

Book Reviews

ERIC KERRIDGE, *The Common Fields of England*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1992. viii + 216 pp. 1 map. £35.

This book joins the series of volumes devoted to various aspects of open fields that have appeared over the last twelve years. The presentation is confined to the historical data, there being no discussion of the geographical and archaeological contributions to the subject.

After a clear introduction and description of common subdivided fields, and of their ridge and furrow form, the book launches boldly into the their origin at chapter 2. It brings together, in a full and useful way, all the Saxon charter references that throw light on the existence of common fields. Whilst it is abundantly clear that intermixed holdings with intercommoning of meadow and fallow were in existence during the tenth century, it is less clear that the eighth-century laws of king Ine really prove that there were common fields at that date.

After the Saxon charter evidence there is not very much medieval material, and indeed the book does not claim to be about *medieval* common fields, but it does begin with the Saxons. It is surprising to find the statement that from 1277 by-laws 'were almost invariably entered in the court rolls' (p 89); in this writer's experience by-laws are only mentioned intermittently until c 1530. The bulk of the presented data is a very detailed analysis of by-laws, and their implications, recorded in court rolls, mainly from 1550-1750.

There is a most thorough demonstration of the amazing flexibility of cropping within common fields, and there can no longer be any doubt that individual farmers could do what they wished. Understressed, however, is the widespread existence of an underlying three-course rotation; the fallow year was only rarely flexible.

A lengthy chapter on 'overseas', mainly continental, fields (26pp out of 128pp of a book titled *English fields*) develops into the claim that common fields were an English (Saxon) invention that spread to the rest of Europe. This seems to rely on a conviction that there were no developed and permanent systems of common fields on the Continent until the thirteenth century (pp122-3), combined with a 1955 French reference that there were such permanent fields in England in the tenth century (p126; why not the Saxon charter data of chapter 2?). Recent work has provided evidence

that large-scale (and presumably regulated) planned fields were in existence on the Continent by the end of the eighth century, and probably in England too, but the English historical evidence of this date is not as good as the continental.

The footnotes are copious and detailed, the result of a lifetime's work, and there will be useful sources for everyone to pursue. It would have been helpful to have Public Record Office references given in the modern form, so saving the inexperienced student much trouble. Many of the footnotes are so composite (for example, number 496 actually gives twenty-two references) that it is not always clear which of them might be the most relevant to the point being made.

The book has no illustrations, surprising for such a photogenic subject with a welter of interesting maps and landscapes surviving. The sole line drawing is a plan dividing England into forty-two named regions which are used in the text instead of identifying places by their counties. This scheme is nowhere explained, and although interesting it would be clearer if the map had a coloured imprint of county boundaries as well, for, with regions less familiar to any particular reader, there can be uncertainty as to which area a county has been assigned.

As a whole the book forms a useful analysis and reference source for the later material, but for assertions that common fields were of unique English origin, one would have expected more discussion of the early medieval sources, of the physical layout, and of the archaeological evidence.

DAVID HALL

ROBERT C ALLEN, *Enclosure and the Yeoman: The Agricultural Development of the South Midlands 1450-1850*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992. xv + 376 pp. £45.

This is a most refreshing and stimulating read. Here is a wholly different approach not only to the role of enclosure in the economic development and growth of England since the Middle Ages but also to the role of agriculture in general. Over many years through the major journals and a succession of University of British Columbia Discussion Papers we have grown used to Bob Allen's independent approach to the central questions concerning British agrarian capitalism. Now the full flower of his research blossoms before us in one volume.

In a marvellously succinct opening chapter he introduces the reader to a familiar historiography of ideas which he calls agrarian fundamentalism. The modernization of rural institutions through the dissolution of open-field peasant farming by enclosure and the transformation into large-scale capitalist farming, by which process agriculture was made more productive, is the first idea. Second, this resulting agricultural productivity is said to have given a boost to or provided a prerequisite for English industrialization (with the connected and essential point which is fundamental to English historiography that England was the *first* industrial nation). Third, the traditional story then debates from fundamentally different political poles – the Tories and the Marxists – whether this achievement, or shall we call it end product, was only possible in a society which was not simply unequal, but was made more unequal in order for it to occur in the first place. Enclosure is often characterized as the most important factor in the story. Above all other influences, did it provide the essential boost to agricultural productivity? Was one aspect of this productivity the provision of an industrial labour force? Was this the outcome of natural forces of change in which the social dislocations and income inequalities were also natural? In subsequent chapters Allen confronts these issues, but he does so in wholly novel and essentially innocent ways. He employs a mainly non-polemical, but highly empirical and statistical historical laboratory to confront the question, was enclosure necessary? Was enclosure a minor and non-essential contributor to agricultural productivity?

Allen constructs his answer by discussing two agricultural revolutions – the yeomen's and the landlords'. In the first he claims that the greatest productivity achievements were made from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century, in particular in the seventeenth century, and by the yeoman farmer mainly in open-field agriculture. This was the case whether measured in terms of yields (especially in the seventeenth century) or labour productivity (especially in the eighteenth century). In contrast, the landlords' revolution was an adjustment in rural social institutions, the most wide-sweeping of which was enclosure, but which conclusively became an exercise in income diversion and greater income inequality rather than an exercise in income generation. The outcome of this revolution, if not the motive, was to re-direct the Ricardian surpluses acquired by the yeomen's revolution to the landlords by raising rents. If the first revolution was the productivity revolution, and the second was regressive, then Allen's conclusion is, as he says himself, 'unavoidable' – 'most

English men and women would have been better off had the landlords' revolution never occurred' (p 21) – though since this study is based on the south Midland counties there will be many other Englishmen who will feel neglected. The conclusion in these terms is forgettable, the more memorable is that 'agricultural output might have grown faster in the eighteenth century if the yeomen had retained ownership of their land: his greater proprietary interest gave the yeoman a greater incentive to increase production than tenancy at will gave the capitalist farmer' (p 311).

This study turns much of agrarian history on its head, and some of it rightly so, but in the extremes of this revision there are perhaps a number of shortcuts and over-exuberant assumptions at play. For example, Allen's use of the land tax in essentially a hitherto much criticized exercise in using acreage equivalents to establish land-ownership sizes and relative distributions will likely highly displease one well-known, but in this case ignored, critic of that source. An important empirical base is Arthur Young, though often Allen uses Young's own findings against Young himself. This will not displease those readers who are sceptical about Young's central role in the historiography, but they will still differ with Allen on other issues. Some might say that Allen is cavalier in his definition of the yeoman (used interchangeably at times with peasant farmer, meaning relatively self-sufficient farmer, where self-sufficiency refers to own-family labour). The family farmer who emerges enjoyed a variety of tenures which secured his ownership or quasi-ownership of farming decisions and property rights. These tenures included copyholds and beneficial leases as well as freeholds. Allen's perambulation over the centuries from the late Middle Ages produces a high point in this democratization of 'landownership' in the seventeenth century – the golden age of the yeoman. In a thesis which wishes to make the most of the yeoman's revolution Allen's excursion back to medieval origins is understandable and necessary. With equal certainty, however, we learn that the yeoman had largely disappeared by the end of the eighteenth century, thus giving the emerging landlords' revolution some substance on the ground before it is neutralized in subsequent analysis. Interestingly however, the yeoman disappeared before the great parliamentary enclosures, a neutralization of a different sort. His disappearance came about by adjusting tenures out of copyholds and other archaic forms into tenancies at will, by a process in which the landlords used the relatively newly-developed mortgage as a means to raise money in preference to the hitherto favoured method of

raising funds by the large entry fines associated with those old tenures. This is a large study but it does have a narrow geography and many local and regional historians will not recognize this new history which is placed before them. In addition, recent work on agricultural rents is revealing a lingering life-after-apparent-death of copyholds, beneficial leases and other otherwise moribund tenures, well into the nineteenth century.

Therefore, Allen's book will tread on many toes, but in doing so it should breathe life into otherwise smouldering embers. But the ultimate test of the plausibility of the 'two revolutions' thesis is the robustness of Bob Allen's econometric tests. But then to confound us, the first chapter which directly confronts the evidence on enclosure and productivity change (chapter 6) is a delightful demonstration that 'The open field farmers missed most of the gains to improvement' (p 129), followed in chapter 7 with the opening line that 'Enclosure did [after all] accelerate the adoption of new crops, livestock, and draining' (p 130). The opportunity to change is not yet the same as productivity, and what follows is the estimation and measurement of long-term growth in crop yields and labour productivity with startling results. For example, 'enclosure gave no boost to output and may, indeed, have resulted in a decline' (p 130). In addition, we learn that in heavy arable districts the open-field farmers 'had accomplished about three-quarters of the growth [in yields] from the late Middle Ages leaving just 25 per cent for enclosure itself' (p 149). But how many centuries did it take for open-field farming to improve, compared with the one century (or less) we usually associate with the vital period of enclosure in the eighteenth century, where improvement might have been almost an overnight event? The rate of growth might yet have a more prominent place in the argument. In addition, at times Allen could lead the reader into confusing two issues. Is the story really about the relative efficiencies of enclosure and the open fields, or is it about long-term changes? The two are obviously connected, but is it about the measurement of change in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries relative to the magnitude of change over the previous four or five centuries? Enclosure may well have had a marginal absolute impact, but will a rate of growth model, as distinct from the absolute growth model pursued in this book, reveal the eighteenth century as more important than Allen allows?

The sign of a successful book is revealed not only in the number of questions it raises, but also in the centrality of those questions to the big issues. I may not like everything I read here, but

on the scale of 'purpose of fit', this is a vital book, and will be a focus of debate for years to come.

MICHAEL TURNER

CHARLES F FOSTER, *Four Cheshire Townships in the Eighteenth Century: Arley, Appleton, Stockton Heath and Great Budworth*, Arley Hall Press, Northwich, 1992. 88 pp. Illus. £6.95 (incl p & p).

This book is intended to be the first in a series of publications dealing with social and economic changes in a handful of neighbouring Cheshire villages in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Based upon the archives of the Arley Hall estate of the Warburton family, they promise to illustrate many themes of interest to agricultural historians. Readers, moreover, will be able form their own judgment on these issues, if the format adopted here is followed in future volumes, for the author presents a mass of information in a set of easily-digestible tables and appendices. The text itself is complemented by a number of photographs and maps.

The choice of subject for this inaugural volume, an examination of the social changes that occurred in the study area, is easily discerned. Not only does it help set the scene for the series but it also enables the author to make use of the comprehensive range of records kept by Sir Peter Warburton, a particularly enterprising landowner. Sir Peter was an active and energetic agricultural improver, modernizing tenancies, reorganizing farms and rebuilding mills and farmhouses, as well as enclosing the commons. He was also involved in transport improvements, becoming *de facto* chairman of the Weaver Navigation, a development which greatly aided the local salt industry.

Of particular value to agricultural historians is the information on tenurial change and on the fate of the small farmer, both tenant and owner-occupier. According to the author, a social revolution took place in the years between the 1740s and the 1870s. This was the period when the old lifeleasehold system, still extensive in the 1740s, was swept away and replaced by rack-renting. At the same time farms were engrossed and estates consolidated into larger units. This process, already underway by the mid-eighteenth century, accelerated thereafter. In the 1740s three-fifths of the land (by capital value) was owned by 194 families and only two-fifths by large landowners. By the 1870s five squires possessed 95 per cent of the land. Such a development clearly had a major impact upon society and social relationships and some discussion is given to the fortunes of the various groups. In this context a link between land-holding and the

industrial development of the northwest is suggested.

This is a somewhat unassuming book but one which contains much fascinating detail. It is therefore disappointing to note that little attempt has been made to fit local events into the general context of the time. In a number of areas of social and economic life the experience of the communities being studied reflects national trends, and the connection needs to be brought out with greater force. In places, too, the narrative becomes too dense (as in the section on representative property-owners) and tends to hinder the flow of the argument. Similarly, a tighter analytical framework ought to have been established, though a number of important conclusions are put forward in the final chapter. Nonetheless, in spite of these reservations, the book does provide agricultural historians with valuable insights into the course of agrarian change during a critical period and I, for one, shall certainly look out for the second volume in the series.

PETER EDWARDS

RICHARD LAWTON and COLIN G POOLEY, *Britain 1740-1950: An Historical Geography*, Edward Arnold, 1992. xiv + 338 pp. 78 figs; 52 tables. £14.99.

This volume represents a bold and ambitious attempt to provide students of geography 'and related subjects' with a survey of the transformation of Britain from a pre-modern to a modern economy and society. The two-century time-span of the text is deemed essential because it was not until the mid-twentieth century that the processes which had begun to shape the geography of modern Britain from the early eighteenth century were fully diffused through the nation and its regions. The basic structure of the text is chronological. Three separate sections survey the country from the 1740s to the 1830s, the 1830s to the 1890s, and the 1890s to the 1940s. Within each chronological section, five thematic chapters explore the political, economic and social context, demographic change, the countryside, industry and industrialization, and urbanization and urban life. Introductory and concluding chapters bracket the main body of the text.

The richness and density of the empirical content and the coherence and clarity of its presentation are the strengths of the book. Readers who feel ill at ease in a sea of words will welcome the fact that in this volume they are never far from some statistical *terra firma*. Not only is the text itself densely larded with facts and figures, but the authors make generous use of statistical tables and statistical maps and diagrams. It has to be said that

this treatment largely rules out serious consideration of the past as an arena of present debate, and it is for this reason that the book, necessarily light on ideas and their evolution, seems more likely to inform than to inspire. But perhaps it is unreasonable to expect in a textbook qualities to which textbooks generally do not aspire.

A more admissible complaint concerns the book's system of referencing. Sources are not provided for much of the material, and the few references given cannot always be traced to the short bibliographies which appear at the end of each chapter. This draconian solution to a considerable bibliographical problem impairs the book's value as a starting point for further exploration of its themes, and leaves the dimensions of the massive programme of reading which was clearly the prelude to the composition of the text a matter of surmise rather than record. This is a pity.

JOHN R WALTON

ROGER SCOLA, *Feeding the Victorian City: The Food Supply of Manchester, 1770-1870*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1992. xx + 347 pp. £29.95.

In view of the large amount now published about the standard of living during the industrial revolution, it is remarkable that Roger Scola's is the first book on the food supply of the major industrial city. The introductory chapter details the sources used, while the second outlines the growth of the city in the hundred years after 1770 and its expanding demand for food. The next four chapters examine the changing supply patterns of the major components. These deal with meat, dairy products, fruit and vegetables, and fish. Then another four chapters look at various features of the distribution system. These include a study of the markets and fairs, the marketing of fresh foods, the distribution of bread and groceries, and the changing pattern of food retailing. The concluding chapter draws all these threads together, relating the study's main themes to the general debate on living standards. Because Roger Scola died of Hodgkin's disease in 1988 the book had to be seen through to its final state for publication by his widow, Pauline Scola, and his colleague Alan Armstrong. The substantial body of the work is Roger Scola's, but Alan Armstrong has revised and expanded the second chapter to take account of recent research, and he has added the concluding chapter.

Sections of particular value to agricultural historians are those dealing with the marketing of farm produce. It has often been lamented that we lose sight of agricultural output once it has passed the farm gate. But Scola has an abundance of

material explaining which areas Manchester drew upon for its foodstuffs, and the changes these underwent as the city expanded and transport changes enabled the area it drew on to increase. In the case of meat supplies this introduced a greater seasonal stability to prices after 1850, even though the long term demand tended to run ahead of supply (pp 65–70). But the pressures the Manchester market also exerted on the farm sector are revealed as well, causing some farms to abandon cheese-making in preference for the regular income from fresh milk. To some extent the picture of supplies is uneven. There is certainly more information on Manchester's fish, meat, dairy products, fresh vegetables and fruit than there is about the corn and flour which would have provided the major part of the calorific intake of its inhabitants. This was because a significant amount cereal requirements were supplied via Liverpool – also the regional corn milling centre – and the fact that up to 1870 the baking trade in Manchester, as elsewhere, was dominated by small businesses.

In the past historians of the food trades have perhaps relied too heavily on generalizations drawn from London. Scola's book provides a valuable counterbalance to this because it reveals that in some important respects the experience of Manchester was different. For instance, the capital relied heavily on town dairies for its milk, whereas Manchester had few of these establishments, because it could be supplied from the surrounding farms in the dairying districts of Lancashire and Cheshire (pp 71–6). The author also points out that the distinction between the wholesale and retail butchers in Manchester was by no means as sharp in 1850 as has been suggested by Jeffreys and myself (pp 183–7). Other generalizations, such as Mathias's belief that nineteenth-century housewives would cross a town to save a halfpenny or farthing, are challenged. Using the customer lists of some of Manchester's early nineteenth-century traders summoned for debt, Scola finds that a high proportion of them lived very close to the shop (pp 235–6).

The whole book stands as a remarkable piece of work, combining the better known published and national sources with the local records of Manchester to produce a comprehensive and well documented picture of its food supplies and distribution system. The problems that the author faced in undertaking this type of study were considerable. In effect there were numerous separate trades and networks each catering for a different food product. Most of the enterprises engaged in food production and its distribution, at least until after the railways appeared, were small in scale and not particularly well documented. This meant that a

wide range of source material had to be used, some of it only offering up the occasional 'nugget of gold' (p 8), so that the author had to tease out much of the material. This patience and industry has been well rewarded. The final result is a handsome volume with an abundance of statistical material, several appendices, and some good contemporary illustrations that should be of great use to a wide range of readers.

RICHARD PERREN

IAN DYCK, *William Cobbett and Rural Popular Culture*, CUP, 1992. xvi + 312 pp. £35.

William Cobbett will be remembered as the champion of the labourer and, more widely, of the rural way of life. But he came late, almost naively, to the cause of the rural worker. He lurched from right to left, from reactionary to radical, almost as if he was not from a rural farming background. He had spent nearly all of the crises years of the 1790s in North America. He missed that vital decade and therefore he was slow to grasp the growing alienation both between agriculture and commerce, and within agriculture between labourer and farmer. He returned to England in much the same spirit of thinking as he had left – very English, very anti-Jacobin and anti-revolutionary, a God, King and Country man through and through. But the consequences of commercialism, brought to a focus in the 1790s, eventually hit him squarely in the eyes – economic relationships had changed and the country was threatened with invasion, thus bringing together the newly discovered emotion, involving the labourer and the rural way of life, with his always strong love of country.

The agricultural changes compared with the golden age he remembered (the tail end of the period 1720–85) had dealt the labourer particularly a savage blow. Already a prolific writer in both America and Britain, he became extravagantly prolific, especially in the pages of the *Political Register*. His was an act of politics even if he did not reach Parliament until the early 1830s. He wished to project the economic betterment of the labourer through political representation. In a property-owning democracy he maintained that they also held property – it was in their labour – and they required representation. Yet Cobbett was not an advocate of true equality and, dare we say it, of classlessness. Rather he believed in a traditional social order. He recognized that 'all relations in English rural society were class relations' (p 73), but they should not be overlain with benevolence, charity, servitude or inferiority, but by fairness and mutual respect. He appeared to spend much of his active political life in deep

frustration – he foretold the Swing riots, and supported them, and he could see more dramatic revolution on the horizon. He was pleased at the widening of the franchise in the Reform Act, but felt betrayed on behalf of the labourer with the New Poor Law.

This book, therefore, is a fascinating biography of at times an enigmatic man. Yet it is meant to be other than a biography; it is meant to set Cobbett's cause and imagination in the context of rural popular culture. This culture is demonstrated in abundance, especially through songs and other verse, but whether Cobbett swims in unison with that popular culture, whether it was a device to project his political stand for the rural way of life is a different issue. At times it is as if there are two stories. They share the same time and place, but they do not always coincide. The dust jacket declares that this is a novel approach. For this reviewer the bravado of the approach is not always sustained in the telling of the story or, as I see it, in the two stories that are presented. That need not matter – the themes may not connect, but they are still both full of richness. Yet there is a way in which they do draw together. Inevitably this is through the narrow reductionism of economics. The culture had been shocked by changed relationships, inequality of income distribution, and the rise of industrial society. These are threads in the popular culture, but also in Cobbett's observations and his political projections, and intentionally or not this is an important focus in this study.

MICHAEL TURNER

MOWBRAY PEARSON, ed, *Flitting the Flakes: The Diary of J Badenach a Stonehaven Farmer 1789–1797*, Aberdeen University Press and National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1992. viii + 325 pp. £25.

James Badenach, a doctor of medicine and a member of the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh, acquired the estate of Whiteriggs (Kincardineshire) in 1788. He farmed part of the estate and leased some land to tenants. From 1789 to 1797 he maintained a daily diary, Sundays excepted, of his farming activity. The diary survived in the archives of Glenbervie House and has now been transcribed and analysed by Mowbray Pearson, a geographer at Edinburgh University. Diaries for this period are rare and this, presumably, justified publication. Rarity, alas, does not necessarily guarantee interesting contents. Pearson stoically tries to squeeze some significance from an extraordinarily dull journal by collating the material under several headings: weather, agricultural practice, livestock, servants, markets, mills

and distilleries, prices, building, planting, garden, and transport.

Badenach apparently had a reputation as an improver, and here and there the diary records some of the practices associated with that important breed: liming, tree planting (as many as 25,000 seedlings in December, 1789), and new farm buildings. There are glimpses too of the wider forces which propelled or checked improvement: an 'uncommon demand for cattle in England' in 1794, the stoppage of the distilleries in 1795 with a consequent fall in barley, and import competition from Ireland in 1797. What there is no sign of is the sense of excitement or of dramatic change so evident in other contemporary accounts. That may, perhaps, be the diary's value for it is largely an account of the labour-intensive grind of late eighteenth-century farm work. Fickleness of climate determined the daily tasks. Little wonder then that every entry records the weather, though not in a consistent enough form for quantitative analysis. Pearson's interest was prompted by this possibility but it is permissible to wonder if different issues are not posed even by the slender pickings of this diary: why does so little produce appear to have been sold off the farm, what was the nature of the local labour market that it generated Badenach's outburst against the 'accursed' hiring fair, and where did Badenach obtain his information about 'the late Derangement of the London & other Banks'? A little more speculation might have produced a greater yield.

RON WEIR

R B MACCARTHY, *The Trinity College Estates 1800–1923: Corporate Management in an Age of Reform*, Dun Dalgan Press (W Tempest) Ltd, 1992. x + 273 pp. IR£19.50.

In the nineteenth century Trinity College Dublin owned 195,573 acres spread across sixteen of the thirty-two Irish counties. It was one of the largest landowners in the British Isles, and at the same time one of the least efficient or effective landlords. The college governors were reluctant to appoint proper agents, preferring to do the business themselves through a bursarship which rotated among the seven senior fellows on a two-year cycle. Since by 1897 the average age of the board was seventy-six this was hardly a recipe for good stewardship, and so it proved. Robert MacCarthy's tale is one of inefficiency, incompetence, and rank bad management, with the college pulling itself together at the beginning of the twentieth century, just in time to sell off most of its property after 1903.

Sorry tale it certainly is, but there are several compensations for the historian. TCD estates included examples of just about every type of

landholder in Ireland, across a broad swathe of the country, so that the book offers an insight into land management and tenancies. As with Oxbridge colleges, TCD preferred a system of 'beneficial leases' giving the tenants maximum freedom and the landlord as little trouble as possible (at least in theory). The college resisted as long as possible any moves towards converting its leases, eventually having its hand forced by legislation. The middleman structure covered much of the estate, and appropriately Dr MacCarthy pays it considerable attention, but other estates were differently managed, as he shows with case studies of the directly managed properties of Rusheen and Iveragh. In neither case did the college distinguish itself in land management.

In some respects this book is a detailed labour of love, but insofar as it throws light on the wider operation of corporate estates, it represents a significant addition to what remains – by comparison with private estates – a relatively thin literature. At the same time it provides valuable insights into the Irish land wars, and the religious tensions which inevitably affected the position of a Protestant college landlord. As a result, it merits close attention from historians of all aspects of late nineteenth-century Ireland.

J V BECKETT

DOMINIQUE ZUMKELLER, *Le Paysan et la Terre. Agriculture et Structure Agraire à Genève au XVIIIe Siècle*, Editions Passé Présent, Geneva, 1992.

376pp. 12 plates; 7 maps; 36 graphs. Swiss Fr 52. This handsome volume has its methodological antecedents in the rural monographs produced by several generations of francophone historians, geographers and other social scientists. But whereas they concentrated on analysing rural conditions and socio-economic changes across whole provinces or *pays*, Zumkeller focuses sharply on 10,000 ha of farmland which comprise the immediate surroundings of Geneva, a detached area slightly to the east, and a third district alongside the Rhône a few kilometres west of the city. A wealth of literary, statistical and cartographic evidence, in the form of censuses, cadastral registers and maps, and surveys of properties held by the *hôpital général* of Geneva enable many aspects of rural life to be investigated and patterns of landholding and land use to be reconstructed.

Flanked by mountains to the east and west, washed by the waters of Lac Léman, and traversed by the river Rhône, the 'Geneva basin' was described by eighteenth-century travellers as a veritable 'pays de cocagne'. Despite its mountainous surroundings, it belonged to the broad realm of 'southern' farming systems, rather than to the

northerly domain of communal arable fields, and thus supported irrigated meadows, enclosed pastures, gardens, orchards and vineyards, as well as stretches of cropland. Of particular distinction were its suspended vines (*hautains*) which flourished amidst groups of fruit trees. Villages clustered around Protestant temples or extended along roads, and smaller hamlets flourished in the midst of their fields. These prosperous landscapes contrasted with surrounding high pastures and intermediate stretches of woodland and rough terrain. Countryside was linked to town in terms of producing food, supplying labour, and making clocks, cloth, shoes and other handicrafts for distribution by urban merchants. Cattle rearing for meat and milk became increasingly profitable as the eighteenth century progressed and land-use patterns were reorientated to pastoral pursuits rather than cereal cropping. Indeed, the city of Geneva (which housed 25,000 inhabitants in the 1790s) called on supplies from well beyond the study area, with wheat, livestock, firewood and building timber being brought from Savoy, the Pays de Gex and the Bresse. Supplies of labour included many religious 'refugees' and came not only from these districts but also from more distant portions of France and the German and Swiss lands.

Zumkeller organizes the discussion around the key themes of rural population, land, farming activities, and prices and wages. Parish registers are analysed meticulously to identify trends of births, marriages and deaths in the villages surrounding Geneva from 1700 to 1797. Chapter 4 will be of particular interest to many readers since it provides a detailed review of the suite of cadastral maps and registers which were prepared by dynasties of land surveyors between 1670 and 1797. Early eighteenth-century cadastral plans were richly decorated with drawings of farmhouses and other rural buildings but toward the end of the century Geneva's cartographers produced less elegant but nonetheless highly informative maps. Taken together, plans and accompanying registers enable the story of changing landholding and land use to be reconstructed accurately. New crops (clover, lucerne, maize and potatoes), improved strains of livestock and better implements were adopted gradually in the Geneva basin but innovations were diffused neither widely nor rapidly, despite the copious agronomic writings of the Lullin de Châteauevieux family and others. Zumkeller advises against any notion of there having been an agricultural revolution around Geneva at this time. However, the introduction of fodder crops enabled more livestock to be kept and cereal yields to rise. Rapidly growing urban demands for animal products favoured that section

of the rural economy and made it particularly profitable for farmers in this prosperous and visually attractive stretch of countryside which was already appealing to travellers and affluent 'tourists' at the time of the French Revolution.

Le Paysan et la Terre is illustrated by a large number of maps and graphs, and a cluster of illustrations reproduced from eighteenth-century sources, showing vines, ploughs, field patterns, farmhouses and livestock. A minor irritation is the absence of scales on the various maps of the surroundings of Geneva. A statistical appendix on commodity prices and landholding, a copious list of archival sources, and a lengthy bibliography complete this very attractive volume which will be of interest to all concerned with eighteenth-century rural life.

HUGH CLOUT

ANTHONY H GALT, *Far From the Church Bells. Settlement and Society in an Apulian Town*, CUP, 1991. xiii + 276 pp £30.

'If you want to eat bread, stay far from the church bells' says the proverb from Locorotondo in Apulia, which gives this book its title. In the Murgia dei Trulli, in sharp contrast to other areas of southern Italy where landless proletarians inhabit agro-towns, independent peasants ('post peasants' in Galt's terminology) farm small acreages and live in stone-built *trulli*, conical dry-stone houses of primitive appearance sited on their holdings. These dispersed small farms are inhabited by a people whose way of life and values distinguish them both from the town-dwellers of nearby Locorotondo and the agricultural proletariat of southern Italy and Sicily. They are, and have long been, committed 'to work until their bones ached so as to make a step ahead for their children'. Work forms the centre of their lives and neither it nor the land is regarded (as they are by many rural labourers in the *Mezzogiorno*) as a curse. Values and family structure service the commitment to work and to the maintenance and improvement of the family holding, which in turn provides a measure of security and independence. If this sounds the picture of an ideal or idealized peasantry it is interesting to note that emphyteusis, the tenurial basis of Locorotondese farming, was recommended by eighteenth-century liberals such as Genovesi for its ability to produce good farming and an industrious, contented and quiescent peasantry.

Galt's aim, an ambitious one, is to determine 'why a dispersed pattern and small holding agriculture had developed and how these are related to social structure and values'. This quest takes him

beyond ethnography to oral and local history, economic history, and historical geography. These form about half the book. Galt's approach, highly empirical and economic for an ethnographer, uses John Bennett's concept of 'adaptive strategy' as an organizing heuristic device. Social reality is seen as the outcome of purposive adaptive behaviour by individuals or groups, as they encounter changing circumstances. This is a framework many historians might think says too much and too little, but it does not hamper Galt unduly. In Locorotondo, he suggests, social reality is the product of the interplay of adaptive strategies by landlords and peasants in an economic situation, favouring wine growing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, on land agriculturally too marginal to invite estate exploitation. Emphyteutic (implanting) leases required peasants to make vineyards in return for security of tenure and, in many cases, the opportunity to purchase the improved land. Enhanced rents benefited landlords who avoided development costs and who, because of the marginality of the land, had no interest in breaking the theoretically perpetual leases as those in more favoured regions did. Social values serviced these realities.

Galt's account is elegant, if rather overschematic, and in its historical sections ignores a number of key historiographical issues going back to Marx and beyond. His approach does not encourage a tendency either to linger in the bywaters of the past or, oddly in an ethnographer, to explore the *mentalités* of past and present Locorotondese to any extent. This is nevertheless a most welcome book. Any scholar with such an ambitious interdisciplinary mission deserves our encouragement at a time when a workable methodology for local studies is badly needed. Galt has made a useful start here as well as writing a valuable and enjoyable study of a region still neglected in the English language literature.

A P DONAJGRODZKI

Noticiario de Historia Agraria, Boletín del Seminario de Historia Agraria (SEHA), 1 (2), 1991, Universidad de Murcia, twice yearly. \$50 to individual members, \$60 to institutional members.

Agricultural history is alive and kicking south of the Pyrenees. Witness the number of scholarly publications over the last decade or so. Avid readers of the review sections of this journal will be aware of the valiant contribution of such periodicals as *Agricultura y Sociedad* and *Estudios d'Història Agraria* to our detailed understanding of Spain's rural past. Moreover, institutions such as the Bank of Spain, the Ministry of Agriculture

and the Barcelona publishing house Crítica have played an active role in making available to scholars and a wider public the fruits of much recent research. Since its foundation in 1982, the *Revista de Historia Económica*, organ of the Spanish Economic History Association, has included a large and diverse body of material on agricultural history. Then at the beginning of the present decade a group of enthusiasts set up what they preferred to call an agricultural history seminar, with the acronym SEHA.

SEHA's objectives, set out in its statutes, are 'the encouragement of research, teaching and publication of all work related to the historical analysis of agriculture'. Geographers, economists and social anthropologists are also welcome to contribute, while the SEHA invites collaboration from interested parties outside the Iberian Peninsula. To further its aims, the group have produced a bulletin entitled *Seminario de Historia Agraria*. The latter, however, is not intended to be just another conventional journal, building up a stock of articles for everyone's reading list. In a 'dummy' issue, sent to known sympathizers, a format was established for the future. There would be short pithy articles on problems of methodology, information on the current state of research, with particular reference to regional historiography, a bibliographical section spelling out to new researchers the amount of material available on given topics, book reviews, research in progress, and details of theses submitted.

Now we have issue number two, a bit thicker in size than anticipated and consequently a little late in appearing. It also contains a new section in which a distinguished practitioner (María Teresa Pérez Picazo) summarizes part of the debate at last year's annual meeting. Otherwise there are tightly-written pieces on, among other topics, public forests, agro-ecology and agricultural prices in early twentieth-century Spain. The historiographical sections evaluate recent research on Navarre, Galicia, the País Valenciano and Andalusia. Rural credit merits a bibliographical approach while Italy and France are also featured in short articles. A 'review of reviews' section focuses on material contained in the Italian periodical *Annali dell'Istituto 'Alcide Cervi'*. Finally, the book review section is, by Spanish standards, lengthy, objective and very informative.

For my part, I found this new journal highly readable, remarkably jargon-free, enormously valuable as a source of research and reading materials, and most useful as a source of what is going on across the peninsula. Agricultural historians in this country should welcome its appearance.

JOSEPH HARRISON

MATTI PELTONEN, *Talolliset ja Torpparit: Vuosisadan vaihteen maatalous-kysymys Suomessa*, Suomen Historiallinen Seura, Helsinki, 1992. 429 pp. Illus. No price stated.

This monograph is the 154th volume in the research series of the Historical Society of Finland. The Finnish text, with its striking historical photographs and 400 items of bibliography, has an English summary and English captions to its maps. The social crisis in rural early twentieth-century Finland is analysed in both its international and domestic settings.

Internationally, the opening-up of New World grain supplies, the intensification of trading through speedier transport and the rise in demand for forest products all forced on the commercialization of the Finnish economy. Peltonen discusses the consequent structural adjustments. In 1900, some 90 per cent of Finland's 2.7 million inhabitants were classified as rural. Landowning families accounted for 40 per cent, though two-thirds of them had less than ten hectares of arable land and only the larger properties derived a significant income from forestry. Twenty per cent were tenants, often paying a part of their rent in labour. The remainder consisted of a mixed group of crofters, day labourers and annual hirelings, male and female. There was no organized labour movement. Divisive landlord-tenant relationships were aggravated by the effects of international forces. Modest land reforms only slowly redressed the situation.

Excellent social surveys and the inspection reports of the Land Mortgage Bank are among other primary sources. Peltonen's authoritative monograph underlies the remarkable transformation of the Finnish farming system that has taken place since his grandparents' days.

W R MEAD

Shorter Notices

FRANK MOORE and JOHN HYNAM, *The Horses Knew the Way: Memories of a Lincolnshire Life*, Alan Sutton, Stroud, 1991. ix + 149 pp. £12.99.

Born around the turn of the century, Frank Moore was the son of a Norfolk farm horseman of unusual skill. His father was widely consulted about sick or difficult horses, and locally there seems to have been more than a suspicion of magical powers about his abilities. The family moved to the Lincolnshire fens when Frank was in his teens, where he in turn went to work with horses. Some time before 1970 John Hynam tape recorded his recollections, and reworked them. The result is a series of anecdotal chapters giving a personal view of what community meant in isolated rural areas in the first half of this century, and embedded in the stories are many illustrations of the incorporation of folk beliefs into the changing lives of twentieth-century farmworkers. It is not an account of farming with horses, though there is one chapter on breaking horses, nor is it a biography, since it covers only a part of his life. Even the basic details on his age, family, and the places they lived in are very incomplete and have to be derived incidentally.

It makes a pleasant read and there are many points of interest in what seems to have been a contented and emotionally satisfying life. Unfortunately, though it is clearly intended as oral history, there is no indication of how far Hynam altered or edited the recordings. The very personal nature of the account gives it much of its interest, but this does also detract from its value to a historian, because it is entirely lacking in context and in any other points of view. As a view from the inside it stimulates thought about the way villages functioned, and suggests lines for others to follow up. There is, however, absolutely no way of knowing from this how far Frank Moore believed that the ability to control and cure horses was in fact based on magical abilities, and how far this has been played up for publication. Compared to George Ewart Evans' masterful development and dissection of similar hints in his Suffolk research, this leaves the reader wondering.

STEPHEN CAUNCE

VALERIE PORTER, *The Southdown Sheep*, Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, Chichester, for the Southdown Sheep Society, 1991. xii + 177 pp. Illus. £12.75 (incl p&p).

This attractively produced and illustrated book has been published in celebration of the centenary of the Southdown Sheep Society and the bicentenary of the Southdown as an improved breed. It begins with brief but enthusiastic descriptions of the downlands and of the breed which originated there. This is followed by a description of agricultural practices of the early eighteenth century, and the changes which subsequently took place. Whilst it cannot be denied that unenclosed farming systems were not ideal environments for breed improvement, the assertion that the poverty of winter keep necessitated the slaughter of 'most livestock' in autumn is no longer credible. An 'heroic' agricultural revolution is introduced as a suitable context for an anecdotal account of the role of John Ellman, Thomas Coke, and Jonas and Henry Webb. Whilst these men were undoubtedly very influential as publicists, and as suppliers of stock to 'model' farmers and enthusiastic gentry, (many of whom are named in the book), it is regrettable that the more widespread market-responsive developments in sheep management which owed much to numerous long-forgotten ordinary farmers and shepherds are not accorded the recognition they deserve. The emphasis upon the role of individual breeders is of necessity less evident in the author's description of the gradual decline of the breed (in numerical terms at least) from the closing years of the nineteenth century to the present day. The remainder of the book, deals with the history of the breed society, the influence of the breed – both within Britain and overseas – flock management, shepherds, and sheep fairs. This is undoubtedly a book for the breed enthusiast rather than the agricultural historian, who will find little which is new, either in fact or in interpretation.

ANDREW K COPUS

THE ROYAL BATH AND WEST OF ENGLAND SOCIETY, *Catalogue of the Library and Archives, 1990*, Royal Bath and West of England Society, Shepton Mallet, 1991. 218 pp. £5. (+ £2 p&p).

The 1990 catalogue of the Royal Bath and West Society's library, which supersedes the 1964 edition, consists of two main parts: a library catalogue and an archives catalogue. There is also an inventory of the Society's pictures and other artefacts.

The library catalogue is divided into an author sequence of books, reports, pamphlets, and miscel-

laneous material (103 pages) followed by a listing of titles (57 pages). The catalogue is not differentiated chronologically and contains a number of items which predate the Society's foundation (1777) while other works relate to the 1970s and 1980s. Although the library has much material which reflects the interests of the Royal Bath and West's past and present spheres of influence in the west of England and southern counties, such as dairying, cider manufacturing, and cheese making, this is a fully representative collection of British agricultural history. It contains some fascinating and rare items and is particularly strong in late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century agricultural pamphlets.

While the archives catalogue has perhaps less general interest, especially since the publication of Kenneth Hudson's bicentennial history of the Society (*The Bath and West*, 1976), the various minute books are accompanied by some useful notes which are indicative of their contents.

The Society's library is now housed at Bath University and the archives are deposited at the Guildhall, Bath. Both have been made available by the Society for use by students or researchers on application to the Society's honorary librarian or chief executive, or Bath Records Office archivist in the case of the archives. The catalogue deserves to be purchased, however, as a valuable study guide in its own right and the Royal Bath and West Society and John Davis, chairman of the Library and Archives Committee, are to be congratulated for putting their rich historical resources so readily at the disposal of the agricultural historian.

NICHOLAS GODDARD

DOUGLAS WILLIS, *The Story of Crofting*, John Donald, Edinburgh, 1991. 168 pp. illus. £8.50.

Picking up a short book on a complex subject – with no footnote references – is bound to induce misgivings in a reviewer for this journal, misgivings which in this instance proved to be at least partially justified. On the plus side, the author adopts a multi-disciplinary approach, concerned as much with physical landscape and material culture as with written history, and this approach works well for the subject. On the minus side is the populist style of writing. Men and women are always 'folk', and the historical perspective is assumed to be unfamiliar to the reader.

The historical background of crofting is well presented, but Willis betrays his own lack of historical knowledge when he asserts that the right to buy their crofts (which came about in 1976) was the culmination of the crofters' struggle (p 94). In fact the notion of having a legal title to the land was always alien to the Highland mentality, and many crofters did not avail themselves of the offer, much to the dismay of the Department of Agriculture. In his discussion of the contemporary scene Willis does not even mention one of its most disquieting aspects, absenteeism (if a crofting tenant chooses to live elsewhere, the croft might well not be worked by anyone). The omission of such a serious concern is curious in any story of crofting in Scotland. Willis seemed to me far more at home in geography than in history (but was that because I am so much more at home in history than geography?).

In spite of its failings, the book fills a gap. Secondary school pupils (and also some adults), looking for an easy introduction to a subject they know little or nothing about, will find that *The Story of Crofting* does very nicely.

LEAH LENEMAN

Notes and Contributors

(continued from page 81)

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