

Book Reviews

DELLA HOOKE, *The Anglo-Saxon Landscape: the Kingdom of the Hwicce*. Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1985. viii + 270 pp, 53 maps, 4 plates. £30.

PAULINE STAFFORD, *The East Midlands in the Early Middle Ages*, Leicester University Press, Leicester 1985, x + 230 pp, 29 maps; 41 plates, £25 (hbk); £9.75 (pbk).

The term 'landscape' (with or without 'history' added) continues its insidious progress. Della Hooke's study is more truthfully titled than some which have emerged from authors and publishers seemingly afraid that 'historical geography' is offputting to readers, although her subtitle hints that a more accurate title would have begun with 'An' rather than 'The'. As would be expected from her earlier work the past landscape is principally perceived from topographical evidences found in her own searches among grants, writs and boundary charters in the style of Grundy and Finberg; the place-name evidence is more secondary; and – if one took only what is relayed here – Anglo-Saxon archaeology has not advanced the subject very far in the West Midlands.

Anglo-Saxon England was invaded from more than one direction, and in the same manner arrive these two most recent of its regional histories. Manchester is the more altruistic, since the former Hwicce territory – roughly the diocese of Worcester – lies far from the seat of its University Press while Pauline Stafford's East Midlands – stretching from Bedford to the Humber – do have Leicester near their centre. Her study forms the second of a series of projected regional studies which began with Wendy Davies' *Wales in the Early Middle Ages*. The series editor need not fear however that the core of the West Midlands has been already occupied, and there will not have to be a renewal of weapon shaking in the border wapentakes. Della Hooke's study is a substantial product of original scholarship, with much narrower objectives than the overview in *The East Midlands*: one notices twelve self-citations in her bibliography as against two by the author of *The East Midlands*.

Both University presses, it will be seen, have been exceptionally generous in providing for illustrations: they occupy about one-quarter of the pages. All but four of Della Hooke's fifty-seven illustrations are drawn figures, principally detailed local distribution maps (and occasionally too detailed, as in Fig. 3 with its eleven separate miniscule symbols). Features as local as these do not appear in the distribution maps of the *East Midlands*, and the frequency of the 'after...' acknowledgements below them indicates

that they do not arise, as in the case of *Hwicce* maps, from an author's original researches. However, Pauline Stafford's varied and well-reproduced plates – more numerous than her maps – are much more supportive of their text than Della Hooke's. It is the book with landscape in its title that has called in the camera to least advantage. Each has a long bibliography. The former has no footnotes but Della Hooke makes the worst of both worlds by exiling her footnotes from the feet of pages to the end of chapters where *op. cit.* references can be found to works not cited in that particular chapter as well as conventional abbreviations, such as 'B.' and 'S.', unexplained unless one has diligently read through the notes to chapter 1.

'Landscape' is a word that has gone up in the world with the inevitable risk of going down in estimation. At its zenith, as in Hoskins' title or in the work of C C Taylor, past landscapes were of interest as part of a process, a 'Making' indeed. By this standard a title such as Della Hooke's is bound to arouse expectations impossible to fulfill for her period and area. Her detection and interpretation do not concern the influence of Anglo-Saxon agriculture and settlement on the modern landscape. When present landscape features do occur it is usually to authenticate one or other of the successive stopping places recited in the ritual circumnavigations in the 137 West Midland charters that form her main documentary source. The minor role of the present landscape in this landscape study is well indicated by the fact that there are only five photographs as against fifty-three figures, and their choice has a rather desperate air. The strength of the book lies in its patient assembly and interpretation of topographical detail to create what is almost a Hwicce atlas with large- or small-scale maps, depending on the quality of the documentary information. In this atlas territorial administrative units are the main cartographical features; and from the geography of these to seek for signs of economic resources exploited and unexploited. There is a chapter on agricultural regions and another on those areas where most development can be discerned, but in them very little of general interest is added to what is already known: at best the details 'give colour' to older generalities.

For the long centuries before cartography, photography and printing combined to make landscapes available at the study desk, a reconstructed landscape of a small area at a single moment of time might seem to serve a local and limited purpose, akin to the recovery of a small body of fact from more traditional written or printed sources. Reconstructions of a larger area might serve, as a map or atlas

would today, as a distribution map of exploited resources, drawing attention to significant gathered clusters on the one hand and void spaces on the other. Yet for a period as remote as the Anglo-Saxon the problem with inferences drawn from distribution maps that are necessarily (but flimsily) based on a small haphazard documentary survival and on the other haphazardry of archaeological exploration is simply that in this sort of register an absence mark is inconclusive: as inconclusive, say, as making inferences about historians' busyness or idleness from an absence-list at conferences.

A series of reconstructed landscapes, on the other hand, might seem more promising for the study of those historical changes, such as the advance and retreat of settlement or the changing arable-pastoral ratio, which are most likely to have erased and re-etched landscapes: but here again it needs more substantial data coverage than Anglo-Saxon documentation allows, and when the book comes to conclusions its patient collection of reconstructed local landscapes seems to have added little to what is already known about historical processes.

Figures such as 41, 46, 47 and 49, which show 'Pre-Conquest settlement and land use' in five sub-areas, could profit by less ambitious labelling (as in the more accurate Fig. 43, 'Agricultural features recorded in charters') for actual charter evidence of land use is miniscule in relation to the area mapped, especially bearing in mind the admission (p 139) that 'the evidence for the settlement pattern is almost entirely lacking'. Sometimes, alas, many a mickle can make only another mickle.

Pauline Stafford's *East Midlands* is one of a series of 'Studies in the Early History of Britain'. Her remit, lucidly fulfilled, was thus wider than a landscape history although we learn on p xi that it is to be (quite properly) a 'history... rooted in its geography and landscape' and to that end the first page actually begins, 'The landscape...'. Subsequent chapters deal with The Land, The Agrarian Economy, and Towns, Trade and Industry, As a regional history it admirably marries the particular and the general, giving the reader an up-to-date account of Anglo-Saxon history, treating the chronology of settlement, political events and political institutions without mistaking the East Midlands for the whole kingdom. The chronological treatment is much clearer than in the *Hwicce*, and there is a much more awareness of the archaeological record. The illustrations are well selected and well reproduced.

'Landscape' is encountered again in the subtitle for the last and shortest of the book's three Parts, 'People in the Landscape', implying that the reader will have been traversing landscapes without people in the previous eight chapters but is now about to meet people in them. the author is doubly unfair to

herself: her previous pages have not had landscape at their centre in either the Hoskins or the Hooke sense; nor were they dehumanized either in subject or in treatment, and I see people's artifacts and sculptured people among their illustrations. Conversely, what is Part 3? its two chapters turn out to be Social Structure, and Religion and Belief: all People and not a landscape in sight. Thus language is abused when buzz words are respected.

MAURICE BERESFORD

JOHN McDONALD AND G D SNOOKS, *Domesday Economy: a New Approach to Anglo-Norman History*. OUP, 1986. xv + 240 pp. £27.50.

The novocentenary of the Domesday survey of England has witnessed a predictable plethora of publications, some of which have yielded a remarkable crop of new arguments, new ideas, and even new evidence. The country's most famous historical record is still capable of stimulating original research, as old orthodoxies face the challenge of new technologies. Nowhere has this challenge been posed more dramatically and more trenchantly than in this book, which methodologically marks a sharp break with the past century of Domesday scholarship. Part II of *Domesday Economy* (chapters 8-10) is a detailed presentation of the statistical methods that underpin the analyses and conclusions of Part I. We enter an unrelentingly mathematical world of the least squares method, the Box-Cox extended model, heteroskedasticity, homotheticity, the Mukerji production function, and isoquants. To anyone who lacks training in modern economic and statistical methods, these one hundred pages will be quite literally and almost totally incomprehensible. This is not a criticism of the authors, who have arranged their material and argued their case with admirable lucidity; it is nevertheless a fair warning to the potential reader who has not seen this book and appreciated the technical challenge that it represents. The New History has come to stand up beside the New Archaeology, and to be counted!

Messrs McDonald and Snooks have a directness of approach that one might expect from scholars based in Australia: 'It is essential to confront and refute an established interpretation before further progress can be made' (p 82). Accordingly in the following pages H C Darby's claim that there is no systematic relationship between annual values and manorial resources is effectively demolished. It is demolished by means of a statistical analysis of all the data for two counties, Essex and Wiltshire. The samples are quite big: 861 lay and ecclesiastical manors in Essex and 532 in Wiltshire. The lay and ecclesiastical data are always presented separately, but we are given no lists of manorial units and we

are therefore not in a position to know how the authors have dealt with ambiguous and complex entries. Essex is recorded in Little Domesday and its demesne livestock figures have been used to suggest that this information by itself has little impact on annual values, when compared with non-arable resources of meadow, pasture, and woodland. Another result of the analysis is that the renders of watermills are not included in the total valuation at the end of each entry, a valuation that was supplied by the lord or his agent. Having been rescued from 'the long shadow of doubt cast by Round, Maitland, Galbraith, and Darby... quite clearly, the best indicator of income and wealth is annual value' (p 94).

These conclusions may be statistically valid for whole shires, but scholars whose sample is much smaller (e.g. an individual estate or fief) will still need to exercise caution. The authors are prepared to recognize some differences between shires and have selected these two as 'normal', i.e. relatively unscathed by natural and man-made disasters in the decades prior to 1086. One suspects that, were the analysis to be extended to the remaining Domesday shires, the definition of normality would prove to be more and more elusive. The other main conclusion of this analysis is equally problematic at a more localized level than the shire: that there is a close and positive relationship between tax assessments and manorial resources. Danegeld, it is argued, was not merely a land tax but a tax on all the resources of the manor. At this point the authors veer towards the unhistorical, for it is asserted that 'William I's administration was able to accurately assess and record the taxable capacity of English manors' (p 74). In fact the royal administration, through its officers the sheriffs, dealt in round numbers of hides or carucates for shires and for hundreds or wapentakes. It was within these local administrative subdivisions that there was scope for finer adjustments in a manorial context. Similarly the suggestion that 'a head of state who wishes to maximize his net tax revenue will attempt to apply the principle of capacity to pay' (p 46) is hardly supported by the present government's approach to the imposition of a poll tax. History is apt to confront the rational scientist with human irrationality.

It is at the level of humble historicity that one might quarrel with these eminently rational and technically proficient authors. Thus, for example, their assertion that manorial lords were endeavouring to maximize income needs to be demonstrated in relation to the much more detailed evidence of the extents and inquisitions of the late twelfth century onwards. Interesting statistical conclusions – that on lay manors in Essex in 1086 arable activities were 2.59 times as important as pastoral activities, or that

the contribution of demesne plough-teams to net production was 2.56 times greater than that of the peasants' teams, or that villeins worked on average 36.4 per cent more hours a week on the demesne than bordars (cottagers) – should be tested against the later evidence. The argument that slaves were not closely associated with the lords' plough-teams seems to be based on a global comparison with other manorial personnel, rather than on an analysis limited to those manors that had any slaves at all. In other words, the retention of slavery on some manors and not on others was itself an historical circumstance that needs to be explained. The generalized statement that freemen and sokemen held their land directly from the king is both untrue and at variance with the practice of counting freemen and sokemen along with the villeins, bordars, and slaves as labour variables. The introductory scenario with its predominance of open fields, two-course rotation, and nucleated villages is painted in without any proof or reference to the recent literature on these subjects. There are, too, some worrying lapses and dubious concepts: Battle located in Kent, the heavy iron plough, that watermills were an industrial resource, and that urbanization had not proceeded very far before 1086.

Despite these and other reservations, *Domesday Economy* has to be accepted and indeed welcomed as a major pioneering work. It recognizes correctly that the central institution of the Domesday economy was the manor, though the concentration on two southern shires keeps the focus well clear of the frontiers of manorialization farther north and west. It provides us with a methodology for dealing with stochastic (non-exact) economic relationships. At the same time it gives due recognition to the use of sampling techniques by F W Maitland, who did not have the benefit of statistical theory or powerful computers. It tells us a great deal more about the economy of Domesday England than its traditionalist predecessor, R W Finn's *The Norman Conquest and its Effects on the Economy* (1971). With the latter, however, it shares a fundamental methodological weakness arising from the fact that the shire (Domesday or modern) was primarily an administrative unit rather than an economic one. Like all revolutionaries, Messrs McDonald and Snooks have found it harder to discard the baggage of the past than they may care to contemplate.

H B CLARKE

T H ASTON (ed), *Landlords, Peasants and Politics in Medieval England*. Past and Present Publications, CUP, 1987. viii + 446 pp. £25.

This is a second volume of medieval articles originally published in *Past and Present*, most of which

are of interest to agrarian historians, with five essays on landlords, five on peasants, and one on agricultural technology. They are of historiographical interest, because when we see essays written over a period of sixteen years assembled within the same covers, the difference between the old and new can be appreciated. At the peak of its development, the *Past and Present* essay had clear characteristics. It was willing to recognize connections between economics, politics and culture. It refused to be bound by national frontiers, identifying parallels between countries, and using differences to draw fruitful comparisons. It employed novelties in interpretation and method. It was humane in its approach, sympathizing with the underdog, and preferring literary to statistical evidence. It sometimes drew strength from a belief that the past had something to say to the present, and that the message was best conveyed to a wide readership in readable prose. Not every essay exhibited these qualities simultaneously, but many displayed two or three of them at once. In this collection the most striking examples of the genre are Holt's exploration of aristocratic property as a means of understanding the politics of the twelfth century, Maddicott's thorough exposure of the burden of taxation carried by the peasantry under the first three Edwards, Razi's lively defence of the flourishing fourteenth-century village community at Halesowen, and the very original demonstration by Gatrell of the cross-fertilization between Russian and English peasant studies. Some of the other essays, though of high quality in many respects, do not carry the distinctive *Past and Present* hall-marks, and could well have been written for other journals.

The editors – the plural must be necessary, because although only the late T H Aston's name appears on the cover, this volume has appeared two years after his tragic death – ought to have helped the readers to understand where each essay fits in the flow of historical writing. It would surely have been relevant to mention somewhere that Dodgshon on fields and Langdon on horses, as well as Raban on mortmain, were followed by books by the same authors on these subjects, and that King's thoughtful essay on the fortunes of thirteenth-century gentry families later appeared as a chapter in his book on Peterborough Abbey. Holt's essay belongs in the midst of a group of writings on aristocrats, land and politics in the twelfth century, and Dodgshon's important contribution forms part of a new wave of interest in fields and villages among archaeologists and geographers, and this could have been indicated. Only Coss, in a helpful addendum to his article on the thirteenth-century Langley family, explains that his article provoked a counter-blast from D Carpenter, and mentions other work on the same subject.

The other contributors should have been encouraged to do the same. We are not even told the date of the original publication; some of us can remember when all of them first appeared, but students who were babes in arms in 1970 will have no such knowledge.

The articles are in their different ways controversial, as all challenging and innovative history will be. Some question current orthodoxies, like Britnell's analysis of the economics of small estates. All have provoked critical comments and replies; for example the responses to Holt's article published here. An important exception, which has produced few reactions, is Hatcher's article on English serfdom and villeinage. He seeks to show that the unfree peasants of the thirteenth century were not overburdened with seignorial exactions, because they received protection from custom sufficient to ensure that by 1300 demand for land had pushed leasehold rents well above villein's dues. It makes points of great importance, for example rightly stressing that the main burdens of servility were owed in cash rather than in labour, because labour was cheap and plentiful in the thirteenth century. The argument is almost entirely economic, expounded with a cool logic and supported by a wide range of sources. And yet it does not ring true, because it does not explain the persistence and passion with which peasants disputed their servile status, nor the vigour with which lords pursued their rights, and does not even fit the economic evidence that villeins paid large sums of money to convert their supposedly protected villein tenures into apparently vulnerable leaseholds. A missing ingredient in the argument is the psychological effects of the uncertainty of villeinage, because custom governed only a limited area of peasants' lives, and left them fearful of sudden financial demands or arbitrary acts. Perhaps, even in the new climate of the 1980s, someone will state a contrary view at length, in a *Past and Present* essay of the old-fashioned kind.

CHRISTOPHER DYER

MICHAEL ASTON, *Interpreting the Landscape: Landscape Archaeology in Local Studies*. Batsford, 1985. 168 pp, 71 figs, 23 plates. £9.95.

Michael Aston, not a man to need to quarry the *Shorter Oxford*, may not know that 'landscape', coming into English like so many improvements from the Dutch, was not then a word for the terrain itself but for an artist's observation and recording of it. Yet, as his title shows, his instinct is exactly that. A landscape is there for interpretation.

While waves pound the coast of Holderness and diminish its low clay cliffs England is consoled by the build up of new saline mud further down the

North Sea coast: and while the masters of Geography and History inside the universities are these days eroding the pre-modern on more than one front it is consoling that students in Extra-mural classes are, by their tutor's researches and their own directed observations, likely to be better informed about the settlement and agrarian history of the English regions than most undergraduates. Now the metaphor must be abandoned, for the writing here is nowhere muddy if sometimes salty.

The flow of Aston's text and the apt and usually novel illustrations are like the succession of slides in a good adult class or weekend school, and the language of the exposition is pleasantly conversational and direct, with a concluding lecture (chapter), 'What does it all mean?', calculated to convince the classgoer that landscape archaeology is a humane subject, opening the traveller's eye in daylight hours and sending him back for more in the classroom as the autumn darkness descends.

The author, unlike this reviewer, is not given to trespassing, and he must have knocked on more farmhouse doors than anyone in the profession: usually in the Midlands and the South-west although the place-names in the List of Illustrations show that his examples are more widely drawn, and will be useful to workers in the field generally. The book covers all aspects of agricultural history that have left impressions on the landscape, with an unusual extra on communications.

Aston's book, unlike some other recent books on landscape history is far from being Hoskins reserved. Its aim is not to send the student to documents – only a quarter-page of 'How do we Know?' is about written source materials although hardly a topic in the text could have been treated without the author's prior labours in such sources. Its archaeology is field archaeology. It is not oblivious of others' work with trowel and spade but realistically assumes that there is a body of readers with energy, enthusiasm and curiosity but without a taste for the trowel and spade. The tools are large-scale maps and strong boots.

The publishers, praised by the author for their patience in awaiting his manuscript, should be blushing for another reason. The line figures are well drawn and well reproduced but too many of the photographs are over-inked as if some second Black Death has descended on the landscape. If this is the price to pay for modern printing processes that keep a well-illustrated book within the means of ordinary readers it begins to look self-defeating. On the other hand the limp cover has as good a coloured air photograph of a church amid village earthworks as has been published anywhere, and the shadows here are for real. The author's photograph (in black and white) decorates the backcover, looking like some

impish rainswept gargoyle: perhaps it is impishness that makes the front cover a problem picture, for it has no caption and does not appear in the list of illustrations, a reticent list altogether since no page numbers are given.

MAURICE BERESFORD

TIMOTHY DARVILL, *Ancient Monuments in the Countryside: an archaeological management review*. English Heritage, Archaeological Report No. 5, Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, 1987. viii + 188 pp. 145 Figs. £12.50.

This well produced and extensively illustrated monograph is primarily an attempt to understand the occurrence of ancient monuments in diverse landscape settings and to present a strong case for sympathetic management strategies. The final aspect or recommendation is only touched upon briefly, namely the development and promotion of a firmly secured future for ancient monuments throughout the countryside as a necessary consequence of recognizing their cultural importance. The author's conclusion is urgent but hopeful.

The history of ancient monuments in England as recognizable indicators of society's past development and change occupies the first quarter of the monograph. A broad survey ranges from the early antiquaries to the most recent techniques of geophysical recording. The discussion of the culture resource management emphasizes one aspect which prompted this present survey: the quality and finite quantity of ancient monuments and the accelerating threats to their survival and successful care when less than 2 per cent of sites are protected in public guardianship.

For readers of this journal the most valuable aspect of the report should be the review of the various landscape categories, both 'natural' and man-made, providing an assessment of their development and utilization over many centuries extending from the last glacial incursion to World War II. For all categories the author is able to identify characteristic uses and settlements as well as to highlight the most serious threats in the rural 90 per cent of England's land surface. Within the natural landscapes he emphasizes the dynamics of change in past and current use, the desiccation of the wetlands, the acceleration of coastal erosion and the vulnerability of river gravels and alluvial plains to commercial exploitation and housing growth. Important as these natural landscapes are, especially when their waterlogged conditions preserve organic remains so completely, they do comprise only 6 per cent of land surfaces.

Far more extensive and typical of man's activities are the arable and pasture areas of England. Here the majority of human settlers lived and worked

from the Neolithic period to the Victorian age. The past developments of these landscapes and their present fragility in the face of deeper ploughing and prairie farming is well illustrated. The evidence from woodland and heathland is more difficult to record but is equally necessary in order to understand how these areas supported agrarian economies. Paradoxically the most artificial landscapes are the best protected: the parks which surround Tudor and later country houses have mostly survived into the present century with their leisure function unimpaired and with their relict landscapes unscathed. The upland moors are jointly the product of human interference and climatic change. They provide obvious evidence of past human exploitation, often justifying the designation 'areas of special cultural interest' rather than to be protected as individual unrelated sites. This theme was well explored in Darvill's previous monograph.

Throughout this well-presented survey the main theme is man's agrarian development. Typing errors are few though the final section of the bibliography is omitted. The caption to Fountains (Fig 119) needs improvement and Fig 144, apparently shot in gathering dusk, merits replacement. Understanding the landscape and preserving it for posterity is here defended as a desirable and necessary discipline.

LAWRENCE BUTLER

D A CROWLEY, (ed), *Victoria History of Wiltshire*. Vol. XIII OUP for Institute of Historical Research, 1987. xx + 280pp. Illus. Maps. £60.

This latest volume of the Victoria History deals with nineteen parishes in the southwest of Wiltshire, situated along the valley of the Ebbel and in the Vale of Wardour. Throughout the Middle Ages this area was dominated by the nunneries at Shaftesbury and Wilton, and after 1539 came into the possession of a few wealthy gentry families, notably the Herberts of Wilton and the Arundells of Wardour. Much of the region consists of chalk downlands where for many centuries the traditional sheep-corn husbandry flourished; it remains predominantly agricultural, with Tisbury as the only major settlement, and it is also one of the most beautiful parts of Wiltshire. The one major industry has been stone quarrying, and from the Roman period fine-quality stone has been extensively quarried at Chilmark, Teffont Evias and Tisbury, as well as greensand at Donhead St Andrew and Donhead St Mary. Chilmark stone was used at Wilton, in the cathedrals at Old and New Salisbury, at Wardour and Longford castles, and in the many fine parish churches, gentry mansions and manor houses of the region. Local stone was also used in the medieval farmstead at Place Farm, Tisbury, part of the possessions of the nuns of Shaftesbury, where the largest medieval barn in England remains as a tribute to the scale of monastic farming.

The strengths and weaknesses of the familiar VCH approach are both apparent in this volume. The closely-packed wealth of information does not make for easy reading, but to the assiduous local historian it provides a model of meticulous documentary research and a lesson in the use of a vast range of different sources. The complex histories of manors and manorial descents are traced with authority and clarity, as is the pattern of land-holding, tenurial changes, ecclesiastical arrangements and the economic history of each parish, while the good, brief architectural descriptions of churches and houses, together with well-drawn maps are admirable. The printing and production are excellent, and the well-chosen illustrations admirably complement the text, although plans of some major buildings such as Wardour Castle or Place Farm would have been a welcome addition.

The agricultural history of the district has to be hunted through the section on each parish, but the search is rewarded with good detailed material on the medieval field systems, details of the large sheep flocks and common-field farming, on changing land use, and post-medieval enclosures, conversion to arable of much of the downlands, the consolidation of holdings and on the spread of dairy farming during the twentieth century. We are given a good account of the settlement patterns along the chalk valleys and of the contrasting situation in Semley parish where common pastures still survive on the heavy clays. Useful information is also provided on the influence of the great estates, on woodland management and on farm buildings. Disappointingly little evidence has been found, however, concerning the construction and working of water meadows along the Ebbel and the Nadder, although reference is made to the construction of numerous watercress beds.

The tight VCH formula, however, leaves little scope for detail, and the enforced brevity of the entries sometimes masks their full significance. It would have been interesting to know more of the slow break-up of the large pre-Conquest parish of Chalke with its minster at Broad Chalke, a process evidently still not complete by the early fourteenth century, or about the late-medieval desertion of so many farms and hamlets all over the chalkland. The account of Bowerchalke mentions that from 1882 to 1922 the energetic high-church incumbent produced and printed a weekly parish newspaper which he sold for ½d per copy, but the brief reference hardly does justice to this remarkable achievement, nor to the incomparable source for all aspects of local life and history which the newspaper provides. For Fonthill Gifford this volume provides an excellent succinct account of the remarkably complex series of mansions that were successively built in the

parish, including a good description of Fonthill abbey, its construction and the massive landscaping associated with it. But we are given scarcely any information about its builder, William Beckford, nor about the source of his enormous wealth; and we are not told that it was his homosexuality and consequent exclusion from society which led him to indulge in ever more fantastic architectural extravagances. Likewise, the reference to Beckford's 'collections of antiquities and early furniture' is hardly an adequate description of one of the greatest private displays of works of art assembled in England.

But notwithstanding such brevity, this volume provides an immense store of factual information, and provides for researchers great quantities of reliable material on economic, social and religious life, nonconformity, local government, charities and educational provision, as well as the necessary references from which more detail can be obtained. It takes its place alongside the other excellent topographical volumes for Wiltshire as the essential starting point for any historical research on the county, and provides a welcome work of reference to this interesting and attractive part of Wiltshire.

J H BETTEY

PETER WARNER, *Greens, Commons and Clayland Colonization: the Origins and Development of Green-side Settlement in East Suffolk*. Leicester U P, Dept of English Local History, Occasional papers, 4th series, 2, 1987. vi + 66pp. 12 figs. £5.95.

As an illustration of the truism that every part of England has not just its own but its idiosyncratic local history, Dr Warner's microscopic study of one aspect of the landscape history of a tucked-away patch of Suffolk is both exemplary and interesting. His actual area of study is quite difficult to place in default of a small-scale location map if, as for this reviewer, it is unfamiliar terrain; but it is centred upon the country c 20-35 miles south of Norwich around Halesworth between Ipswich and Lowestoft, in part related to the R Blyth valley. Indeed the booklet arises from the author's doctoral research on Blything hundred.

The relationships between solid and drift geology, soils, land carrying capacity, and settlement pattern and forms are the themes running through the study. Their context is appropriately outlined in Chapter 1, 'The Topography of Clayland Commons in East Anglia', where the crucial factor of localized differences in drift geology, for example in defining locally 'marginal land', is emphatically brought out. Chapter 2, 'Clayland Colonization in the Eleventh Century' discusses several interpretative options and offers a model for understanding how the present

landscape of nucleated and dispersed settlements and often fragmentary greens comes to bear its present appearance in the study area. The model is examined in the light of several detailed case studies, specifically in relation to the emergence, survival and, in many cases, disappearance of green-side settlement, in Chapter 3, with a short, pithy and, I would suggest, seminal final chapter laying out some firm 'Conclusions'. The booklet ends with an Appendix briefly discussing 'Some Fifteenth-century Tenurial Suffolk Surveys or 'Dragges'', followed by fourteen pages of footnotes.

Since the publication is both short and tightly-argued, with understanding dependent on grasping much local detail, far better to read it than rely on a summary in a brief review. Two quotations indicating key concepts are plucked out to encourage such action: '(in the Domesday survey) We are presented with a well developed landscape indeed an 'old country' (p 44); 'the formation of new tenements ... led to a style of leap-frog settlement pattern ...' (p 45). Dr Warner has probably successfully sorted out his own local history, and fair enough; the wider significance of his work is that, in defining the idiosyncrasy of his obscure patch, he offers a methodology and a model to test elsewhere.

P J FOWLER

ANGUS J L WINCHESTER *Landscape and Society in Medieval Cumbria*. John Donald, Edinburgh, 1987. x + 178pp. £20.

Despite being 'loved to death' as one frustrated conservationist has put it, the Cumbrian landscape is far from being understood. Yet surprisingly, what stands out about Angus Winchester's study of its development during the medieval period is the extent to which he demonstrates how the gaps in our understanding have been due to neglect rather than an absence of suitable documentary material. Through his resourceful exploitation of such sources, he has reconstructed layers of landscape history that have hitherto been only dimly perceived yet which are crucial to any understanding of what we see today.

After an opening chapter that stresses the region's distinction from southern Britain in terms of its isolation, poverty and pastoral bias and its role as a front-line area that bore the brunt of hostilities with Scotland, the author provides a series of thematic surveys covering the period 1100-1600. In many ways, the most challenging is that on lordship and territory. A circumstantial case is made out for seeing large pre-Norman estates as the basis for both Norman baronies and administrative wards like Allerdale and Copeland and even for seeing the larger parishes as having a pre-Norman origin. In a

most successful discussion, Winchester elaborates on the crucial contrast between lowland areas and the forest areas (e.g. Derwentfells) that occupied the upland core. In the former, a great deal of settlement formation occurred over the century or so prior to the Norman conquest of the region in 1092, with subsequent growth being channelled into their enlargement. In the latter, temporary shielings were in use as early as the Norse period, but permanent settlement did not begin to invade the valleys that radiate from the upland core until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when small hamlets were created in the valley bottoms and a scatter of more dispersed farmsteads were subsequently founded on the surrounding fell slopes. A combination of war with Scotland and livestock disease added to the local impact of the Plague over the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Though growth renewed itself over the late fifteenth century and though further colonization led to intakes at the limits of cultivation, the process did not spawn new settlements unless one includes the forest settlements split between co-heirs.

Winchester relates these phases of growth to field patterns and tenures. The older settlements of the lower ground comprised a bovated core of open fields, whose constituent holdings were held by customary tenure. Twelfth- and thirteenth-century expansion added blocks of *forland* (land outside) whilst the assarts and riddings colonized over the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries formed the basis for outfield cropping systems. By comparison, the settlements and 'grounds' of the upland core were, from the outset, held on a free, non-customary tenure, giving their inhabitants 'the look of frontiersmen'. His treatment of the successive changes affecting fell pastures is especially valuable, their supposed early use as common grazing within a multiple estate system slowly giving way to their partition between townships, first in the form of recognized grazing areas, or heafs, and later through the physical demarcation of heafs with stone walls. At the same time, the use of shielings declined and the vaccaries present during the thirteenth century gave way to sheep farming by the sixteenth century. Winchester's discussion of woodlands is similarly pivoted around a boldly-defined shift, with the clearance of woodland or their destruction by stock during the high middle ages giving way, by the sixteenth century, to a more protective, conservationist policy as local iron working and bobbining helped to re-value the area's depleted reserves. A final thematic chapter on rural industry and towns contains useful maps but is not so successful in turning early documentation into a sense of landscape and its development.

Writing on medieval Cumbria has always had something of a threadbare appearance. Winchester's

book remedies this deficiency, dressing the problem with a richness of theme and detail. It impresses as much by its juxtaposition of well-researched local examples and regional surveys as by its awareness of the wider national debate on particular themes. It has its gaps, notably the lack of comment on vernacular building styles, walls or buildings. Nor am I convinced by the decision to incorporate local examples of landscape evolution into appendices rather than the text. Yet despite such points, it can be recommended as a most satisfying book.

R A DODGSHON

M J DOBSON, *A Chronology of Epidemic Disease and Mortality in Southeast England, 1601-1800*. Institute of British Geographers, Historical Geography Research Series, no 19, November 1987. 110 pp. £4.95.

This volume, slim but satisfyingly pithy, is likely to become an invaluable reference tool for all historians enquiring into short run fluctuations in local populations in early modern England. Dobson traces annual mortality fluctuations between 1601 and 1800, and their possible causes, in 165 parishes located in Essex, Kent and East Sussex, an area she categorizes surprisingly as a 'geographical region'. Two simple but carefully considered statistical measures enable her to do two things. First she charts the extent to which burials in any calendar year throughout the area as a whole varied above or below a statistical mean, a device which enables her to place individual years into one of seven categories ranging from 'crisis mortality' years through to those that were 'exceptionally healthy'. Secondly, she assesses the geographical extent of 'crisis mortality' by assigning each year to one of four categories that depend on the percentage of observed parishes exhibiting defined burial leaps. Thus crises could be 'widespread', 'extensive', 'diffuse', or merely 'local'. This quantitative material is then matched with qualitative information about prevalent diseases drawn from a variety of sources - poor law records, medical chronologies, letters, diaries and so on.

The results are rendered in several forms: in graphs and statistical tables, in a year-by-year chronology that draws attention to possible causes of these local and regional burial leaps, and in a brief introductory summary of methods and findings.

Dobson discerns two contrasting patterns of crisis mortality: 'One in which moderate peaks in mortality were present across a wide distribution of parishes and another in which isolated and intense epidemics affected only a few parishes'. The latter pattern she associates with diseases such as bubonic plague, whilst the former is linked strongly with 'fevers' of various kinds, amongst which Dobson

elevates the enteric fevers (typhoid, paratyphoid, and dysentery) into prime position. Smallpox, somewhat surprisingly, she associates with severe local outbreaks rather than moderate but extensive ones.

The South-east, Dobson insists, escaped comparatively lightly in this period, though until comparable work is undertaken on other localities we obviously cannot be sure of this. In only three years – 1625, 1638 and 1679 – did aggregated regional burials reach 'crisis mortality' levels. Not only were local crises then also widespread, but each was contained in a cluster of high mortality years, with the last (1678–81) being by far the worst episode of the entire period. The calendar year may not of course be the most appropriate unit of measurement for those epidemics that straddled succeeding years, producing 'high mortality' in several rather than a 'crisis' in one of them. The period 1727–30 might provide examples of this.

Although it looks as if oscillations in aggregated mortality diminished after 1678, and no single year thereafter ever produced such widespread high mortality, information on the overall frequency of local crises can only be derived with effort from Dobson's tables. Did local crises diminish in frequency after the years 1678–81? Even if they did, this does not necessarily mean that life chances improved. What one really wants is information about mortality rates and how these interacted with other demographic variables such as nuptiality and fertility. These limitations apart, however, the work must be warmly welcomed.

R B OUTHWAITE

ALAN ARMSTRONG, *Farmworkers: A Social and Economic History 1770–1980*. Batsford, 1988. 302 pp. 26 Tables. £29.95.

Professor Armstrong has produced a clear account of the principal changes which affected the lives and working conditions of farmworkers over the course of more than two centuries. He brings together much recent research by other historians and summarizes the significance of their contribution. The book is divided into ten main chapters, arranged chronologically, plus a brief 'retrospect'. Each begins with a short discussion of the major developments in agriculture during the period under consideration before concentrating on the position of the labour force *per se*. Much attention is devoted to variations in employment levels and in the real wages of the workers, along with their associated regional trends. Particularly in the earlier chapters, covering the French wars and their immediate aftermath, he weighs the views of both 'optimists' and 'pessimists' in the standard of living debate, before coming down largely in favour of the 'optimists', for the

war period at least. He concludes that 'it is difficult to agree with the well-entrenched view that the real remuneration of farmworkers' families tended to decline systematically during the war years' (p 55). However he does qualify this later by pointing out that with '14 out of 22 grain harvests' in the years 1793–1814 'characterized as deficient in varying degrees', agricultural workers, like other sections of society must have 'suffered considerable privations in certain years'.

Unlike many books on the subject, this examines the position of the female members of the labour force and assesses the significance of their earnings to total family income, as well as chronicling the general decline in their numbers over the period. The incidence of rural crime, the effect of poor law changes in the nineteenth century, and the growth of the trade union movement are likewise examined in some detail. Also useful is the survey of farm employment during and since the Second World War, with a decline of more than a third in the size of the wage labour force between 1949 and 1979, despite increasing state intervention to regulate wages and conditions.

Less attention is paid to questions of housing and diet (except in Chapter 4, which deals with the 'golden age' from 1850–1872). And, indeed, one of the weaknesses of this otherwise valuable book is its failure to convey what it felt like to be a farmworker during these momentous years, when agriculture was toppled from its erstwhile pre-eminence in the nation's economy, and the number of men employed in it shrank dramatically. The arduousness of the daily round for much of the period, the nature of family relationships, and the role of religious and leisure activities are surveyed only briefly in an account concerned primarily with the broad general outlines of the worker's economic and social situation. Also missing is a systematic analysis of his relations with other members of village society, save for his employer.

Inevitably in a book covering such a wide timespan a few small errors have crept in. Thus, contrary to Professor Armstrong's assertion (p 95), the total of farmers' and graziers' wives does appear in the 1871 census; according to the official report there were 187,029 of them. It was from 1881 that they were omitted. Similarly, in 1908 (p 142) the amount of the old age pension for married couples was set at 10s not 7s. 6d. But these are minor points. Overall, the book can be warmly recommended as a useful addition to the literature on rural life, and a reliable text to be consulted by students of agrarian history. The inclusion of a number of *Punch* cartoons to illustrate some of the points made by the author is a pleasant additional feature.

PAMELA HORN

R UNWIN, *Wetherby: The History of a Yorkshire Market Town*. Leeds UP for the Wetherby Historical Trust, 1987. xi + 251 pp, 12 maps; 58 illustrations. £8.95 incl. p+p from Wetherby Historical Trust, Castlegarth, Wetherby, W. Yorks.

Robert Unwin's attractive and informative history of Wetherby from the Bronze Age to modern times is excellently done. A chorus of witnesses indicate the challenge he has set himself, for the ancient Wharfedale settlement of *Wederbi* or *Werrebi* has remained modest in size and status throughout many subsequent centuries.

It was 'a famous little place with nothing much to see', decided *The King's England*; a 'small market town on a hill', reported Leland in the 1530s; 'small', suggested Defoe; 'poor', added Richard Pococke in 1751; 'a small, gloomy and ill-built market town', superadded the irascible John Byng in 1792; many properties were 'delapidated', wrote the *Leeds Intelligencer* thirty years later; many residents were 'indifferent' to culture and improvement, absorbed only in 'money and cattle', concluded the *Wetherby News* in 1870; while locals recalled the place in the 1930s simply as 'a quiet country town, where everybody knew everybody else'.

Yet the challenge to interpret small town life is surmounted triumphantly. Dr Unwin does not claim too much for Wetherby; nor yet too little. It was important precisely for its very long continuity as a very small market centre, and staging post on the great road to the north. One of the often-unsung 'Banburys of England', it constituted a nodal rather than a growth point on the country's economic and transportation network. Dr Unwin documents the life of such a localized settlement with great skill. Agricultural historians might perhaps wish for fuller information about the scale and nature of its market transactions and farming hinterland; but historians of all persuasions will be indebted to his unusually detailed material on the range of occupations in Wetherby from medieval right through to modern times.

Continuities in economic role, furthermore, did not entail a history without excitements or hazard. There were onslaughts from plague and baronial warfare in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; as well as military skirmishes in rebellions and civil war under the Tudors and Stuarts. Nor did continuity preclude economic depression. Eighteenth-century Wetherby faced difficulties in the devastating aftermath of 'a dismal accident by fire' in 1723, compounded by sluggish trade and an indifferent landlord. Little wonder that there was local excitement, when the freehold of the entire market town, plus all manorial rights, was sold off by the Duke of Devonshire in 1824. But many former tenants subsequently struggled, having paid

inflated prices for their properties in a tense public auction.

Nor, finally, did economic continuity preclude internal disputes and dissention. Dr Unwin points to religion and education as the social battle-fields of modern times. He provides much highly interesting material on Church/Chapel rivalries over schooling in the Victorian era, and a rather more circumspect account of twentieth-century political conflicts over the many (and still continuing) educational reorganizations. It all makes for a fascinating account of Wetherby's evolution from a small market village on a traditional river crossing, into a confident modern urban centre. Above all, and most felicitously, Dr Unwin demonstrates that local history can be analysed with affection but without sentimentality.

PENELOPE J CORFIELD

VANCE HALL, *A History of the Yorkshire Agricultural Society 1837-1987*. Batsford, 1987. 240pp, 4 maps, 36 plates. £14.95.

In writing this sesquicentennial *History* of the Yorkshire Agricultural Society (YAS) Professor Hall states that his intention is also to contribute to the broader history of nineteenth-century agriculture and science. Indeed, the author makes some bold claims about his work, indicating at the outset that it is as much 'reinterpretation as interpretation' not least in that 'our understanding of what was happening within English agriculture during an apparent paradigmatic few years 1835-60, needs heavy revision'. In conformity with this objective, the greater part of the book (113 out of 182 pages of main text) is devoted to the pre-1914 period which is a fair recognition of the fortunes of agricultural societies as their Victorian prosperity was not generally regained until the revival of agricultural fortunes which followed the Second World War.

The primary sources for this *History* are the Society's recently rediscovered records and accounts of shows which have appeared in Yorkshire local newspapers. There is also some interesting, if rather inconclusive, correspondence between H S Thompson (the dominant figure in the early affairs of the YAS), J H Gilbert, and Philip Pusey taken from the Rothamsted Archives and presented in a short appendix. The author has not, however, found it necessary to consult the nineteenth-century agricultural press (other than the *TYAS* and *JRASE*) for comment and observation on the Society's proceedings. This may explain why his particular heroes of 'the scientific reform movement within English

agriculture' are T D Acland, Pusey (whose paper 'On the progress of agricultural knowledge during the last eight years' in *TYAS* and *JRASE* for 1850 is held to be 'possibly the most masterly and influential piece of mid-century English agricultural analysis'), Spencer, and Thompson, as opposed to various other opinion leaders then committed to 'scientific' agriculture. As Professor Hall's account is based on what appears to be a narrow reading of nineteenth-century sources and, indeed, more recent secondary accounts of the period he wishes to reinterpret, his presentation of the intellectual *milieu* of early Victorian agriculture is unbalanced. Most attention is given to aspects of agricultural science – especially the view that Thompson and others took of Liebig's work – but the attitudes of YAS's promoters to the economic and political dimensions of their project are accorded little space.

A prime example of the sort of 'reinterpretation' that we are offered by Professor Hall is his theory that the proliferation of local agricultural societies in early Victorian England coincided with the hiatus in new railway ventures between 1837 and 1842 and so benefited from the capital which was available (p 27). Given the author's initial claims, it is surprising that Professor Hall takes a largely uncritical view of the concept of a 'Golden Age', typically relying on a retrospective assessment in support of its agricultural profitability.

When we turn to the more recent period of the *YAS History*, the circumstances leading to the establishment of the permanent showground at Harrogate are related, but more emphasis might have been placed on the innovative nature of this venture, in that it provided a model which was to be followed by a number of other major agricultural societies not least – and belatedly – the RASE. The difficulties which have since attended some of the affairs of the YAS – and have restricted its sphere of operations – are rightly not ignored, but the author's treatment of the Society's recent history is for the most part confined to a factual account. It would have been interesting to learn something more of, for example, the membership profile of the YAS – past and present – the show audience, and the recent trend of show policy.

This book may be welcomed as a contribution to our information about agricultural societies but the welcome must be heavily qualified. The work fails to deliver what is promised – there is really very little which is new here regarding the broad context of early Victorian agricultural history, and some of the (re)interpretations provided verge on misinterpretations. Finally, whether the present members of the YAS will be pleased to see their *History* adorned

with a Marxian quotation, however apposite, this reviewer is inclined to doubt.

NICHOLAS GODDARD

HARRIET RITVO, *The Animal Estate: the English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age*. Harvard UP, 1987. xii + 347 pp. 53 illustrations. £14.95.

Harriet Ritvo's interesting and wide-ranging volume explores aspects of the relationship between people and animals in nineteenth-century Britain. Although these relationships conformed to no single pattern, and cannot be attributed to any one cause, Ritvo believes that the diverse 'animal-related discourse' was not chaotic or unstructured, but took domination and exploitation as its central themes. Animals fulfilled a double rhetorical function. On the one hand, they celebrated and reinforced human power. On the other, they allowed domination to be expressed in disguised forms. The faint-hearted were offered an oblique mechanism for the exercise and expression of hegemony. The prominence of animals in the imaginative life of the nineteenth century reflects the strength of these functions.

The notion of a moral hierarchy in the animal kingdom, analogous to the orders of human society, is traced in an introductory chapter which surveys the changing content of popular zoology from Bewick to Darwin. Evolutionary theory dethroned both God and humankind, but in such a way that man was able to appropriate some part of God's glory. In effect, the Darwinian view was no less hierarchical than its predecessors, conferring simultaneous support on human ascendancy and the established social order. Such rhetorical structures underpinned human dealings with animals.

Ritvo then develops her argument in six loosely-connected thematic chapters, which illuminate three different features of nineteenth-century social history. The activities of elite cattle breeders (Ch 1) and the breeders of prize dogs and cats (Ch 2) show how animals could be used to support and celebrate Britain's internal social hierarchy. Dogs and cats appealed to those whose economic power and social aspirations were of more modest proportions than was customarily found among pedigree cattle breeders.

The emergence of humanitarian concern for animal well-being, as reflected in the work of the RSPCA (Ch 3), and recognition of the need to control animal-borne diseases, particularly rabies (Ch 4), is seen as part of a much larger debate about the maintenance of social order and the control of society's dangerous classes. Maltreated and disease-prone animals were associated metonymically with the lower orders who were normally their owners.

The growing popularity of menageries and zoological collections (Ch 5), and the development of

game hunting in the colonial territories of Africa and Asia (Ch 6) are both interpreted as celebrations of the triumph of imperial enterprise. Collections of captive exotic species gave the lower orders opportunities both to admire and 'in a shadowy way' to participate in the conquests of their more fortunate countrymen; zoos were not meant for mere diversion. The images and spoils of big game hunting presented an even more powerful evocation of the conquest and domination of exotic territories. 'Dead wild animals ... symbolized the British suppression of the Afghans or the Ashante more compellingly than their pampered captive cousins.' The book ends without the benefit of a concluding chapter.

Much of Ritvo's material could only be considered marginal to the interests of agricultural historians. However, this does not argue against either the overall plausibility of her general thesis or the direct relevance to agricultural historians of some parts of the evidence which she deploys in supporting it. There are two respects in which this volume represents a highly significant contribution to British agricultural history, one general and one specific. First, in a general sense Ritvo ably demonstrates that action and motive are conceptually inseparable. To acquire a true understanding of the past requires that they be perceived and treated as inseparable. The book's methodology implicitly presents an elegant plea for sensitivity to context. This message is important to all of us.

Second, the chapter on cattle breeding provides an example of the way sensitivity to context can sharpen our interpretation of specific substantive themes in agricultural history. In Ritvo's view, élite breeders 'appropriated the rhetoric of utility', not utility itself. They had no shared identity of interest with the objectives of non-élite commercial breeders, despite their claims to that effect. Contextual analysis of early nineteenth-century evidence shows how the élite employed their overweight and costly cattle as symbols of leadership and social prestige. The book is worth its modest price for this single thirty-five page chapter alone.

JOHN R WALTON

MALCOLM JONES AND PATRICK DILLON, *Dialect in Wiltshire*. Wiltshire County Council, Library and Museum Service, Trowbridge, 1987. xxv + 206 pp. £7.95.

Malcolm Jones had originally meant to make a contribution to a series of local history booklets, but from that project grew his collaboration with Patrick Dillon finally resulting in this attractive work. This final version has a layout partly following Dr Martyn Wakelin's *English Dialects: An Introduction* and it was Dr Wakelin who helped in

checking the typescript and who wrote the Foreword.

Much of the material is culled from Leeds University's *Survey of English Dialects* (ed H Orton et al, E J Arnold, Leeds, 1962-72). Sadly they acknowledge permission from Edward Arnold for reproducing parts, but it is a common mistake, one supposes.

However, there is a wide spectrum of additional material for the county, collected by and specially for the authors, and while they give a swift review of the historical development and some of the collection of the *Dialect Survey's* work in the county, it is perhaps the comments on the survivals and of the additional material that are most entertaining and useful here. The mention of names collected by the *Survey* for agricultural terms does not make clear that they were culled from elderly speakers in the 1950s, and there is no information as to whether the variant words for the 'weakest pig of the litter' heard then are still alive. Probably there are still people in Wiltshire who talk about a *nisgal*, or a *nestle-tripe*. There is evidence, however, in what seems to be a modern photograph of a pair of scarecrows in a Pewsey allotment, of the survival of *gally-bagger* for a scarecrow.

Other sections of the book have put together information on plant-names and bird-names from authorities in earlier publications and there is a useful suggestion in an appendix of questionnaires that could be used by teachers in schools for helping children to collect any survivals of the words first mentioned in these, and such as the 1939 Opie's book *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*.

In the section devoted to birds in place-names the authors try to see how far there may be a contribution to the history of the language in this area. They quote from Ekwall's *Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* the name *Stintford* equated with the name with the bird, *stint*. This seems to be rather stretching things and since another interpretation has already tentatively suggested that it could be a 'ford where people were accustomed to take rest', a further even likelier one could well be the meaning expressed in a word at least as old as the bird-name; the element *stint* could well be 'the division or allotment of land' adjacent to the ford.

See how the book can inspire further thought and lead to more inquiry and collection! Nothing less could be expected; pleasure and inspiration for any country lover abound here, most particularly, of course, to any who know Wiltshire and the surrounding counties well. The authors and the County Museums Service are to be complimented on putting out such a compendium, so well produced, illustrated and bound.

STANLEY ELLIS

ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF ENGLAND, *Houses of the North York Moors*. HMSO, 1987. xi + 256 pp, 434 figs. £19.95.

With this book the revolution in Royal Commission policy which has seen the replacement of prohibitively expensive Inventories by cheaper thematic volumes may be considered complete. The inventory element, already pared down to a point where it satisfied nobody, has finally been abandoned so that plans and plates now appear juxtaposed at appropriate points in the text. The new approach however, while easing the task of the reader, challenges the authors to construct a coherent analysis in which the evidence of buildings is interwoven with that of documents to further our understanding of the area's economic and social history. They have certainly assembled the tools for the job, recording over 800 buildings and working through an impressive range of documentary sources including over 600 probate inventories for the period 1690 to 1780. The outcome is a considerable work of scholarship, beautifully illustrated with over 300 plates and 200 plans of quite remarkable quality and surpassing the already high standards of previous volumes.

The survey area covers some 1500 square kilometres and embraces eighty townships in the moorlands proper and on the limestone plateau to the south. Although the district is agriculturally quite varied, its buildings display a remarkable uniformity. The earliest surviving farmhouses, of seventeenth-century date, were originally single-storeyed, cruck-built longhouses which differed from medieval longhouses (known by excavation from other parts of north-east Yorkshire) only in possessing a timber firehood instead of an open hearth. During the eighteenth century these houses were adapted and new ones were built to provide some extra domestic and service accommodation without altering the basic plan very much. Major innovations such as kitchens and compact planning were not widely adopted much before 1800. The uniformity and simplicity of these houses, coupled with a paucity of gentry residences, have afforded the authors scope to devote a major part of the volume to some important categories of building usually neglected in studies of vernacular architecture. The houses of three very ordinary market towns – Helmsley, Kirkbymoorside and Pickering – have been studied in great depth and with stunning results. The late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century cottages which proliferate in all three towns are shown to have originated largely from the subdivision of older properties usually built to the rural farmhouse plan – mostly longhouses or near-derivatives! Painstaking research, mostly into title deeds and newspaper advertisements, has enabled the authors to link new compact types of house appearing about the same

time with different layers of the aspiring commercial and professional classes, while work on special types of buildings, such as inns and public houses, reveals subtle adaptations of the traditional plan rather than anything innovative.

Farm buildings, the subject of another major study, are described and analysed in a long chapter dealing with every type of structure from barn to dog-kennel. In addition farm complexes are discussed and classified with the help of a delightfully lucid series of drawings. Most of the farm buildings are thought to date from a few decades either side of 1800 and they illustrate the pace of agricultural change much better than the farmhouses themselves which were often adapted rather than rebuilt.

The only serious criticism one can offer of this generally admirable book is that it raises a number of questions of wider historical significance without attempting to answer them. In the study of market towns for example – perhaps the most valuable part of the book – the pressures which may have led to the subdivision of older urban houses into cottages are not examined. No estimates of population and total houses are given – even the nineteenth-century census figures are missing – and urban inventories, unlike their rural counterparts, are not used to provide information about the scale of local business activity. Instead the authors suggest enclosure and the subsequent relocation of farmhouses as the main factors. But surveys show that even in the early seventeenth century the townsmen of Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside had little in the open fields beyond common grazing rights. Why then did they require sizeable farmhouses in the first place? However, if the authors have failed to answer these and other questions, they have at least provided a fascinating and well-organized body of material for others to develop further.

One relatively minor point concerns the terminology used in the text. The meaning of 'longhouse' is nowhere defined and we are far into the book before the significance of 'false longhouse' and 'vestigial longhouse' become apparent, 'linear plan' and 'centralised plan' are not self-explanatory either. A glossary of such terms would have been very helpful for the reader who is not an expert in vernacular architecture.

BARRY HARRISON

GERALD D NASH (ed), *Journal of the Historic Farm Buildings Group*, Vol 1, 1987, 42 pp, including 5 pp of plans and diagrams. No price stated.

Interest in the study of historic farm buildings has been developing apace during the last few years but publication of articles on the subject has been scattered in journals of medieval and post-medieval archaeology, vernacular architecture, industrial

archaeology, architectural history and agrarian history generally. The formation of a society to bring together students and enthusiasts of the subject has been under consideration for quite a long time and the Historic Farm Buildings Group was established in 1985. It has held conferences in East Anglia and South Wales, publishes a Newsletter and has now produced the first volume of what is to be its annual *Journal*.

The first article, by Nigel Harvey, is a comprehensive account of the development of study and publication of material on historic farm buildings in this country. Although one might quarrel with one or two items, such as the omission of the thesis by Davies on farm buildings in Shropshire, completed in 1952, and the confusion of the Vernacular Architecture Group's conference of 1977 with that of 1967 which was the first devoted to vernacular farm buildings, the account is indeed comprehensive and interesting to read. As one of the pioneers of the subject and the author of the first national study of historic farm buildings in England and Wales Nigel Harvey is well qualified to write this introductory article.

There follows a provocative article by Eurwyn Wiliam, the authority on Welsh farm buildings, challenging the simplistic view of the use of the familiar three-part 'English' barn. He agrees with the conventional view that such a barn normally has a fixed threshing floor with flanking storage bays but suggests that we should look at the many barns in which this arrangement is modified and ponder on the reasons. He repeats both recent and contemporary assumptions on the use of opposed double doors to allow the draw-through of carts but does not mention the appreciable number of instances where the lie of the land prevents this – let alone that draw-through is impossible in the bank barn arrangement. However he reminds us of the practice of threshing and winnowing outside, of the use of stacks or ricks of corn, the use of barns for shearing and accommodation of cattle, and generally of the long confused period when tradition suggested the continued use of the large capacious storage barn and common sense suggested that a small barn and a large stack yard would be better.

There is a vigorous account by John Severn of the restoration of a dovecot and conversion of a cowhouse into a restaurant. There is rather a brief but well-illustrated note by J Kenneth Major on a farmhouse smoking chamber. Susanna Wade Martins raises questions on the use of farm buildings emerging from the Norfolk Farm Buildings Survey. A fully-illustrated survey of a farmstead in Wales by Anthony Parkinson introduces what one hopes will be a regular feature.

The journal is neatly produced to A4 size, though the proof reading of one or two articles could be better. Plans and line drawings are well reproduced though the process does not allow for photographic illustration. Altogether it is a welcome addition to the scattered literature on the subject. It is to be hoped that as the Historic Farm Buildings Group develops in strength and numbers so the journal will develop to the size and quality of production which the subject deserves.

R W BRUNSKILL

ROTHAMSTED EXPERIMENTAL STATION, *Catalogue of Records in the Station Library compiled 1985-7*. Rothamsted Experimental Station, 1987. viii + 178 pp. Unbound, £10.

Anyone who undertakes research into the history of agricultural science in this country, especially for the period before 1920, sooner or later has to take Rothamsted Experimental Station into account. With this catalogue scholars are introduced to a fairly substantial body of archival material that has been virtually inaccessible for many years, stored unlisted in the strong room of the library at Rothamsted. A grant from the Leverhulme Trust enabled the work, extending over two years, of checking the contents of the archive and compiling the catalogue to be completed.

The archive mainly covers the period c1840-c1940, and by far the largest part of the collection comprises papers relating to the work of Sir John Bennet Lawes and Sir John Gilbert from the 1840s onwards. There are personal and working papers, especially of Gilbert's, a good proportion of whose letters with correspondents at home and abroad survives. There is also a large body of papers relating to the experimental work at Rothamsted and Woburn, much of it studies and data used in preparing published articles and lectures. A few of the better-known articles by Lawes and Gilbert, such as that on the production and consumption of wheat published in the *Journal* of the Royal Agricultural Society for 1893, have no specific supporting papers in this archive, but researchers will still find material relevant to such articles.

Although Lawes and Gilbert appear predominant in this collection there are no less valuable papers from their twentieth-century successors. The work of Sir Daniel Hall and Sir John Russell, at Rothamsted and elsewhere, is well represented; so, too, are several other prominent members of the Rothamsted establishment, including Edwin Grey, R Warrington and M D Glynn.

As well as the work of the individual scientists, the archive contains a good collection of records from Rothamsted Farm, covering the period from the 1840s to the 1950s. These, together with similar

records from the experimental farms at Woburn, promise scholars a wealth of detail on the operation and experimentation on these farms.

The catalogue well repays the Leverhulme Trust's grant, for it is a thoroughly organized research tool. Full indexes guide researchers to the documents that are likely to be of value to them. With so much change taking place in the structure of agricultural research, here is a timely reminder of what has been achieved in the past, and of how much of that awaits historical study.

JONATHAN BROWN

ANDREW F FRASER, *The Native Horses of Scotland: Scottish Breeds of Horses and their Folk*. John Donald, Edinburgh 1986. 186pp. £12.50.

In a book which contains such a wealth of well-assembled information, there is one startling omission. There is no mention of grass sickness. This devastating disease, almost invariably fatal, was first described in 1909 following an outbreak at an army remount depot at Barry, in the county of Angus. Perhaps it had occurred sporadically before. In any case, hundreds of victims, mainly draught horses, died annually from grass sickness in the 1920s, and the financial loss and the sheer grief caused by the disease accelerated the change from horses to horsepower on the land. Moredun Research Institute in Edinburgh, a centre for investigation of the disease, puts the present incidence in Great Britain as high as six to seven hundred cases a year.

The author also gives less than fair credit to the Shire for its effect on the Clydesdale. William Dunlop, the great breeder, described the Clydesdales and Shires as 'of practically one breed. The kings and queens of Clydesdale to begin with were nearly all first cousins with the Shire.' Not to be laid at Mr Fraser's door, but surprising in one of John Donald's scholarly publications ... there are more than sufficient irritating misprints, reaching the nadir on p 109, where Stranraer becomes Stranaer, Cambuslang becomes Cambusland, and Scotland's biggest agricultural show becomes the Higland Show. The pictures are too small, but it would be difficult to choose which to throw out so that the others might be enlarged.

Those points apart, this is a really remarkably good book. One feature which makes it unique is the detailed description of the anatomy and musculature of each breed. Breed points evolved because horses with those points were better workers and therefore worth extra money. It is a reminder of the plasticity of animals in domestication. The Clydesdale, the garron, the Sheltie are all artifacts.

Because of the way the use of the horse has changed, the natural assumption is that Clydesdales were primarily agricultural workers. This book is a

corrective to this. Coalmining was the original impetus to the breed's development. As coal began to be mined in quantity, packhorses were not enough. Mr Fraser elegantly traces the steps. 'Loads on wheels were needed and haulage of cartloads of coal was what resulted. The better the roads, the bigger carts they could support. The heavier the loads to be drawn, the bigger and stronger the horse must be. The taller the horses, the faster they could travel. So the essential link in the chain of production, supply and consumption of industrial power became big, strong, quick horses.'

Flanders stallions – not Flemish stallions, he points out, but the Flanders breed – and others were put to the good local mares. In time, the result was the Clydesdale. Mr Fraser, who is director of Animal Care at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, puts the Scottish native breeds in their world context, but is himself a Scot and worked with horses in Scotland as a youth. It is clear that his real love is the Clydesdale. It is a lover and an enthusiast who says that no other working horse could be so huge, stylish, perky and colourful, or describes the metallic music made by a thousand tons of moving horseflesh in the streets of Lanark. This is a valuable source-book for those whose interests lie in agricultural history. But it is far better than that. It is a readable book, mercifully free from rosy sentimentality, but appreciative of Scotland's native horses and the men who tended them.

DUNCAN GILLESPIE

J LUCASSEN, *Migrant Labour in Europe, 1600-1900*. Croom Helm, 1987. ix + 339 pp, 20 plates. £35.00.

The notion that European society in the early modern period was composed largely of static self-contained communities has recently been replaced by one that emphasizes dynamism and fluidity. Demographic historians in particular have revealed both the complexity of migratory patterns and the importance of in-migration from the countryside for urban growth. Indeed, most of the research on the structure of European migration before 1900 has focused on the demographic aspects of urban expansion and has highlighted the temporary nature of urban in-migration. Recent contributions to English demographic history, for example, have maintained that a large proportion of migrants to London in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were destined for the British American colonies and only stayed in the capital temporarily. While the migrant worker is an important feature of contemporary European societies, little attention has been paid to the history of this phenomenon.

Jan Lucassen's book is clearly an attempt to redress the balance and to establish the historical study of migrant labour in Europe as a vital area of research. In Part one – the core – of the book, the author illustrates the features of migrant labour in the northern region of the French Empire in 1811. The North Sea system, as the author describes it, was an area of labour migration which comprised a receiving zone in a coastal strip from Calais to the Elbe, and a source zone to the east and south of this strip. Many aspects of the migrant labour system are described in this book, including the geography of migration, the enabling transport mechanisms, and the occupational structure and household characteristics of migrant labour. The second part of the study compares the North Sea system with other contemporary European labour migration systems; and part three offers a long term view of all of the labour migration systems in Europe over the period 1600 to 1900.

Despite fascinating detail about migrant workers in the North Sea system, this is a disappointing study. Not only does the unique 1811 survey provide the only substantial source of information, but the analysis presented can only be described as self-evident. The author assiduously indicates that labour migrates only under specific conditions; namely where a free labour market exists; where there is a real wage differential between receiving and source regions; or where a demand exists for seasonal labour in the receiving region with a corresponding supply of labour in the source region. In the discussion of long term changes in labour migration, the author claims that migration systems come and go, that the level of migration rises and falls and that migratory labour often becomes permanent. This book provides a great deal of descriptive detail, some of which is most welcome, but offers very little in the way of fresh insight.

KATRINA HONEYMAN

JAN BIELEMAN, *Boeren op Het Drentse Zand 1600-1900: Een nieuwe visie op de 'oude' landbouw*. A A G Bijdragen, 29, Wageningen, 1987. xxiii + 834 pp. 138 tables, 82 figs, 35 maps, 27 appendices. No price stated. In Dutch with English summary. *Agrarian Change in the Dutch Province of Drenthe*. The development of farming in the Dutch province of Drenthe from 1600-1910 falls into several phases. Against a backcloth of an inhospitable environment of infertile sandy soils, open field farming developed in a landscape described as almost empty steppe and blanket bog. Density of population in the early seventeenth century was low, and farming had more than the usual insecurity attached to it. As a way of spreading risks an extensive and diversified agriculture developed. The open-field arable amounted to

only 6 per cent of the landscape and the breeding of horses and cattle formed the cash 'crops'. An infield-outfield system developed based on a two-course rotation with the most peripheral parts of the outfield lying in almost permanent fallow. The alternation of winter and spring rye meant that effectively half the open field was available for grazing practically the whole year.

In this environment the economy expanded and animal numbers rose, but from c.1650 to 1730 a scissors crisis occurred of falling agricultural prices but rising costs. The farming response was towards more intensive activity with increased output of rye, a more permanent use made of the outfield, and in consequence a decline in communal grazing. This engendered a spirit of individuality, of long term increases in arable productivity, and, into the nineteenth century, an increase in population. From the 1820s, with the demand for meat and dairy products from the early industrializing countries, the prices' terms of trade moved back towards animal products and the pattern of farming swung back to livestock. The arable sector shifted out of the rye cash crop into fodder. A new and final reorientation of local farming developed from the 1870s as the European market for cattle and pigs closed behind tariff walls, while free entry into Britain helped the pig trade to flourish. Allied to this was the development of creameries with which better to compete in Britain with other butter producers and which provided buttermilk and skimmed milk byproducts to feed the pigs. These phases produced a wave-like alternation from large extensive to small intensive farm structures.

This tale of three centuries of enormous structural change for what is a small area of Holland takes nearly 850 pages to tell and is the publication of the author's doctoral thesis. The reader can imagine just how much valuable detail there is which one day might usefully be compared with other parts of north-west Europe.

MICHAEL TURNER

PATRICK O'FLANAGAN, PAUL FERGUSON AND KEVIN WHELAN (eds), *Rural Ireland 1600-1900: Modernisation and Change*. Cork U P, Cork 1987. xiv + 187 pp. IR £12.

These proceedings of a conference of geographers, historians and 'other cognate species' held at Trinity College, Dublin in 1985, define modernization as: 'the impact of forces, of exogenous and endogenous origin on Ireland' during three hundred years. This is a much wider definition than Irish historians have previously employed and, given the different disciplines, it is scarcely surprising to find that the scope and direction of the papers is wide ranging,

sometimes at the expense of the theme of modernization. This volume should not be read primarily for enlightenment about modernization; what it does offer are contrasts between historical and geographical method and, more rewardingly, several innovative essays.

The former is most apparent in two papers, J H Andrews on the struggle for Ireland's public commons and T Jones Hughes on landholding and settlement in Counties Meath and Cavan. The fate of common land was a matter of indifference to the Irish public, in contrast to the English, and enemies of the common enjoyed 'a walkover'. The real struggle was between two kinds of single tenure: the conventional landed estate and the non-rent paying freeholder. In a discussion which would have gained from being related to the wider literature on property rights, Andrews shows how settlers on common land created rights of owner occupancy and awarded themselves 'the 3 Fs' long before Gladstone saw these as a solution to the land question. Andrews uses 'a sample' of 290 townlands that carried the name 'Common' on Ordnance Survey maps; T Jones Hughes uses these plus Griffith's valuation and field evidence to create a data set with which to compare the rural geography of the Meath-Cavan border, a contrast between the northern edge of a market oriented economy in Leinster and the peasant world of south Ulster. The geographer's method of interrogating a data set reveals spatial differences but will leave economic historians dissatisfied about the behavioural implications. It is, for example, one thing to use landlord residencies in 1876 as an indication of areas considered more desirable for residential purposes and quite another to infer that this points to regions of better farm management without some additional criteria.

Innovation is most apparent in three papers: Bell on Irish farming techniques; Gailey on rural housing; and Fitzpatrick on the modernization of the Irish female. Bell explores Solar's argument that Irish agriculture was more productive than conventionally believed by comparing 'improved' and 'common' systems of cultivation and uncovers both integration and rationality. Gailey is concerned with the modest housing of the mass of the population and utilizes an impressive range of skills to overcome deficient documentary evidence. Assistance with technical terms would, however, have been helpful. Fitzpatrick rescues the Irish female from undeserved obscurity but his study of her life-cycle presents a grim and depressing picture.

Two papers, Macafee on pre-famine population in Ulster and Whelan on the religious factor in the 1798 rebellion, produce new, local evidence on important topics. The remaining paper by Connolly is wholly faithful to modernization, providing an

overview of violence and order in eighteenth-century Ireland which will be greatly appreciated by undergraduates overwhelmed by studies of particular organizations.

RON WEIR

RAMON GARRABOU, CARLOS BARCIELA AND J I JIMÉNEZ BLANCO (eds), *Historia agraria de la España contemporánea*, volume 3, *El fin de la agricultura tradicional (1900-1960)*. Editorial Critica, Barcelona, 1986. 568pp. n.p.

Most scholars who have attempted any comparative surveys of European economic development agree that until the 1950s Spain differed from the general European pattern. Given its wealth of primary exports and its easy access to rapidly-growing markets it should not have remained so poor. The inadequacies of the agricultural sector have provided the most persistent explanation. Specifying what these inadequacies were, though, has not proved so easy and has led to widespread disagreement. Climate (too dry), soil (too thin), fertilizer consumption (too low), the pattern of land distribution (too skewed towards large estates), the forms of land tenure (too restrictive) and tariff protection (too high), have all had their advocates as the basic problem. Until relatively recently it was in fact possible to argue almost anything without being refuted, so little reliable information about Spanish agriculture was there. Even now estimates of Spanish national income before the 1960s vary extraordinarily and the figures for the agricultural sector are the weakest. Agricultural historians are painstakingly piecing together production and price series for the main crops. As they succeed the arguments gradually become better specified. The main contribution has been made by a group of scholars in Barcelona whose work has been drawn together in the series of which this is the third volume. The title of the volume, with its implication that in Spain it has only been in this century that 'traditional' agriculture has disappeared, indicates the intellectual origins of the enquiry, the belief that the process of change in the primary sector was abnormally delayed in comparison with other European countries.

The book reflects another dominant concern of Spanish historiography, its obsession with the problem of the Franco regime. The book is divided into two parts, pre- and post-1936. To the first there is a long, valuable 'introduction' amounting to one-third of the whole section by Jose Jiménez Blanco which sets out the statistical evidence for the whole period as far as it is known. The introduction to the second part is more of a polemic, concentrating on estimating the costs of the Franco regime's policies to agriculture and the economy as a whole. The remainder of the volume is made up of separate

essays. In the first part these are on state forests, technological change, Catalan viticulture, cork production, sugar production and refining, and new settlement. In the second part there is a detailed analysis of wheat prices combined with two general essays on the relationship between agriculture and economic development, whose gist is partly that the Franco regime delayed the process of change in the primary sector even more abnormally than earlier governments. That the agricultural disasters of the period 1936-1950 have much to do with the policies of Franco's government seems indisputable. But Franco inherited what had already become a long tradition of high protection. In Spain foodstuff prices seem to have increased in a steep secular trend after the mid-1890s and it is difficult to find any explanation for this movement, which seems quite out of step with overall European trends and is even remarkable in comparison with the increase in Germany, unless it be the fact that Spanish grain tariffs were higher than elsewhere. An increase in grain output was being generated by government policy before 1914 and in this case, as under the Franco regime, the main concern of government policy was wheat. Over Spain's dry-farming area wheat remained therefore in spite of developments in the New World and Russia the most important crop, more important by area and by value than wine or olive oil whose output was more determined by export demand. Had the wheat sector, as it was in North America, been based on capital-intensive rather than labour-intensive methods of farming this might still not have held back development. But tariffs retained labour on the land while restricting its income gains by slowing down the process of technological innovation. Palafox has recently argued that the effect of the tariffs was actually to reduce textile consumption and so retard the development process throughout the economy. Another way of looking at this is to say that the absence of land reform, breaking up the large units of landholding in the dry-farming area, was responsible for maintaining the excessive importance of

over-priced wheat in total output and for keeping textile consumption low by diverting the profits from the tariff into too few pockets. In either case Franco was but the inheritor of previous attitudes, because agricultural policy under his regime continued the earlier tradition of putting the socio-economic interests of the landlords first. Furthermore the pace of economic change in the 1950s was much more rapid than before, because of the changes elsewhere in the economy, in spite of Franco's policies.

Whatever the complex arguments in favour of and against grain tariffs in France or Germany in the last third of the nineteenth century the Spanish case seems to be one in which the defensive reaction did extensively damage the capacity for economic change at a crucial moment. But real proof of this is still wanting. It depends on a more measured assessment of the absorptive capacity of European (and other) markets for exported cash crops. Cork was a success story. So was citrus fruit, but the value of the output in this second case was very small by the side of the problems needing to be solved. Catalan wine was a boom and bust story of such dramatic proportions as to show vividly the dangers of over-reliance on success in competition on European markets. About the olive oil trade we still know little. And these are problems relating to a wide network of international trade in food products, not just to Spain. It depends, too, on a more measured assessment of the true levels of productivity in Spanish arable farming, taking into account not merely wheat yields but yields throughout the rotation cycle which included the wheat crop. Without the last figure it may even be that the condemnation of Spanish wheat farming has been excessive. The current vigour of economic history in Spain, of which this volume is a good example, suggests that we shall not have to wait long for answers.

ALAN S MILWARD

Shorter Notices

ALEXANDER FENTON, *Country Life in Scotland, Our Rural Past*, John Donald, Edinburgh, 1987. v + 194pp, illus, £7.50.

The first impression on reading this book is that there would have been enough material available to fill several volumes and that Alexander Fenton would be first in line to win a prize for précising. The main theme is social history and this is reflected in the choice of illustrative material, which is both

effective and comprehensive. The impact of the great changes effected since 1750 on the people of Scotland are charted, with also much information on the processes of change themselves.

The early chapters in the book look back to the old systems, describing the estate based units and the transhumance or shieling systems. The displacement of these through the conversion of grazing areas to arable and enclosure of common land is

then looked at, and the influence this had on social structure through the creation of a new paid workforce and the consequent movement of surplus workers to new villages or to marginalcrofting areas.

On a more detailed level the buildings in the landscape are reviewed in chapters on old building styles, the new estate inspired rebuilding and the provision of hearths and chimneys.

In the following chapters agricultural equipment is looked at and the new introductions, starting with ploughs and spades and going through to harvesting equipment. In all cases not only are the technicalities of the tools and machines touched upon but also their influence on the workforce required. Following the harvest there is an interesting chapter on the stacking of corn and then progress in the processing techniques. A chapter is then devoted to 'neeps an tatties', leading into the final areas of dairy products, meat and bread, the emphasis here being on the actual diet of the workforce.

In all a myriad of themes, and despite the great interest the book offers, one can't help but have a passing wish that when *Scottish Country Life*, its predecessor, was being revised the opportunity was not taken to expand it.

ANNIE HOOD

J CROWTHER, *Enclosure Commissioners and Surveyors of the East Riding*, East Yorkshire Local History Society, Beverley 1986. 55 pp; two plates, £1.50. This work serves as a useful follow-up to the author's previous listing, with Barbara English, of the Yorkshire enclosure awards. To the bare details of commissioners' names given there, she has added for the East Riding some of the essential details of background, activities and personalities without which our understanding of their role in the process must remain incomplete. Information about personal relationships and their business connections both with each other and with the promoters of enclosures offers some interesting insights into the reality behind the official record, and she has uncovered some telling examples of dubious and even downright illegal practices. Her analysis of the patterns of work of individuals, and of the surviving account books, makes a useful addition to the available evidence on the process and its costs, and the directory of commissioners and surveyors provides a helpful reference source.

There are a few minor errors, as in the confusion of the two John Flintoffs, and the rather cavalier treatment of, for example, Joseph Butler, one of the most widely travelled of the early commissioners, is perhaps an inevitable reflection of working at a local scale. Such a scale of investigation is however essential, for many of the questions about the part

played by individuals can only be tackled realistically at this level; Jan Crowther has provided us with some answers from the East Riding.

JOHN CHAPMAN

STEPHEN COOPER, *A House Divided*, Bridge Publications, Penistone, 1987, xv + 89 pp. 5 maps; 9 illustrations; 8 facsimiles of documents, £8.95 (hbk). £4.50 (pbk).

This is a beautifully produced booklet. The artistic cover is card but the binding is firm and the printing is excellent. Even so weight for weight it makes volume v of the *Cambridge Agrarian History* seem cheap.

It is an unusual combination of local history and biography researched and written by an unusual combination of historian and solicitor. The legal papers which form the basis of the book were discovered in the author's own office and led him into a search for supporting material in record offices. The context of the story is Thorpe Hesley in David Hey country of farmer/metalworkers in South Yorkshire. The author has used the documents skilfully to illuminate a tragic case of madness brought about by marital misery and alleged trickery over a will which drove John Billam, a yeoman, linen weaver and shopkeeper, to attempted suicide and a madhouse in York.

Much of the interest comes from the depositions of Billam's neighbours who give their views of a turbulent marriage and the characters of Billam and his wife. History does not usually give insights into the insignificant who usually remain mere statistics. Cooper gives interesting sidelights into aspects of the eighteenth century; the Marquis of Rockingham as an enthusiastic improving landlord, instead of an incompetent politician; a small man, Billam, building up a fortune by seizing his opportunities; and not least the treatment of the mad and the way the law worked.

DAN BYFORD

LEN SHARMAN *Working the Land: reminiscences*, Salient Press, Ipswich, 1987, 68 pp, illus. £3.50.

It is curious how poignant are recollections of lives spent in hard work. Len Sharman's memoirs here published were prompted by the interview he gave to the BBC series, *All Their Working Lives*. He was born in south Norfolk, in a village of scattered farms different in nearly every respect but the poverty of its working-people from the Norfolk celebrated in the improving fables of nineteenth-century agronomes. His earliest recollections, however, are of the country best known to Rider Haggard, of Mundham, Kirstead and the Ilketshalls in Suffolk. In 1927 he followed his current employer into a substantial

farm at Kelsale in south-east Suffolk and thereabouts he worked for the rest of his life. It was not a working life of much incident, but his graphic evocation of people and places in a past that is stranger and more remote to us than the world that appeared to Defoe would have been to his parents is so striking that it could have been composed by Adrian Bell. Mr Sharman's commentary on his times testifies to the precision of George Ewart Evans' distillation of early twentieth-century rural life in Suffolk. It also sets into context, in specific human terms, the historical sociology of Howard Newby and Alan Howkins in whose hands somehow the soft clay of the oral tradition has been distorted by over-much kneading. For although Mr Sharman evidently did not write his memoirs direct on to paper the *rédaction* of his thoughts has been accomplished with unobtrusive sympathy by Mrs D Durrant. Moreover the numerous illustrations have been chosen with care to underline the text of his reminiscences, although most pictures are obviously not of Mr Sharman himself at work.

For those who saw the television series this little book will be an invaluable memento. For others its accuracy and honesty of purpose will serve as a guide to the increasingly articulate annals of the poor. Len Sharman's life has mirrored that of his fellow farm workers in the first two-thirds of this century; but his explication of the experience is more accomplished than his contemporaries customarily achieve. Moreover, Suffolk County Council is to be congratulated for publishing the book. In Mr Sharman the Museums Service has found a quarry of good stone: perhaps he has more to tell.

B A HOLDERNESS

ALAN CARTER & SUSANNA WADE MARTINS (eds), *A Year in the Field*, Centre for East Anglian Studies, University of East Anglia, Norwich, 1987. 77 pp, many maps, diagrams and photographs, £3.95 (incl. p&tp).

This substantial booklet serves two purposes. It relates the experience of a research organization dependent mainly on MSC funding in setting up a study of historic farm buildings in Norfolk. At the same time it sets out the conclusions which had emerged at the end of the first year of research.

Although Alan Carter and Susanna Wade Martins were experienced in the study of old buildings, including farm buildings, the research workers recruited under the MSC scheme were not. It is a tribute to the skill of the organizers and the enthusiasm and adaptability of the research workers that an efficient team was quickly established. In order to deal with the problem of gaining an overview of something like 10,000 farmsteads in a large county of a sample of some 300 farms (involving field

recording of some 1200 buildings) was made based on several estates spread about the different farming areas of the county. The field work was systematically conducted and the team was large and diverse enough for library and archive work to be done simultaneously. The results have been manually sorted though computer handling is intended for later stages in the study.

The first year's work has shown that a substantial proportion of the historic farm buildings survive, though small buildings, such as shelter sheds are more vulnerable than the large barns. The 'Great Rebuilding' of farmsteads after about 1780 is confirmed with model farms on the great estates leading the way. Very few dated buildings were discovered but use of documentary materials and dating by analogy e.g. of Norfolk carpentry with that of Essex has enabled a convincing chronology to be started.

We look forward eagerly to future volumes in the series as the survey continues and to a concluding report which will be a major addition to the small number of published regional surveys of historic farm buildings.

R W BRUNSKILL

KEVIN FITZGERALD, *With O'Leary in the Grave*, Oxford Paperbacks, 1987. 175 pp. £3.95.

For vivid writing, memorable characters, evocative description, and good stories well told, this book will stand comparison with any of the memoirs of farming in the 1920s which have been published in recent years. It is mostly concerned with the author's experiences as a farm pupil in Ireland, agricultural student at Seale-Hayne College and the Kilmarnock Dairy School, and farmer in his own right in County Tipperary. He also worked on a Canadian farm. Some of the character sketches are excellent: there is Mr Willington, 'without question the best all-round farmer in Ireland'; Mick Barratt, the champion ploughman of Tipperary; Professor Drummond, 'a bully and the best cheesemaker in the world'; the Dean of Cashel and his Black Bottle, the contents of which had been distilled in the 1820s and lain buried in a Mayo bog for eighty years; and, especially, his father, a fascinating and charismatic man, by turns overwhelmingly generous or pointlessly mean, at times exasperating, embarrassing and preposterous.

It might perhaps be argued that his accounts of farming could have been more detailed and systematic, although this would hardly be a fair criticism, for Kevin Fitzgerald has not set out to provide source material for the agricultural historian. But if we want to know what it was like to lift turnips by hand on frosty mornings, or feed a thrashing

machine, or learn to plough with horses, there are vivid accounts to be found here. The major omission, for this reviewer, was any explanation of the meaning of the title.

PAUL BRASSLEY

R E PEARSON and J G RUDDOCK, *Lord Willoughby's Railway: The Edenham Branch*, Willoughby Memorial Trust, Grimsthorpe, Lincs, 1986. 120 pp. Illus. £4.50 (+ 0.65p p & p).

Lord Willoughby's Railway is an attractive little book which closely examines the brief existence of a small private railway from its conception in the early 1850s to its closure in 1873. The Edenham Branch Railway in south Lincolnshire was the inspiration of Baron Willoughby de Eresby and was built to serve as a connection between Willoughby's estate and the Great Northern Railway's Peterborough-Grantham line. The railway evolved almost by accident, stemming from Willoughby's love of Victorian steam technology on the one hand, and his desire to service his estate on the other. The original intention was to construct a road suitable for a traction engine but as this scheme met with problems, the alternative idea of building a railway was adopted. The main freight of the railway was coal but agricultural produce was also carried and there was a limited passenger service. Like so many small railways, the Edenham Branch had little hope of either profitability or a long life despite the optimism of its creator. Lord Willoughby died in 1865 and shortly after competition from lines of large railway companies forced the branch to be closed.

The authors provide a detailed insight into both the motivation for and the impracticability of Lord Willoughby's railway. The book is well written, if somewhat anecdotal, and is amply supported by photographs and maps. Some of the illustrations and accompanying comments are a little difficult to follow as the authors seek to unravel the complicated details. However, the book provides yet another useful illustration of the Victorian preoccupation with steam and the impractical schemes which that preoccupation generated.

C S HALLAS

FRANCESCO CALCATERRA, *Gli agrumi nella storia del Meridione - Origini, sviluppo e peripezie di una coltura*, Lcd, Rome, 1987. 95 pp. ill. L12000.

Agricultural historians have paid little attention to the production and distribution of citrus fruits, a neglect important in the history of southern Italian agriculture where oranges and lemons have played quite an important role. Calcaterra confines himself to nineteenth-century Sicily, though he outlines the previous history of his subject in an introduction. It was only after the independence of southern Italy under the Bourbons (1734) and above all in the nineteenth century that the area planted with oranges and lemons began to expand and foreign demand to increase. Further expansion followed the political unification of the peninsula (1860), a period when many areas of Sicily previously devoted to corn and mulberry trees were turned into citrus orchards and plantations, attracting wide investment from the local economy. There was little demand in Italy and expansion depended almost entirely on exports controlled by foreign merchants who retained the lion's share of the profits, as they had done with corn and silk in previous centuries.

This dependence on foreign markets, coupled with the complete lack of planning by the central government, made the citrus fruit industry very vulnerable. Crisis began in the 1880s when some markets, such as France, were lost to Spanish competition, the freights charged by the English shippers rose and the United States became more and more self-sufficient. Calcaterra maintains, however, that crisis was caused not only by foreign competition but also by the alliance at home between corn producers and industrialists which resulted in the 1887 protectionist tariff. This provoked reaction from the corn producing countries who were the greatest importers of Sicilian oranges and lemons.

This short book is valuable mainly for its contribution to our knowledge of an almost totally neglected topic and for its documentary sources. Its structure is somewhat lacking in rigour and cohesion, while many of the ideas hinted at by the author are not developed with the clarity they deserve.

GIGLIOLA PAGANO