 (1963); For Masovia, I. Gieysztorowa and A. Żaboklicka (eds), *Lustracja województwa mazowieckiego 1565*, pts 1 and 2 (1967–8); A. Sucheni-Grabowska and S. M. Szacherska (eds), *Lustracje województwa płockiego, 1565–1789* (1965); Z. Kędzierska (ed.), *Lustracje województwa rawskiego, 1564 i 1570* (1959); For Royal Prussia, S. Hoszowski (ed.), *Lustracja województwa pomorskiego, 1565* (1961) and S. Hoszowski, *Lustracja województw malborskiego i chełmińskiego, 1565* (1961); finally, for the Ruthenian lands, K. Chłapowski and H. Żytkowicz (eds), *Lustracja województw ruskiego, podolskiego i brzeskiego,* pts 1 and 2 (1992–2001).

[11] I. Rychlikowa, 'Lustracja 1564–65 jako podstawa szacunków dochodów z gospodarki polowej', *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej* 22 (1974), p. 678.

chronologically coherent data. Mielczarski's analysis of Little Poland was based on data from 1565 for Lubelskie voivodship[12] and from 1569 for Krakowskie and Sandomierskie voivodships. Likewise, his data for Masovia comes from different periods in different voivodships: 1564 for Płockie voivodship, 1564 and 1569 for Mazowieckie voivodship and 1570 for Rawskie voivodship. All his data for Greater Poland comes from 1569, whereas that for Red Ruthenia is derived from surveys of 1565.[13]

For the purposes of this study, data concerning the kind, quantity and prices of grain sold by each of the 523 farms has been compiled. The figures have been used to calculate price indexes and average sales of particular grains for individual voivodships. The equilibrium price of wheat and barley calculated for the purposes of this study is not based on grain prices in Gdansk, as was the case in Mielczarski's analysis, but on the prices in Cracow. The decision to use Cracow rather than Gdansk was prompted by the fact that the Cracow grain market is the only one to provide a relatively complete set of data for wheat and barley prices in the years under study. The use of Cracow brings an additional advantage. Gdansk was a very important centre for the rye trade (which was the main export grain in Poland) and its prices were determined by the strength of the export demand. For this very reason, however, the Gdansk grain market can hardly be treated as representative of the rest of the country.[14] Cracow, although admittedly in the zone of the Vistula river, was more representative of Poland as a whole because grain production for local markets was as important as production for export. In this study, we are not interested in determining the territorial range of individual local markets. Instead, our focus is on establishing the characteristic features of grain markets in particular regions that were, at the same time, units of state administration.

Another point is that unlike Mielczarski's study, the present one considers prices from a much shorter period, i.e. 80 instead of 150 years. This is because complete records of Cracow grain prices are available only for the years 1521–1600 and, consequently, the equilibrium price for particular grains was determined only for those years (Table 1). This is taken to be the mean of prices over the 80 years indexed against oats (where oats equals 100).[15]

These figures may be compared with prices recorded in primary sources. The surveys of 1564–65 provide information about the prices of grain sold from the demesnes, but not of grain from mills or peasant rents. These were current prices, recorded by members of the commissions on the basis of oral evidence or checked by them directly at the market ('wedle pospolitego targu'). Data is drawn from the last quarter of the year when the grain supply was greatest, so the prices recorded are at their lowest during the year.[16] On the basis of this data it is possible to calculate price indexes of particular grains in different regions of Poland for this single year (Table 2).

It is noticeable that the most balanced of all rye markets was that of Gdansk, which is hardly surprising given this city's dominant role as a centre of international trade and because of the character of rye, commonly grown throughout the country and a major Polish export

[12] Voivodship is the largest unit of local administration.

[13] Mielczarski, *Rynek zbożowy*, pp. 198–204.

[14] This was noted by Mielczarski himself, who wrote: 'An average calculated from Gdansk prices is not reliable because it applies to a city which is a large export centre, while the scale is to be applied to local centres situated in the vicinity of the place of production'.

[15] Pelc, *Ceny w Krakowie*, Tables 3–7.

[16] Mielczarski, *Rynek zbożowy,* pp. 30–2.

TABLE 1. Equilibrium price of grain prices on the Cracow market (1521–1600) (oats = 100).

Years	*Index*		
	Rye	*Wheat*	*Barley*
1521–1600	221	330	175

Source: Adapted from J. Pelc, *Ceny w Krakowie w latach 1369–1600* (1935), tables 3–7.

TABLE 2. Price on regional grain markets, 1564–65 (oats = 100).

Region	*Index*		
	Rye	*Wheat*	*Barley*
Royal Prussia	217	300	150
Greater Poland	186	379	163
Little Poland	242	322	203
Masovia	200	371	183
Red Ruthenia	227	325	152

Sources: J. Małecki (ed.), *Lustracja województwa krakowskiego, 1564* pts 1 and 2 (1962–64); A. Wyczański (ed.), *Lustracja województwa lubelskiego, 1565* (1959); W. Ochmański (ed.), *Lustracja województwa sandomierskiego, 1564–65* (1963); A. Tomczak, C. Ohryzko-Włodarska and J. Włodarczyk (eds), *Lustracja województw wielkopolskich i kujawskich, 1564–1565*, pt 1 (1963); A. Tomczak, *Lustracja województw wielkopolskich i kujawskich, 1564–65*, pt 2 (1963); I. Gieysztorowa and A. Żaboklicka (eds), *Lustracja województwa mazowieckiego 1565*, pts 1 and 2 (1967–8); A. Sucheni-Grabowska and S. M. Szacherska (eds), *Lustracje województwa płockiego, 1565–1789* (1965); Z. Kędzierska (ed.), *Lustracje województwa rawskiego, 1564 i 1570* (1959); S. Hoszowski (ed.), *Lustracja województwa pomorskiego, 1565* (1961); S. Hoszowski, *Lustracja województw malborskiego i chełmińskiego, 1565* (1961); K. Chłapowski and H. Żytkowicz (eds), *Lustracja województw ruskiego, podolskiego i brzeskiego,* pts 1 and 2 (1992–2001).

commodity (Table 2). Greater Poland, Kuiavia and Masovia, which were the chief suppliers of rye for export, were characterized by an excess of supply over demand, while in Little Poland demand exceeded supply. A relatively balanced situation characterized rye markets in Red Ruthenia where the impact of Gdansk grain trade was negligible. Mielczarski's conclusions about the rye trade based on his analysis of the Gdansk market do not differ greatly from our conclusions based on the examination of rye market in Cracow.

The situation in the wheat and barley market was quite different. The Gdansk market was characterized by an excess of supply over demand for all grains. The supply of barley in Greater Poland and of wheat in Little Poland also exceeded demand. Masovia was characterized by a deficit of both barley and wheat, whereas in Red Ruthenia, whilst the wheat market was relatively balanced, the supply of barley was greater than the demand for it.

An examination of the situation in all the regional grain markets in Poland in the second half of the sixteenth century reveals that in spite of some differences between them, and despite varying indexes of price relations between particular grains, none of the regional markets experienced any gross disproportion between supply and demand (Table 2). Even the most pronounced differences between the equilibrium price of wheat (330) and price indexes in Royal

TABLE 3. Grain price indexes in 1565.

Voivodship	*Number of demesnes*	*Grain*		
		Rye	*Wheat*	*Barley*
(a) Royal Prussia				
Pomorskie	15	217	300	150
(b) Masovia				
Mazowieckie	68	200	373	187
Rawskie	22	200	376	175
Płockie	6	200	320	154
Total	96	200	371	183
(c) Greater Poland				
Brzeskie Kujawskie and Inowrocławskie	12	200	250	133
Łęczyckie	17	182	360	159
Sieradzkie	31	210	416	175
Kaliskie	19	172	369	164
Poznańskie	15	146	358	169
Total	94	186	379	163
(d) Little Poland				
Krakowskie	76	246	324	204
Sandomierskie	74	240	320	203
Lubelskie	14	240	320	206
Total	164	242	322	203
(e) Red Ruthenia				
Bełskie	24	249	300	154
Ruskie	79	221	332	152
Podolskie	2	200	333	133
Total	105	227	325	152

Source: As for Table 2.

Prussia (300) or Greater Poland (379) were indicative of only a minor excess of either supply or demand. Similarly, the barley market, characterized by higher demand in Little Poland (203) and higher supply in Royal Prussia (150), did not experience any drastic supply-demand imbalance. Changes in the equilibrium price of both grains did not exceed 30 per cent. Even smaller fluctuations are visible in the market for rye characterized by higher supply on the demesnes in Greater Poland (186) and higher demand in Little Poland (242). Here, the changes in the equilibrium price did not exceed 25 per cent. This means that the market for rye, which was the major Polish export commodity and as such was most vulnerable to changes in external economic conditions, was actually more stable than the market in wheat or barley, which were

TABLE 4. Pattern of grain surplus on royal demesnes, 1564–65.

Region	*Number of demesnes*	*Grain (%)*			
		Rye	*Wheat*	*Oats*	*Barley*
Royal Prussia	47	39.0	9.8	26.1	25.1
Greater Poland	93	48.8	5.3	36.5	9.3
Masovia	104	55.0	4.1	34.0	6.9
Little Poland	164	36.5	10.1	44.7	8.6
Red Ruthenia	115	37.4	10.0	41.6	11.0
Total	523	43.5	7.7	38.4	10.3

Source: As for Table 2.

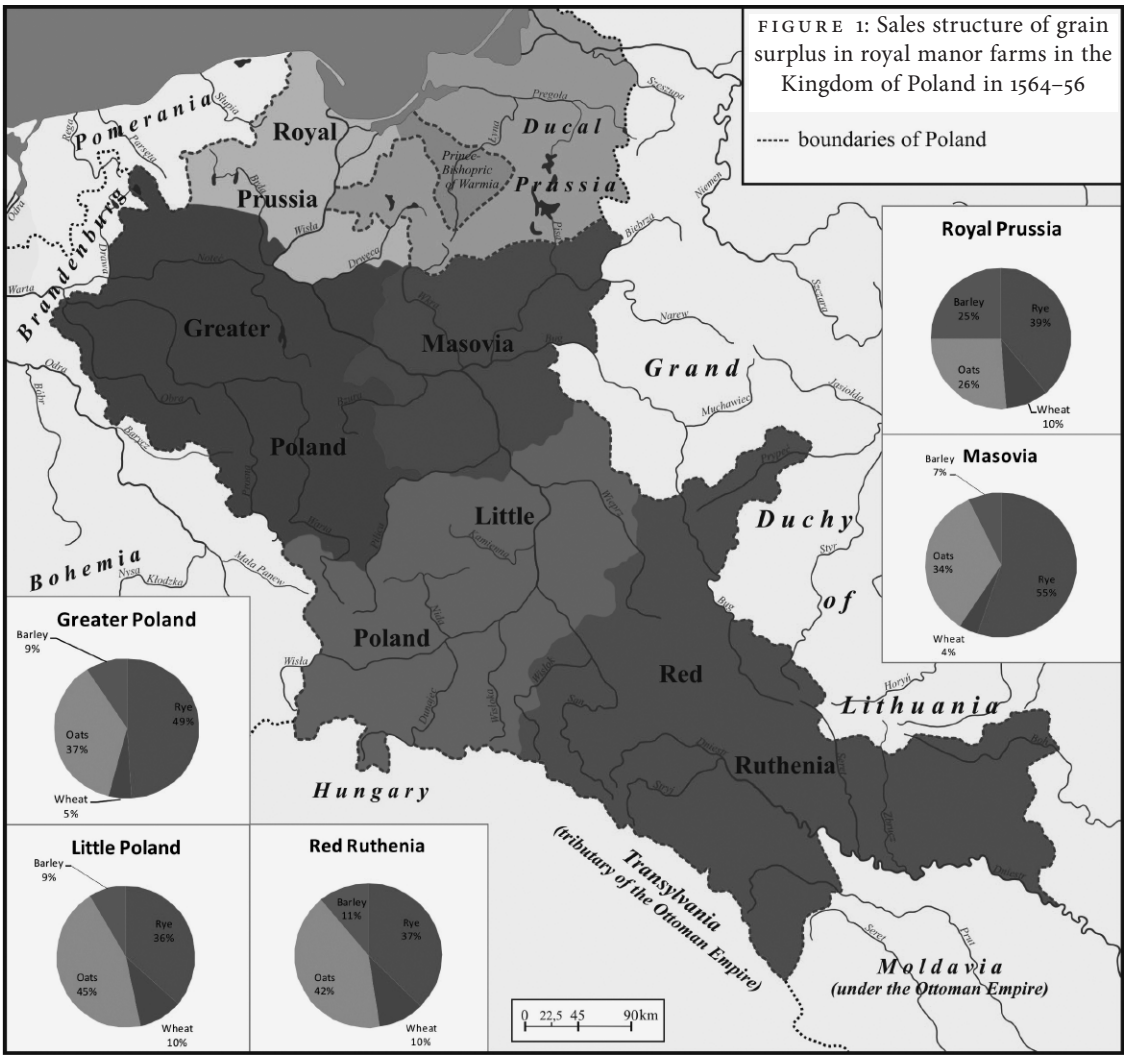


FIGURE 1: Sales structure of grain surplus in royal manor farms in the Kingdom of Poland in 1564–56

TABLE 5. Pattern of grain surplus on royal demesnes, 1565.

Voivodship	*Number of demesnes*	*Grain*			
		Rye	*Wheat*	*Oats*	*Barley*
(a) Royal Prussia					
Pomorskie	28	36.5	4.9	31.9	23.7
Malborskie	11	31.3	29.5	12.2	26.9
Chełmińskie	8	47.7	0	24.7	27.6
(b) Masovia					
Mazowieckie	74	56.1	4.6	31.3	8.0
Rawskie	23	54.7	3.0	38.6	3.7
Płockie	7	44.0	1.8	47.9	6.4
(c) Greater Poland					
Brzeskie Kujawskie and Inowrocławskie	13	46.8	1.7	31.2	20.3
Łęczyckie	16	47.6	2.0	40.0	10.4
Sieradzkie	30	43.5	8.1	38.6	9.8
Kaliskie	19	54.1	4.2	38.2	3.8
Poznańskie	15	55.8	8.1	31.3	4.8
(d) Little Poland					
Krakowskie	76	28.4	13.7	48.9	9.0
Sandomierskie	74	41.3	8.1	41.8	8.9
Lubelskie	14	55.5	1.4	37.4	5.6
(e) Red Ruthenia					
Bełskie	14	48.8	6.9	33.4	11.0
Ruskie	94	35.8	10.4	42.5	11.5
Podolskie	7	27.3	15.9	35.5	21.3

Source: As for Table 2.

grains mainly produced for domestic consumption. Detailed data for the price indices of grains, where oats equals 100, by local jurisdictions or voivodships, is presented in Table 3.

An explanation of the situation of each grain in regional markets as presented in Table 2 may be sought in the pattern of grain produced for sale and in the influence of exports on regional markets (Table 4 and Figure 1). Rye and oats were grown throughout the country and on some demesnes they constituted almost all the grain available for sale. Rye was slightly more popular than wheat as it was sold by 520 of the 523 demesnes (99.4 per cent), whereas oats were sold by 504 demesnes (96.3 per cent). Wheat and barley required better soil than rye and oats and therefore could not be grown everywhere on an equally large scale. Nonetheless, wheat for sale was produced by 397 of the 523 demesnes examined in this study (75.9 per cent) and most (484,

or 92.5 per cent) sold barley. The percentage share of wheat produced for the market ranged from mere 0.5 per cent of all grains to 75 per cent while the share of barley ranged from 0.5 per cent to 100 per cent.

The importance of particular grains in the pattern of production for the market varied considerably from region to region (Table 4 and Figure 1). For instance, rye predominated in Masovia and Greater Poland, both of which were the major suppliers to the grain trade by shipment down the Vistula and the Oder rivers. Barley production, mainly for the brewing of beer, was more extensive in Royal Prussia than elsewhere because of the better quality of soil and bigger local market. Differences in the importance of particular grains between Little Poland and Red Ruthenia were minimal and both regions displayed similar market tendencies even though the former was much more involved in the waterborne trade down the Vistula. In Table 5 the same data is presented by voivodship.

I

Data from 1565 indicates that of the 45,000 *lasts* of Polish grain exported that year, 92 per cent was rye and the remaining 8 per cent was wheat.[17] About two thirds of all grain leaving Gdansk came from regions other than Royal Prussia, and especially from Masovia. Detailed information is available for 1568 from the surviving records of the tollhouse in Włocławek. The source reveals that around 25,000 *lasts* of grain were floated down the Vistula to Gdansk and it allows the identification of the place of origin of about 15,000 *lasts* (Table 6).

About a third of the grain sold on the Gdansk market came from Royal Prussia. Unfortunately, although the inspectors surveyed 47 farms in this region, the data collected by them is incomplete and it is possible to determine price indexes on the basis of information from only 15 farms, drawn from only one of the Royal Prussian voivodships (Table 3 (a)).

The indexes of rye, wheat and barley prices in Pomorskie voivodship reveal that the supply of all grains exceeded demand. Closest to the equilibrium price was the price index of rye (217), while the situation for wheat (300) and barley (150) was much less balanced. A characteristic of Royal Prussian grain production is a large share of barley in the grain brought to sale (a quarter of total sales, see Table 5a)). This market is also distinctive because of the amount of wheat produced, which in Malborskie voivodship reached 30 per cent of the total although, at the same time, demesnes in Chełmińskie voivodship did not sell wheat at all. The concentration on wheat and barley was at the expense of rye and oats, which, in Malborskie voivodship, constituted only about 40 per cent of the total grain finding its way to the market.

The majority of grain transported down the Vistula to Gdansk came from Masovia. This was of fundamental importance to the structure of grain production in the region. In all three voivodships of the Masovia region, the share of rye in overall grain production was larger than the national average (Table 5b). Rye in Masovia constituted 55 per cent of total grain produced by the demesnes for the market. At the same time, the region experienced a shortfall in the supply of wheat and barley. That the index of rye prices fluctuates around 200 (the equilibrium price was 221) is indicative of a relatively integrated market for rye throughout the whole

[17] Mączak, *Między Gdańskiem a Sundem*, p. 71.

TABLE 6. The waterborn grain trade in the Vistula basin in 1568.

Region	Percentage share in the grain shipped down the Vistula
Greater Poland	7.0
Masovia	54.3
Little Poland	17.0
Red Ruthenia	10.0
Grand Duchy of Lithuania	11.7
Total	100.0

Source: Adapted from: S. Gierszewski, *Wisła w dziejach Polski*, (1982), pp. 64–5.

region. The index of wheat prices for individual farms, by contrast, oscillated between 300 and 560, whilst that of barley ranged between 150 and 240 (Table 3 (b)).

Wheat in Masovia was grown on 79 demesnes (74 per cent of the whole), but only on four of them did its share of overall grain production exceed 15 per cent. On all the other demesnes, the share of wheat was smaller and in some cases very small indeed. It appears that Masovian demesnes were stimulated neither by the opportunity provided by the Gdansk market nor by domestic demand to develop the production of this grain. Another characteristic feature of this region was that the shortage of wheat was not balanced by any increased production of barley (Table 5 (b)).

The situation was more complex in Greater Poland where there were pronounced differences in the pattern of grain production for sale between particular voivodships (Table 5 (c)). Brzeskie Kujawskie and Inowrocławskie voivodships (Kuiavia), both lying within the catchment of the Vistula trade, were characterized by an average share of rye in their output but little production of wheat, whose shortage was to some extent compensated for by a remarkably increased supply of barley (more than 20 per cent). The price indexes are indicative of a relatively integrated grain market, with an increased supply of all grains (Table 3 (c)). The situation was similar on demesnes in Łęczyckie voivodship where growing wheat was equally unpopular, but, unlike in the two voivodships mentioned previously, barley was not substituted for wheat. Price indexes show a slightly increased demand for wheat and an excess supply of all other grains. Data from Sieradzkie voivodship are closest to the national average, but at the same time its grain market was definitely much less integrated than elsewhere in Greater Poland. The rye price index for individual farms (Table 3 (c)) fluctuated between 160 and 250, for wheat the range was from 330 to 500, and, for barley, from 150 to 200. In Poznańskie and Kaliskie voivodships, rye formed as much as 56 per cent of grain supply. In Poznańskie voivodship, the share of wheat in the structure of the grain supply was close to the national average, whereas in Kaliskie voivodship it was definitely lower. In both voivodships the share of barley was also much below the national average. Price indexes (120–200) show a largely increased supply of rye on local and regional markets, which may be explained by the unstable conditions for

[18] Chojnacka, *Handel na Warcie*, p. 197.

the shipment of grain down the Warta River that arose from frequent changes in the rate of tolls, temporary bans on grain imports to Brandenburg and the New March, and also from the burdensome staple rights (right of pre-emption) exercised by Frankfurt an der Oder and that city's economic rivalry with Szczecin.[18] The wheat price index (300–400) is indicative of a somewhat greater demand for this grain, but it is worth adding at this point that a third of all demesne farms in these voivodships did not grow wheat at all. On the other hand, although almost all demesnes produced barley for sale, its price index – fluctuating between 133 and 200 – reveals that the demand for and supply of barley varied considerably within this area.

The grain market in Little Poland was much more uniform and integrated. It is even possible to talk about it as a regional market although each voivodship was, of course, to some extent unique in the structure of its grain supply (Table 5 (c)). Krakowskie voivodship was characterized by a relatively large share of wheat in the total amount of grain produced for sale (14 per cent), which gave a price index of 324, showing a slight excess of the supply of this grain over demand (Table 3 (c)). The percentage share of barley in the production for the market was close to the national average, giving it a price index of 204, indicative of excessive demand. Other voivodships in Little Poland followed the same pattern of wheat and barley price indexes (wheat, 320; barley, 203–206) although the percentage share of each in the grain available for sale was much lower than in Krakowskie voivodship. The most interesting aspect is the market for rye. The price index of this grain throughout the region was 240 although there were considerable differences between particular voivodships. In Krakowskie voivodship, for example, rye constituted 30 per cent of all grain sold, whereas in Lubelskie voivodship it was over 55 per cent. It appears that rye and wheat in Krakowskie voivodship were produced for the domestic, local market and met the demand in the area, while from Sandomierskie and Lubelskie voivodships a considerable portion of both grains was transported to Gdansk. At the same time, it is surprising that the tiny quantity of wheat produced by the royal demesnes in Lubelskie voivodship still exceeded the demand for this grain (as can be seen from its price index).

Data from Red Ruthenian voivodships (Table 5 (e)) reveals considerable diversification in the supply structure and interesting tendencies in the price indexes. For instance, even though the grain market in Bełskie voivodship was dominated by rye, the price index of this grain (249) suggests that the demand for rye in the area was still higher than its supply (Table 3 (e)). The percentage share of wheat in the grain market was lower than the national average, but the price index of wheat (300) suggests an excessive supply and so does that of barley (154). A smaller share of rye and a larger share of wheat in the output of demesnes in Ruskie voivodship resulted in the price indexes of these two grains being close to their equilibrium prices (221, 332). In the case of barley (152), supply exceeded demand. Barley constituted as much as 20 per cent of the total amount of grain sold on the market by demesnes in Podolskie voivodship and its price index there (133) indicates that supply exceeded demand considerably. A similar tendency was visible in the rye market (200) although the share of this grain in the supply structure was exceptionally low (27.3 per cent). The wheat price index (333) suggests a balance between supply and demand even though the quantity of available wheat in the area was almost twice as high as the national average.

II

The mix of grain produced by the royal demesnes presented here may be compared with the pattern of grain put on the market by other great landowners. For example, in 1565–66, the estate of the Bishop of Włocławek in Kuiavia, which contained about 30 demesnes, sold its surplus of grain in the following proportion: rye 70.3 per cent, wheat 6.8 per cent, oats 11.3 per cent and barley 11.3 per cent.[19] Data from the sale of surplus grain by the Archbishops of Gniezno is not available, but the proportion of grain left for sowing in 13 demesnes belonging to the Archbishops in mid-century was as follows: rye 62.0 per cent, wheat 5.7 per cent, oats 27.0 per cent and barley 5.3 per cent.[20] In both cases, the rye was sold directly to Gdansk. Some rare data from just nine demesnes belonging to the gentry in Greater and Little Poland for the years 1550–80 (studied by A. Wyczański), shows a somewhat different structure of grain left for sowing: rye 39.9 per cent, wheat 6.8 per cent, oats 42.8 per cent and barley 7.7 per cent.[21] About 80 per cent of the total grain floated down the Vistula to Gdansk from regions outside Royal Prussia came from great estates.

In the analysis of the supply of different grains in various regions of Poland, it is worth considering what factors influenced the decision to grow and sell a particular kind of grain. It appears that the export trade was a factor of the paramount importance in the shaping of local and regional grain markets. It is discernible in the interest that some of the commissioners surveying the royal demesnes showed in the circumstances of grain sales, especially in Masovia. In Rawskie voivodship 14 out of 23 demesnes surveyed in 1564–65 (61 per cent) shipped their rye to Gdansk by river. The same was done by 42 of 74 (57 per cent) of the demesnes surveyed in Mazowieckie voivodship. It may be concluded that in the region that was the largest supplier of grain for export from Gdansk, some two thirds of the demesnes participated in the shipping of grain down the Vistula. Our data is certainly not complete because the commissioners did not reach all the demesnes in the region. Besides, the fact that the survey does not mention that a particular demesne sold grain to Gdansk does not necessarily mean that it did not. A comparison of the saleable surplus of farms whose export of grain to Gdansk is mentioned by the survey with those where it is not does not reveal any striking differences between the two (Table 7). This may mean that export was indeed an important factor influencing the choice of cereals grown in Masovia. Moreover, it appears that even if some of the grain was sold locally rather than sent to Gdansk, it was still the export demand for rye that determined the scale of its production in particular regions.[22] Grain production in Masovia was dominated by rye (55 per cent of total sale). A similar proportion may be found also in Greater Poland (Poznańskie and Kaliskie voivodships) and in Little Poland (Lubelskie voivodship). Rye price indexes in these parts of Poland indicate that the quantity supplied was much larger than the quantity demanded. An excess of supply also characterized those voivodships where the production of

[19] L. Żytkowicz, *Studia nad gospodarstwem wiejskim w dobrach kościelnych XVI w.* (2 vols, 1962), table 58.

[20] J. Topolski, *Gospodarstwo w dobrach arcybiskupstwa gnieźnieńskiego od XVI do XVIII wieku* (1958), p. 165.

[21] Wyczański, *Studia nad folwarkiem*, p. 146.

[22] Warsaw merchants, for example, would purchase grain in Mazowieckie voivodship, on demesnes located far away from the Vistula and the Bug, and then floated it to Gdansk. Chudoba, *Warszawski rynek*, p. 37.

TABLE 7. Pattern of grain produced in two categories of Masovian demesnes, 1564–65.

Category of demesnes	*Number of demesnes*	*Grain*			
		Rye	*Wheat*	*Oats*	*Barley*
Demesnes mentioned by the surveyors to be sending goods to Gdansk	56	56.7	4.1	33.1	6.1
Demesnes with no mention of goods being transported to Gdansk	41	54.4	4.5	32.9	8.2

Source: I. Gieysztorowa and A. Żaboklicka (eds), *Lustracja województwa mazowieckiego 1565*, pts 1 and 2 (1967–8); A. Sucheni-Grabowska and S. M. Szacherska (eds), *Lustracje województwa płockiego, 1565–1789* (1965); Z. Kędzierska (ed.), *Lustracje województwa rawskiego, 1564 i 1570* (1959).

rye was smaller (45 per cent of total sale, which was still higher than the national average), such as Chełmińskie, Brzeskie, Kujawskie and Inowrocławskie, Łęczyckie, and Bełskie.

Rye production developed at the cost of other cereals, wheat and barley in particular. Demand for these two grains varied from region to region and this is discernible in the diversity of price indexes. Supply of wheat did not meet demand in Poznańskie, Kaliskie, Łęczyckie, Mazowieckie, Rawskie, and Bełskie voivodships. In Brzeskie, Kujawskie and Inowrocławskie voivodships, the very limited supply of wheat from demesnes (about 1.5 per cent of production) was compensated for by barley which constituted as much as 20 per cent of the grain marketed. The relative disinterest on the part of demesnes in growing wheat resulted partly from their focus on producing rye for export but also the poor quality of the soil, which made the production of wheat impossible in some regions of Poland.[23] The commissioners were often curious why some royal demesnes grew rye, oats and barley, but not wheat. Throughout their reports there are comments such as: 'They do not sow any other grain here because hardly any crops well', 'This farm yields a very poor crop because its soil is sandy'; 'The soil is barren here, very sandy'; 'They do not grow wheat here because it does not crop well'.[24] In the areas where the soil was rich and fertile, wheat was grown in large quantities. For instance, on five royal demesnes in Żuławy Malborskie (an area of very fertile fenland) wheat formed as much as 50 per cent of all the grain put on the market. (In the whole Malborskie voivodship it was 30 per cent.) Good soil and the proximity of Gdansk, which was itself the major consumer of wheat and also the point from which it was shipped abroad, encouraged many demesnes to devote more effort to the growing of this cereal. But rich soils were also found in Red Ruthenia, where wheat crops in Ruskie voivodship made only 10 per cent of total grain production, and about 16 per cent in Podolskie voivodship. Elsewhere, poor soil was a reason for a preference for rye production, but it was not only wheat that was given up. One of the reports says that 'neither millet, flax nor hemp is grown on the demesne, as we are told, but peasants do grow them'.[25] Royal demesnes in Starostwo[26] Warszawskie 'do not sow wheat, barley or tartary buckwheat

[23] The quality of soil on farms where wheat and barley was grown was of much greater importance than in the case of rye and oats.

[24] *Lustracja województwa mazowieckiego*, pt 1, pp. 101, 36; pt 2, 101.

[25] *Lustracja województwa mazowieckiego*, pt 2, p. 198.

[26] Starostwo is a complex of royal estates.

TABLE 8. Yield ratio on demesnes on the basis of surveys of 1564–65.

Region	*Rye*	*Wheat*	*Oats*	*Barley*
Royal Prussia	4.4	7.6	4.7	4.1
Greater Poland	3.1	3.6	3.1	5.1
Masovia	5.8	6.6	5.0	8.0
Little Poland	4.9	5.1	5.1	6.4

Source: Adapted from A. Wawrzyńczyk, *Studia nad wydajnością produkcji rolnej dóbr królewskich w drugiej połowie XVI wieku* (1974); A. Czapiuk, 'O plonach zbóż w Polsce i w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim w XVI i XVII wieku', in C. Kuklo (ed.) *Między polityką a kulturą* (1999), pp. 233–47.

these years, as we are told, though they used to sow all kinds of grain, only under the present *starosta* [manager][27] they do not … *Starosta* always floats his rye to Gdansk'.[28] However, it was not only the quality of soil that was responsible for the limited position of wheat in the overall structure of grain supply. Access to a market where the grain could be easily put up for sale was even more important, which becomes clear when we look at the high yield ratio of wheat. Wheat was sown on over 75 per cent of demesnes and its yield was no worse than that of rye (Table 8), and yet wheat production for the market did not equal the production of rye because rye could be easily exported and wheat could not.

The only area between Royal Prussia and Red Ruthenia where the share of wheat in the total grain put on the market exceeded 10 per cent was Krakowskie voivodship. Here, the demesnes did not actively ship produce to Gdansk, which discouraged greater rye production. On the other hand, however, the quality of soil was lower there than in Żuławy (part of Royal Prussia) or Red Ruthenia. It appears, therefore, that the factor determining the position of wheat was the demand for it in the capital city. With a price index at 324, very close to the equilibrium price (330), and forming 13.7 per cent of the crops produced, supply slightly exceeded demand. It may be suggested that the small supply of wheat for bread and brewing was caused, in many parts of the country, by a combination of poor soil quality and the demesnes being geared towards the production of rye for export, but also by a relatively low level of domestic demand for the better quality grains resulting from people's poor living standards and limited resources.

A similar combination of factors influenced the supply of barley although this grain was more commonly grown than wheat (on 92.5 per cent of royal demesnes) and its share in the overall output was larger. From time to time the survey of royal manors contain notes that barley 'is not sown because it does not crop well'.[29] Barley was not exported from Poland, so its share of overall production of over 20 per cent in all Royal Prussian voivodships and also in Brzeskie Kujawskie and Inowrocławskie is indicative of a substantial demand from the brewing industry based, in particular, in north Poland. The fact that barley made 20 per cent of total grain sales in Podolskie voivodship (Red Ruthenia) may be explained by the character

[27] The starosta was a manager in charge of a complex of royal estates.

[28] *Lustracja województwa mazowieckiego*, pt 1, p. 41.

[29] ibid., pt 1, p. 153.

of the soil there, which created favourable conditions for greater wheat crops as well. The level of 10 per cent of total sale was exceeded by barley also in Łęczyckie, Ruskie, and Bełskie voivodships. In neither of these areas did rye drive out barley. Nevertheless, rye supplied to the market did not exceed 50 per cent either. In voivodships where the share of rye in the market was higher (Mazowieckie, Rawskie, Lubelskie, Kaliskie, and Poznańskie), barley was sold in a much smaller quantity and did not form more than 6 per cent of the grain offered for sale by demesnes.

III

There has – rightly – been little dispute in Polish historiography about the importance of European demand for Polish grain in the development of a demesne economy based on coerced labour. This relationship was first noticed by the great pre-war Polish economic historians, Stanisław Kutrzeba and Jan Rutkowski.[30] Western European historians have for decades built their own theories about economic and social development around this insight, including the leading theory of Immanuel Wallerstein and its concepts of core and periphery and a world-economy.[31] Others have explored the relationship between foreign demand, the introduction of forced labour and the transformation of the Polish peasants' social and legal status.[32] But the theoretical models of economic development have sometimes seemed to lack support from primary sources. Meanwhile, a more detailed examination of the records has revealed that only 5 per cent of all bread grain produced in Poland was exported, which has resulted in a greater emphasis being placed on the domestic market.[33]

In the sixteenth century, Poland entered a period of development and relative prosperity. In 1370, the estimated number of people inhabiting Poland was about two million, which gives a population density of 8.3 people per square kilometre.[34] By about 1580, the likely density of population in the three most important regions of the country (Greater Poland, Little Poland and Masovia) had increased to about 21.3 people per square kilometre.[35] It may be estimated that the entire territory of the Polish crown in the second half of the sixteenth century was inhabited by 3.65 million people, which implies that over 200 years the number of consumers in the domestic market had increased by more than 80 per cent. Almost one million of them lived in towns,[36] whose number increased from 688 at the end of the Middle Ages to 861 a hundred years later.[37] Although it was a characteristic feature of Central European towns that their inhabitants were involved not only in craftsmanship and trade, but also produced some of

[30] S. Kutrzeba, *Wisła w historii gospodarczej dawnej Polski Rzeczypospolitej* Polskiej, (1920); J. Rutkowski, *Historia gospodarcza Polski* (2 vols, 1946), I, p. 128.

[31] I. Wallerstein, *The modern world-system,* I, *Capitalist agriculture and the origins of the European world-economy in the sixteenth century* (1974).

[32] W. Kula, 'Agrarian class structure and economic development in pre-industrial Europe', *Past and Present* 70 (1976), pp. 30–75; W. Kula, *Teoria ustroju feudalnego: próba modelu* (1962).

[33] *Historia Polski w liczbach*, (2 vols, 2006), p. 39; J. Topolski, *Przełom gospodarczy w Polsce XVI wieku i jego następstwa* (2000), p. 56.

[34] *Historia Polski w liczbach*, I, p. 51.

[35] I. Gieysztorowa, 'Ludność', in *Encyklopedia Gospodarcza Polski do 1945 roku* (2 vols, 1981), I, p. 431.

[36] *Historia Polski w liczbach*, I, p. 59.

[37] M. Bogucka, H. Samsonowicz, *Dzieje miast i mieszczaństwa w Polsce przedrozbiorowej* (1986), pp. 119, 332.

their own food,[38] the urban demand for grain still increased. The development of the domestic market is also discernible in the number of licences granted for fairs. In the first decade of the sixteenth century more privileges were issued than in the entire fifteenth century and this tendency continued in subsequent years.[39] In the sixteenth century the number of village fairs also increased and 'together with the development of grain market, trading villages were established along rivers'.[40]

The significance of exports for the growth and evolution of the domestic market should not, however, be ignored. It is worth remembering that only 20 per cent of total grain production was put on the market. The rest was either consumed by its producers (60 per cent) or set aside as seed corn (20 per cent). Given this, it transpires that the 5 per cent of total grain supply being sold abroad made as much income as the 25 per cent sold through the domestic market. Therefore, foreign demand for Polish grain inevitably shaped the supply, prices and structure of grain production.

Jerzy Topolski divided Polish demesne farms into two categories according to their production focus. He called the first category 'expansionist' and the second 'autonomous'.[41] The first were demesnes belonging to large landowners, specializing in production for export and thus narrowing the range of their crop production. The second category were demesnes run by gentry, who sold their more diversified farm produce in local markets. Although the number of autonomous demesnes was greater, grain prices, also on local markets, were indirectly dictated by the owners of expansionist demesne farms, which can be seen in the significant degree of unification and integration of the rye market. Royal demesnes scattered around various regions of Poland could also be assigned to these two categories. Some of them, especially in Royal Prussia, Masovia and Greater Poland, and those situated along the Vistula or its navigable tributaries, were focused on producing grain for export and this determined their production strategies. All expansionist demesnes, royal ones included, were focused on growing rye and shipping it to Gdansk. This preference had inevitable consequences for the market situation of wheat and barley. Given that 70–75 per cent of total grain production in Poland came from peasant farms, it is obvious that also this group too, and not only the owners of autonomous demesnes, felt the consequences of the export grain trade on the Polish economy.

[38] H. Samsonowicz, 'Małe miasto w środkowej Europie późnego średniowiecza (próba modelu)', *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych* 50 (1989), pp. 35–6.

[39] *Historia Polski w liczbach*, II, p. 132; H. Samsonowicz, 'Przemiany osi drożnych w Polsce późnego średniowiecza', *Przegląd Historyczny* 64 (1973), p. 708.

[40] J. Maroszek, *Targowiska wiejskie w Koronie Polskiej w drugiej połowie XVII i w XVIII wieku* (1990), pp. 39–40.

[41] J. Topolski, *Polska w czasach nowożytnych. Od środkowoeuropejskiej potęgi do utraty niepodległości (1501–1795)* (1994), p. 27.

Book Reviews

Britain and Ireland

DELLA HOOKE, *Trees in Anglo-Saxon England. Literature, lore and landscape* (Boydell Press, 2010). x + 310 pp., 21 figs., 6 illus., 3 tabs. £50.

Both author and publisher should be congratulated on the appearance of this handsome book. Solid and beautifully printed, and illustrated with clear and relevant figures, it is a pleasure to handle. Straightforward in style, encyclopaedic and authoritative in content, consistent in quality, and shot through with a vivid aesthetic appreciation of trees, it is a pleasure to read.

The book is divided into three sections. The first takes as its focus the symbolism of trees in pre-Christian and Christian contexts, in Anglo-Saxon and other contemporary literature, and finally as an element in national consciousness. The second section locates trees and woodland in the Anglo-Saxon landscape, discussing the nature and distribution of Anglo-Saxon woodland, the evidence for woodland management in early charters, and the use of individual trees or groups of trees in boundaries, assembly places and significant locations. The last section deals with trees across three ecological settings, wood–pasture and 'ancient' countryside, damp places, and open or planned landscapes. There is a critical evaluation of early medieval sources, an extensive bibliography and a sound index.

The volume is valuable in a number of ways. It is a compendium of primary material drawn from an impressive range of sources: place-names and Anglo-Saxon charters, early medieval literature, archaeological and landscape evidence, and documentary sources. There is, for instance, a discussion of the distribution of the Celtic place-name *nemet,* which (as is well known) indicates trees or woodland with sacred attributes (pp. 46–8). What is new (to this reviewer, at least) is the evidence for the size of some of these groves, and their setting in even larger areas of open grazing. For example, there are 13 place- and river-names derived from *nemet* on the northern reaches of Dartmoor within an area just 20 km by 40 km, itself located in much wider wood–pasture. Yet we know almost nothing about how such landscapes worked in practice. Local communities clearly managed and exploited these large areas of grazing for their flocks and herds, and some areas were enclosed for coppicing and the growing of standards. What is completely unknown is whether the sacred areas were under a different management regime, whether they were continuously or only seasonally important, how their boundaries were marked, or how they were accessed and by whom. Underpinning such questions are, of course, wider issues of social and economic organization.

The book is also valuable in including evaluations and interpretations of primary material in the wider context of an up-to-date historiography. To take just one of innumerable examples: *lēah* is one of the most commonly known place-name elements associated with woodland landscapes. Yet despite its ubiquity, it can be difficult to interpret accurately, being found across Britain in regions of extensive woodland as well as in areas of more open wood–pasture. Hooke is nonetheless sure-footed in finding her way through a range of interpretations that combine charter material (which is difficult to interpret) with regional geographies and the preferences of individual scholars, to conclude that it was most probably used to indicate open grazing, interspersed with stands of wood, even in places like *Andredesleag*, the Sussex and Kentish Weald (pp. 125–6).

And finally, there is much here to stimulate new research. Some will be based on the unavoidable flaws that specialists in one discipline and another will find in this book. That surely is one of the roles of publication, and is in itself a cause for congratulation provided that (as is the case here) the material being criticized is of fundamentally high quality. Yet others will seek to drill down into the inevitable generalities that must accompany such a wide-ranging view. The figures showing national distributions of many individual species (hampered, of course, by the unequal distribution of early charters across the English counties) could offer a springboard for new research on the regional character of early medieval ecology and land use, especially when integrated with archaeological, palynological, environmental, documentary and

architectural sources. The wider context of generalizations of ash and oak found in so many early records, and yet (apparently) so rarely found in place-names or assembly places, fruit trees in river valleys, especially those with a long history of cultivation, and the thorns that enclosed early arable, offer exciting possibilities for research focused on particular regional landscapes. The cumulative longer-term results of such work might throw some light on the origins and development of English regional landscapes.

Trees in Anglo-Saxon England will be an essential reference work, and one of the few to be read for both interest and to support other research, moving seamlessly between bedside table and library shelf of interested layman and committed scholar.

SUSAN OOSTHUIZEN
University of Cambridge

PAUL CULLEN, RICHARD JONES and DAVID PARSONS, *Thorps in a changing landscape* (Explorations in Local and Regional History, University of Hertfordshire Press, 2011). xviii + 224 pp., 47 figs, 9 tabs. £14.99.

Since the pioneering work of Margaret Gelling, the study of place-names has taken account of local landscapes and economies in the interpretation of linguistic evidence. Here, two place-name experts and a landscape archaeologist join forces to cast new light on the subset of names containing the Old Norse element *thorp*. In the late 1960s and early 1970s Kenneth Cameron, using East Midland examples, argued that such names were applied to small, dependent settlements that were founded late in the Anglo-Scandinavian era or in the two centuries after the Norman Conquest on poorer soils near the edges of manors and parishes. This hypothesis was reinforced by the detailed work of Gillian Fellows Jensen on all the counties of the Danelaw and it has been generally accepted.

The authors have gathered a corpus of 896 place-names in *thorp*. The heartland of the name lies north and east of the line of Watling Street, now the A5, within the territories of the former Five Boroughs of the Danelaw. *Thorps* are plentiful too in Yorkshire and Norfolk and they are scattered elsewhere in the northernmost counties of England. South of Watling Street, a smaller number of *throps* are derived from an Old English word with the same meaning. The authors settle an old debate by concluding that they are contemporary with the Danish *thorps*. Great numbers of names in *-torp* are found in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands and other parts of northern Europe, where studies have shown that they tend to be small, often dependent, low-status, outlying places.

In contrast with other habitative generics, such as *tun, ham* or *by*, *thorps* hardly ever grew into towns. Many of them disappeared in later centuries. No *thorp* has been systematically excavated, but a considerable number have revealed evidence from small-scale digs. The pottery that has been found nearly always dates from after 900, in line with the Cameron hypothesis. Intriguingly, a small number of settlement plans suggest that in their earliest phases *thorps* were arranged in regular, linear and compact plots of near-equal size, along a single village street, in contrast to the more complex layout of earlier Danish settlements known as *bys*. This settlement form hints at some special purpose.

In chapter 6, on 'Thorps in the Landscape', the authors demolish Cameron's claim that *thorps* and *throps* were sited on poor soils by plotting the distribution of these names against MAFF soil grades. Their maps show that these settlements were mostly found on grade 3 agricultural soils that are considered to be good to moderate in quality. Arable soils were strongly favoured independently of their drainage properties and they tended to be superior to those of the earlier *bys*. The authors conclude that *bys* and *thorpes* may have performed separate economic functions within the early medieval countryside: *thorps* housed small communities that were involved with arable cultivation while the primary function of *bys* was livestock farming. Moreover, *thorps* were placed 'in the very areas and at the very time that we understand the landscape to have been undergoing fundamental change. The primary factor was a cereal revolution'. Were they founded perhaps for workers in the distant open fields, for ploughmen or even perhaps slaves tied to the demesne? Some names imply groups of youths or workers. Others belonged to royal estates. Were *thorps* the equivalent of berewicks and bartons elsewhere?

The authors are at pains to point out that other factors influenced the creation and development of these new settlements. The use of Scandinavian personal names as prefixes suggests a high incidence of private, individual tenure or ownership. The development of *thorps* coincides with the growth of urban markets and the demand for grain. And perhaps the name lost its association with arable farming over a long period of time?

These are stimulating ideas. The arguments are set out with admirable clarity. Readers will want to see which of them apply to their own particular areas of interest. In the case of the present reviewer this is Derbyshire and South Yorkshire. Derbyshire has far fewer Scandinavian place-names than the other East Midlands counties, and none of the 17 *thorps* recorded

there before 1300 are found on the carboniferous limestone plateau, now known as the White Peak, even though the villages there had open fields; and only three are located in the Trent Valley, where Midland-type open fields were plentiful. The remaining 14 *thorps* are all situated within the north-eastern wapentake of Scarsdale. Only two of these were sited on the best cereal-growing lands on the magnesian limestone belt, where farming was organized on an open-field system; the other 12 were on the coal-measure sandstones, where closes associated with hamlets and scattered farmsteads were more characteristic than villages surrounded by small open fields. Nevertheless, the wapentake supported 54 corn mills in 1652, so cereals were clearly once as important as livestock.

The chronology of the South Yorkshire *thorps* fits that described by the authors, though, as they note, many more names appeared in the West Riding well after 1500, when the original meaning may no longer have applied. We might add that a complicating factor in the history of these secondary settlements is that some of the so-called 'lost' *thorp* names were simply renamed: Renathorpe is now Hatfield House, Canonthorpe is Falconer House, and Streetthorpe is Edenthorpe.

South Yorkshire had 30 *thorps* recorded before 1300, of which twelve were named in Domesday Book. All were sited in the central part, well away from the Pennines in the west and the lowlands of Hatfield Chase in the east. Of the seven on the magnesian limestone and the four immediately to the east, only four were recorded in 1086. The majority of *thorps* were again in the mixed farming district of the coal-measure sandstones, which was characterized more by wood–pastures than by open fields (though each village and hamlet had its small 'townfields'). However, support for the idea that *thorps* were associated with arable farming comes from the distribution of another Old Norse place-name element. South Yorkshire has twelve *thveits*, the -thwaites that were clearings, meadows or paddocks associated with pastoral farming. They too are found only on the coal-measure sandstones and on or just off the magnesian limestone belt near Doncaster. *Thorp* and *thveit* appear to be describing two different types of outlying farming communities.

This book is a fine piece of collaborative research that suggests new ways of looking at the transformation of medieval agrarian economies and the creation of settlement patterns that still characterize much of the present landscape. It will be warmly welcomed by readers of this *Review*.

DAVID HEY
University of Sheffield

MARK NETZLOFF, *John Norden's* The Surveyor's Dialogue *(1618): A critical edition* (Ashgate, 2010). xlii + 223 pp., 10 figs. £55.

John Norden's *Surveyor's Dialogue*, published in 1607, 1610 and 1618, is widely recognized as one of the most articulate reflections on agrarian practices and changes in early seventeenth-century England. Surveyors, who were increasingly employed to review manorial records, advise on estate management and improvement, and in some cases to map estates, assumed a role at the centre of debates about agrarian structures and values. Norden's volume, in this context, was one of many surveying manuals to be published, but arguably the most influential of all. Its author was also one of the most prominent surveyors and cartographers of his generation, working extensively on state projects, such as the Jacobean surveys of forests, as well as surveys of private estates. Moreover, as this timely modern edition demonstrates, *The Surveyor's Dialogue* has since assumed a kind of canonical status, and has been quoted widely in a range of recent work, across disciplines ranging from economic history to Renaissance literary studies. And yet, as Mark Netzloff quite rightly argues in his introduction, it has too rarely had the sort of attention, as a full and coherent work, that it deserves.

Netzloff is determined to correct this situation. He looks carefully, for instance, at parts of the book concerned with agricultural improvement and the sale of land, as well as some of the better-known discussions of the role of the surveyor and the social structure of the estate. He is astute on the peripatetic expertise of the surveyor, seeking at once to encode common standards across the country and to spread innovation from one region to another. As Netzloff writes, from this position the surveyor 'begins to refer to the customs of his "country" *as* customs – as local, subjective, and open to reform and improvement' (p. xxxii). Yet this remains a studied, measured argument for reform, and Netzloff reflects thoughtfully on this. In particular, he argues that Norden wrote the book at the same time as the Midlands Revolt, and indeed 'deliberately sets his dialogues at exactly the same time' as the uprising, on an estate that remains 'undisturbed by the most tumultuous events in agrarian England during the Jacobean period' (p. xxxv). It is not easy to base much of an argument on the lack of reference to an event, and Netzloff himself is not entirely clear what to make of this, but he is surely right to note the text's commitment to an ideal of economic reform without social destabilization. Others at this time were developing radical arguments in favour of enclosure; Norden notably skirts around this most controversial of rural issues.

For all its strengths, however, the introduction is disappointingly short, at thirty pages, and in some respects somewhat sketchy. On textual matters, in particular, it is a little weak. There are a couple of interesting observations about changes to the text between the 1607 and 1618 editions, including Norden's recognition of deforestation, an issue that had absorbed much of his time in the employment of the state, but no substantial analysis of the text's development. Moreover, apart from a passing reference to editions of the book in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there is no discussion of readership and influence. More might also have been said about the author himself, and his relationship with the book's powerful dedicatee, Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury.

Given the availability of Early English Books Online, the value of a new edition of an early modern text must always be an open question. This volume, though, justifies the effort. The decision to modernize spelling will not please all readers, but makes sense for a publication of this kind. The annotations are helpful, Norden's many marginal notes are preserved as footnotes, and text added for the 1618 edition is indicated in square brackets, or recorded in textual notes, to allow readers to analyse aspects of the book's development that may interest them. The index is slight, especially on the text itself as opposed to the introduction, but may be sufficient for navigation. While some researchers may continue to use the original versions, there is much here to make the text more accessible, and some genuine reasons to cause those familiar with it to look at it afresh.

ANDREW MCRAE
University of Exeter

MARY SIRAUT (ed.), *A history of the county of Somerset, X, Castle Cary and the Brue–Cary watershed* (Boydell & Brewer, 2010). xix + 236 pp., 74 illus., 17 maps. £95.

This volume in the VCH's Somerset series covers ten ancient parishes, including the town of Castle Cary, lying between the rivers Brue and Cary in the south-east of the county, in Catsash hundred. The area has a typical Somerset landscape of rolling green fields, streams, and hedgerows, but its homogeneity is misleading as it conceals much variety in landholding and agriculture, and some significant industry.

The town of Castle Cary, lying at the north-eastern edge of its parish, was a centre for secular and ecclesiastical administration in the Middle Ages, and had a weekly market, but for most of its history was modest in size. Though it had an earlier clothing trade, its growth came from the horsehair factories and linen mills started up in the early nineteenth century using local water power. At its peak the horsehair industry had three major factories, of which one still remained in 2000, producing high-quality webbing and other products.

For seven of the parishes little or no source material exists regarding medieval agriculture, and overall there are few manorial records, or large runs of estate material, except for Kingweston, mainly because most manorial lords were absentees and most parishes had fragmented ownership by the eighteenth century. In about half the parishes the manorial lands were sold off or the manor was divided, and only two parishes had resident landowners with substantial lands. Kingweston was the only parish where all the freehold was owned by one landlord, the Dickinson family, who from the 1740s bought the manor and all the remaining freeholds except the glebe, remaining there until the 1920s. In Alford the manor belonged to the Thring family for a hundred years from 1807 and, though they did not own all the land, as resident landowners they were influential in the parish and its main employer.

Elsewhere landholding was very diverse, allowing the creation of many small freehold estates and owner-occupied farms, and the fragmented landholding may be reflected in the constant division, amalgamation, and reorganization of farms' lands: farm sizes generally increased during the nineteenth century, but many large farms were reduced in size by the early twentieth, and in any one parish some farms were reduced, others increased, and new farms were created. In the twentieth century many farmsteads were built on new sites, often to replace those in the villages, which were then converted into dwellings or holiday accommodation.

Though grass predominated by the early nineteenth century, all parishes still had some arable, and many were typified as dairy and corn. However, a wide variety of crops, including potatoes and teasels, were grown, attributed to the existence of the many small freehold farms, since large landlords tended to discourage variety. By the end of the twentieth century dairying remained important, but more diversification had appeared, with a range of crops, fruit, and products such as alpaca and ice cream, while mixed enterprises involved tourism and leisure activities. Farming remained strong in some parishes, such as Babcary, with about ten working farms in 2000, but in West Lydford no working farmsteads remained in the village, and its pasture was used by farmers from outside. One non-agricultural crop of significance came from Keinton Mandeville, where by the late eighteenth century large areas of the open-field arable were quarried for the slabs of Lias Keinton stone,

which was lying near the surface and was used for buildings and fences in nearby villages and pavements throughout southern England.

The earliest land-use information is generally from tithe apportionments, which have been used here to produce more informative parish maps, showing the areas of the arable, grass, and orchards, and are greatly to be welcomed, since they also give a sense of how medieval fields have may been organized. The social history section allows the inclusion of interesting details such as the travelling drapers from Scotland who founded prosperous businesses in Cary, or the marble mason's wife in Keinton with five children, who gave her occupation in 1861 as 'slave to the rest of her family'. Regrettably, the copy-editing has become a bit slack, with a few misspellings, most noticeably on the hundred map. This may be a result of staff shortages, and it is sad to have to add that the last member of the Somerset VCH staff has been made redundant and, though work is continuing on a voluntary basis, this is no more than a short-term respite. Despite the energetic efforts of supporters in the local authorities and elsewhere, the end of work on the Somerset series, as for some other counties, is not far off unless a substantial source of funding is found.

PATRICIA CROOT
Institute of Historical Research

DAVID S. JOHNSON, *Liming and agriculture in the central Pennines. The use of lime in land improvement from the late thirteenth century to c.1900* (BAR, British Series 525, 2010). ix + 147 pp., 30 figs, 31 tabs. £40.

This is an excellent book on a subject of considerable interest to all agrarian historians. The book's focus is on the historic use of lime as a soil additive and it sets liming in the context of land improvement. To this end it provides us with a case study and extensive examples that others can use for comparison in their own research areas. The research aims extend beyond establishing the time frame for liming as a soil improver to include its use in areas without a limestone geology and those which were not subject to parliamentary enclosure. Further, close attention is paid to the question of who initiated the use of lime and how its use proceeded over time.

Johnson's research area is extensive and extends eastwards from the Lune to beyond Richmond and from Kirkby Stephen southwards, stopping short of Keighley. (His current research is extending this area to include the whole of Westmorland.) The period covered is as far back as he can find evidence, so that the discussion runs from the thirteenth to the twentieth century. The evidence itself benefits from the author's notable experience as a local archaeologist and the wide range of contacts he has built up over the years. The latter enables him to use the kind of small private archives often unavailable to agrarian historians, who tend to depend upon those of the big estates deposited in county record offices. Of particular value are the diaries and commonplace books which still exist in significant numbers but which do need this kind of personal contact to locate. He is prepared to use all relevant material to support his exploration of the physical landscape, climatic conditions or changes in market demand in pursuit of a wider understanding of his subject, and his detailed discussions contain clear descriptions of both evidence and processes. This blending of examples and discussions from a range of sources and research techniques provides us with the strongest evidence of the antiquity of liming and its widespread application, and shows that the initiative for its use could come from either farmer or landlord. Johnson's discussions and arguments have a robustness and clarity that reflect a lifetime of observing and thinking. Nor should we overlook the frequent, relevant and good-quality diagrams, maps and coloured photographs, which we have come to associate with BAR reports.

For the benefit of those unfamiliar with BAR (British Archaeological Reports) it should be explained that these are (generally) rapid conversions of theses and dissertations into A4, soft-backed publications available on request from www.hadrianbooks.co.uk. The dissemination of recent research requires no justification although the straight publication of academic submissions does not always provide a literary style of English. The concept of 'archaeology' is stretched far beyond the usual framework: whilst BAR 493 is *The maritime and riverine landscape of the west of Roman Britain*, BAR 497 uses probate evidence to examine *The material culture of the tradesmen of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1545–1642*. This range of content makes them an exciting resource, but BAR reports have two significant drawbacks. The first is the cost: the 2011 publications range in price from £37 to £73. The second is much more serious. Academic texts lose much of their functionality if there is no index, and this reviewer cannot recall a BAR report that has possessed this fundamental item. This absence is unacceptable, and only partially addressed by the very detailed contents pages.

David Johnson's authoritative discussions cover a lot of ground. This includes his pungent criticism of Historic Land Characterisation as 'too one-dimensional, it is desk-based (so arguably ignores landscape) and

does not provide a mechanism for exploring past landscapes', a point of view that this reviewer is very happy to support.

JENNIFER S. HOLT
Rossendale

KAREN J. CULLEN, *Famine in Scotland: the 'ill years' of the 1690s* (Scottish Historical Review Monograph series 16, Edinburgh University Press, 2010). xii + 218 pp., 14 tabs., 14 figs. £55.

The poor harvests of the 1690s or so-called 'ill years' have never attracted the detailed historical analysis accorded to the Highland famine of the 1840s. Yet, as the author of this welcome new study, Karen Cullen, points out, the famine of the 1690s was a national famine as opposed to the regional famine of the 1840s, and the death toll in the 1690s was always seen as higher than that of the 1840s, with as much as 10 per cent of the Scottish population dying from its effects and as much as 20 per cent locally. Cullen's monograph sets out to address this deficiency, providing an informed and insightful analysis of the 'ill years'.

As a text, it comes across as having a number of clear strengths. First, it provides what is easily the most authoritative analysis of exactly what happened in the 1690s, establishing precisely how the 'ill years' unfolded in terms of harvests and food supply. Though sometimes labelled as the 'seven ill years', the crisis was spread over only five years, three of which produced nationally catastrophic harvests (1695, 1696, and 1698), though poorer weather conditions had started to affect harvests in the years immediately before 1695. Second, there is an impressive grasp of context throughout the book. As well as reviewing Scotland's long-term record of poor harvests so as to add weight to the seriousness of what happened in the 1690s, Cullen also explores how what happened in Scotland compared to the subsistence crises happening elsewhere in Europe at this point. Consideration is also given to its economic context, the 'ill years' being only one of four economic crises affecting Scotland in the 1690s. Third, the extended discussion of how weather led to poor harvests and then to famine is not handled in a simple cause–effect way. Cullen holds to the Amartya Sen view that it is not poor harvests alone that matter but access to food or food entitlement. Through this approach, she opens up a much broader debate, one that considers how markets, the Privy Council, kirk sessions and local communities responded to the problems created by scarcity, each responding with different interests or sentiment and effectiveness. Significantly, she concluded that whilst a new poor law act or proclamation was issued every year, it was the kirk sessions that provided most relief. Fourth, a chapter devoted wholly to the migrational response to the 'ill years' makes it clear just how much social dislocation was generated by their accumulating effects, as thousands went in search of food or tried to slip their accumulating rent arrears, though parishes and burghs became less tolerant of strangers and vagabonds as the crisis progressed. Fifth, although stressed as a national famine, the last such famine in Scotland, Cullen is keen to draw out the marked regional and social differences that underpinned the 'ill years'. That it had its most severe effects in the north and north-east and its least in the eastern Lowlands may not surprise, but its proportionately greater effect on adults rather than children does.

In a book that squeezes the lemon thrice dry in terms of how much it has to say on all aspects of the problem, it might be churlish to complain about what is missing or understated. Yet for all its coverage, more might have been made of the traditional mechanisms by which rural communities in some areas tried to mitigate some of the short-term effects of famine through the use of shell food, herbs, etc. Whilst it is right to emphasize the greater risks associated with spring-sown grains, more might also have been made of the differences between oats and barley, with the latter being sown later and harvested earlier than the former, providing communities in the north and north-west with some buffering against risk. It is for this reason that farmers in Iceland actually retreated out of oats into barley during the most severe phases of the Little Ice Age. Lastly, there are a number of references to marginal land and holdings being abandoned on a large scale in particular areas, like the north-east, but some of the contemporary observations that are used really need to be tested against more explicit data. Yet whatever its omissions, *Famine in Scotland* undoubtedly succeeds in giving an authoritative definition to the 'ill years' and in establishing it as a 'demographic crisis of catastrophic proportions'. It also demonstrates just how much a study of this kind can gain from being wide-ranging and resourceful over the data used.

ROBERT A. DODGSHON
Aberystwyth University

BOB BUSHAWAY, *By Rite. Custom, ceremony and community in England, 1700–1880* (Breviary Stuff Publications, 2010). 194 pp., 13 illus. £14.

Breviary Stuff Publications was, according to their mission statement, founded to keep significant works of radical history and 'history from below' in print. Bushaway's *By Rite*, first published by Junction Books in 1982, has long since been out of print, with secondhand copies both hard to find and expensive.

That Breviary has made it possible for a new audience to enjoy this important book is to be applauded. That they have managed to do so at such an accessible price and maintained reasonable production values – the curiously wide pages and poorly reproduced images aside – is testament to their desire to make important works accessible to those who cannot afford the high cover prices of, and I quote, 'certain academic presses, who publish works on working class history with cover prices that most working class people cannot afford'. Besides corrections, the text remains unaltered from the first edition. This is a good thing, for not only was *By Rite* well received on its initial publication but also the text has stood the test of time. This is a beautifully written book. Indeed, notwithstanding the subsequent publication of E. P. Thompson's *Customs in Common* and the more general writing of custom and customary ceremony into rural history, many of Bushaway's richly detailed chapters remain at the forefront of our knowledge of the practice of custom in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century countryside.

The book is divided into six substantive chapters preceded by a short analysis of the meanings of custom, the sources for its study, and a brief survey of past attempts to conceptualize custom. This was always the least satisfactory chapter, lacking any wider understanding of alternative – for instance, elite – interpretations of custom or reference to the already vast anthropological literature on customary ceremony. If it was out of the Breviary spirit to substantially rework this chapter, to add a final chapter reflecting on the reception of *By Rite* and the ways in which the field has evolved would at least have been a worthwhile exercise. But this is a minor grumble – and perhaps in part covered by Bushaway's essay on popular culture in Harry Dickinson's *Companion to eighteenth-century Britain*. The other chapters need no such *addendum*. Chapter two analyses the customary calendar, focusing in particular upon ways in which church ringers as a clearly defined community group were tied to an essentially secular calendar. The church, as chapter three attests, acted to legitimize the celebration of many secular holidays, partly enforced by law – the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot was marked by a state service in every parish church – and partly by popular assertions that their customs were underwritten by church and state. Nineteenth-century attempts to suppress rambunctious celebrations of 5 November were, so Bushaway relates, often stridently opposed by making this very claim.

Rogationtide perambulations of parish bounds were also occasions to engage in several extra-church customs. Monies were levied, beer demanded, whilst young boys were often 'bumped', stood on their heads, or thrown into clumps of nettles in acts of symbolic machismo by the older men. That perambulations continued long after the church had lost interest in supporting the practice was a testimony to its usefulness in helping resist enclosure through muscular performances of territoriality, in asserting the importance of community, and, critically, in supporting the need to maintain customs that served to legitimize the rights and cultures of the poor. As the analysis in K. D. M. Snell's splendid *Parish and belonging* attests, knowledge of the physical and political limits of the parish was the wellspring of rural cultural life. In short, the public performance of custom was vital in maintaining social cohesion, not just amongst rural workers but also between the different social classes.

Arguably, the most important contributions to our understanding of the sociology of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English countryside are made in the first part of chapter four and chapters five and six, studies of the ways in which custom underpinned harvest work, social conflict and popular protest, and crime respectively. If we now know rather more about the importance of custom in the urban and dockside workplace thanks to the work of Adrian Randall, John Rule and Leonard Schwarz, chapter four remains the standard reference on custom in the fields and farmyard. Even Peter King's excellent studies of gleaning add to rather than supplant Bushaway's analysis. Chapter five's exploration of the ways in which the so-called 'Swing Riots' of 1830 were culturally underwritten and politically justified by doling and processing customs has served to inspire a recent upsurge in interest in Swing, whilst chapter six has inspired this reviewer's studies of tree- and wood-bound conflicts.

On its first publication reviewers were in doubt as to whether Bushaway's study was an important book. If the passage of time – and the publication of subsequent studies – has shown *By Rite* to be a landmark contribution to our understanding of English rural culture, it has in no way dimmed its importance. It remains a compelling analysis of custom and customary ceremony. It is a 'must read' for any student of English rural history.

CARL J. GRIFFIN
Queen's University, Belfast

ERIC L. JONES, *Locating the Industrial Revolution. Inducement and response* (World Scientific Publishing (UK) Ltd., 2010). 272 pp. £45.

The pen of Eric Jones, over the several decades of his career, has never been less than stimulating. This volume is no exception. He takes an important look

at a currently neglected aspect of the British industrial revolution: its regionally differential impact. Specifically he is concerned to explain the de-industrialization of large swathes of southern England at the very time that the North took off. It has long been recognized that de-industrialization was the obverse of the coin of industrialization and that there were casualties of the regional and sectorial concentration and specialization of industry that was a hallmark of the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, as Jones rightly points out, well before the North was growing fast, southern England was shedding its manufacturing industries. 'The south's decline began too early for it to have been the straightforward victim of a superior north' (p. 39). And only in the late stages of industrialization did the use of coal and steam power become decisive locationally. Jones argues that, by asking what caused the de-industrialization of the south, and by considering inter-regional competition, especially in the non-mechanized sectors, the underlying forces in the transition to modern economic growth are more clearly revealed.

Leaning heavily on local and regional industrial histories to illustrate his general arguments with detailed examples, Jones looks carefully at some of the south's industrial regions of the early modern period, taking Kent, Hampshire and Gloucestershire as particular case studies. He emphasizes that relatively new manufacturing as well as old centres were disappearing, 'punctiform' as well as cottage industries: there were chronic disadvantages in the whole area south of the Severn/Wash, and few exceptions to the decline of manufacturing outside London and Portsmouth. As possible explanations Jones dismisses the response to differential factor supplies and relative factor prices as excessively *a priori*. Worker resistance and lack of inventiveness were also unimportant. Conservatism about shifting to lower quality and mass production or to different product mixes, and inadequate supplies of capital are similarly found wanting as explanations. Jones makes a particularly strong argument against the idea that the quality of southern rural labour was inherently poor. Although often the response to decline rather than its initial cause, weaker networks of producers and ancillary traders may have played a part, as may have guilds and trade restrictions, but the Achilles heel of southern industry lay in deficient innovation, the result of a failure to invest in manufacturing.

Blanket genetic or cultural theses such as those (respectively) of Greg Clark and Deirdre McCloskey are examined and found wanting as explanations for this failure to invest and for regionally differentiated growth. In a rather unorthodox chapter Jones brings evidence from his own family tree to counter Clark's argument as applied to southern England. Yet he has some sympathy for Clark in suggesting that it was not enterprise that was snuffed out in the south but risk taking and entrepreneurship *as applied to manufacturing*. Instead these qualities shifted into farming, agricultural processing, communications and services. The rural south had geological and topographical advantages over the North for arable and other farming. It also had the massive locational advantage of proximity to the London food market. However, the decline of southern industry was a result neither of comparative advantage in farming nor of the success of that sector, which inevitably occurred at the expense of industry. Jones puts major emphasis upon that fact that 'Capital obtained from political favours, court offices, government sinecures, the law and trade entered the southern countryside, as successful men sought to fix their position by buying estates' (p. 149). Fortunes made in public finance, empire and the slave trade sometimes went into urban development but the majority went into southern estates that were generally used unproductively and wastefully, for leisure and blood sports rather than pecuniary gain. Jones does not mince his words in describing the 'laundering of metropolitan money' (p. 159) in the economy of the south. Such 'landed proprietorship created a milieu in which manufactures were disapproved and new industries unwelcome' (p. 161).

There were some southern industries that experienced longer-lived success. Jones puts their eventual demise down to falling transport costs, inter-urban commercial competition and the growing integration of the national market that exposed them first to other southern producers and then to the now more efficient manufacturers of the North. Regional concentration of industrial sectors (cottons largely in Lancashire, wool in Yorkshire, iron in the North East and South Wales, metalwares in South Yorkshire and the Black Country, for example) generated significant economies of agglomeration and the scattered industries of a earlier era could not compete.

Jones offers some interesting critiques and asides about aggregate statistical analysis as a key to causal explanation and he address a wide range of competing literature on Britain's industrial revolution. That some passages have a text-book or survey feel should not detract from the important central argument. Indeed, the accessibility and the range of the volume will make it attractive to students.

PAT HUDSON
Swansea University and
the London School of Economics

JOHN and PAMELA MCCANN, *The dovecotes and pigeon lofts of Wiltshire* (Hobnob Press for Wiltshire Buildings Record, 2011). xvi + 235pp., 159 figs., 29 illus. £14. (Available from Wiltshire Buildings Record, The Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, Cocklebury Road, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 3QN).

John McCann is an acknowledged authority on English dovecotes and the Wiltshire Buildings Record is an exemplary body for the work it has done on recording buildings over the last 30 years. As we would expect therefore, this book is a thorough and scholarly investigation of the provision for pigeons within the county. As well as containing detailed descriptions and photographs, sometimes with architectural drawings, of some 60 surviving examples identified in the county, it also lists those that have disappeared, but to which there are documentary references. A further section deals with the much smaller pigeon lofts and nest holes in houses, barns, stables and other buildings.

This book is more than an illustrated gazetteer, although the descriptive list runs to 121 pages; it also discusses the changing importance of pigeon keeping and how it was managed. The main purpose of a dovecote was to house nest boxes in an environment reminiscent of the rock crevices that the pigeons (or domesticated Blue Rock Doves) would inhabit in the wild. In the dovecote the eggs were hatched and the young birds known as squabs would be taken just before they were ready to fledge. Because their flying muscles had never been used, the meat was exceptionally tender and much prized as a delicacy. Dovecotes were therefore prestigious buildings and part of a luxurious lifestyle. The period when the squabs were available was limited from spring through to autumn and so, McCann argues on the basis of household accounts, they did not provide a winter source of meat as has sometimes been claimed.

The design of the dovecote is placed firmly within a functional and historical framework with short chapters explaining the history of pigeon keeping, what dovecotes were and how they were built. It was necessary for the dovecote to provide protection from predators and this would affect their design. Up to the eighteenth century the main dangers came from birds of prey, foxes and members of the cat family. For this reason windows were rare, but instead ventilation was through louvres. The threat changed, however, after about 1720, following the introduction of the brown rat on trading vessels from East Asia. McCann explains that as the brown rat can climb or jump up a smooth vertical surface of hard material more than three feet high, the design had to change. After about 1750 dovecotes were built with raised doorways and nest boxes, deep foundations which could not be burrowed under and close mortar joints. As the value of grain increased and the amount of bare fallow, on which pigeons could graze, decreased, pigeon keeping declined. It was condemned by agricultural commentators such as Arthur Young, and the heyday of the dovecote was over by the mid-nineteenth century.

Wiltshire is a county particularly rich in dovecotes but this is not simply a picture book of quaint and picturesque buildings, although the illustrations are indeed of a very high standard. Rather their form is discussed as being governed by their function, which, as far as protection from predators was concerned, changed through time. The gazetteer is followed by a section that discusses the great variety of designs of the different elements that made up the dovecote, but concludes that no regional or chronological pattern could be found. Rather it was a question of personal choice.

McCann's style can be rather strident and dismissive of past interpretations. He is at his most dogmatic in his defence of this particular type of building, when he states – whilst briefly discussing residential conversions – 'There is no justification for destroying any more dovecotes in Wiltshire by converting them to dwellings' (p.161), a sentiment with which, having read this book, we may well agree.

SUSANNA WADE MARTINS
North Elmham, Norfolk

PETER L. WALKER (ed.), *Tithe apportionments of Worcestershire, 1837–1851* (Worcestershire Historical Society, new ser., 23, 2011), £25 incl. p. & p. Available to non-subscribers on CD-ROM only, from Robin Whittaker, 14 Scobell Close, Pershore, Worcs., WR10 1QJ.

Tithe apportionments have long been one of the foundational documents of agrarian history, historical geography, and local and regional history. The parish-by-parish surveys of land ownership, state of cultivation, approximate value and tithe liability are the closest thing we possess in Britain to a European-style cadastral survey. Indeed, as Eric Evans's concise but highly informative historical introduction to this volume makes clear, the tithe commutation process could have provided just such a thing. The plan by the superintendant of surveying, Lieut. Robert Dawson, for a series of detailed parochial maps all drawn on a common scale was vetoed on grounds of cost. The tithe apportionment schedules and their maps (where they survive) provide us with one of the few truly detailed, comprehensive and publicly accessible historical datum points for ownership, tenancy, cultivation and ecclesiastical property. It is particularly welcome, therefore, that the Worcestershire Historical

Society, Worcestershire Historical Environment and Archaeology Service, the National Lottery (Local Heritage Initiative) and local history groups, and the editor, Peter Walker, have combined to produce this extremely useful transcription of the Worcestershire apportionments.

The volume is available in hard copy to members of the WHS, and as a CD-ROM to non-members. The CD-ROM contains an electronic version of the published introductory volume. It begins with an introduction to the editorial practices and some local recording peculiarities within the Worcestershire apportionments. This is followed by a brief overview of the project to transcribe these awards, and then by Eric Evans's guide to the parliamentary history of the tithe commutation process. This is particularly valuable because it explains why the apportionments eventually took the form of parish-by-parish surveys, and commutations of tithes as rent-charge apportionments. It also devotes some time to the subsequent history of the tithe, and the process of tithe redemption (in exchange for government stock) initiated in 1936, and completed in October 1977. The introduction also contains a county map, indicating the location of surviving awards (generally good, but with fewer in the south-east corner of the county), and a hand-list of parishes and awards.

The awards themselves are found on the CD-ROM as Microsoft® Excel spreadsheets. For each surviving parochial apportionment the editor has provided an 'Introduction' (an abstract of the summary at the beginning of each apportionment schedule), and separate Excel 'worksheets' listing the summary of the survey arranged by landowner, the full plot-by-plot survey, and a summary of the apportionment arranged by landowner. The editor notes that he checked the surveys thoroughly, beginning with the arithmetic of the summary and then moving to the full listing, checking tenant-by-tenant. He concludes that most of the rent-charge valuations appear very rounded, and allotted to the entire farm or holding, rather than being apportioned according to the value of individual fields. There was also occasional confusion over ownership, with un-enfranchised copyholders of the Dean and Chapter of Worcester being described as 'owners' in the parishes of Doddenham and Broadwas. The editor also supplies a list of individual recording quirks identified in particular parishes.

This amounts to a fascinating and extremely valuable resource, one that fully repays the time, effort and collective endeavour required to produce it. The searchable spreadsheets will be a very important source for agrarian and local historians, and provide a new level of detail that should stimulate research into Worcestershire's agrarian history. The volume also conjures the 'pipe-dream of the possibilities that might arise from national transcription of the tithe apportionments'. While that prospect will probably always remain a fantasy, this volume certainly indicates how it should be done.

H. R. FRENCH
University of Exeter

ANDREW JONES, *Victorian North Devon: a social history* (Andrew Jones, 2010). vii + 529 pp. (available from Andrew Jones, The Rectory, Bishops Nympton, South Molton, Devon, EX36 4NY).

Although the author's assertion that this is 'the first scholarly study of Victorian north Devon' can be disputed, he does address a need for more published work concerning Devon's history. It is a great pity therefore that Jones's book is marred by its failure to fulfil expectations that are raised by the title. Jones's meticulous research and exemplary extracts from a myriad primary sources centre on the parish of Rose Ash and its hinterland, in the south-eastern corner of the area that he defines as north Devon. Focusing on this district means that key influences are ignored. Lacking, as it does, an adequate recognition of north Devon's maritime communities, this cannot truly be a social history of north Devon. As a history of the impact of religion on the agricultural communities around South Molton, this book works much better. Jones's central theme of the disparity between the rural poor and their landlords, the clergy in particular, is well handled. If the title had not led readers to expect a wider application, then there would be less to condemn in this book.

Chapters two and three are entitled 'Rural Life' and 'Community Life' respectively, but it is not altogether clear how Jones is distinguishing between the two. 'Rural Life' encompasses customs, beliefs and prejudices and how they shaped and controlled Victorian rural society. It then ranges across sexual mores, public health and migration. 'Community Life' begins with an assessment of the extent of rural unrest in north Devon, then moves on to clubs, societies and parish charities before returning to examine crime. It is a shame that a great deal of interesting material becomes somewhat lost in this lack of structure.

The biographies of five members of the rural elite, with authority in Rose Ash and the surrounding area, rate a chapter of their own. There is an assessment of the influence that these individuals had on the parishes where they held sway. It is unfortunate that these are stand-alone biographies, lacking in contextual

comment on the role the middle classes played in agricultural communities. When Jones moves on to church, chapel and clergy he is at his best and these sections have real merit. Here is the context and insight that is lacking in earlier chapters, providing a valuable account of the impact of the Anglican Church, its fabric, sacraments and clergy, on Victorian rural communities. Although Jones does perhaps underplay the role of the chapel, this is a reflection of the small part of north Devon upon which he is concentrating.

The chapter on schooling has general relevance but Jones's discussion of farming and enclosure returns to the parochial, and is applicable to the area around South Molton rather than the wider region. He finishes with a somewhat incongruous chapter on the village green, which, he acknowledges, is a feature of few Devon villages. The account of the disputes over the ownership of the green at Rose Ash does help to illustrate the control of prominent families in that one village but again there is a need for this to be given broader significance.

When Jones tackles his proposed work on the twentieth century, and I hope he will, he would do better to acknowledge that he is focusing on a smaller area and on themes that are not so broad. That way he will not raise unrealistic expectations in his readers and the book will be recognized as a good example of what it actually is, rather than one that fails to live up to its claims.

JANET FEW
North Devon

REX SLY, *Soil in their souls. A history of Fenland farming* (The History Press 2010). 160 pp., 153 illus. £14.99.

Rex Sly's account is, in essence, a personal account of the transformation of Fenland farming. The narrative is interspersed with cases studies of individual farmers and their families. The idea that the inhabitants had 'soil in their souls' could, however, be defined in a more precise way and the rationale for the individual chapters articulated in a more explicit and persuasive way. There is also lack of clarity in terms of the precise period being covered, and in respect of the magnitude of the changes which have taken place in the different periods. This is apparent in respect of the contextualization, where the review of the key changes merits more precise clarification as they are sometimes based on rather dubious assertions. As such, it does not really cater for an academic audience, given the minimal use of endnotes and the many generalizations and assertions it contains about the historical development of farming.

Its structural weaknesses are also evident in the rationale for the selection of the chapter titles. It is more or less self-evident why the first five chapters are included, given their common theme of the different social groups living in the Fens. However, it is more difficult to understand how these relate to the last two chapters on 'Crop Spraying' and 'Fenland Cropping'. There is also a very marked variability in the length of the chapters. For example, chapter 2, 'The Ultimate Prize', covers five pages while sixty pages are devoted to the final chapter on 'Fenland Cropping'.

There are a considerable number of instances where the expression could be refined, for example, p. 11, 'ball rolling for the supermarket'. Occasional typographical errors are evident, such as 'wa' for 'war' on p. 27. The text would have benefited from a conclusion; even a tentative one would have been appreciated. In a similar way, a bibliography listing at least some of the key texts consulted would have been useful.

In spite of the book's rather obvious academic weaknesses, it is essential than these do not obscure the text's very positive features. It provides a very useful and informative insight into the way this particular region has been transformed. While the rationale for selecting particular farming families for inclusion is not always as persuasive as it might be, these case studies provide valuable personal accounts of the way that they have coped with recent challenges. The text also contains an impressive collection of photographs and maps, which adds variety and illustrates the transformation of farming in a region that has so far merited scant attention by conventional historians.

JOHN MARTIN
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MATTHEW JEFFERIES and MIKE TYLDESLEY (eds), *Rolf Gardiner: Folk, nature and culture in Interwar Britain* (Ashgate, 2011). xiv + 188pp., 4 figs. £55.

Rolf Gardiner (1902–71) is a figure of interest in various spheres of activity: folk dance, music, forestry, organic farming, conservation, youth movements, Anglo-German relations and 'radical Right' politics. Refused membership of the Home Guard on account of his perceived pro-German sympathies, he was nevertheless accepted by the establishment in later life. He was chairman of the Dorset branch of the CLA, High Sheriff of that county in 1967, and chairman of the European Working Party for Landscape Husbandry. A founder member of the Soil Association, he became an elder statesman of the organic movement.

Jefferies and Tyldesley concentrate on the most controversial period of Gardiner's life, from the 1920s to the 1940s, during which his relationships with German

youth groups, his ambivalent attitude to the Nazi regime and his cultural pessimism about England's future marked him out as what Richard Griffiths, one of the contributors to this book, termed a 'fellow-traveller of the Right'. Gardiner's inter-war activities present a dilemma for the organic movement, since his approach to agriculture played a key role in his resistance to the cultural and political developments of mid-twentieth century England. Robert Waller, biographer of Gardiner's mentor, Sir George Stapledon, once told me that he had admired Gardiner enormously as a forester and environmentalist, but detested his politics and his arrogance. The problem, though, is whether the politics can really be divorced from the environmentalism; and it is compounded by the difficulty of determining exactly where Gardiner stood politically. The editors state that their aim is 'neither to indict nor to exculpate Gardiner, but to situate him historically'.

To illustrate Gardiner's historical context, Jefferies and Tyldesley have drawn together an impressive selection of scholars. Jefferies himself writes on Gardiner's links with the German naturist movement, while Tyldesley has undertaken some fascinating detective work on his friendship with Max Plowman, which sheds light both on Gardiner's attitude to pacifism and on Plowman's attitude to Nazism. David Fowler argues for Gardiner's importance as a pioneer of 'youth culture', a phrase which has a somewhat different meaning today from what Gardiner would have understood by it. Georgina Boyes examines Gardiner's role in the revival of English folk dance, a tradition he incorporated into his farming activities. Richard Griffiths and Dan Stone analyse the complexities of Gardiner's political position, with Stone in particular tracing the connections between politics and organic farming in Gardiner's thought and practice.

Richard Moore-Colyer's essay on 'Rolf Gardiner, farming and the English landscape' is the most directly relevant to agricultural historians, a detailed account of Gardiner's struggles to regenerate substantial areas of Cranborne Chase through afforestation and soil improvement. Moore-Colyer demonstrates that Gardiner was far from being an impractical dreamer; he was a highly disciplined worker who transformed his surrounding landscape for the better and was prepared to experiment with the unfashionable techniques of organic husbandry. Gardiner believed firmly in local initiatives and resisted the abstract uniformity imposed by a centralized State: an attitude that led him into conflict during the War with the Ministry of Supply, over the issue of flax production. As always, Moore-Colyer's style combines scholarship with wit. I especially enjoyed his account of Gardiner's early morning 'character-building run[s] in the nude across a stretch of Cranborne Chase, no doubt to the alarm of any poachers who happened to be drifting home after their nocturnal forays'.

The editors offer an Epilogue that looks, with tantalizing brevity, at Gardiner's post-war activities and discusses how far his ideas may have influenced a subsequent generation of environmental activists. Even if they did not directly do so, one can still discern various parallels between Gardiner's concerns and those of later environmentalists. It is perhaps significant that E. F. Schumacher formed a friendship with Gardiner from the mid-1960s. Much work on the last two decades of Gardiner's life remains to be undertaken.

As to whether the book avoids either condemning or whitewashing Gardiner, it seems to me that it is indeed very fair-minded: so much so that he perhaps gets off rather lightly. Many of his comments, as quoted in these essays, are rebarbative, and although Richard Griffiths warns against the judgement of 'guilt by association', the fact remains that Gardiner chose to associate with the SS, the SA and some of the most dedicated British sympathizers with Nazism, such as the estate owner Viscount Lymington and the eugenicist Anthony Ludovici.

Jefferies and Tyldesley are to be praised for having brought together such an authoritative range of perspectives. Whatever one's view of Gardiner, he was clearly a remarkable, many-talented man, prescient enough to see the implications of western culture's disregard for the biological realities on which our existence depends, and to emphasize the centrality of agriculture to national life. He is indeed, in the editors' phrase, 'worth more than a footnote in the history of inter-war Britain'.

PHILIP CONFORD
University of Leicester

LIZZIE COLLINGHAM, *The taste of war. World War Two and the battle for food* (Allen Lane, 2011). xv + 634 pp., 15 illus., 4 maps. £30.

Britain's wartime food supply problems, and its response to them, changed the pattern of international trade in agricultural products, and the effects remained after the war. Germany should have found its problems easier to solve. Admittedly it was the second-largest global food importer in 1939, after the UK, despite a long-standing policy of national self-sufficiency, but many of its imports came from continental Europe where they were safe from blockade. And after the spring of 1940 it also acquired supplies from Denmark and the Netherlands, which would previously have gone to Britain. But it had the deserved reputation

of being reluctant to pay for its imports, so its suppliers in south-eastern Europe were increasingly unwilling to provide the bread- and feed-grains that it required. Dutch dairy products historically depended on feedstuffs imported from overseas, which were no longer available. German farmers were short of labour and fertilizers, and so unable to expand production to match demand. German consumers did not actually go short of food until the last year of the war, but those in the occupied territories did because much of the food they would have eaten was being forcibly exported to Germany.

Similar stories of changed priorities can be told about most countries in the Second World War. Japan was also a major food importer before the war, and its consumers suffered accordingly when the ships carrying rice from Korea, Burma, Thailand, and what is now Vietnam, were sunk by American submarines from 1943 onwards. At the beginning of the war Australian producers found that their wheat and apples were no longer required as only higher-value products such as meat and cheese were worth shipping to the UK, and farm workers joined the army and left the land for better-paid industrial jobs. But by the end of the war Australian and New Zealand farmers were working flat out to provide the million or so US service personnel in the Pacific theatre with 95 per cent of their food. It was not only the belligerent countries that were affected. Spain had difficulty both in obtaining imports of wheat and in selling its fruit and vegetables. Argentina maintained its wheat and beef exports, but the demand for its feed grains fell dramatically, to the point where maize and linseed were being burnt for fuel to replace scarce oil imports. War, as the journalist George Steer remarked, was 'the highest form of inefficiency known to man'.

The results could go far beyond the inconveniences experienced in the UK. As Lizzie Collingham reminds us, the nineteen million deaths in battle during the war were at least matched, if not exceeded, by the number of civilian deaths from starvation or malnutrition and its associated diseases. Indeed, 60 per cent of Japanese military deaths were starvation-related rather than the result of direct enemy action. They joined the two or three million Soviet citizens (nobody knows the exact figure) who died of hunger and related diseases, one million of them in Leningrad alone. There were two or three million Chinese deaths in Henan province, three million in the Bengal famine of 1943–44, thousands of prisoners of war in Japanese, German and Soviet camps, and numerous others in the Philippines, Malaya, Greece, the Netherlands, and even, at the end of the war and shortly afterwards, in Germany.

Sobering as these figures are, this book is much more than a simple catalogue of wartime disasters, difficulties, and improvised solutions. The war affected the demand for and supply of food, and brought nutritional scientists and government planners into food debates in unprecedented ways. Equally importantly, in Collingham's view, food issues were central to the outbreak of war, its conduct, and its eventual outcome. Concerns over future food supplies, she suggests, lay behind both the German decision to invade the USSR and the Japanese invasion of China. Once war began, food became a strategic material, as the various submarine campaigns demonstrate, and food shortages contributed to Japanese military failures towards the end of the war, whereas the USSR's food problems did not prevent its victories. She is not alone in making these suggestions, but she pursues them in more detail, on a wider geographical scale, and in my opinion more convincingly than previous writers. In this densely referenced, clearly argued, and wonderfully readable book she takes the familiar wartime food stories of rationing and digging for victory to a completely new level, and reveals the value of examining the various national histories in a global context.

PAUL BRASSLEY
University of Exeter

Europe and Elsewhere

TIMOTHY JENKINS, *The life of property. House, family and inheritance in Béarn, south-west France* (Berghahn Books, 2010). xii + 181 pp. £35.

The author calls this book an 'ethnographically-focused account of the life of property in Béarn' (p. 162). This review can give a glimpse only of the wealth of relations, connections, ideas and overviews presented, that range from local inheritance traditions in Béarn from the Middle Ages onwards, to the origins of the ideas of the famous French sociologist of the family, Frédéric LePlay (1806–82), to the more recent development of theories and concepts of the Béarn-born Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) and finally to national and European Union political debates.

Jenkins describes the 'house', encompassing dwelling, property and family, as the most important organizing principle (p. 7) of French Pyrenean societies. One family member of each generation inherits the entire property (land), as well as the authority, reputation and status as the new head of the family. Non-heirs receive only limited compensation or dowries in order to avoid the division of the 'house', the most important aim in this society. In his description of Béarn, LePlay coined the phrase 'stem family' system, in which

three generations lived in one house. Except for the parents and the designated heir and his partner, all other family members in the household remained unmarried. Marriage strategies were a function of the inheritance system. For almost two centuries now, this traditional system has been depicted by authors like LePlay and Bourdieu as being on the eve of extinction or as having vanished some years before, under the perceived threat of outside modernizing incentives, like the legally enforced equal division of inheritances, individualistic 'cosmopolitan' views on family, property and authority, and technological developments in agriculture.

Jenkins stresses the incompatibility of all these different views, and he concludes that the 'house' system of farms remains viable because its flexibility has allowed it to cope with the threats of the last two centuries, at least in the largest 'houses'. Even today, large farmers are still at the centre of local values, and Jenkins describes them very positively as the main agricultural innovators and most successful political leaders, serving as a model for others. In fact, Jenkins distinguishes two organizing concepts in social life: a seemingly archaic one resting on authority within the family and connected to the large farms; and a supposedly modern one with room for individual initiative, that was of most importance for small farmers and villagers, and also to some extent for mothers and younger non-heirs. 'Their co-inherence permits a distinctive, flexible and complex social life' (p. 160), but this combination also triggers the idea that the preferred concept has repeatedly to give way to more 'modern' attitudes. In addition, Jenkins points out the influence of ideas about the family system in Béarn on debates on social reform (civil society) and on sociological and anthropological concepts (symbolic capital, habitus) through LePlay and Bourdieu.

As an economic historian interested in the countryside it proved difficult for me to appreciate the content, methods and arguments in *The life of property*. Take, for example, the lack of empirical evidence about aspects of the functioning of the 'house' system, and its overall aim to transmit the property to a single heir. Bourdieu is criticized for the way he uses statistics, but Jenkins' work also lacks figures. He mentions that he has conducted an in-depth study of 60 farmsteads from 1780 onwards, but fails to present any systematic survey of the results; all we get is a few examples. Jenkins blames Bourdieu for building his analysis on old men as his main informants, yet he devotes a whole chapter to an analysis of a novel about the 'house' of a minor noble/large farming family around 1850, written in 1914, by someone born in 1874 of artisan origins! Elsewhere, Jenkins describes in detail how another 'house' survived the division of the property forced by the Civil Code, and the 'urban' ambitions of a younger son in 1848. However, he overlooks the fact that the same 'house' was sold in 1870, when the male heir died as a soldier and his sister married and moved away. If the main aim was the continuity of the house, then why did the daughter not succeed, and why did the only son, whose presence was essential on the large castle–farm, put the continuity of the house at risk by entering the army?

Jenkins repeatedly stresses the long-term continuity of the 'house' as the foundation of the local value system in Béarn, without giving any clue about the actual importance of the 'house' system to the different social groups, whether in 1800, 1850, 1900, 1950 or in 2000; figures on the incidence of transfers of 'houses' inside and outside the family are not provided. Regrettably, the thinness of the empirical evidence is not compensated for by an extensive knowledge of the literature in the field of family and rural history. The numerous recent publications of Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga and Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux on the stem-family in the Pyrenean region are not cited (expect for one dating from 1984), while references to recent publications on the concept of family strategy are limited.

In conclusion, Jenkins's book could be very attractive for anthropologists and researchers interested in the history of ideas. However, rural historians wanting to get a real grasp of the nature, the working, the motivations and the development of the Pyrenean stem family system would do better to turn to the work of Arrizabalaga and Fauve-Chamoux.

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TRACY DENNISON, *The institutional framework of Russian serfdom* (Cambridge University Press, 2011). xx + 254 pp., 1 illus., 1 map. £60.

In this excellent book, Tracy Dennison conducts a detailed investigation into Voshchazhnikovo, an estate in Iaroslavl' province, to challenge accepted views of Russian serfdom. She is particularly critical of the continuing acceptance by many historians of elements of what she terms the 'peasant myth'. This myth, she argues, has its root in the visions of nineteenth-century idealists rather than empirical evidence, and believes that peasants allocated land according to household size, redistributed it periodically to reflect changes in households, thereby leading to a weak sense of private property, the absence of land and labour markets, and a collective mentality that minimized risk and provided communal support. In chapters on household

structure and family economy, the rural commune, land, property and labour markets, credit and savings, and consumption, Dennison demolishes this myth with respect to Voshchazhnikovo.

Ultimately, rural society could be more dynamic and 'modern' under serfdom than is usually portrayed. In Voshchazhnikovo, land did not equal wealth; on the contrary, land was tied to dues and the more land a family worked, the more dues they were liable to pay. Land was allocated according to a family's ability to pay and some families did not have land. Land was bought, sold and bequeathed. As the land was relatively poor and greater profits could be made from non-agricultural activities, it made sense for many families to pay others to work their land or to rent it out. Some employed labourers or even owned their own serfs. Only 11 per cent of households made a living solely from agriculture; many males acted as migrant labourers in cities or engaged in estate-based manufacturing enterprises. Serfs took out loans for investments, saved, and lent money to other serfs. There was also an expanding market for clothing, jewellery and materials for house improvements.

Dennison's research, then, reinforces earlier work that stressed the diversity of the serf economy, whilst revealing a range of activities that one would assume could not exist under serfdom. Legally, serfs could not own land or other serfs, and the fact that they did in Voshchazhnikovo was due to the policies of its owners, the Sheremetevs. They allowed serfs to buy and sell property in their name. They protected the rights of owners, settled disputes, and oversaw all important issues concerning serfs' lives, from households and marriage to conscription and trade. In some respects, these practices support the view of serfdom as a repressive and arbitrary system, yet in the hands of owners like the Sheremetevs, who remained impartial and consistent in their policies across generations and estates, these practices formed a reliable framework in which serfs could work, live and pursue individual interests.

The role of the serf owner, therefore, was crucial and the Sheremetevs were not typical. As one of the richest families in Russia, they were able to maintain a central management office in St Petersburg for all their estates, and could afford to draw up and enforce numerous policies. They understood that permitting greater diversity on their estates benefited them financially; serfs, for example, paid for their help in purchasing land and, on becoming wealthier, paid higher dues. Most serf owners were smaller, enacting inconsistent policies as they could not afford to manage a complicated social and economic structure like Voshchazhnikovo. Equally, the Sheremetevs' policies were only valid on their estates. In the state's eyes, property owned by the Sheremetevs' serfs remained the property of the Sheremetevs. If the Sheremetevs had decided to seize this property, then their serfs could do nothing.

Thus, Dennison rephrases the old question: it is not so much that serfdom was uniformly restrictive across Russia, but more a case that Russia could have been more advanced without it. That said, she raises the interesting point that serfdom's abolition in 1861 actually represented a regression for estates like Voshchazhnikovo. By removing the role of the Sheremetevs without replacing it with full legal rights for peasants, the state made Voshchazhnikovo's peasants worse off in many ways, even if they were now free.

Dennison's book helps historians re-examine Russian serfdom in productive ways. Her evidence is fascinating and often reveals new aspects to serfdom, even if her stress on the impact of serfdom as an institution is not always as innovative as she implies; after all, as her footnotes make clear, in most places she is contributing to existing debates. Nonetheless, Voshchazhnikovo was a different type of estate to those studied by other historians, owned by a different family in a different geographical area, and consequently her findings help construct a more detailed and complex picture of serfdom. Furthermore, Dennison has an impressive grasp of the relevant research on the peasantry of western and central Europe, enabling her to draw wide-ranging comparisons. Russia's experiences come across as a variant of Europe's, rather than completely distinct as is often implied, and this is true of much of Russia's historical development.

MATTHEW RENDLE
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STEPHEN MOSLEY, *The environment in world history* (Routledge, 2010). ix + 123 pp., 10 tabs. £65 (hbk), £18.99 (pbk), £18.99 (eBook).

There are many reasons why agricultural historians would do well to pay attention to the work of environmental historians; the latter have much to say about farming and its impacts. Stephen Mosley's slim volume, *The environment in world history,* is an excellent case in point. Focusing on the most significant factors behind environmental change that have taken place over the past 500 years, Mosley's work is less general and diffuse than many other recently published environmental history primers, which tend to begin with prehistory and end at the present day.

For those seeking a clear description of environmental history itself, Mosley's discussion of its evolution

and approach is extremely helpful. Environmental history's 'primary goal is to reveal how human action and environmental change are intertwined', he writes, adding that the nation state has frequently proven an inadequate framework for research undertaken by environmental historians (pp. 2–3). A key concern of environmental historians has always been understanding and documenting the extent and impacts of land use change, with Mosley reminding his readers that 35–50 per cent of the earth's land surface has now been 'radically transformed by human activity' (p. 6).

The book is built around four chapters, each dedicated to either a source of environmental change or an aspect of the earth's biosphere that has been subject to particularly severe environmental impacts. The chapters focus on hunting, forests, soils, and cities.

Discussing soils, Mosley emphasizes the acceleration in rates of erosion, exhaustion and salinization during the modern period and, most extremely, since the end of the Second World War. The role of Western European colonialism in the damaging of soils in North America and Africa is explored, with European migrants to 'new' lands viewed as '"environmental pioneers" encountering soils that were unfamiliar'. In many cases, these soils were less resilient to erosion than typical northern European soils, argues Mosley: 'northern European farming practices had evolved in a temperate climate, typically on undulating terrain with heavy soils that were not so vulnerable to erosion by wind and rain' (pp. 61–2). The mistake that European settlers made was to assume a similar resilience on the part of new, lighter soils they were now farming. Indeed, Mosley describes settlers' approach as often no better than 'soil mining', with consequences that remain serious to this day.

Turning to the period since 1945, Mosley offers a damning overview of the cumulative impacts of industrial agriculture. He highlights the issue of soil compaction in Europe while acknowledging that since the end of the Second World War, approximately 80 per cent of 'all significant soil degradation' has occurred in the developing world (p. 68). Another problem arising from the embrace of industrial agriculture has been the manner in which intensive use of inorganic fertilizers has had the effect of 'masking' deterioration in soil health and functioning. Long-term, irreversible soil depletion is an issue yet to be confronted, argues Mosley, and because soil degradation has usually occurred 'too slowly and too unobtrusively to attract much public attention' there is little awareness that 1.5 billion hectares of cropland have been abandoned over the past four decades (p. 80).

The environment in world history offers a clearly-reasoned overview of major factors in recent environmental change, with a strong focus on soil (mis) management. It is also an excellent introduction to the approach taken by environmental historians.

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MARK B. TAUGER, *Agriculture in world history* (Routledge, 2011). x + 192 pp. £65 (hbk), £18.99 (pbk), £18.99 (eBook).

There is, according to Tauger (pp. 1–2), a complex relationship between farmers and urban civilization, and between farmers and their environment, but in general, he argues, farmers are subordinate in both cases. Therefore the history of agriculture is, from this perspective, an account of the various ways in which farmers escaped from this subordination, only to meet, in recent times, a fresh set of challenges in the form of global warming, peak oil, pollution, debt, and declining farmer numbers (p. 2). Before the nineteenth century, he argues, farmers were self-sufficient, but then, initially in the West, and subsequently elsewhere, 'civilization incorporated the farmers into itself, creating a relationship of interdependence' (p. 181), and this, he suggests, makes both vulnerable to dependence on oil, environmental threats, and socio-economic injustice. The modern world therefore needs to learn from the various ways in which early farmers recycled their waste, adapted to markets and environments, and produced food without requiring large inputs of energy. In short, it needs to respect the dependence of civilization upon agriculture (p. 182).

This book is part of a series on 'Themes in world history', aimed at undergraduate world history survey courses taught especially in the United States, but also elsewhere. In less than 200 pages it therefore has the task of not only outlining the origins and development of agriculture across the world, but also making the story relevant to world history in general, often, presumably, to students who will not become history specialists. It is a formidable challenge. In meeting it, Tauger adopts a conventional structure, dividing world history into seven periods, three before 1500 CE, and four afterwards, although the level of detail increases towards more modern times, and more than half of the book covers the nineteenth and twentieth century in three big chapters. Within each chapter again the arrangement is fairly conventional, with separate sections on Europe, the Americas, China, and south and central Asia.

In a book such as this, which aims to encapsulate the work of an enormous number of archaeologists

and historians, it is tempting to identify the points at which the author is at variance with generally accepted interpretations, or makes simple errors of fact, and most period or subject specialists will no doubt find several in a rapid scan of the book. Is it helpful to apply the term 'debt peonage' to both tenants in ancient Athens (p. 18) and feudal serfs (p. 39)? Whether or not medieval peasant land allotments really are most often called *manse* (p. 38), by the time the term has reached the glossary (p. 184) it has been redefined as 'the large house of the lord'. Devotees of Arthur Young's advocacy of enclosure may be surprised to learn that he has changed his name to Robert, and that 'only Denmark carried out land consolidation and enclosure in the eighteenth century' (p. 83). Four pages later we are told that there was fierce peasant resistance to pre-1700 enclosure in England, and that 'Parliament' imposed enclosure legislation after 1800. A paragraph on the Common Agricultural Policy (p. 142) becomes confused because the effects of its early policies are conflated with its subsequent development, and discussions of eastern European agricultural history often seem to mean only Russia (see p. 68).

Faced with such a range of material to cover, and to be compressed into so short a space, some errors are probably inevitable. The more significant question is whether they undermine the reader's confidence in the book as a whole, and whether they vitiate the author's overall argument. Perhaps what matters more than the detail is whether the overall concept forms a useful framework for world agricultural history. For readers who come new to the subject some framework, or overall issue that persists through the book, is surely better than none if their interest is to be maintained; the question then is whether Tauger's 'subordinate farmer' model is more useful than one which traces the effects of technology transfer, trade, and changes in land ownership and occupancy across space and time, or one which assesses the changing balance of demand and supply for agricultural products and the factors that affected it. Its novelty and debatability may in themselves be a useful device for capturing and keeping the reader's interest. On the other hand, some suggestion that there could be alternative frameworks or models, and where they might be found, might have made the book even more useful as an introduction.

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HANNAH VELTEN, *Milk. A global history* (Reaktion Books, 2010). 160pp., 58 illus. £9.99.

Velten begins her book by looking at human attitudes to the milk of many mammals around the world over time. She shifts quite rapidly to her main focus: production and consumption of cows' milk in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain and the United States. She organizes her book primarily around shifting views about the value of milk within that period and geographic framework. By the mid-nineteenth century, milk had acquired a bad reputation, as a result of horrific problems arising from the way the commodity was marketed to an ever larger, urban-based population. The author describes city dairies in that period, the way adulterated milk was produced, how disease (most particularly tuberculosis and dysentery) was transferred through milk to people (especially infants), the increased emphasis on cows' milk as a replacement of human milk for babies, and the rise of both condensed and powdered milk.

The author outlines demands for reform and shows how better control over the quality of milk on the market was put in place. She compares regulations enforced by New York State and Britain to improve the purity of milk and its cleanliness, and to ensure the absence of disease-carrying bacteria in it. She discusses the process of pasteurization. Velten also notes efforts at promoting milk. Milk was supplied by the state to schoolchildren in Britain, for example. The advertising of milk, and state support of advertising, played a role in helping the milk cause. These activities made milk a healthier product and also increased public respect for it. By 1950 milk had achieved huge popularity, with a growing body of consumers in both Britain and the United States.

But late in the twentieth century, milk's star began to fall. Milk consumption in the United States and in Britain was in decline by the 1970s (particularly among the young), while consumption of carbonated drinks was on the rise. Drinking milk was simply not cool or hip. Some argued that pasteurization had ruined the natural taste of milk. On top of this situation, significant shifts in attitudes to milk as a food had taken place. Dr Benjamin Spock, for example, after years of advocating milk for children, reversed his view. He encouraged the abandonment of milk drinking. People had become concerned about the welfare of cows supplying the milk, as well as health issues around 'technological' milk (milk from cloned cows for example). In the meantime, consumption of milk has risen considerably in Asia. Velten briefly compares modern Anglo-American trends with those in Asia late in the twentieth century. The author sees this pattern as part of a larger one, which could be described as 'nutritional colonization'. Decline of milk drinking in traditional consuming countries does not mean that milk consumption on a world scale is also declining.

Asian increases in milk drinking led to a rise in global consumption.

The book's focus is milk, not the dairy industry. Generally speaking, Velten downplays dairying in her story. Because historical dairying is very much part of the historical milk story, however, overview observations on how the dairy industry developed would have been useful. Knowing more about the bovine types producing the milk within the period she discusses (as well as dairymen's points of view) would have put the subject of milk into a broader context. Many of the problems of the early fluid milk industry related to contingent changes in the cheese and butter industries. Cattle movement and the role of bovine disease in that movement were also critical factors in historical dairying for milk. A brief look at the rinderpest plague of 1865, and the public's attitudes to London's milk in relation to it, would have placed the uproar over the city dairies in perspective. Milk 'warm from the cow' was no longer in such high esteem after that time. Understanding the dynamics of the world's dairy cattle population today – their breeding and production – is essential if one wants to appreciate patterns in global consumption. The story of milk is a complicated one with many facets impinging on it. Recognizing that some complexity in the historical milk story arose from historical dairying is important. It is a point that the author might have emphasized more than she did.

This book is admirable in many ways. It is well written and organized. Casual readers will learn a great deal about milk consumption from it. There is no cutting-edge, innovative information in the book, but I believe the author wanted to attract a general educated reading public, not a specialized group of historians.

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