

Book Reviews

EDWARD MILLER and JOHN HATCHER, *Medieval England: Rural Society and Economic Change 1086-1348*. Longman, *Social and economic history of England*, ed. Asa Briggs, 1978. xviii + 302 pp. £4.95.

This is the best popular book on rural England during this period for a great many years. It is well written, up to date, and remarkably comprehensive, with the emphasis where it should be, upon the land and the people. The first chapter deals with King William's England and the last with King Edward's England. In between are chapters on land and people, markets, villages, villagers—their status and tenure, and their family and fortunes—lords, and landlords and the land. We are promised a second volume on *Towns, Trade and Economic Policies 1086-1348*, and one of the strengths of this book is that it covers, briefly, price trends, the growth of towns, and international trade, so that we see rural England in an urban and commercial context.

The approach is, with due caution, frankly Postanian, though here and there—for example in the discussion of wages—there is a hint of the difficulties. On the whole, therefore, this is a statement of the orthodox, Malthusian and Ricardian, view of the history of rural England.

Though there is here no very thorough discussion of population history, this must be the starting-point in all discussions of the Postan thesis. Surveys, rentals, and inquisitions are very unreliable sources, and, as our authors point out, there were great regional differences, but with due attention to the proper weighting of the different regions, and careful comparison only of equal cohorts of years, some general statement is possible. This argues a continuous but slowing population rise from 1086 to about 1294, which, were the Domesday population 2,000,000, would give a 1294 population of about 7,200,000. Thereafter came a decline down to about 1318, which left a population of about 6,740,000. Population seems to have been stagnant in south-eastern England in 1260-92, and to have declined in the east Midlands in 1244-80, southern England in 1287-1311, the west Midlands in 1273, and in Yorkshire in 1290-1309. The point nowhere made in this book, that in the five counties of eastern England, between the Humber and the mouth of the Thames, there was no population decline down to 1300, is surely significant, for in 1086 one-third of the people recorded in Domesday lived in eastern England, and by 1300 nearly a half (46 per cent). Eastern England was also *the* land of small holders—people with less than 10-20 acres of land—but in most of

England, in the time of King Edward as in the time of King William, about 60 per cent of the English peasantry had the supposed minimum of land for survival. Morcellement took place only in the highly developed regions of eastern and south-eastern England, and the east Midlands, because much of southern and south-western England, the west Midlands, and the Welsh marches had to absorb by new settlement substantial numbers of landless slaves and newly emancipated small holders in a somewhat primitive economy. By 1300 Hampshire was supporting only half as many people per square mile as Norfolk.

East Anglia could do this because it had a more advanced agriculture. It grew mainly barley, with sizeable crops of legumes which fixated nitrates in the soil, and sowed its crops very thickly. It fallowed only once in six or eight years, marled the land freely, and almost achieved continuous cultivation. It virtually abolished oxen by the 1240's (Miller and Hatcher say, p. 227, "oxen remained the principal draught animals in every part of England"), and it laid greater stress upon milch kine than on sheep, which are the sign of a backward economy. It made cheeses out of cows' milk, not out of ewes' milk. These characteristics existed elsewhere in the progressive parts of England where most Englishmen lived. Our authors' contention that yield ratios were not so high in 1300 as now is true, but the gross amount of corn available in eastern England was very much greater than elsewhere, and these counties carried the rest. Lynn exported wheat to Flanders because Norfolk had a surplus. But for the Black Death the population pressure in these counties would have brought the agricultural revolution, which was, to some extent, a rediscovery of old East Anglian practices, much nearer.

Two other points of criticism are necessary, one major and one minor. The pages on diet are inadequate, though, as Dr Johnson says about women preachers and dogs walking on their hind legs, we are surprised to find a discussion at all. They contain the myth of the "carbohydrate" diet. The English peasant had an adequate protein consumption from bread, herrings, and dairy products, and vitamin C from cabbage, leeks, onions, and garlic. His "sub-scorbutic" condition is a myth.

Lastly, I wonder when medieval historians will learn that the correct translation of *salina* is not "salt pans"? It occurs all the way through Darby's *Domesday Geography* and describes a technique of salt extraction which Englishmen never used (except once, misguidedly, in eighteenth-century Norfolk)—the sun-pan method—which we use in

our great saltworks at Dampier, on the north-west coast of Western Australia, and which the French use at Les Salins, at the mouth of the Rhône. The English translation of *salina* is "saltern," which is the word the Old English landbooks use when describing them in Sussex. Even R. E. Latham's *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List* gets it wrong. John Ray sufficiently described the technique when in 1674 he wrote, in his *Collection of English Words not generally used* (pp. 147-8):

The manner of making Salt of Sea-sand in Lancashire.

In summer time in dry weather they skimme or pare off the upper part of the sand in the flats and washes that are covered at full sea, and bare when the tide is out, and lay it up on great heaps. Of this sand they take and put in troughs bored with holes at the bottom, and thereon pour water, . . . which water, draining through the sand, carries the salt therein contained down with it into vessels placed underneath to receive it. So long as this liquor is strong enough to bear an egg they pour on more water; so soon as the egg begins to sink they cast the sand out of the troughs, and put in new. This water thus impregnate with salt they boil in leaden pans wherein the water evaporating the salt remains behind.

The "great heap" is the saltern, and the associated buildings the saltcote.

The book is well produced, and I counted only six misprints, which is quite good these days. Everyone interested in medieval English agrarian history should read it.

H. E. HALLAM

C. PHYTHIAN-ADAMS, *Continuity, Fields and Fission: The Making of a Midland Parish*. University of Leicester, Department of English Local History, Occasional Papers, Third Series, no. 4, 1978. 53 pp. £3.95.

The extent to which there was continuity in a variety of forms from Roman times to the Anglo-Saxon has remained a vexed question since it was reopened twenty years ago by H. P. R. Finberg's study of Withington in the Cotswolds. The debate continues, but with an increasing tendency, it seems, towards an acceptance of continuity, not least because of the untiring efforts of G. R. J. Jones to establish the extent of the survival into later periods of Romano-British and even earlier arrangements in systems of central manors with satellite hamlets—multiple estates, as he terms them. Much of the debate has been conducted at the macro-scale, both historically and geographically, with broad generalizations supported to varying degrees by particular instances. Ultimately,

however, it is at the local level that this hypothesis has to be tested and Phythian-Adams has conducted such an inquisition in the parish of Claybrooke on the boundary between Leicestershire and Warwickshire.

For reasons relating to the equivocal nature of the evidence and the complex character of the problem being investigated, Phythian-Adams adopts the retrogressive method of working from the better-known to the lesser-known, from the recent to the remote past, so that his path starts out on relatively firm ground, but becomes increasingly unsure as it moves further into the more distant periods of history. He interrogates an impressively wide range of witnesses—including the present-day landscape and modern maps as well as medieval records and earlier charters—to make them yield their evidence in his efforts to reconstruct in meticulous detail the subsequent development and ultimate origins of such features as parish and property boundaries, field and settlement patterns, and the fragmentation of estates. Although essentially very circumspect in his approach, Phythian-Adams is compelled by the nature of the evidence also to be conjectural. He readily recognizes that he is dealing with possibilities and probabilities rather than with positive proof, with convictions rather than with certainties. He at least is prepared to argue that the origins of Claybrooke parish, and hence of the wider territorial entity that seems to have preceded it, are most realistically to be sought in some period before the arrival of the Danes in the late ninth century, and quite possibly in the Roman period. He makes a strong case for this interpretation. Few could disagree with Phythian-Adams's claim that there need to be more parish biographies of the kind which he has produced.

ALAN R. H. BAKER

R. R. DAVIES, *Lordship and Society in the March of Wales 1282-1400*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1978. xvi + 512 pp. £15.

This magistral work, the most important book on this period of Welsh history since W. Rees published his *South Wales and the March, 1284-1415. A Social and Agrarian Study* in 1924, will excite political and administrative historians even more than agrarian historians. The nature of the evidence and the nature of medieval Welsh society and economy alike dictate that of the twin subjects lordship receives 70 per cent of the space and society the rest.

To readers of this journal, part iv, 'Marcher Society', will be the most interesting, but the comparative absence in these regions of demesne agriculture, and the overwhelmingly secular nature of Marcher lordship, ensure that there is little to say about agriculture. Nevertheless, there is much

that is interesting. Our author deals with "English and Welsh in Marcher Society," and then proceeds to discuss the two nations separately. In his chapter on the English he discusses both the burgesses and the rural settlers in a new and rewarding way. His discussion of the Welsh has to follow deep-rutted tracks long worn by numerous predecessors, and he divides this chapter between the free and the unfree. He accepts the explanation of the origin of the Welsh *uchelwr*, which the late Professor Jones Pierce first made known, but hesitatingly, as if he had as yet undisclosed reservations. More positive is his clear explanation of Welsh *gavelkind*, which did not always lead to impoverishment, but truly could reduce the affluent to penury.

The heart of Professor Davies's discussion of the Welsh peasantry is in his discourse on the economic structure of Marcher society. When he writes about the distribution of wealth he makes lavish use of unpublished sources to delineate a pattern not hitherto described. Discussion of the Marcher land-market leads naturally to a dissertation upon the squirearchy, who were to be very important in later generations. Finally, in writing about the fifteenth century, he touches upon the decline of serfdom and customary tenure, and gives us more about the relationships of the English settlers and the Welsh.

This is an interesting, humane, and lucid book, the product of long years of ripe scholarship. Five hundred years of publishing at Oxford have also given us a book which, in spite of its size, is pleasant to read and handle and almost (not quite) free from minor blemishes.

H. E. HALLAM

EMMANUEL LE ROY LADURIE, *Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French village, 1294-1324*, translated by Barbara Bray. Scholar Press, 1978. 383 pp. £12.50.

Montaillou has been hailed universally as a major publishing and historical event. It burst on the scene (in a rather longer French version) in 1975, and now appears in an English translation. Here, it is argued, is the authentic medieval voice, the life of the real peasant for the first time revealed in all its facets (especially sexual: marital and extra-marital relationships appear at great length in many different parts of the book). Exploiting the records of heresy trials of the early fourteenth century, especially those from the village of Montaillou where almost all the inhabitants were rounded up and interrogated in great detail, the author has analysed the world of the southern French villager in the mode of the modern anthropologist.

The picture that emerges is a fascinating one—a village on the north-facing slopes of the Pyrenees, divided into a double economy, the agricultural

(mixed farming with arable, including turnip growing, and small flocks of sheep) and the shepherd economy, looking after "large flocks of at least several hundred head of sheep" engaged in transhumance, a migratory way of life from the summer pastures on the French side of the mountains to the winter pastures in north Catalonia. "Montaillou was a mountain-dwelling micro-society, whose people generally had little money, little prestige and little power"; it was organized on a household (*domus*) basis rather than on estates.

A great deal is revealed about this one village and about others in the neighbourhood—but some hesitations begin to grow as the book proceeds. For one thing, the evidence is somewhat thin—fourteen law cases per year spread over some seven years (1318-25). Only twenty-eight persons in all came from Montaillou itself (the significance of the first date given, 1294, is not clear unless thirty years is taken as a generation). What is more, Professor Le Roy Ladurie sticks closely to his chosen source material: little is drawn from other sources, either documentary or physical (especially surviving medieval buildings—there is only one totally uninformative photograph used as end papers without caption). The evidence available serves the author's interests well: it describes social relationships, but not the physical environment. More could be said from other sources on such topics as, for instance, a money economy and credit, or the secular law courts, or the training that the parish priest obtained, or even on hand-queens in the village.

Because of this intensive use of a limited source, the book is unexpectedly repetitious, sometimes tediously so: the same incident occurs time and again in considerable detail (the long quotations have a freshness about them which they quickly lose on repetition). Despite this, however, the author fails to get inside the sources: he remains bound by his own presuppositions. To describe Pierre Maury as a "democrat" is anachronistic. He frequently uses the term "irregular unions" for the temporary sexual liaisons which the villagers formed from time to time—perhaps in an attempt to shock his readers; but it reflects a lack of understanding of a social structure only just beginning to come to terms with the demands of an intrusive Church for the "regularisation" of sexual relations (i.e. "marriage" according to the Church's rules, not customary practices heretofore enjoyed).

A third hesitation is one which the author clearly shares—the fear that such a study will be taken as describing a "typical" medieval village. But the place (with its virtual lack of serfdom) and the time (which saw a flow of upland population into the lowlands of France or Spain) were quite specific. Montaillou was not typical of anything; it

was a village in disintegration—not just because of the Inquisition's attack on heresy, but because of the collapse of the mafia-type rule of the Clergue family, which could lead on occasion to such brutality as the cutting out of the tongue of an elderly village gossip. These were the real wielders of power, not the Comte de Foix or the captain of his castle in the village. And when their hold was broken, village society was in disarray. Montaillou cannot be compared with a heavily manorialized village in the champaign country, or with an industrialized village in the north. What Le Roy Ladurie has explored are the particularities rather than the general characteristics of one village in the south of France.

Is *Montaillou* then unique? Does it depend so much on the chance survival of a particular set of records that it can never be repeated? What is revealed is what the sources speak of and this alone. Are there other sources similar to these?

The answer is probably No: but at this point the real achievement of this book stands clear to be seen by all. There may be other sources as yet unexplored, though hardly as rich as the registers of that arch-Inquisitor Jacques Fournier. But there are already well-known sources which will now, as a result of the work of Le Roy Ladurie, be looked at in a new light. Care will be taken to see what light they throw on popular culture—on subjects such as diet, or body language, or mental horizons and world pictures, or the terms used in affection or in hostility, or on the chauvinism (usually adult and male) implicit in the records themselves, or in the methods by which the common culture was transmitted, or the many, many other subjects touched on briefly by this wide-ranging study. This is the real value of *Montaillou* for other historians, the questions it raises about other local communities and the ways in which the sources can be analysed. And this being so, the absence of a subject index is unpardonable: how can one find what this wise and humane author has to say about contraception, or demography, naming customs, tithes, or even—for the readers of this journal—crops and farm tools? The publishers must remedy this in the subsequent editions of this volume which will certainly be demanded.

Perhaps what is the most important conclusion of this whole study is slipped in and may be passed over unnoticed: "the communal spirit, far from being a survival from pre-history, must have developed in upper Ariège between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, parallel with the growing role of the village community as a force within the state and as a fiscal and political unit." If Professor Le Roy Ladurie can spare the time from satisfying the demands of the film-makers for more information into the sex-lives of the Occitan peasant,

perhaps he could expand these few words into his next book.

ALAN ROGERS

EDWARD BRITTON, *The Community of the Vill: A Study in the History of the Family and Village Life in Fourteenth-Century England*. Toronto, Macmillan of Canada, 1977. xvii + 291 pp. \$22.50.

This remarkable book is a product of the Toronto school of medieval historians which Professor Ambrose J. Raftis has led with such distinction for a good number of years. Dr Edward Britton is the editor of the *Herald Gazette* in Bracebridge, Ontario, and this book is the outcome of his studies for a Ph.D. at the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies.

The subtitle is sufficient explanation of the contents: the method is to see the macrocosm in the microcosm, here the Huntingdonshire village of Broughton in 1288–1340. Dr Britton divides his book into five parts and deals with the family, including family groupings, marriage, the children, and the domestic group; economic status, especially movable property, landholding, industry, and trades; social interaction, particularly village officials, co-operation, friction, and social mobility; village demography; and the village community and beyond.

There are a great many fascinating things in this beautifully written book, but room for only a few comments. Dr Britton divides his villagers into A, B, and C families, in order of wealth and influence, and there are a few unattached persons. He is at pains several times to stress the honourable and important part which women played in this society, particularly the major importance of ale-wives as money-earners, and the equitable treatment of adulterers and adultresses. His pages on adultery are very important, for they stress the need to maintain marriage as the buttress of a landholding society.

The chosen period is that which Professor Postan has selected to begin the downward trend in population. To many readers of this journal Dr Britton's attitude to the Postan thesis will be the most interesting part of the book. He shows that in 1288–1340 there was a decline in replacement rates, but suggests that emigration was a more potent factor. There follow several interesting pages in which Dr Britton considers aspects of the Postan thesis. He points out the confusion between "subsistence" and "subsistence income," and criticizes Dr Titow's assumption that only the holding produced the peasant's needs. He also lightly discusses peasant diet, points out that a largely grain diet is not a "carbohydrate" diet—a notion derived from popular literature on dieting—

but that good bread is rich in second-class protein, and underlines once more the significance of the number of butchers' shops in Broughton. The Huntingdonshire peasants were, in fact, rather richer than many English peasants, for the median holding was a half-virgate, and there were many peasant virgaters. In Broughton 43 out of 85 families had nearly 20 acres of land each, but at the bottom end 31 families had less than 2 acres each. These poorest families declined only 1 per cent more, in 1288-1340, than the richest, and there was no connection between the size of the holding and vulnerability to the famines of 1315-17. The Malthusians have forgotten the importance of village livestock, including goats, geese, and poultry, the amount of food a cottage garden can produce, and the resources of commons in this village of Broughton Wood.

Dr Britton's book will provide reading and discussion for many years. It is a most important challenge to orthodoxy, whether Marxist or Malthusian, and a splendid example of the new social history. Perhaps Dr Britton's profession has also taught him something else. He writes clearly and elegantly, without any of the sociological claptrap which defaces the work of some social historians. Too many young social historians are like the 1920's Bloomsbury intellectuals, who sat all night on the edge of the bed talking about sex, instead of getting into bed and getting on with it.

H. E. HALLAM

R. S. GOTTFRIED, *Epidemic Disease in Fifteenth Century England: The Medical Response and the Demographic Consequences*. Leicester U.P., 1978. xiii + 262 pp., 40 tables, 2 maps. £10.

Although many aspects of the economic history of late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England remain obscure, the majority of medievalists are inclined to take widespread evidence of agricultural recession, the phenomenon of the deserted village, and the contraction of some old-established centres of trade and industry as pointers to "arrested economic development and declining national income," in Postan's words. The role of population in relation to these developments is ambiguous. During the century following the Black Death its undoubted absolute decline served to reduce aggregate output, but on the other hand tended to increase per-capita income. Land and food became relatively abundant and cheap, and the return to labour reflected its scarcity value. Yet for many years (precisely how long is a matter of disagreement) population seems to have failed to respond to these favourable conditions.

As its title suggests, Gottfried's study is concerned with the mechanics of population change, and in particular with the vexed question of the

extent to which the plague continued to be a primary factor in regulating population. To this end he has brought the computer to bear on the demographic content of some 20,000 probated registered wills and related documents in Norfolk, Suffolk, the Archdeaconry of St Albans, and the Prerogative Court of Canterbury between the 1430's and the 1480's. Differences of opinion have in the past been expressed about the social coverage of wills; Gottfried believes that they are representative of the adult male population, excluding perhaps the bottom 25 or 30 per cent.

Without doubt he is on surest ground when using this material to trace aggregate fluctuations in mortality. From literary evidence he has ascertained that between 1430 and 1480 there were some eighteen years of national epidemics, and as many as twenty-seven in some places. When graphed by year and season of death, his testamentary data correlate well with this picture, causing Gottfried to conclude that his findings support the "biological" (as distinct from the Malthusian) interpretation of mortality. They thus give valuable empirical support to the case argued by, amongst others, J. D. Chambers and M. J. Hatcher, and alone amply justify his researches. Not surprisingly, contemporary medical authorities understood little of the causation of epidemic disease. Readers of medical works were warned against "fleschly lust with wymmen" and "gret repleccacions," and in one eccentric treatise given instruction on how to recognize Lucifer, the presumed agent of epidemic disease, in disguise.

Beyond this, the demographic limitations of the testamentary material and lack of complementary sources naturally make themselves apparent, and assumptions abound, so that the book takes on an increasingly speculative air. Whilst it is clear from Gottfried's researches that the incidence of plague was far from being restricted to urban centres (as supposed by Creighton, Shrewsbury, and Bean), his attempts to identify rural seats of endemic disease are somewhat inconclusive, since the size of the base populations at risk is unknown. A tendency for comparatively late average age at marriage, according with Hajnal's well-known postulations, is inferred from the fact that testators in age group 1 (i.e. whose wills mention parents, and who account for 1.3 per cent of the sample) refer to spouses in only one-third of all cases. The wealth levels of testators have to be based upon the size of bequests to the high altar of the church of burial. Much space is devoted to the computation of replacement indices after the manner pioneered by Gottfried's mentor, Professor Thrupp. Obviously, female progeny are often unmentioned, and thus Gottfried relies chiefly upon male replacement rates. At no point in the period did these reach

unity, except briefly among some *élite* groups, although there are signs of a general rise in the late 1460's and 1470's. Even then they were "not large enough to give firm evidence that population was growing at significant levels, or even growing at all." Moreover, if the trend were established beyond any doubt we should still be left with the problem of accounting for it, in terms of an increase in fertility, a decrease in infant mortality, or a change in the aetiological character of epidemic disease, as the author candidly points out.

Gottfried's study thus makes an important contribution to our knowledge of mortality fluctuations and their causes, and beyond this is necessarily far less conclusive. Nevertheless, one cannot but admire the heroic quality of his struggle with the testamentary sources which, *faute de mieux*, have to be used. This is a deeply interesting and original book, which incidentally has been very pleasingly produced (in America) at what by today's standard must be regarded as a moderate price.

W. A. ARMSTRONG

J. SÉGUY, *Les Assemblées Anabaptistes-Mennonites de France*. Paris, Mouton, 1977. 904 pp. No price stated.

The dauntingly enormous bulk of this volume—a converted doctoral thesis of unmistakably French proportions—and its invaluable forty-page bibliography of works in French, German, and English suggest that the study of Anabaptist history has become a growth industry in Europe as well as in America. The belated product of nineteenth-century emigrations, a four-volume *Mennonite Encyclopedia* emanated from Pennsylvania in the 1950's, while since 1905 a publishing house in the same state has issued a *Mennonite Yearbook*; Goshen College in Indiana boasts its own specialist journal, the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*.

Dr Séguy makes a significant contribution to the sociology and typology of religions by surveying the origins, organization, and vicissitudes of the Mennonite-Anabaptist sect in the Alsace, Lorraine, and Montbéliard regions from the early sixteenth century to the present day. He has much to say about the geography of the movement, the social composition of the religious radicals, and (following Troeltsch and Weber) their social teaching and the consolidation of their community life, their reactions to the French Revolution and the two world wars, and the notable change in the twentieth century from isolation and introversion to social awareness and evangelism.

For readers of this journal the central feature of Séguy's book will no doubt be his extended discussion of the agricultural activities of the Mennonite-Anabaptist communities. Farming and

Anabaptism in the eastern part of France were until recently virtually inseparable, agriculture being not simply an occupation but the essential basis for the Anabaptist religious life and a reinforcement of its exclusiveness. Compelled originally by religious, economic, and political necessity to live well away from towns, authority, and a hostile society at large, the Mennonite-Anabaptists made a virtue of necessity and became renowned agriculturists. In agriculture, as in their religion and social organization, the desire—the need—to innovate was strong and natural. Land reclamation, drainage schemes, crop rotations, the scientific use of fertilizers, the development of new farming implements, high crop yields and lush pastures, stock-raising and dairying (they were celebrated for their gruyère cheese) are among the features of the Mennonite-Anabaptist economy which became famous between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Though wrongly credited with the introduction of the potato into the eastern region of France, the Anabaptists became well-known protagonists of the crop. It is certain that they pioneered the growing of clover and of madder. But what is also impressive about these religious agriculturists is the sheer scale (as well as the variety and inventiveness) of their activities. No wonder that some of the eighteenth-century physiocrats regretted that France was not more densely and more evenly populated with Anabaptists!

Agriculture has continued to be a leading occupation for this religious group down to the present day, and the speed with which mechanization has been introduced on to their farms demonstrates that their drive to innovate is as strong as ever. But although farming remains a major activity of the religious communities, they are no longer exclusively employed in this way. "Comment peut-on être 'menno' sans être agriculteur?" has been one of the central questions which the religious groups have had to face as, more and more, they have become an integral part of modern France and not just a separate enclave within it.

R. C. RICHARDSON

ALEXANDER FENTON, *The Northern Isles: Orkney and Shetland*. Edinburgh, John Donald, 1978. x + 721 pp., 287 plates. £15.

The Northern Isles: Orkney and Shetland attempts—for most part with great success—the descriptive reconstruction of the material culture of the two northerly groups of islands; these are very distinct from one another, but combine in each case the characteristics of geographical isolation with, paradoxically, sensitivity to influences from diverse and distant sources. Distinctive individual character together with a slight delay and check on modernizing forces has produced evidences in material

shape that could probably not be equalled anywhere else in the British Isles. The author's approach to these historical riches is indicated by the titles of the seventy-one chapters into which the book is divided. The fundamental method is to look hard at the objects and material facets of the environment; each type of object is separately scrutinized as to the finest details of use, design, manner of operation, and developing style, the account being completed in each individual case over the whole span of the record from early often up to modern times. It should be emphasized that the whole range of records—written and oral as well as the objects themselves—is used.

The result is far from being a mere list of chance historical survivals. The relentless accumulation of details in the end succeeds in re-creating the life of the people with astonishing solidity. One has the illusion of listening to an observer talking of his own practical experience—an observer blessed with an accurate memory and a gift for simple explanation. The account may be sectionalized, but so complete is the coverage that the individual objects and activities fuse into coherent and interdependent sequences. Part of the secret is that it is an account of activity as well as of inert objects. There is always life and movement pulsing through these pages. Indeed, specific examination sometimes broadens into a delineation of social groupings; something of the structure of society comes through. The range of possessions and the variety of craftsmanship are unexpectedly wide, although Mr Fenton's account, so solid and realistic, might tempt the reader to think that he could step into a house of, say, the seventeenth century and cope with all the daily duties. The main activity is, of course, agricultural, and each process is minutely described up to the final consumption of the produce. It is impossible to think that such accounts, with the interlocking of many circumstantial details, are other than completely accurate. It must be said, however, that while we see so much of individual skill and ingenuity, of the use of resources as given, there is little indication of the wider scale of these resources. We cannot judge how close were the limits imposed by availability of land and grazing or fuel rights. Some figures are given for grain yields, but what this meant for individual subsistence is not explored.

It is possible to be over-persuaded by the apparent completeness of the picture (although not, certainly, because of any overt claim by the author). Even with all the evidence here laid out the total impression must still be dependent on the chance of what happens to have survived. With the long time-spans that are traversed in each section it is easy for any but the most careful reader to compress events and usages that are widely separated

in time into one solid but static picture. The extent to which the particular methods and objects dealt with in different chapters were strictly contemporaneous, and whether on putting them together they truly fill the canvas, requires stringent checking.

Mr Fenton confesses to being more interested in the objects and ways of the past than in those of the twentieth, or perhaps even the nineteenth, century. Yet he does not halt his account where his interest diminishes. The result is a subtle distortion. It is perhaps right that he should not lovingly describe the operation or design of a combine-harvester as he does the flail or sickle; but with the diminishing detail the balance of the impressions left on the reader is of a traditional society with a few modern additions extraneously appended to it. And that is scarcely fair to the innovating capacity and adaptability found in both groups of islands. Indeed, it is in the treatment of problems of change that the method of the book meets with the greatest problems. True, it is made clear that there is no period without its changes. Innovations and adaptations are always minutely altering the pattern of work and material equipment. Yet, in a sense, these are seen as modifications of a long-continued and localized system—a traditional and particular culture. The view is completely convincing in all that had happened up to 1800; but from then on innovation force of a different order of magnitude begins to work. A new question arises about the place and force of the traditional culture. Do, for example, agricultural methods that are more international than local in their basic conception begin to take over? How far did they reduce the customs of the islands to an international uniformity? Is tradition seen only in survivals, relatively numerous as they may be, or are the traditional modes still dominant? No doubt it is a matter of balance, but it would be interesting to know whether the author thinks that Shetland, and, more particularly, Orkney, still have a form of agriculture peculiar to themselves. He offers no answer. But where mention is found of combine-harvesters and cheese factories among so many material objects of an earlier day the reader is bound to wonder.

The ambiguous political and geographical position of the islands crystallizes the question of the origins of their customs; what have been the relative strengths of Scottish and, on the other hand, Scandinavian influences in the various historical epochs? Language may give clues. Among his many skills Mr Fenton includes those of the linguistic scholar, and, as with every other aspect of the material objects he is examining, he meticulously lists linguistic derivations. Some conclusions are clear and immediate, but more often the indications are ambiguous or tentative, and it is never certain, of course, that linguistic coincides with material

identity. Once again, too, the method of concentration upon the particular keeps obscure whatever there may be of a general picture of the flow of influences. He attempts no general and systematic assessment of the linguistic evidence.

In sum, the present reviewer feels that if Mr Fenton could shed some of his scholarly reticence, his refusal to go beyond the immediately provable and detailed facts, he would contribute even more to an understanding of the influences at work within the Scottish rural scene. In his previous work on *Scottish Country Life* he stopped short of any general speculation; he does so again, and the world of scholarship is the poorer. Still, with these reservations, he has written a book which is massive in its information yet still readable, and which over many parts of his subject has an air of definitive and unchallengeable authority.

MALCOLM GRAY

R. FIELDHOUSE and B. JENNINGS, *A History of Richmond and Swaledale*. Chichester, Phillimore, 1978. 520 pp. illus. £9.50.

Many years of work have obviously gone into this impressive book, which like earlier works on Nidderdale and on Harrogate and Knaresborough is based upon W.E.A./Leeds University extramural tutorial classes. It contains a wealth of information about the town and the dale, all of it placed in a wider setting and related to general problems of economic and social history. Covering all periods from prehistory to the twentieth century, it will have a wide appeal in Yorkshire, and offers a great deal of information on many topics that currently interest agricultural historians.

Inevitably, sudden changes of topic, period, and scene interrupt the sense of continuity, and at times Richmond and Swaledale seem rather divorced from each other, but in compensation the historian who merely wishes to read what the authors have to say on certain topics will find the arrangement of the book rewarding. The chapters on the early modern period are particularly strong, but historians of later periods will find less of interest, perhaps because in many ways the area had by then lost much of its former importance.

The authors are very good at interpreting topographical evidence, whether it is the street pattern of the medieval new town or the varied field patterns of the dale. This visual and map evidence is constantly related to documentary sources in a way that readers of this journal will applaud. Faced with so much information, the reviewer can select only topics that are of particular general interest to agricultural historians, though there is much else to interest students of urban history, vernacular architecture, industrial archaeology, religion, education, and other fields.

In the early Middle Ages the main valley up to Reeth and Healaugh contained several settlements that were surrounded by small open fields with extensive pastures beyond; higher up the valley two forests were developed for pastoral farming through a series of vaccaries. Early medieval expansion came to a halt in 1314-15 when a series of arable and livestock disasters following bad weather coincided with repeated Scottish raids. The Black Death, further epidemics in 1369 and 1374, and a succession of regional and local plagues for the next hundred years reduced the population drastically. Taxation assessments make the decline clear and show that the area took a long time to recover.

Agrarian historians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries will certainly need to consult chapter 6, which reads like a series of specialist articles on the effects of tenurial and inheritance patterns on agrarian developments. It is comforting to read that we should not be surprised that historians are often confused by such things, for "contemporaries were hopelessly muddled." In an inflationary age conflict between landlords wishing to raise rents and tenants determined to pay no more than they had done was inevitable, especially where land was held by customary tenure rather than by lease. Confusion arose because of a considerable overlap in the customs appurtenant to different forms of tenure, and the battle was prolonged. As for partible inheritance, the effect of the custom "was to create a pattern of smallholdings often verging on economic ruin. It perpetuated a peasant farming system and stimulated a search for subsidiary sources of income."

Lead-mining, of course, was the chief subsidiary source, but the Richmond area was also noted for its knitted stockings. The authors have used probate inventories and corporation records (particularly apprenticeship indentures) to great effect in demonstrating the character and the widespread nature of this useful by-employment. During the early seventeenth century Richmond hosiers collected knitted stockings not only from Richmond and Swaledale but also from Wensleydale and Teesdale, and sent most of them to London or abroad; during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries over 2,000 dozen pairs a year were normally exported overseas from Stockton, and a similar quantity sent by coaster to the capital.

The disappearance of the open fields by the beginning of the seventeenth century meant the virtual disappearance of arable farming. Most of the good meadow and pasture land had also been enclosed by that time. Intakes from the commons and the constant subdivision of large fields produced the characteristic small closes that we see today.

Farmers were dependent on a subsidiary employment and their beast-gates in the carefully regulated cow pastures. Cattle were significantly more important than sheep, and it was through dairy-cum-beef farming that the dalesmen survived.

DAVID HEY

R. W. DUNNING (ed.), *Victoria County History of Somerset, Volume IV*. O.U.P. for Institute of Historical Research, 1978. xx + 260 pp. Illus. £40.

This is the second volume of the Somerset series to be published with the financial assistance of the county council. Covered in it are the hundreds of Crewkerne, Martock, and South Petherton. All three are located in the southern part of the county: Crewkerne, a small, compact area near the southern boundary, Martock, even smaller (being once coterminous with the manor and ancient parish of Martock), and South Petherton, having a detached portion, Whitestaunton, on the boundary with Devon.

Agriculturally, all three districts were once marked by a fairly even division between arable and pasture, and by the existence of open fields and some extensive commons. The arable farming of Crewkerne declined with the fall in prices after the Napoleonic Wars, and an increased area of meadow and pasture was used for dairying and mixed cultivation. Combe farm here was considered a model in the middle nineteenth century, employing a Chandler's liquid manure drill, a Hornsby drill, a drying kiln for corn, and a water-powered bone-crushing mill. In Martock the decline of the medieval manorial units and enclosure of open fields and commons led to consolidation of holdings and the appearance of larger freehold farms; wheat and beans, with flax, gave way to pasture, which by 1841 was nearly twice the area of the remaining arable. The manors of South Petherton hundred were also much changed by enclosures, though in Barrington some open-field tillage survived to the end of the nineteenth century. This and some other parishes in the hundred depended in part on the domestic industries of cloth-making (flax-dressing, linen-weaving), the manufacture of rope, twine, and sailcloth, and the making of smock frocks and straw bonnets; and especially on gloving, which gave considerable employment to women and girls. Some parishes were severely affected when the gloving trade declined. In farming the tendency was, as in the other hundreds, for arable to decline in favour of pasture.

The volume is produced to the traditionally high standards of the V.C.H., and as always is a quarry of valuable detail for the patient searcher through its pages.

G. E. MINGAY

M. E. TURNER (ed.), W. E. TATE, *A Domesday of English Enclosure Acts and Awards*. University of Reading Library, 1978. viii + 459 pp. £30 post free.

The lists of parliamentary enclosures compiled by W. E. Tate have long been an invaluable source for students of the enclosure movement, and the absence, in published form, of some of the county lists, coupled with the inaccessibility of others, has been a major handicap. Dr Turner has therefore provided a great service in editing and revising Tate's papers, and making them available in this volume. The result is a massive collection of basic information about parliamentary enclosures, including the dates of all known Acts and Awards, the acreages recorded, and the present whereabouts of the awards themselves, all listed by counties. In addition, the introduction provides a summary of the whole procedure involved, together with the various source materials associated with each stage, which will be of considerable help to those attempting to delve into the subject for the first time.

It is perhaps a little unfortunate that Dr Turner's stated brief was to complete Tate's plan as initially conceived, for this has produced a layout less easy to use than it might have been. In particular, the division of each county list into separate sections, depending on whether an enclosure was reported to contain open field or not, is both inconvenient and misleading. Few would now accept that the term "open field," as commonly used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, had as precise a meaning as may have appeared to writers in the earlier part of this century, and the value of knowing that an Award contains some quantity, however insignificant, of this ill-defined category of land seems far outweighed by the loss of the simple chronological order which otherwise might have prevailed. Moreover, the lists are not accurate, for the categories in the Acts were not necessarily intended to be exact statements of the types of land it was actually intended to enclose. Two of the twenty-nine West Sussex enclosures listed as containing open-field arable do not do so, and a casual glance at other counties reveals similar errors. This is particularly regrettable, since most of the rest of the information provided appears to be extremely reliable.

A further problem is the absence of cross-referencing to other works. One of the major difficulties in all enclosure studies is the multiplicity of lists, many of them inaccurate, and often using entirely different names to refer to the same enclosure. It would have been extremely valuable to have the various errors, misprints, and mis-identifications firmly categorized as such, rather than have to assume, from the absence of some

records, that the author or editor has seen good reason to reject them.

In spite of these criticisms this remains an invaluable work and a worthy memorial to the life-long efforts of W. E. Tate. It will form an indispensable reference point for all future studies of the parliamentary enclosure movement.

J. CHAPMAN

G. E. MINGAY (ed.), J. L. and B. HAMMOND, *The Village Labourer*. Longman, 1978. xliii + 296 pp. Paperback £4.50; hardback £8.50.

A qualified welcome may be extended to this reprint. *The Village Labourer* first saw the light of day in 1911, and added a useful historical dimension to the contemporary debate concerning the problems of the land and the labourer. It last appeared in 1948. Few readers of this journal will need to be reminded of the merits of the Hammonds' work; they are properly credited with bringing to bear a deep sense of human sympathy, considerable historical imagination, and highly developed literary skills. In short, as Professor Mingay comments, their history was "alive, immediate, urgent and throbbing with moral fervour."

From today's standpoint the shortcomings of *The Village Labourer* are equally apparent. There is a distinct regional bias towards the south and east. The study is not an overview of the position of the labourer, but rather an examination of three aspects assumed to be closely linked in a causal sense. These are: the social consequences of enclosure; the nefarious effects of the old Poor Law; and the Swing riots of 1830. Only comparatively recently has their account of the riots been superseded by the work of Hobsbawm and Rudé, but most of the Hammonds' assumptions concerning the economic and social impact of the Poor Law are now open to serious question in the light of modern research since the 1950's. In particular they overlook population growth as a fundamental factor in rural poverty. Their assessment of the consequences of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century enclosure is equally dubious, and in this case far less excusable. Although the Hammonds could not have taken the results of Gonner's patient statistical inquiries into account in their first edition (*Common Land and Inclosure* was published in 1912), even that of 1948 continued to disregard his findings as well as the more recent material of scholars such as Clapham and Chambers. The Hammonds always relied heavily on arguing from the supposed salient instance, and, unlike Gonner, had no quantitative sense whatsoever; but as journalists they were apparently very well aware that the most effective method of coping with awkward facts was to ignore them. Parallel instances may be found in the companion reprint,

The Town Labourer, edited by Dr Lovell. The Hammonds were prepared to conduct discussions on aspects of the standard of living with their critics in the learned journals, but took little cognizance of them in later editions of their books.

One is bound to hesitate before agreeing that it was a good idea to reprint such a partial, tendentious, and outdated work in 1978. But on balance there is a case to be made for doing so. As is pointed out on the cover, *The Village Labourer* remains essential reading for a full understanding of the long-argued controversies which it stimulated, and will no doubt continue to shape popular concepts of the course of social change on the land. It is certainly preferable that students should be referred to this edition, with its excellent critical introduction and extensive bibliography, than that they should rely on the existing copies which are widely available in libraries and in second-hand bookshops.

W. A. ARMSTRONG

JOHN POST, *The Last Great Subsistence Crisis in the Western World*. Johns Hopkins U.P., 1977. xv + 240 pp. £9.70.

Readers of Dr Post's articles in the *Journal of Economic History* (June 1974) and the *Economic History Review* (February 1976) will already be familiar with many of the views put forward here in book form. But these views lose none of their interest by amplification and supplementation. The great merit of the book is that it deals with historical themes and problems which are well known, but are far from being well understood. For example, we all knew of the harvest failures and economic crises that characterized the years 1816 to 1818, on which Dr Post focuses, but did we understand the full extent and severity of the ensuing distress and suffering? Climate obviously had a vital bearing on the poor agricultural yields, but no one has argued more convincingly than Dr Post that concentrations of volcanic dust in the upper atmosphere, following great eruptions in the years 1811 to 1818, were the main cause of falling average temperatures throughout the western world. The distress in 1817 was known to be severe, but only Dr Post has compared it so closely with the earlier subsistence crises of 1709-10 and 1740-1 which also struck on a European scale. He then goes on to give detailed accounts of the popular disturbances and social protest movements which resulted directly from deteriorating economic conditions, not only in England but also in Europe and in the eastern United States. These disorders, it is argued, frightened many European governments away from liberal policies and transformed them into more oppressive regimes, at least in the short term. Dr Post draws on an impressive range of sources in

German, French, and English to prove his points. One of his more interesting arguments is directed against the idea of the autonomous incidence of infectious disease. It is argued strongly that many diseases are famine-linked, and moreover that epidemics became rarer in the western world after 1670 mainly because of improved quarantine regulations imposed on overseas shipping. Another old theme to receive new treatment is the question of whether high agricultural prices stimulate or depress semi-developed economies: again the arguments in favour of depression are forceful.

In view of the dramatic literary evidence on the severity of the crisis produced by Dr Post, mortality rates adduced from statistical evidence seem surprisingly low. Was this European crisis really so closely comparable with that of 1709-10? But one does not have to agree with all the views put forward in this book in order to admire it. Truly scientific studies of this kind are rare enough. The i's are dotted, the t's are crossed, no awkward issues are avoided. A valuable bibliography is appended. Dr Post's book deepens immeasurably our understanding of this crisis period.

J. R. WORDIE

CHRISTOPHER SIMON SYKES, *The Visitors' Book*. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1978. 224 pp. Illus. £12.50.

The basis of this new book on the Sykes family of Sledmere is the discovery of a long-forgotten cache of photographs. These—splendidly reproduced in this handsome volume—range beyond the family, their home, and their travels, and include fascinating studies of servants, grooms, estate workmen, and village life. This is not to suggest that the text is negligible: it is almost entirely confined to the story of the family, but is indeed an excellent complement to the photographs, lucid, entertaining, and informative.

The study begins with the celebrated fourth baronet, Sir Tatton Sykes (died 1863), said to be one of the three great sights of Yorkshire (the others being York Minster and Fountains Abbey). Sir Tatton's long-outmoded style of dress and other foibles are well known, though well worth the recounting, and among the less familiar details of his career mentioned here are his introduction of bone manure and his exploits as a drover.

Sir Tatton's heir, another Sir Tatton, was hardly less of an eccentric. He was a hypochondriac who wore six coats to maintain his body temperature, took his chef with him on his travels especially to prepare the milk puddings considered essential for his diet, and evinced a powerful dislike of both flowers and front doors, the latter phobia taken to the extent of putting false front doors on new cottages. He was also something of a recluse who

rose at six and retired at eight; it is not entirely surprising that his wife, thirty years his junior, resorted to the pleasures of London society and became a compulsive gambler and alcoholic. A tremendous scandal over her debts gave unwelcome publicity to the family's domestic affairs near the end of the century.

The book comes down to the 1930's with the story of Sir Mark, the sixth baronet, a highly talented man eminent in letters and politics, and an officer in the Boer War, and his successor, Sir Richard, who showed early promise as a film director and script writer. Along the way we meet Christopher Sykes, younger son of the fourth baronet, intimate of the Prince of Wales, and a somewhat sad and introspective *habitué* of the London scene, the scandalous Lady Florence Paget, and Venetia, sister of Jessica the alcoholic, who was famous for her parsimony, said to extend to entertaining a visitor with the cat's leavings.

Together these bizarre characters make a fascinating study; and if all the details of the tales told here are not entirely true, at least they deserve to be. One is left pondering the influences of upbringing, family background, social position, and great landed wealth. There was much talent, and much waste of it. As Christopher Sykes confided to his diary:

How curious it is to look at our family party, lying gloomy and querulous each in their arm chair by the fire; and think of the wealth and position fortune has lavished upon us, and how little we enjoy it. Splendid to relate, very little in reality.

G. E. MINGAY

EDITH H. WHETHAM, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Volume VIII, 1914-39*. C.U.P., 1978. xxiii + 353 pp. £12.50.

Volume VIII of *The Agrarian History* has been written single-handed by our Society's President, and is a remarkable *tour de force*. Miss Whetham's account of the years between 1914 and 1939 rests on extensive research, and commands a great range of statistical and other materials; yet she succeeds in producing a volume of reasonable length which is everywhere illuminating, invariably interesting, and always readable. Her work will be widely welcomed as the standard source of reference and the major elucidation of a most complex and rapidly changing period in our modern agrarian history.

The treatment is chronological, and is firmly based on informed assessments of changes in markets, prices, and costs of production. The period is broken down into the three phases of war, depression, and intervention, an inevitable approach, perhaps, though one which conceals somewhat the

existence of long-term trends, and makes it a little difficult to follow these through the volume; and there is relatively little on the social aspects of the land and the farming population. Four chapters set the opening scene, considering production, markets, types of farming, and the agricultural environment of 1914. The war and its brief aftermath of prosperity and price control are next discussed, and then follows a systematic account of the depression era and its vicissitudes. This takes the reader up to the period of new policies of renewed and permanent government intervention. The volume concludes with a consideration of scientific research, and its uses, the further changes in farming practice in the 1930's, and the general character of the countryside as it was on the eve of the Second World War.

The picture that emerges is enormously varied. There were many significant advances in techniques, though the application of machinery to labourious farm tasks, for example to the lifting of potatoes, was by no means a simple operation. The labour force fell, and productivity rose, though these changes did little for the profits of farming between the wars. Bankruptcies, Miss Whetham points out, were few in relation to the existing 200,000 or so holdings of above 20 acres—only 600 even in the peak of 1932, and an average of 426 a year between 1922 and 1933—but these figures were not a true reflection of the extent of difficulty, hardship, and distress. Farmers gave up, and farm-workers lost their jobs, and the farms themselves were sadly neglected. Clement Attlee thought farm conditions in eastern England were comparable only to those in areas of abandoned mines or in derelict towns.

The progress of change was uneven, and in 1939 English farming was still poised between rival technologies. Farmers then, concludes Miss Whetham, were probably still using much the same kind of equipment as fifty years before; they still employed half a million regular hands, and the continued role of the horse as the principal source of power limited the degree to which implements could be changed; the fields and buildings, similarly, were mostly those of the previous century or even of some earlier period, while among the pedigree breeders of shorthorns names like Booth and Bates were still current. Tradition still had its influence, as against the more tangible forces of prices, costs, and profits, and the machine age had yet fully to come in.

G. E. MINGAY

LAWRENCE ALDERSON, *The Chance to Survive: Rare Breeds in a Changing World*. Cameron & Tayleur/David & Charles, 1978. 192 pp. £7.50. This book does not have an academic approach. It is obviously aimed at the wide popular readership amongst those interested in rare-breed conserva-

tion. But with fifty-five colour plates and a black-and-white photograph on nearly every page it provides a valuable source of illustrations of extinct and declining livestock for the agricultural historian.

The first chapter sets the scene with a world-wide survey of recently extinct breeds, and others that are declining, giving detailed lists for Britain and France, but the disadvantageous lack of reference to illustrations in the text here becomes evident. Next follows a chapter on breed origins and development which the agricultural historian will realize is weak, if only because no evidence is given to substantiate the statements in the text or summarized in the diagrams. Students of the subject would be advised to seek the more reliable reviews in existence, few of which are given in the bibliography.

Chapter 3 presents the case for preserving minority breeds, but this is weakened by the lack of evidence to support many of the statements. More emphasis is placed on commercial than academic, e.g. historical, value, but again doubtful historical statements are made; for instance that the Wensleydale breed of sheep represents the sheep kept by the Cistercians. Here and throughout the book the author creates confusion by naming the Orkney breed of sheep the North Ronaldsay, since that is the only island on which it had survived in recent times.

The author then deals in some detail with the way in which livestock breeders in the last 200 years, in selecting for "improved" types, have tended to go to extremes, and have eliminated other characters that may be of value in different future systems, pigs and poultry being used to provide the best examples. The fifth chapter, entitled commercial considerations, covers the productivity of minority breeds at some length, and quotes some useful nineteenth-century figures as well as results from recent experimental work.

Chapter 6 deals with visual attractions such as colour and horns and their inheritance. But it seems odd that wool characteristics, which are far more than visual, are included here, and not in the previous chapter.

The last chapter details the strategy for genetic conservation. The author starts by drawing attention to the conflict which exists between the livestock breeder's urge to change and improve and the conservationist's desire to maintain the status quo. Between the extremes of sacrifice of genetic characters in the interests of uniformity, and replacement by cross-breeding, a middle course is advocated in which a breed would be maintained as a closed population, and mating organized to ensure maximum variation.

These admirable sentiments do not appear to be

fully matched by the acceptance procedure of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust, quoted on page 172. The insistence on breeding true to type ignores the fact that a breed not doing so would preserve more variation. Then in including a factor for the age of a breed, would it not have been better historically to use the question: "Was it known before 1900?" rather than "Has it been known for seventy-five years?"

In stating on page 182 that the R.B.S.T. has gained the support of the Animal Breeding Research Organization, the author surely puts the cart before the horse since the A.B.R.O. Report for 1970 contained an article by the reviewer advocating gene conservation and the setting up of such a society. The outline of colour inheritance in sheep in the appendix on page 184 is taken from an article by the reviewer without acknowledgement. There is a selective bibliography, a useful list of addresses of breed societies and other organizations, but the advisory committee of the R.B.S.T. listed is that for 1973 and not the year the book was published.

M. L. RYDER

LEE R. MARTIN (ed.), *A Survey of Agricultural Economics Literature. Volume I Traditional Fields of Agricultural Economics, 1940s to 1970s*. Univ. Minnesota Press, 1977. xviii + 540 pp. \$25.

The American Agricultural Economics Association decided some years ago that there was a need for a major review of the agricultural economics literature published over the last thirty years. The first volume dealing with traditional fields of agricultural economics has now appeared; a further two are promised. The aim of this major undertaking is to furnish teachers and researchers in agricultural economics and related subjects with a comprehensive survey of the literature. To this end the volume is in seven parts, each part having an acknowledged expert responsible for its contents. The parts are:

- I Farm Management and Production Economics, 1946-70 (Harald R. Jensen, pp. 86 including 285 references);
- II The Analysis of Productive Efficiency in Agricultural Marketing: Models, Methods, and Progress (Ben C. French, pp. 103, 763 references);
- III Policy for Commercial Agriculture, 1945-71 (G. E. Brandow, pp. 83, 242 references);
- IV Postwar Policies Relating to Trade in Agricultural Products (D. Gale Johnson, pp. 30, 175 references);
- V Agricultural Price Analysis and Outlook (William G. Tomek and Kenneth L. Robinson, pp. 80, 380 references);

VI Agricultural Finance and Capital Markets (J. R. Brake and Emanuel Melichar, pp. 68, 300 references);

VII Technical Change in Agriculture (Willis Peterson and Yujiro Hayami, pp. 43, 163 references).

In all, therefore, 2,308 review papers are encompassed in this one volume, and are subjected to analysis and survey, providing a most useful source for reference. One limitation is that references are mainly confined to U.S. literature and that studies in other countries receive only a passing mention.

The scale of American activity in the field is daunting, but then so is the expenditure. In the second part on 'The Productive Efficiency in Agricultural Marketing' the statement appears "since World War II the United States Department of Agriculture and state experiment stations (with federal help) have allocated between \$4 million and \$8 million per year to projects dealing with efficiency in various parts of the marketing system for agricultural products." There is perhaps a slight suspicion that agricultural economics in America has become an industry in its own right, and after spending so much money and so much time examining productive efficiency in another industry, it is tempting to suggest that the time may be at hand when it should consider examining its own efficiency. The following statement somehow seems rather unconvincing: "To evaluate the public benefits accruing from the analytical system described in this paper we need to consider the general contributions to economic knowledge, the direct effects on marketing costs and prices, and the side effects on employment, income distribution, economic growth, and related factors. Unfortunately, there are few quantitative measures of these effects. About the best that we can do is to compile a list of favorable and unfavorable indicators and then attempt to form some conclusion on the benefit-cost ratio."

However, this volume undoubtedly serves as a useful and scholarly review of the traditional fields of agricultural economic activity, and the subsequent volumes will be awaited with interest.

PETER NEWBOUND

GEORGE G. JUDGE *et al.* (eds.), *A Survey of Agricultural Economics Literature, Vol. 2*. Univ. Minnesota P., for the American Agricultural Economics Association, 1977. xxii + 473 pp. \$25.

This is the second volume of three, which together provide a comprehensive and highly professional review of American writings on agricultural economics over the period 1940-74. The whole enterprise is much to be commended and repre-

sents an invaluable service to scholarship by selecting, summarizing, interpreting, and evaluating the main contributions to this vast literature.

This volume is concerned with quantitative methods. Its sections include reviews of the following aspects: estimation and statistical inference in economics; economic optimization in agricultural and resource economics; systems analysis and simulation; and information systems (including a detailed account of the agricultural economic data currently available, a review of technical developments in the methodology of agricultural statistics, and an assessment of the adequacy of the data).

Two persistent themes recur. The first is that the various quantitative approaches need to be

more fully integrated in problem-solving and in the testing of theories. The second is that agricultural economists, in their search for "optimal solutions," have used models which have been insufficiently flexible and not well adapted to the realities of the evolutionary nature of the research process.

There is little in this volume which will be of interest to the historian of agriculture, but to the student of the recent history of scientific method and its application to the complexities of agricultural situations and developments it is a mine of information.

D. K. BRITTON

Shorter Notices

GEORGE STURT, *Memoirs of a Surrey Labourer; Lucy Bettesworth*. Firle, Sussex, Caliban books, 1978. vii + 318 pp. £7.50; 280 pp. £7.50 respectively.

These two further reprints by Caliban Books of the works of George Sturt make an entirely appropriate combination. Both are concerned with the life, work, and outlook of a fairly typical labouring couple, Frederick Grover (alias Bettesworth) and his wife, about the turn of the century. Grover was Sturt's gardener, and his anecdotes, views, and speech were of such interest to Sturt that he took the trouble of making copious notes of them, the basis of his *Bettesworth Book* (also reprinted by Caliban in 1978) and the two present volumes. Though closely linked by a theme, these two books are substantially different. *Memoirs of a Surrey Labourer* (first published in 1907) is largely concerned with Bettesworth in his declining years—his struggle to maintain an ailing wife and keep a roof over their heads. It is a poignant story, beautifully told, and well conveys the sense of isolation, self-reliance, and yet helplessness of the elderly country poor, not least in their dealings with the officials of the Poor Law and the inevitable infirmary. *Lucy Bettesworth* (first published in 1913) discusses the labourer's married life and the work of country women, though these are mainly the "odds and ends," as Sturt put it, of his material relating to the Bettesworths. Much of this volume is concerned with more general aspects of labouring life: the summer migrations in search of work, the design and use of farm implements, the enormous

condescension and unsuitability of the education offered by country schools. Both books capture admirably the feel of a now departed way of life.

ROBERT TROW-SMITH, *Farming through the Ages in Pictures*. Farming Press, Ipswich, 1978. 111 pp., 114 plates. £4.95. PETER WILKES, *An Illustrated History of Farming*. Bourne End, Bucks., Spurbooks, 1978. 159 pp., 74 plates. £5.

Two books consisting largely of photographs of farming subjects may seem to constitute an unfortunate publishing coincidence. In fact the books are in several respects complementary rather than competing. Robert Trow-Smith's volume has only a very brief text but picture captions that are full of interesting detail and comment, and many of the pictures themselves are new, coming from the author's own collection. His illustrations begin with prehistoric corrals and conclude a wide-ranging survey with Land Army girls and Italian prisoners on the land in the Second World War. Peter Wilkes has much more text to support his fewer pictures, and his coverage is much narrower, concentrating on developments in farm implements and machinery since the early nineteenth century, and particularly on those of the present century. His captions are on the brief side, and a number of the older items shown are not dated. Both volumes are of necessity selective in what they choose to illustrate and discuss, and the second is rather more specialized. But both have much that is new and interesting and will be particularly valuable for schoolroom use.