

Book Reviews

ROBIN A BUTLIN, *Historical Geography: Through the Gates of Space and Time*, Edward Arnold, 1993. xiii + 306 pp. £14.99.

In recent years notions of history and the possibilities for historical modes of explanation of all sorts have received increasing critical attention. The 'historical' has, we might say, become problematic. Professor Butlin's book, the 'first ever history of the subdiscipline' of historical geography (p x), provides the opportunity for some of those issues to be discussed and rediscussed among geographers and others interested in studying the 'landscapes' of the past.

Professor Butlin's book offers us three things. First, he traces the changing nature of historical geography through from c1700 to the present, charting its changing interests and methods (chapters 1 to 3). This history is made to pivot on the making of 'modern' historical geography in the early twentieth century, what Professor Butlin calls the 'Classical' phase (dominated by the work of H C Darby). It must be stressed that what we are offered is not a contextualized account such as the one that David Livingstone has recently provided for the discipline of geography as a whole (*The Geographical Tradition: Episodes in the History of a Contested Enterprise*, Oxford, 1993), although there are places where the events described are contextualized (see pp 13 and 16–17 for two early examples). Nor is this an engagement with the coils of theory and politics like that of Derek Gregory (*Geographical Imaginations*, Oxford, 1994), although, again, there are sections where the politics of theory are debated (see, for example, pp 44–5). Instead, this is very much a careful subdisciplinary history. It traces national traditions, key figures and key works, and shows us the connections and differentiations between them. Second, Professor Butlin examines the sources of evidence used by historical geographers (chapter 4). Third, he sets out much of the work done under the banner of historical geography in a number of different areas of study (Landscape, Power and Control, the Urban, the Rural, Industrialisation, Transport and Communication). This is done not so much as a series of historiographical reviews but as a set of synthetic historical geographies of these arenas. By doing this (chapters 5 to 11) he provides us with a sense of the subject matter of historical geography and an overview of work done within the subdiscipline up until the late 1980s or early 1990s.

The publication of this book raises a number of interesting questions about the nature of historical geography. The first relates to the basis on which

historical geography can be made to stand apart from history and geography so as to have its portrait painted as a separate and distinctive subdiscipline. I would certainly agree with Professor Butlin that 'historical geography' has operated as a label or identity under which people have worked, but that still begs the question of the changing relations between geography, history and historical geography. Indeed, there is a strong sense throughout the book that 'historical geography' is a category which means something over and above the theoretical positions which have animated its practitioners. While we might include an enormous number of people within the category of those who study 'the geographies of past times' (p ix), we also need to raise questions about what divides them. For example, does it make a difference that David Harvey's geographies of the past have more in common with those of Karl Marx than those of H C Darby? I would argue that it is important to stress that the nature, and even the existence, of historical geography is as much a matter of theoretical positions (of ontologies and epistemologies) as it is of academic identities and institutional locations.

Taking this point seriously raises a set of questions about what knowledges we take to be historical geographies. Professor Butlin is not explicit about the basis on which work is selected for inclusion in the substantive chapters but it is apparent that they are, for the most part, organized around the work of those who might identify themselves as historical geographers. He does not, however, completely close his account off around such people because there are also references to the work of historians and others. It might, however, be worth taking a much broader view of the matter. If historical geographies are geographies of the past then they can be written by anyone. Who is more sensitive to the spaces of the prison than Michel Foucault or John Bender? Who is more aware of the geographies of gender and race than Catherine Hall or Vron Ware? This might mean that a book as wide-ranging as *Historical Geography* would be impossible to produce, but it is crucial to acknowledge that historical geographers rarely work solely within something called 'historical geography'. What they read, who they talk to, what they research is influenced by interactions with other 'geographers' of all kinds. These interactions form a wide and complex interdisciplinary space which encompasses biologists, historians, sociologists, anthropologists and many others. Historical geography has benefited enormously from throwing its borders open; it should not now close them off.

Indeed, it is apparent that not fully recognizing the nature of this interdisciplinary space causes some problems for Professor Butlin's book. The substantive chapters do not trace strong lines of argument because the wider debates within which the arguments of 'historical geographers' are being made are not to be found within the subdiscipline alone. Grouping together the works of 'historical geographers' is not guaranteed to group the like-minded.

Another question is over the sort of historical geography that this book prioritizes. It must, first of all, be noted that Professor Butlin is clear in pointing out the multiplicity of approaches that are possible within historical geography, and he is explicit in his avowal that there are no clear grounds for prioritizing one over any of the others. Yet his reviews of work done within historical geography do give emphasis to certain visions of the past, a fact that is as much to do with the concerns of the historical geographers whose works are discussed as it is to do with Professor Butlin's interpretations of them. Let me give two examples of what seems to be missing. First, historical geographies of what we might call the imaginary. These are discussed in terms of 'landscape' but they also need to be discussed in relation to power, transportation, industrialization, urbanization and the rest, each of which has a vibrant 'non-material' historical geography. What is presented here is very much a discussion of the 'real' – field boundaries, factories, suburbs and railway tracks – people and things in space, and little attention is paid to the ideas, discourses, imaginings and utopias which are increasingly becoming the stuff of historical geographies. Second, historical geographies of gender. Professor Butlin is right to call for more attention to be paid to gender in the future, yet there is no explicit attention paid to these issues in the accounts that he presents of the past. Surely there is enough work done within historical geography to at least mention that urbanization, industrialization and the rest were gendered processes. Even if there is not it raises again the question of the worth of constructing accounts of the past based on the work of historical geographers if that provides only a limited field of vision.

Despite these criticisms, as much of 'historical geography' as of *Historical Geography*, it is a virtue of this work that it sets out what has been done so far within the subdiscipline and provides us with the opportunity of discussing what should be done in the future.

MILES OGBORN

BARRY CUNLIFFE, *Wessex to AD 1000*, Longman, 1993. xvii + 388 pp. 97 figs; 30 plates. £15.99. Professor Cunliffe's well-illustrated book on early Wessex is a notable addition to this generally

excellent series, having as its basis the archaeological record of the counties of Avon, Somerset, Wiltshire, Dorset, Hampshire and Berkshire. It is, as one would expect, a work of synthesis, heavily dependent upon other scholars for the chapters on early pre-history, but using Cunliffe's own extensive and important work to enhance the story of Iron Age and Roman Wessex.

Of particular interest, no doubt, to readers of this journal will be the discussion of the landscape and its utilization by man in the region, and the archaeological evidence for this forms an important part of the early chapters. We move from the naturally-changing flora and fauna of the glacial and interglacials of the Pleistocene, to the first signs of environmental modification by man in the Mesolithic (c 9500–4500), a process which accelerates in the ensuing Early Neolithic of the fifth and fourth millennia with the change from hunter/gatherer to settled, food-producing farmer who was clearing forest and domesticating crops and animals. Evidence from Wessex indicates small plots of wheat and some barley, sheep and cattle pasture, forest maintenance for pigs, and coppicing. This was also the period which sees the first man-made monuments, which were to become so prolific in the Wessex landscape, notably causewayed enclosures, as at Windmill Hill, Wilts, and long barrows and chambered tombs accommodating multiple burials, found for example on Salisbury Plain and the Avebury area.

During the early part of the Later Neolithic/Early Bronze Age (c 3000–1500 BC) there seems to have been something of a standstill in land colonization in Wessex, and the pig becomes the predominant domesticated animal, but by 2000 BC large new tracts of pasture were being created, giving higher percentages of sheep and cattle. Further landscape features appear during this period, including round barrows containing single as opposed to multiple burials, and the imposing ceremonial monuments of, especially, Dorset, Wiltshire and Somerset, such as henge monuments and stone circles, all indicating a highly organized society.

The Later Bronze Age (c 1500–600 BC) was one of dramatic change in farming practice in Wessex, from one that merely produced sufficient for the needs of the people to one intended to maximize food production, with a grain surplus being indicated by the storage pits commonly found on settlement sites. It was also a time when sheep became predominant over cattle.

Few settlement sites are known in Wessex prior to the Later Bronze Age, and it is during this period that such sites stamp themselves with a degree of permanency on the landscape, usually on the chalk,

such as those excavated at Chalton, Hants and Shearplace Hill, Dorset.

During the Early/Middle Iron Age (c 600–100 BC) arable farming increased considerably, evidenced, again, partly by storage pits and the post-holes of wooden granaries. The quite dramatic predominance of sheep over cattle continued, probably because the former could manage without a permanent water supply and so could occupy, and manure, the rather thin-soiled higher downlands that had been opened up. The most visually striking features of this period in Wessex are the hill-forts, the early ones being relatively simple, whilst the later examples have elaborate defensive systems and show evidence of dense interior occupation. Not surprisingly, much of what Cunliffe has to say about hill-forts and their development comes from his own extensive excavation at Danebury, Hants. The overall picture in Wessex is one of many of the earlier hill-forts being abandoned by the late fourth century BC, whilst those remaining became greatly-strengthened, evenly-spaced centres of territories.

The next phase in the narrative, from 100 BC to 80 AD, shows the beginnings of Roman-inspired trade in Britain, and Cunliffe's excavations at Hengistbury Head, Dorset, produced evidence of both imports and material awaiting export. It is also during this period that, thanks to numerous coin finds, three major Iron Age tribes can be recognized in Wessex: the Durotriges, the Atrebatas and the Dobunni.

Following the Roman invasion of 43 AD, industry becomes important in parts of the region, with quarrying for Purbeck marble and the extraction of lead and silver from the Mendips, and by the second century demand had increased, with the construction of major buildings and public bath-houses; indeed, urban development is a striking feature of the Roman period, with important towns at Silchester, Winchester and Dorchester. Cunliffe rightly stresses the fact that our knowledge of rural settlement during this period has been distorted by the concentration on villas to the detriment of other types of settlement. Where these other types have been examined, as at Berwick Down, Wilts, and Chalton, Hants, continuity from the Late Iron Age is apparent, whilst a number of pre-Roman native settlements developed into villas, such as Grateley South, Hants, and Tarrant Hinton, Dorset, a major determining factor in such a development seeming to be proximity to a market centre.

Cunliffe deals as well as the evidence will allow with the last years of Roman rule and the early Saxon settlement in Wessex, where, in the east and north the Saxons were colonizing, evidenced for example at Chalton, Hants, and Cowdery's Down, Hants, whilst in western Wiltshire, Dorset and

Somerset a sub-Roman culture existed; even some hill-forts in Somerset were refurbished and reoccupied. The most striking feature, however, of the immediate post-Roman period was the rapid collapse of urban life.

When we turn to the last chapter, on the ascendancy of Wessex (685–1000), the emphasis is political, as we now enter a documented, historical period. Caedwalla and Ine, in the late seventh and early eighth century, really created Wessex and made it the major force south of the Thames, culminating, after fluctuations, in its brief authority over much of England in the early ninth century. Later in this century repeated Danish attempts to conquer Wessex ended in 878 when the Scandinavians were defeated by Alfred and his forces, and Wessex was left in peace.

This review has, of necessity, had to omit discussion of important matters with which Professor Cunliffe deals, such as the development of pottery and metalwork, increasing prehistoric contacts with the continent, and rituals and religion. But one hopes that sufficient has been said to indicate the author's illuminating broad sweep of an area which assumes so much importance during the later prehistoric period, remains important and highly-populated during the Roman period, and emerges as a major Anglo-Saxon kingdom in the centuries leading up to the Norman Conquest. The only errors noted by the reviewer were 'teaming' for 'teeming' on pp 21 and 23, and an incorrect reference to Fig 2.10 on p 59.

DAVID WILSON

CHRISTINE A HASTORF, *Agriculture and the Onset of Political Inequality before the Inka*, CUP, 1993. xv + 298 pp. 31 figs; 31 tables. £45.

This book is an interdisciplinary study of the emergence of political differentiation among the Sausa of the Upper Mantaro Basin in Central Peru between 200 AD and Inka conquest in the fifteenth century. Its approach is unusual in that political developments are not studied directly but are viewed through the window of agricultural change. Essential to this perspective is the notion that agriculture is not only an economic system, but a social one, in which access to land and water, labour and exchange are mediated through social interaction and political organization. The book aims to understand social change in its specific context rather than seek monocausal explanations. From these few comments it will be clear that, although the book appears as a volume in the *New Studies in Archaeology Series*, it is far from a narrow archaeological monograph. It is not only well embedded in social theory, but the sources and

methods its employs are wide-ranging and innovative.

Hastorf shows how during the late pre-Hispanic period agricultural production extended from the valley bottoms to the low hillsides where the population aggregated in defensive positions. She argues that this movement was triggered not by population pressure, but by defensive needs. These emerged, she suggests, due to conflicts between community leaders who sought to expand their power by gaining control of valley bottom lands which produced prestige crops, such as maize, that could be used to 'buy' the allegiance of other groups.

Her arguments are based on detailed analyses of settlement patterns and agricultural practices drawn from the archeological record, ethnohistorical sources and modern subsistence methods. The empirical work is presented in two main sections. The first considers socio-political change in the Upper Montaro Valley as reflected in its settlement patterns. Archaeological evidence for site location, settlement size and form is examined along with artifactual, architectural and ethnohistorical evidence for social and political differentiation within and between settlements. The evidence indicates a growing concern with defence and reveals increasing wealth differentiation though it did not extend to differential control over resources or production.

The second empirical section focuses on agricultural production in the Mantaro region. Evidence from present-day agricultural practices is used to establish production cycles and cropping combinations from which yields are estimated for different zones that are then compared with evidence from the pre-Hispanic period. First, Hastorf describes the characteristics of the Andean staples, in terms of their varieties, ecological requirements, productivity and calorific values. Many will find this section a useful source of reference. Subsequently she identifies the land-use zones of the region, estimates the crop yields for each zone, as well as the cropping rotations employed. The author not only recognizes the difficulty of inferring past practices from those of the present day, but tries to tackle the issue directly, for example by substituting indigenous crops for introduced species such as wheat and barley and appreciating the impact of fertiliser use. The author then examines pre-Hispanic evidence for intensive agricultural practices such as irrigation, raised fields, terracing, and presents the results of detailed analyses of crop remains. By comparing the yields predicted from 'spatial energetics' with the actual production for each zone obtained from the archeological record, she reveals discrepancies which she attributes to political developments which changed production strategies.

Hastorf's methods are wide-ranging and innovative, and her arguments persuasive. Field work associated with this volume began in the late 1970s and the book clearly reveals mature reflection and radiates a depth of knowledge of the region and Andean culture. Theoretically, methodologically and in substance, therefore, the volume makes an important contribution to our knowledge of social change in prehistory.

LINDA A NEWSON

ROGER B MANNING, *Hunters and Poachers. A Social and Cultural History of Unlawful Hunting in England, 1485-1640*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993. xii + 255 pp. 9 plates; 2 maps. £30.

This is a fascinating and highly readable book on an important subject. Despite the title, it deals primarily with the deer-stealing that was rife throughout the period covered, and Professor Manning presents it as a companion volume to his *Village Riots*, published in 1988. There are, as he says, 'many dimensions to the phenomenon of poaching' and these are amply demonstrated for sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England. The book is packed with examples, drawn mainly from original sources, especially legal records, and all firmly set in their historical context. We see poaching for commercial gain, at its worst, not surprisingly, in the vicinity of London, and probably increasing in volume at the end of the sixteenth century; we see poaching by purlieu men, at least in part motivated by the desire to thwart attempts to extend the jurisdiction of forest as opposed to common law; we see poaching by dispossessed commoners or simply those driven to violent action by the damage done to their crops by straying deer; we see poaching in the form of 'skimmingtons', or general huntings, often with gentry participation or encouragement, directed against particularly unpopular or arrogant owners of deer parks or other hunting preserves. But most of all we see poaching by the gentry and the aristocracy, men deeply imbued with, in Professor Manning's nice phrase, a 'deer-hunting culture'. This, Manning suggests, trickled down to the servants and others of lower status with whom they customarily hunted, and perhaps even narrowed the gap between 'gentry and commonalty'. On the other hand, he only very briefly discusses the traps and snares employed by lower class poachers operating in a quite different tradition.

For the gentry and the aristocracy, but in particular the former, as in the Middle Ages, the sheer extent of game preserves, and increasingly strict property qualifications, meant that hunting was often poaching. And poach they did, both in the royal forest and in each other's game preserves.

Indeed, reading this book one begins to wonder how significant in comparison was lawful hunting, not to speak of how any deer managed to survive. Poaching gangs 'havocked' as much as they hunted, and were sometimes so thick on the ground that they bumped into each other: one group, about to set fire to a hayrick, fled in terror when another group, hiding inside, emerged for fear of being burned alive (the fate apparently intended for the wife and infant son of the absent owner of the game preserve). It is hard, reading about such exploits, to get a clear idea of scale. Professor Manning makes no real attempt to quantify, which would no doubt be difficult, though a footnote promises a more detailed local case study with figures at a future date.

Here, he is content to emphasize the prevalence of poaching and the seriousness and persistence of the lawlessness and violence it entailed. It was a 'symbolic substitute for war' at a time when the opportunities for real combat were diminishing, and when, in any case, the nature of warfare was changing. Raiding game preserves was an obvious and exciting way of pursuing gentry and aristocratic feuding; they manipulated others and poached themselves, sometimes engaging in veritable 'poaching wars'. 'Corrupt' magistrates were not above unlawful hunting and were often reluctant to convict. Forest and game office was exploited to shelter selected poachers and cover hunting far in excess of the accepted perquisites of office.

Professor Manning thinks that poaching was increasing at the end of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. On a general level, the problem was exacerbated by greater competition for resources, including in woodland areas to which the deer were increasingly confined. Poaching was sometimes a form of social protest. But Manning stresses in particular the poaching that was often large-scale and organized, and that was more often than in the past directed against the game preserves of an aristocracy less able to protect its interests. He also traces a change in the attitude of government. Whereas the Tudors had been relatively tolerant of (or perhaps unable to suppress) an activity which to a degree kept turbulent subjects relatively harmlessly occupied, James I moved quickly to assert royal prerogative and aristocratic privilege, and further restrict those qualified to hunt. Professor Manning puts the first attempts to revive forest law firmly back into the reign of James I, and argues that there was a shift in emphasis in the Jacobean Game Laws away from the concern with public order which had first inspired them. Legal changes, which made many common lawyers uneasy, made it easier to convict; in any case, victims unable to get satisfaction in the ordinary

courts turned increasingly to the Court of Star Chamber, thus contributing to its low reputation.

Such a summary fails to do justice to the range of subjects aired in this book. There is much more of interest about hunting and/or poaching, not only (inevitably today?) as theatre, but as a rite of passage, as a means of upwards social promotion, and as a brutalizing influence, to mention only a few of the aspects discussed. And given the importance of hunting, such discussion throws much light on early modern society. The discussion of hunting methods is rather cursory. The book is sometimes rather repetitive; not only certain incidents but whole sentences recur. However, Professor Manning comes up with some nice phrases: to a keeper, he says, a panting greyhound was like a smoking gun.

JEAN BIRRELL

L J ARNOLD, *The Restoration Land Settlement in County Dublin, 1660-1688*, Irish Academic Press, Blackrock, Dublin, 1993. 211 pp. IR£35.

Arnold's short book is a pioneering study of a moment in Irish history which has been ill-understood within Ireland and little considered in Britain. The return of the Stuarts in 1660 required a settlement of land titles in Ireland akin to that in England. But the Irish settlement, after two decades of confused civil war and conquest, was necessarily more complex. Two broad bodies of people needed to be satisfied: dispossessed catholics, both Old Irish and Old English, together with the odd dispossessed protestant (the earl of Ormond), all of whose lands had been forfeited for 'royalism'; and the New English and Cromwellian adventurers who had been granted their lands during the 1650s. Charles's own inclination to favour the dispossessed catholic Irish had to be tempered by a need to assuage the beneficiaries of the Cromwellian conquest. The Act of Settlement (1662) failed to satisfy either interest, being both rigid in its treatment of catholics but also allowing too many of them to recover land from the Cromwellian grantees. It was therefore followed by the Act of Explanation (1665). Both acts were implemented by Courts of Claims which sat in 1663 and 1666-9. It is the politics which lay behind the passage of the statutes and the work of the courts which forms the meat of this book. Later chapters continue the story forward to the repeal of the Acts by the Jacobite parliament of 1689.

This is therefore largely a political study whose range is rather wider than the title suggests. Indeed, the commitment to County Dublin rests rather uneasily with the political narrative (although it is the fate of Dublin landowners before the Courts of Claims that Arnold describes). What the book lacks is a comparative study of the outcome of the Courts

of Claims elsewhere in Ireland especially in Connacht and Clare (to which the delinquents had been transplanted after 1652): a brief excursus on County Wicklow does not suffice. Some larger judgements about the quality of justice administered by the Courts of Claims would have been welcome (although it is clear that their impartiality was always under challenge from petitioners securing letters of commendation from the King). A note on the manuscript sources would also have been helpful. For a study of a passionate subject, dispossession, it is calm and measured, perhaps even bloodless: as a further study of the manipulation of the law in Ireland for political ends, it is very welcome indeed.

R W HOYLE

J F JAMES and J H BETTEY, eds, *Farming in Dorset: Diary of James Warne, 1758; Letters of George Boswell, 1787-1805*, Dorset County Museum, Dorchester, 1993. 180 pp. £10.75.

The two farmers, near-contemporaries, who feature in this latest volume of the Dorset Record Society's publications, were of course untypical – any farmer who, like James Warne, had a taste for genealogy and poetry, or like George Boswell, published a well-known book on water-meadows, must have been quite uncommon, as indeed he would be today.

James Warne (1726-1800) occupied in the course of a long career a number of farms in the Bere Regis-Wool area of east Dorset, beginning to farm on his own at Woodstreet Farm, Wool, at the age of 29. His diary, unfortunately covering only one year, was written soon after, when he was 32. It is a remarkable document, especially for its revealing detail, and shows Warne to have been a very active farmer, not only supervising his men but working alongside them as occasion required, even at such heavy and dirty tasks as carting mud from the river and building a bank. He drew building plans and played no small part in overseeing the men who made alterations to the farmhouse and outbuildings at Turner's Puddle Farm, to which he moved in the course of 1758. Much of his time was spent, however, in travelling, attending the local markets, calling on other farmers, on pleasure jaunts and visiting relations in the district. Even his regular church-going involved journeys to a variety of local places of worship.

The diary has details of the daily farming operations, which throw particular light on the use of water-meadows and the Dorset system of leasing milking herds to a dairyman. In addition, there are revealing references to his relations with his farm servants – which might be stormy when a man would not obey orders or took leave without permission. The precipitate sacking of men may be

explained in part by the casual way in which they were hired – for example, by their calling at the farmhouse or through a chance encounter on the road. Like many farmers of substance he had sums of money lent out at interest, and he borrowed other sums when necessary. In December 1758, for instance, he rode to Wool and there gave his 'Own Note of hand' to Mrs Knapton of East Lulworth for £60, agreeing to pay her 4 per cent for the money. Evidently, as we know, farming communities could obtain credit easily and cheaply in the absence of a developed or reliable banking system. There was cooperation of other kinds also as farmers bought and sold with one another, helped with advice and valued stock, and loaned horses and implements, even a cider mill.

George Boswell (1735-1815) belonged to a slightly later generation of Dorset farmers. He farmed at Puddletown, a little to the west of Warne's farm at Toner's Puddle, but he had numerous other interests, including a grocer's and mercer's shop, business as a maltster, and possibly as a tanner too, and acted as an agent for a number of local landowners in matters concerning enclosures, forestry and land reclamation. He was, however, pre-eminently an improving farmer and an authority on water-meadows, his book on the subject appearing in 1779 and again in a second edition in 1790. He was approached to undertake the revision of the first *General View of Dorset* of 1793 but, disliking the Board of Agriculture's methods, declined.

That he was a leading figure in the county's farming is borne out by his correspondence with George Culley, the eminent Northumberland farmer and writer. Seventeen of Boswell's lengthy letters to Culley, written between 1787 and 1805, are reproduced here. There is much of interest on the state of crops and livestock, harvests, prices, implements and methods of husbandry, especially, of course, the management of water-meadows. But other issues are occasionally touched upon. In July 1793, for instance, Boswell refers to a frightening rash of 'Bankruptcys and stopping of principal Houses' that 'so affected our concerns that we hardly know which way to turn'.

The rise in food prices made him express in 1792 'fears that the lower class will not sit still easy', though he believed the Dorset population to be too small for serious unrest. Three years later he told Culley that wheat and barley were so scarce that the 'poor are for a day together in many Villages without a morcel once or twice a week', and they had to be supported by private and county subscriptions, even though in his own grocer's and mercer's shop there was 'scarcely any money to be taken'. Boswell had a jaundiced view of the general run of farmers who thought the best farmer was

one who had the least outgoings and so made the most money, while he would have no truck with the great figures who initiated the Board of Agriculture, men who expected farmers of his kind to travel two hundred miles at their own expense merely to gratify idle curiosity. 'I very much doubt of the utility of those things in the hands of Lords and Dukes ... nothing give me greater pleasure than to exchange mutual knowledge; but to dance attendance upon great Folks, and to answer such Questions as they may deign to ask you and then with an ungracious Nod be told you are done with - will not suit the Stomach of your sincere Friend ...'

To conclude, both the James Warne Diary and the Boswell Letters are meticulously edited and provided with much interesting and useful background information. The editors and the Dorset Record Society are to be congratulated on producing a volume which will prove an invaluable quarry for agricultural historians of the period.

G E MINGAY

AUSTIN BOURKE, (edited by Jacqueline Hill and Cormac ÓGráda), *'The Visitation of God'? The Potato and the Great Irish Famine*, The Lilliput Press, Dublin, 1993. x + 230 pp. £20.

Economic and agricultural historians new to Irish history of the 1840s were told first to go to Austin Bourke. His distinctive initials, PMA (Austin Bourke) became all too familiar on inter-library loan applications. This is still the case. The old lags know automatically that they need constant infusions of his insights, and also some of his basic recycled data. In other words Austin Bourke stands as a colossus astride the 1840s. But where is the magnum opus which goes with such an epithet? His thesis appeared in 1967 but there never was a published version. This volume is not that PhD, but it is a volume of many of the main themes which are necessary to understand the agricultural history of that troubled decade. They include unpublished chapters from his thesis, some of his famous papers, and contributions to *The Irish Times*.

Not everyone will realize that Austin Bourke was a trained scientist, initially through mathematics and physics but then through a lifetime career in meteorology, begun in 1939. He came relatively late to the study of Irish history. His first published accounts of potato blight, linked to the weather, appeared in 1953, but perhaps it was not until two years later that he realized he had a role to play in understanding and explaining the Irish Famine of the 1840s. In 1955-6 he was seconded by the Irish Meteorological Service to the Chilean government through a UN agency, where his brief was to make links between environmental factors - in his case

meteorological ones - and the recent potato blight in that country, the very same *phytophthora infestans* which ravaged Ireland over one hundred years earlier. From that Chilean experience, it seems, he never looked back.

Thus, this collection of his works includes a lot on the Irish potato blight, a lot on the potato and its position in pre-Famine Irish history, and some detail on the environmental influences. Two chapters from his thesis, contributions to volumes, articles and other works are divided into two sections, 'Agriculture and the potato before the Famine', and 'The Famine'. Included in the latter is some small detail of the potato blight in a wider European context. It is not possible to review the whole of his contribution since almost every essay, both in this collection and also in others which have been excluded, stand alone as important to the understanding of Ireland in the 1840s. But I would single out one major essay which impinges on Irish agricultural history in the widest of ways. Agricultural historians of Ireland are blessed with a database of annual statistics which, if not better are certainly more useful than their British counterparts because they stretch back to 1847, before the June Returns were a gleam in the eye. But what of the pre-Famine base? The unwary will discover some marvellous statistics associated with the 1841 population census of Ireland. Be warned - do not attempt to use them before reading Austin Bourke's *Economic History Review* article of 1965, here reprinted in this collection. He leads the reader through the pitfalls of using the data and the statistical inconsistencies in general which pervaded Irish life. What did an acre mean, was it a Statute, Cunningham or Irish acre, and with what relative distribution were these different units of measurement used in Ireland? Such questions impinge widely on agricultural data, for example on an interpretation of the landholding distributions which are contained in the census. There are also warnings about the interpretation of the animal numbers registered in the census. But more than this. Austin Bourke does not simply say 'be wary', or worse still 'hands off, don't use', he is far more positive than this, and he suggests ways to accommodate the inconsistencies and make the data useful.

It is a pleasure to have this collection of essays, some of which from my location would certainly require inter-library loan applications, and Jacqueline Hill and Cormac ÓGráda must be thanked for their role in bringing them together. But the biggest thanks go to Austin Bourke. He is still the first point of departure for new scholars of Irish agricultural history in the 1840s, and the first refresher for those returning to that troubled decade.

MICHAEL TURNER

C W CHALKLIN and J R. WORDIE, eds, *Town and Countryside: The English Landowner in the National Economy, 1660-1860*, Unwin Hyman, 1989. xiii + 224 pp. £30.

In recent years we have had a steady stream of publications on the landed classes of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England. The lifestyle of the aristocracy, the political role of the landed men, their involvement in charity and cultural pursuits, their mental world – all these have come in for their share of attention. Specialist studies of the landed contribution to the economic development of the country have been less numerous and have, by and large, been confined to volumes on individual landed families. Eric Richards' celebrated volume on the Leveson-Gowers is an example here.

This volume of essays sets out to redress the balance. It consists of eight detailed case studies plus a ranging introduction. The latter, written by Ross Wordie, considers not just the direct economic impact of the landowners but also their influence on the economy via their contribution to legislation and to the creation of an environment conducive to growth. As for the case studies, some – Brian Trueman's investigation into the development of the Guy's Hospital estates, for instance, and Ellis Wasson's portrait of the third Earl Spencer as a progressive landlord – are clearly developments of previously published work. Other contributions, like Jane Cottis' analysis of the estates of the eighteenth-century Berkshire gentleman Sir Mark Stuart Pleydell, have a fresher feel.

But, new or more familiar, all the pieces are well written, authoritative and splendidly researched. Given that there are only eight studies to play with the range of the volume is impressive. The towns examined include nineteenth-century Reading (Steven Blake) and late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Bristol, Birmingham and Liverpool (Christopher Chalklin). For good measure, there is also an illuminating analysis of dock building in Liverpool between 1709 and 1835 by Jane Longmore. This last piece is particularly well illustrated with contemporary maps and drawings.

At first glance, the country landowners selected for scrutiny may seem to offer less varied fare than the towns. All, for example, hail from the midlands and the south. But, once one settles into these country pieces, the hint of narrowness is quickly dispelled. Particularly pleasing is the attention given to the small, gentry estate. As well as the essay by Dr Cottis, already mentioned, Patrick Keeling provides us with a revealing glimpse of the activities of the Northcotes of Upton Pyne in Devon between 1660 and 1851. The country landowner in industry is also considered in a notable essay by

Dr Wordie entitled 'Aristocrats and entrepreneurs in the Shropshire mining industry, 1748-1803'.

All in all, this is an admirable and most welcome volume. The book does not, perhaps, contribute anything very new by way of theory or interpretation, but it undoubtedly adds to the density and richness of our knowledge of the role of the landowner in the English economy between 1660 and 1860. The editors point out that five of the eight contributors are either teachers at or doctoral graduates of Reading University. The university can be justly proud of such an array of talent and of so much research so well done.

ANGUS MCINNES

PAM BARNES, *Norfolk Landowners since 1880*, Centre of East Anglian Studies, University of East Anglia, 1993. 93 pp. £6.

Landownership has been a continuing interest for historians since the Second World War. For a time 1880 marked the terminal date of most studies: John Bateman's figures, published in *The Great Landowners of Great Britain*, provided a solid statistical basis of acreage and rentals, not readily available for later years. Many estate owners placed restrictions on access to the most recent records deposited in county record offices, and there was no national survey available to calculate what had happened to the beleaguered estate owners, hemmed in by falling rent-rolls, depressed agricultural prices and punitive death duties which rose as high as 75 per cent. David Spring, in his Tawney lecture of 1981, explored the subject of landownership after 1880, and since that time there have been general and national studies by David Cannadine, W D Rubinstein, F M L Thompson and others. More records have in the last decade become available; the 'New Domesday' of 1910-11, the death duty registers, records of estate sales and in addition later estate archives are becoming less restricted.

Pam Barnes has taken the set of 106 Norfolk landowners who, c 1880, possessed 2000 acres or more, and from this base she has investigated how the owners and their estates coped with the decline of their fortunes. Her goal was to follow the progress of two generations (p 12), but in practice she covers a longer period, in some cases continuing into the 1980s.

It was a good basis for a study, and Pam Barnes has completed it excellently. The book is a pleasure to handle and to read; it is well illustrated throughout, and although it contains much detailed information, the text can always be read with pleasure. Only the index is surprisingly unsophisticated – could it be computer generated? Strange index entries include 'Incursion of Scotsmen' under 'I' and 'The Golden Years' under 'T'. The index is

based not on family names but on estate names: Blickling, for instance, is mentioned in the index under 'letting the shooting rights', 'rents' and 'sale of valuables' but not under the family name Lothian.

Norfolk Landowners since 1880 contains no great surprises. Here is a picture of great estates in deep financial trouble, surviving by the selling of antiques, the letting of sporting rights, the felling of timber. Servants disappeared; parts of the house closed; sometimes the owners lived abroad. Property and the land itself was neglected. The last act was to split up the estate and demolish the house. In only three years between 1917 and 1920, a quarter of the acreage of the great estates of Norfolk was sold (p 69), a phenomenon repeated in many parts of England. Nevertheless, many great estates continued: Pam Barnes found that those estate owners who were not heavily indebted could manage to cope with falling rent rolls, and those who kept their nerve, could and did survive, taking farms in hand and cutting expenses. On the whole the larger estates endured (8 out of 11 in Norfolk), while the smaller went to the wall. Those that made it through the 1950s still retaining substantial amounts of land moved into better times, with more favourable treatment by successive governments since the late 1950s. This is a most useful county study of Norfolk; it would be good if, as the author suggests, there could be comparative studies of, for instance, a south-western county and a northern manufacturing county, to see if the recent history of the Norfolk landowners is replicated elsewhere.

BARBARA ENGLISH

JAN BIELEMAN, *Geschiedenis van de landbouw in Nederland, 1500-1950: veranderingen en verscheidenheid*, Boom, Meppel/Amsterdam, 1992. 423 pp. Illustrated. Dfl 57.

P C M HOPPENBROUWERS, *Een middeleeuwse samenleving. Het Land van Heusden (ca 1360-ca 1515)*, 2 vols, AAG Bijdragen 32, Wageningen NL, Landbouwwuniversiteit, 1992. xviii + 997 pp. 51 tables; 30 figures; 5 maps; 4 illustrations. nps. [Also published as a doctoral dissertation for the Agricultural University of Wageningen, and as vol xxv of *Historia Agriculturae*, Nederlands Agronomisch-Historisch Instituut, Groningen.]

PETER R PRIESTER, *De economische ontwikkeling van de landbouw in Groningen 1800-1910. Een kwalitatieve en kwantitatieve analyse*, AAG Bijdragen 31, Wageningen NL, Landbouwwuniversiteit, 1991. xvi + 639 pp. 64 tables; 31 figures; 32 maps. nps. [Also published as a doctoral dissertation for the Agricultural University of Wageningen, and as

vol xxiv of *Historia Agriculturae*, Nederlands Agronomisch-Historisch Instituut, Groningen.]

FRANS VAN POPPEL, *Trouwen in Nederland. Een historisch-demografische studie van de 19e en vroeg-20e eeuw*, AAG Bijdragen 33, Wageningen NL, Landbouwwuniversiteit, 1992. 654 pp. nps. [Also published as a doctoral dissertation for the Agricultural University of Wageningen, and as Report no 31 of the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute in The Hague.]

The AAG, or Department of Agricultural History at Wageningen University in the Netherlands, has been busy again. Here are four major works in the space of two years, three of them appearing in the respected series *AAG Bijdragen*, which is an in-house publication vehicle for those connected with the department, although the volumes are almost always published simultaneously by a commercial house. The fourth book under review here, which is not published in the series, is from the hand of Jan Bieleman, who is on the permanent staff of that department, so we have here a Wageningen quartet.

And it shows. The scholarly tradition established in Wageningen by Slicher van Bath, and carried on now by Ad van der Woude and many of his colleagues, is an *Annales*-derived determination to leave no stone unturned in collecting and processing all the quantitative data available, especially the demographic material. This has been done by all the Wageningen group in the most rigorous manner and to the highest standards. But there is more: this quantitative material, and a great deal else, is marshalled to reconstruct the detail of everyday life in the past on often quite a small scale, but over long periods of time. All the works here under review fit squarely into this tradition of awesomely researched quantitative studies over long periods, usually regionally focused, dealing with agricultural or at least agrarian history.

The study by Bieleman, *Geschiedenis van de landbouw*, is a general history of Dutch agriculture from the sixteenth century to the Second World War. Bieleman is prolific, and has shown his ability to conduct detailed studies aplenty in the past; this sweeping narrative is, therefore, all the more welcome in coming from the Netherlands, where only the theologians have traditionally been able to produce great syntheses. Methodologically this overview of nearly four centuries does not offer us very much new, although it certainly maintains the rigorous Wageningen standards. It relies on secondary literature for the most part (a certain amount of it written by Bieleman himself), and concentrates on farm production, spending less time on agricul-

ture's place in the economy, or on matters of rural sociology. Bieleman knows a great deal about the practical business of farming, and his chapters and sections on mechanization and technology are particularly good. The illustrations are well chosen and almost always informative, and all the figures and graphs are handled with easy competence. The division of the vast material is into three main chronological sections covering the periods 1500-1650, 1650-1850 and 1850-1950; within these the treatment is regional, so we get quite detailed local information in each main period. The disadvantages are that the national overview is elusive - perhaps necessarily so - and that because it is largely a narrative, there is little in the way of 'thesis', except for an insistence that farming was never stagnant but always dynamic, and that regional divisions should not be over-simplified. There is, for example, no conclusion, but simply a very short Epilogue sketching the developments (and problems) in Dutch agriculture from 1950 to the present. But this is a very useful book of reference, containing an enormous wealth of knowledge, and is by far the most comprehensive general agricultural history of the Netherlands which has been produced to date. It is only a pity that there is no English-language summary, as there usually is in Dutch academic books.

The other three books are doctoral theses, all at the University of Wageningen. Hoppenbrouwers' *Een middeleeuwse samenleving* is a detailed study of life in a region of the Netherlands called 'Het Land van Heusden' in the late Middle Ages. Heusden was (and is) a small market town north-west of 's-Hertogenbosch (Bois-le-Duc, Den Bosch) in the river area of the central Netherlands, surrounded (then) by sixteen villages forming 'Het Land'. It is a very small area, and Hoppenbrouwers' researches have been exhaustive. The list of consulted archive material is very large, and most of the notes refer directly to it.

His interest is in the area for its own sake, but the study is fully integrated into academic debates, such as the one on the transition from feudalism to capitalism, focusing on the concept of a crisis of feudalism in the late Middle Ages. Hoppenbrouwers analyses this mainly in terms of social class and status, and of social relationships; he also pays attention to the changing nature of the local agricultural economy. The main tool employed is a database (printed in the appendix volume) of 2500 personal dossiers or reconstructed genealogies, on the basis of which it is possible to be quite accurate about family relationships, land ownership, migration, and income (indicated by taxation). The general conclusion is that, rather than there being evidence of some enormous haemorrhage in feudal-

ism which forced the agricultural economy into some form of early capitalism, things changed relatively little in Het Land van Heusden in these two hundred years. There is no evidence of the balance between 'lord and peasant' skewing heavily in favour of either party, and while the lords found it difficult to accumulate capital at an increased rate, the farming population was not able to produce yeomen substantial enough to challenge the political elite. This then is partly a story of peasant resilience: their properties were not broken up on succession, the farming economy was always flexible and responsive to prevailing conditions, and the village community retained quite important legal jurisdictions; part of the reason was also the weakness of the absentee landowning class, caused by its great diversity (myriad levels of nobles, and the urban patriciate) and rapid turnover, and by its weakening at the hands of endless Burgundian wars. The main sections of the work show the approach most clearly: there is an introductory theoretical section (emphasizing the 'bottom-up' approach and the concept of feudal collapse), followed by two very substantial sections on 'Families' (the genealogical reconstructions), 'Ownership and Taxation', and 'Institutions' (legal confrontations). This is an intimate portrait on a colossal scale of research, well integrated into current and past academic debates. There are 300 pages of graphs, figures, and appendices, and there is a useful and extended English summary.

The last two studies take us into the modern period. Priester's doctoral thesis is a study of the agricultural economy of the northern Dutch province of Groningen in the nineteenth century. In many ways it is exemplary, perhaps because it closely follows parts of the model laid down by J L Van Zanden in his pioneering study of the national agricultural economy in the same period (*De economische ontwikkeling van de Nederlandse landbouw*, Wageningen, 1985). It is a reconstruction of the economic totality of agriculture in the province as it changed over time. Exhaustive research into quantitative sources produces cogent (though always arguable) estimates of the factors of production, and of land usage; these are employed to arrive at estimates of production in the various sectors of the agricultural economy. This is all done (in Van Zanden's footsteps) for four fixed points in the century (1815, 1862, 1890, and 1910), which allows the analysis of change over time.

Added interest is provided by an ever-present thematic enquiry: the founder of rural sociology in the Netherlands, E W Hofstee, had a special interest in the province of Groningen, and observed a generation ago that the shift there in the nineteenth century away from pasture to arable fields did not

follow the rest of the country, and did not follow the dictates of market forces, which were very much in favour of dairying in the nineteenth century. The reason for this 'irrational' behaviour on the part of Groningen's farmers, said Hofstee, was that for social reasons they aped the ways of the prestigious gentlemen farmers who had always produced grain. Priester takes exception to this, and restores the rationality of the Groningen farmers by explaining that the shift from arable to dairy is illusory, for permanent grass and arable were in fact both making way for a rapid extension of convertible husbandry, which brought with it a large increase in the cultivation of fodder crops. So less land was classified as pasture, but this did not imply (as Hofstee had thought) a shift to more arable.

This is a classic macro-economic study, even though it is at regional rather than national level; we see little of the world of the farming communities, in contrast to the 'bottom-up' approach of Hoppenbrouwers, and the intimate knowledge which Bieleman demonstrates of the practical processes of farm production. The study is none the worse for that: we have here a presentation of nearly all the economic data on agricultural production, which will form the economic background to more comprehensive studies of communities in the past, and is simultaneously an indispensable contribution to a really thorough understanding of the working and changes of the national economy in the nineteenth century. This is a very useful book, which will remain a standard for a long time; the English summary is short, but provides some access.

The final work under scrutiny, Van Poppel's *Trouwen in Nederland* (which I have reviewed in more detail for *Population Studies*, July 1993), is the most comprehensive survey of Dutch marriage in the modern period. It does not deal with agriculture specifically, but is very much concerned with the demographic and cultural aspects of Dutch life since about 1815, and dwells on the countryside as much as the towns; it is therefore of interest to agrarian historians, if not to strictly agricultural ones.

This dissertation comes from the hand of one of the Netherlands' top historical demographers, with a long history of seminal publications behind him. His quarry here is not only marriage, but also the dissolution of marriage (by death or divorce), and remarriage. Van Poppel is a master of statistical techniques, and displays his expertise widely, but significantly he makes equally extensive use of qualitative sources like contemporary writings, folklore, proverbs, and individual case histories.

The subject is laid out and gone over in meticulous detail. Dutch marriage was not particularly unusual within Europe: the marriage age dropped

a little around 1860, and fell decisively in the twentieth century; peaks in the marriage rate followed the economic cycle as expected, with booms in the 1820s (end of war), the 1850s and 1860s, and after 1900. The book is full of insights, new proofs of established concepts, and fundamental revisions. The two most interesting aspects of Dutch demography in the modern period are the surprising regional variation in so small a country, and the more rapid increase in the population there than in other European countries; Van Poppel steers his study of marriage to contribute to these debates. Alongside falling mortality, Dutch marital fertility was probably the most important reason for the very rapidly rising population; the regional variations he explains in the main by religion, but also by close attention to the varying supply of marriage partners across the country (one example of a new insight), caused by migratory movements. This is an exhaustive study of the subject, and has already assumed the position of standard work, which it will retain for some considerable time. The summary in English is a help to those who do not read Dutch.

These four books are formidable works of scholarship, with only Bieleman's general history of agriculture weighing in at under 600 pages, or having any pretensions to a non-academic market. They are the building-blocks of more general historiography: these immensely detailed studies underpin and make affordable the generalizations of writers on the national experience and indeed the international one. It is not the least of the achievements of the 'Wageningen School', as it is sometimes referred to, that it has diffused a methodology and particularly a statistical thoroughness through its members which allows their works on very diverse subjects to inter-relate, and makes the conclusions comparable.

MICHAEL WINTLE

MARTINE GOOSSENS, *The Economic Development of Belgian Agriculture 1812-1846, A Regional Perspective*, Leuven UP, Leuven, 1993. 443 pp. Be Fr 2200.

JAN BLOMME, *The Economic Development of Belgian Agriculture: 1880-1980. A Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis*, Leuven UP, Leuven, 1993. 510 pp. Be Fr 2500.

At first glance, these elegant volumes appear to be 'identical twins', with standardized mid-green covers bearing abstract designs. Certainly they belong to the same family of research and began life as doctoral theses written at the Workshop on Quantitative Economic History at the University

of Leuven under the supervision of Professor Herman van der Wee. Both fit into a large research programme based at Leuven and Liège for compiling statistical information on the evolution of the national economy between 1795 and 1953, in order to enable Belgian experience to be quantified and compared with processes of change in other countries of western Europe during the broad and controversial period of the 'industrial revolution'. Both studies pay great attention to questions of method, definition and economic rigour, being well supplied with statistical tables and numerical appendices. Both, of course, deal with farming and provide essential sets of highly detailed information for the national database project. However, differences between the two books are not simply to do with chronology, and hence they will be examined individually.

In a volume of 510 pages, with 65 tables and 76 appendices (mostly in tabular form) which cover 170 pages, Jan Blomme reconstructs the annual national indices of output, input and generated income between the onset of 'agricultural crisis' in 1880 and 1980. To be precise, the years spanning the two world wars are excluded because of statistical deficiencies. Within an overall structure, dealing in turn with context, methodology for producing a reliable database, and analysis with interpretation, Dr Blomme charts the changing fortunes of the many elements of the agricultural economy, stressing their rising productivity but their declining contribution to the Belgian economy as a whole. After an extremely useful résumé of the development of Belgian farming before 1880, he focuses on the retreat of arable production in the face of cereal imports and the rise of specialized animal husbandry and horticulture during the period of industrialization and urbanization between 1880 and 1913. Then he turns to the relatively calm inter-war years, when farm labour was being shed and productivity was rising per worker and unit area, before analysing the application of scientific methods since 1950 which enabled agricultural productivity to increase by an average of 3 per cent per annum. The presentation is entirely at the national scale and provides essential information that is being integrated by the Leuven research team into the global national accounts for 1880-1953.

Dr Martine Goossens tackles a shorter period but has two distinctively positive features to enhance the appeal of her work. First, she is using material that relates to three different political regimes, each with its own set of agricultural policies. Second, she is exploring detailed archival evidence to produce a set of regional indicators as well as statistics for (the territory that was to become) Belgium as

a whole. During the French period (1795-1814) there was formal unification of territory, abolition of feudalism (where it still survived in Wallonia), introduction of freedom of cultivation, and a series of policies to encourage food production and to improve agricultural productivity. Napoleonic enquiries, very similar to those undertaken in France, recorded characteristics of the economy in great detail and speculated on potential for future development. They provide Dr Goossens' first datum plane of information. No such investigations were made during the Dutch period (1814-30) when William wished to industrialize the enlarged Kingdom of the Netherlands, enabling cheap grain imports to be brought in from the Baltic lands (as they had long supplied the Northern Provinces) and allowing surplus purchasing power to be directed to acquisition of manufactured goods. Subsequent dissatisfaction among farmers in the southern provinces contributed to the protest movement against the Dutch regime that was to culminate in Belgian independence in 1830. Dr Goossens' second suite of data emerges from annual statistical surveys and the great Belgian census of population, industry and farming that was conducted in 1846, just a few years after the national *Statistique* was assembled in France (1838-40). The economic policy of the new state sought to protect both arable and livestock production, and to construct new roads in the Ardenne and in other parts of Wallonia, thereby linking them with the more advanced economic environments of Flanders which had been well provided with roads for many decades.

The pattern of change during the four decades of study is one of rapid advance in output in the backward south, where levels of production and productivity had been very low. Encouraged by the abolition of feudalism, erosion of the triennial rotation plus reduction of fallow, and the gradual emergence of a national market for foodstuffs, large areas of scrub and heath were put under the plough. A comparable programme of *défrichement* was launched across the lowlands of the Kempenland in the north-east. Central provinces (Antwerp, Brabant, West Flanders) increased their already respectable output levels, but relatively little advance occurred in East Flanders, Liège and Hainault where productivity had been high for centuries. The presentation concludes with some interesting speculations on the relationship between agriculture and Belgian industrial advance, which cannot be tested until manufacturing is subjected to longitudinal quantitative analysis.

The detail of the story is supported by 19 graphs, 68 tables and 9 appendices (embracing 62 pages of statistical tables), and a bibliography of 500 items.

Unfortunately there are only two maps, one being an over-reduced attempt at showing the territorial framework under the French regime and the other depicting very basic 'soil regions'. Dr Goossens is clearly no cartographer and this gives rise to my only real criticism of her book. The opportunity to depict spatial variations in an immediately comprehensible fashion seems to have escaped her. In my opinion, at least, two dozen carefully constructed maps would have conveyed a much clearer message than scores of detailed tables. Indeed, I feel that there is scope for Dr Goossens to write another version of her analysis of this fascinating period of Belgian rural history with an international audience specifically in mind. It would be shorter (no more than 200 pages), be shorn of countless tables and extensive bibliographies, be well endowed with contemporary illustrations and thoughtfully constructed maps, and would emphasize people, places, politics and policies rather than numbers.

These two volumes in the 'Studies in Belgian History' series from Leuven are to be warmly welcomed for the detailed information they convey about a country whose agrarian history is all too often overshadowed by those of its larger neighbours or is associated only with the remarkable progress accomplished in Flanders, and especially around Antwerp, from the Middle Ages onwards. Their appearance in English is appreciated and opens up a wide range of scholarship that has been confined in Dutch-language publications.

HUGH CLOUT

RICHARD HERR, ed, *Themes in Rural History of the Western World*, Iowa State UP, Ames, Iowa, 1993. xiv + 277 pp. 17 figs; 33 tables. \$39.95.

This unusual volume contains essays by five historians, two anthropologists, a geographer, and a classicist. Readers may be certain, therefore, of a varied and wide-ranging offering. They may not have much direct interest in, for example, the management of a Roman estate, a case study of agricultural development in southern Italy, land tenure in eighteenth-century Hesse, nor yet the early establishment of the hacienda in colonial Mexico, but they will find it profitable to follow up the guidelines provided by Richard Herr as a key to the underlying common themes which emerge. Indeed, the book is well worth reading if only for Professor Herr's extremely well-informed, carefully balanced, penetrating, and thoughtful analysis.

This introduction offers first a wide-ranging survey of past and present themes in rural history, providing many insights, not least in its discussion of the French rural historians. He proceeds to the finding of common ground among the various contributors, despite differences in period, country,

approach, and topic. He suggests that the relationships between seven *protagonists* (he prefers this term to *factors*) lie at the heart of rural history, regardless of time, place and subject. These are: the owners of land and those who worked it, the state, the market, demographic forces, customs (or culture), and environment.

He goes on to show how one or more of these protagonists feature and interact in the essays which follow. Thus, in Dennis Kehoe's study the relations between owners and tenants in Roman times are central to the discussion and show strong similarities to those in later periods elsewhere in Europe. Anthony Galt's examination of parts of southern Italy again turns on the landowner and the part played by contemporary culture in shaping attitudes and policies. Thomas Fox's investigation of eighteenth-century Hesse, by contrast, places emphasis on the key part played by the state in the transition from manorial tenure to direct ownership.

With Ronald Janke's account of Indian reservations in the USA the scene moves to the New World. He considers the mistakes made by the state in attempting to make independent yeoman farmers of Indians whose culture was quite alien to this objective. Kathleen Abbas examines the problems faced by settlers who in the Spanish colonies lacked the domestic animals common in Europe, and in particular the length of time required to establish herds of cattle and horses. Robert Claxton turns to the history of climate, and considers the connections between the experience of drought in Spanish America and political and social unrest. John Resch offers in microcosm a study of the adaptation of European settlers in the early history of Peterborough, New Hampshire, the importance there of the growth of population, and the subsequent changes in the community's cultural and political values. Finally, John Schwaller studies the influence of the market, and that of the backing of the colonial government in the establishment of haciendas in the neighbourhood of Mexico City.

Both European and American scholars will gain insights from these studies, even when the topics seem too remote or specialized; and Richard Herr is to be congratulated on bringing the collection together and clarifying the relationships which give logic to the whole.

G E MINGAY

FREDERICK V CARSTENSEN, MORTON ROTHSTEIN and JOSEPH A SWANSON, eds, *Outstanding in His Field: Perspectives on American Agriculture in Honor of Wayne D Rasmussen*, Iowa State UP, Ames, Iowa, 1993. xvii + 158 pp. \$34.95.

Unlike our own more recent Department of Agriculture, that of the USA has long concerned

itself with agricultural history. For the lengthy period between 1940 and 1986, when he retired, Wayne D Rasmussen was the Department of Agriculture's historian and chief of its Agricultural History Branch. In addition, he has been president and founder of the Association for Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums, and president of the (USA) Agricultural History Society. Among the many tributes paid on his retirement the *New York Times* was moved to describe him as 'keeper of the agricultural keys'.

Quite apart from the responsibilities of his official post, Wayne Rasmussen has made a major contribution to writing on agricultural history. The select bibliography which concludes this volume extends to more than a hundred items, and includes papers on Latin America, the USA Department of Agriculture, government legislation and programmes, technology, and a variety of other topics. One article in particular will be well known to British readers: 'The Civil War: a catalyst of agricultural revolution', which first appeared as long ago as 1965.

This volume, produced in honour of this remarkably prolific and influential historian, falls into two main sections. The first deals with the past and future directions of American agricultural history, and includes contributions from James H Shideler (for long editor of *Agricultural History*), Gavin Wright, and Hal S Barron, together with, in the American style, considered comments by Robert E Gallman and Allan and Margaret Bogue. Four thoughtful essays on agrarian democracy in the Middle West, the dispossession of southern farmers, the persistence of family farming despite the rise of modern farming methods, and the impact of technological change on the rural community round off the book. With their varied themes and broad over-views, they are stimulating and highly suitable pieces for a *Festschrift*.

It is impossible in a brief review to do justice to the wealth of ideas and insights gathered together in what is nevertheless quite a short book. And certainly the distinguished contributors show no complacency over the state of their subject. Jim Shideler, for example, reflects that much of the agricultural history written in the past 'is an embarrassment ... We all know a good many opaque works that have *earned* contempt ...' On the other hand, as Allan Bogue argues, experience has shown that the available historical resources are richer than ever imagined, while opportunity awaits those prepared to investigate such issues as productivity change, institutions, and markets and communities, especially if quantitative methods are employed. But he, too, sounds a depressing note: 'Whether history students are literate today is a subject of

some argument. There can be no question but that few of them are functionally numerate, and we need more of that kind working in the field of agricultural history'.

This volume is more than a fine tribute to a major American scholar. It should be read by British historians, more particularly younger ones, who may well find here invaluable ideas capable of translation to the British scene.

G E MINGAY

DONALD H AKENSON, ed, *Canadian Papers in Rural History IX*, Langdale Press, Gananoake, Ontario, 1994. 418 pp. nps.

This ninth volume of *Canadian Papers* brings together contributions concerning a wide variety of countries and sources, having pieces on Ireland, India and South Africa, as well as, of course, on Canada. Indeed, the first piece, one of monograph length (stretching to almost 170 pages) is a very detailed, intensively researched and interestingly illustrated study of the Irish Palatines. These were Germans and others who came from the Continent to settle in Ireland, mainly in Limerick, early in the eighteenth century. They constituted islands of Protestantism in a sea of Irish Catholics, and such was their isolation that they were still speaking German at the time of Arthur Young's visit to Ireland in 1776, and continued to do so for some decades after. However, because of the hostility of the native Irish, economic depression, and other factors, they emigrated to Canada in the 1820s and 1840s, settling in various parts of Ontario. In Canada, while first describing themselves as 'Irish' they eventually forsook their European origins and began to call themselves 'Canadians'.

There follow two studies of Mennonite communities. The first, by Royden Loewen, compares the Mennonites of Waterloo county, Ontario with those of Hanover, Manitoba during the 1890s. He shows that the objectives of maintaining a self-sufficient, family-oriented farm household set in a closely-knit rural community prevailed over the influence of differing regional conditions, particularly as Waterloo county became more industrialized, with consequences for market and social relations. As a result the Waterloo Mennonites had greater difficulty in finding land in order to continue the agricultural nature of the community, so that different strategies were needed to secure the same ends in the two widely separated communities.

The second Mennonite study, by Harvey Neufeldt, examines the community established at Yarrow in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia. Here a scheme for draining former floodlands provided, from 1928, a favourable farming environment for Mennonites coming from the harsh cli-

mate of the prairies. The migrants set about building a new community on the unified village pattern they had known in their homeland (there is a brief section on Mennonite colonies in Russia), and for a period they succeeded. But a change in their economic situation and a variety of external influences, together with the movement away of young people led to a breakdown in the old traditions. By 1960, the author concludes, 'it was difficult to speak of Yarrow as a political, economic and religious brotherhood or community'.

The next study takes us to the eastern edge of Canada, to Nova Scotia. A R MacNeil examines geographical and economic mobility in Annapolis township in the hundred years after 1760. He finds a remarkable turnover of population even before the out-migrations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as new settlers continued to appear (although most of the good land was already occupied) giving rise to continued flexibility in social structure.

Ronald Rudin's illuminating discussion focuses on two studies made some fifty years ago by American scholars of rural Quebec and Ireland. He considers how the first was soon made obsolete by the rapidly changing society of Quebec, while the second remained influential with Ireland's much slower pace of urbanization. This is followed by Lorne F Hammond's study of labour in the lumber camps on the Lièvre river, a tributary of the Ottawa river. The logging season corresponded roughly with the winter inactivity on the farms so that, by logging, farmers could supplement their incomes and gather funds for next season's farming. The round of work in the logging shanties of the later 1870s and 1880s is revealed in some detail, and the author raises the question of to what degree farming was complementary to the forest economy, in opposition to the usual reverse hypothesis.

Stefanie Cepuch deals with the employment of German prisoners of war on Canadian farms in the Second World War. This began in 1943 and formed a valuable means of relieving the wartime labour shortage, the prisoners receiving the same food rations and medical care as their guards. The swindling of farmers is the theme of Kerry Badgley's study of late nineteenth-century Ontario. Too gullible some farmers may have been, but it was their haste to make a quick dollar and the ingenious nature of the frauds imposed on them that were mainly responsible for their losses. William L Marr finds in an examination of fertility variations that ratios were higher in frontier settlements than in older areas, the differences being due to variations in the age of the wife, the birthplace of the head of the household, farm size, and proportion of cultivated to owned acres.

Kenneth Kelly looks at the cropping changes occurring in two districts of north Bengal in the nineteenth century. The growing influence of the Calcutta market resulted in increased division between rich and poor, and between landlord and under-capitalized, indebted and poverty-stricken tenants. Lastly, Tim Clynick explores racial and class relations in the Vaal river diamond camps near Kimberley, Cape Province, in the years before the First World War. The control of applications for a licence to dig was the means by which white predominance in the industry was maintained, while also serving to limit operations by poor whites.

So, a very varied fare is offered in this substantial volume, in terms of subject and location as well as depth of treatment. Some readers of the *Review* may find the sociological bias of a number of the topics little to their taste, and the jargon is sometimes bemusing, but there is nevertheless much of interest in all the papers. As ever, Donald H Akenson has made a first-class job of the editing.

G E MINGAY

TERRY PEACH, *Interpreting Ricardo*, CUP, 1993. xiv + 318 pp. £35.

Interpretation of the work of David Ricardo is today a matter of controversy: currently there are at least three distinct and partisan versions (neo-classical, Marxist, and Sraffian), to which we could add Terry Peach's as a fourth. Disagreement prevails, of course, over the work of Malthus, or of Smith; but in discussion of the work of these writers the tone of controversy, disputatiousness and sheer ill-humour is lacking. It is hardly an exaggeration to suggest that little can be said about Ricardo that will not draw vehement criticism from one direction or another. Terry Peach belongs firmly in this tradition, having over the years conducted a tenacious feud in a variety of leading journals against Samuel Hollander's neo-classical appropriation of the work of Ricardo. This book is the culmination of his efforts, presenting at length his commentary upon Ricardo and upon those put forward by his adversaries.

It must be said at once that Peach's contribution to the genre is exceptionally detailed and well-argued. Although considerably shorter than Hollander's *Economics of David Ricardo* (1979), Peach presents a close reading, month by month, of Ricardo's career as a theoretical economist, from his first work on the Bullion Report in 1809 to his final attempts at clarification of his labour theory of value in 1823. This essentially chronological frame is important, first, to establish the progressive reformulation of Ricardo's ideas in the face of criticism, and second, to establish the sometimes

chaotic and contradictory course that this process took. Peach is able to demonstrate the tenaciousness with which Ricardo held to flawed ideas in the face of criticism from Malthus – here the discussion of revisions to the second and third editions of *Principles* is especially telling. The apparent theoretical lucidity of Ricardo's primary ideas has attracted as well as repelled; Peach demonstrates convincingly for the first time that this lucidity is not a little to do with Ricardo's own intellectual and literary style, combined with the models which have imposed the intellectual orderliness for which he has been either praised or damned. He likewise clearly reveals the manner in which this image of Ricardo as a lucid and coherent theorist is quite at odds with the sometimes disordered course of his thought. As Peach demonstrates, it is in fact this contradictory feature of some of his thinking that provides the material for those diverging interpretations which draw upon different elements of his work for support. Quite properly, the argument is put forward that we should seek to make sense of Ricardo's own thought, however flawed, not tidy it up for him.

Peach's primary target, exposed in the initial survey that he makes of existing Ricardo commentary, is the Corn Model interpretation of Ricardian economics constructed by the editor of Ricardo's collected works, Piero Sraffa. This is to be found in the editorial introduction to vol IV which contains Ricardo's *Essay on Profits*, composed in 1815 in response, it is usually assumed, to the contemporary parliamentary debate on the revision of the Corn Laws. Since the *Essay* appears to derive conclusions concerning the general rate of profit from an analysis of distribution, and imply a theoretically-grounded defence of free trade, this *Essay* has come to symbolize the link between abstract theory and parliamentary practice later realized in 1819 when Ricardo became MP for Portarlington and took part in parliamentary debates on agricultural distress. Peach shows that this is altogether too neat. The *Essay* was in fact written in response to Malthus's own *Observations on the Effects of the Corn Laws* (1814) and formed part of an ongoing debate with Malthus concerning the rate of profit, prices, wages and rents. Central to Peach's exposition of Ricardo is the correspondence with Malthus; he shows for the first time that Malthus was Ricardo's sharpest critic, continually finding the gaps in Ricardo's reasoning and forcing him to revision or, at times, to simple reassertion. Ricardo's intellectual allies, Mill and McCulloch, were, by comparison, of little help and lacked the insight and rigour of Malthus.

This is then as much a revision of Malthus as it is of Ricardo; for no previous commentator has

devoted such effort to understanding the nature of the points disputed in the Ricardo-Malthus correspondence. The result is, paradoxically, to invert the usual understanding of the two theorists: Ricardo the deductive and logical theoretician, and Malthus the prevaricating, indecisive and inductively-inclined teacher. This is something of a bonus in what will certainly become the standard assessment of Ricardo's economics for the future.

KEITH TRIBE

THEODORE PANAYOTOU, *Green Markets: The Economics of Sustainable Development*, ICS Press, San Francisco, 1993. xvii + 169 pp. \$29.95.

The study of environmental issues has, until recently, concentrated on 'market failure' which requires government intervention. For example, there is no market for fresh air, so to ensure an adequate supply of this requires the regulation of air pollution. Several books have appeared recently, of which this is one, stressing that many environmental problems derive not from market failure, but from 'policy failure' by governments. For example, in seeking to encourage the use of pesticides and fertilizers, to allow increases in agricultural output, many Third World governments have subsidized these goods, leading to massive increases in their uses. The outcome has been environmentally damaging overuse, with more not fewer insect pests, soil degradation, and falling yields.

One should begin by outlining what this book is not. It is not a textbook on the theory of environmental economics. (One can tell this immediately, as it contains not a single equation or figure.) It is certainly not a work of historical analysis. It is also not a policy study concerning a particular region, or environmental issue. Rather, it is a little of each of these three. There is ample economic theory and analysis, but expressed verbally and informally. However, unlike many less formal books, the reasoning is rigorous and reveals the author's good technical understanding of the area. There are also many case studies, including fifteen boxed sections, which give illuminating detail of particular issues in various regions, without disturbing the flow of the argument. Finally, there is discussion of how present policies, particularly in the Third World, could be adjusted to make economic developments more environmentally sustainable.

The book is short, with only 145 pages of substantive text, and is divided into six chapters. However, as an introduction to the problems of environmental degradation, particularly in the poorer regions of the world, it is remarkably good. The author's wide experience as a long-time consultant to many governments shines through each

page, and his considerable presentational skills have clearly been honed on civil servants and ministers.

To whom is this book addressed? It would make first-rate bedtime reading for those in government with environmental responsibilities, and would also be a stimulating supplementary text on many undergraduate courses dealing with environment and development. For specialists it will be a pleasant and lively read; for academics wishing to enter the rapidly growing arena of environmental research, it will offer an easily digestible overview.

What of the faults of this book? In view of its objective, of putting the case against many types of government intervention, there are very few. The most important is its brevity, which means that many issues are only briefly mentioned, while others (such as policy failure in the developed world) are entirely omitted, giving the unfortunate impression that environmental problems are specific to the poor.

On balance, this is an admirable book; it is clearly expressed, by an expert in the area, achieves its expositional aims, and deserves a wide readership.

JOHN PROOPS

SUGATA BOSE, *The New Cambridge History of India, III.2 - Peasant Labour and Colonial Capital: Rural Bengal since 1770*, CUP, 1993. xvi + 203 pp. 5 figs; 8 tables. £24.95.

Sugata Bose's account of peasant labour and colonial capital in rural Bengal comprises one volume in the projected thirty-volume *New Cambridge History of India* (NCHI). Almost half of the NCHI has now been published and the high initial standards set by Chris Bayly and (more controversially) Paul Brass have been maintained by most of the later authors. Bose's volume is a welcome addition to the NCHI, but it fails to display the extensive geographical vision that is a characteristic of the best books in the series. Bose's reputation as a keen observer of rural Bengal will be enhanced by the publication of this book. Given that he has already published a revised version of his PhD dissertation on much the same subject matter, however, and given the remit of the NCHI, it is a pity that Bose did not feel able to cast his eyes beyond Bengal. When Bose writes of Bengal he writes of present-day West Bengal in India and Bangladesh; at the very least he might have considered developments in neighbouring Bihar, Orissa, Chota Nagpur and Assam, all of which were for most of this period part of the greater Bengal Presidency.

It is perhaps unfair to criticize an author for what he did not set out to do. In its own terms, *Peasant Labour and Colonial Capital* (PLCC) is a well-organized and challenging text. Bose has little time for the conceptual either/ors which so often com-

mand Indian historiography: either economic or demographic factors to explain trends in agricultural productivity; either class or caste to explain the dynamics of peasant politics and dissent. Bose raises his pen against these and other dualisms and against the sundry 'teleological assumptions' which he believes are writ large in most Indian rural histories. Chapter 3, on property and production, begins with a convincing critique of 'capitalist development' models which either herald or demand the demise of (so-called) semi-feudal or peasant modes of production in the Indian countryside. On this, and on other occasions, Bose is able to link his methodological reflections to wider debates on peasant and agricultural histories which often have their origins in western and eastern Europe: the Brenner debate, the work of the *Annales* historians, and the work of western demographic historians are each mentioned here. But if Bose is sceptical of rigid 'high-theories', he is certainly not averse to what might be called a theoretically-guided history and particularly that version which retains some connexions to Marxism. (If Bose writes of Bengal, he is also shaped by Bengali intellectual and political culture.) Bose rightly insists on marrying theoretical and empirical insights in such a way that the apparently timeless landscapes of rural Bengal – and its seemingly constant patterns of poverty, exploitation and inequality – are seen to be the products of shifting social and geographical forces.

This argument is first made with respect to ecology. Bose points out that the distinctive regional agricultures of lower Bengal (rice in the west, jute in the east) cannot be understood except with reference to the shifting courses of the region's major river systems. It is the fine alluvial soils of east Bengal (in particular) which have long made possible an intensive double-cropping of the land and consequent high rates of population growth and high population densities. Bose then builds on his discussions of ecology and demography to show that peasant households have been reproduced in rural Bengal in a continuing state of poverty but by means of changing patterns of surplus extraction on the part of local landlords, moneylenders, merchant capitalists and the state. Bose ably demonstrates how, when the state's demand for land revenues began to dissipate in real terms, poorer raiyats began to feel the squeeze of indebtedness as pre- and post-harvest loans were extended to them at high rates of interest. These loans were often extended to ensure that the peasantry expanded its production of jute (and indigo in the nineteenth century) for the world market; from the 1820s onwards the rhythms of life and labour in rural Bengal were intimately related to the rhythms of the wider world economy. The upshot was that,

whilst most peasants managed to cling on 'to the basic means of production – land – ... [they] became increasingly dependent on merchant and usury capital' (p 183). Although elements amongst the peasantry in Bengal did contest this dependence, by and large they were not successful (though the fight against indigo production offers a counterpoint to this judgement). The blunt fact is that peasant households were efficiently disciplined by the 'dull compulsions' of the market and capital (and not least in the depression years of the 1930s), and most survived only by increasing what Chayanov would call their rate of self-exploitation (especially of women and children). Despite the partial success of the Green Revolution since 1970, Bose argues that not much has changed since independence in 1947. At best, it seems, the pressures of population, and the political reforms of the Left Front governments, have ensured that West Bengal's poverty is a shared poverty; in Bangladesh it is not even effectively shared.

To make these points and more in a book of just 185 substantive pages is testament to Bose's powers as a scholar and a writer. The writing is taut and most of Bose's critical commentaries are pithy and yet amply sustained. It is almost a shame, then, to have to remark that the book (like any book!) could be better still. I have already mentioned the limited geographical scope of PLCC, and this remains for me its major failing. In addition, I thought that Bose's survey of neo-Malthusianism (and modern demography more generally) was less than sure-footed. Notwithstanding a reference to the work of Mead Cain, Bose seems to be less than fully aware of recent debates in the social sciences about the dynamics of household formation in the face of the risky environments of South Asia. The same might also be said, albeit in different terms, about Bose's treatment of post-independence developments in rural Bengal. In this case, it is not so much that Bose is inaccurate in his judgements – quite the contrary – but that he fails to develop an account of such developments in sufficient detail. Although Bose does engage with the work of James Boyce, he has next to nothing to say about Atul Kohli's influential (but surely deeply flawed) account of the state and poverty in post-1970 West Bengal. The important recent work of G H K Lieten (*Continuity and Change in Rural West Bengal*, 1992) was presumably published too late for Bose to engage with it.

To sum up: PLCC is an excellent survey of the state of rural Bengal in the period from 1770 to 1970. Bose provides a sensible and sensitive guide to the existing literature on this topic and he manages, besides, to provide his own, convincing, account of the events and outcomes he describes.

If the book is not quite as satisfying as it might be, it is because it refuses to expand its spatial horizons and because more recent developments are not always given the coverage they deserve.

STUART CORBRIDGE

HUGH CHEAPE ed, *Tools and Traditions. Studies in European Ethnology presented to Alexander Fenton*, National Museums of Scotland, 1993. 272 pp. Illus. £35.

This collection of essays has been put together at the instigation of the Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland to celebrate the career and achievements of Sandy Fenton. His work for the museum, spanning almost thirty years from the creation of the Country Life Section in 1959, is in itself worthy of this honour. Subsequent roles as Director of the School of Scottish Studies and Professor of Scottish Ethnology at Edinburgh University have underlined the point. Moreover, the European Ethnological Research Centre which is now an element within the National Museums of Scotland was another Fenton brainchild.

His bibliography for the period 1955 to 1990 occupies the final section of the book and runs to eight pages. It is a formidable list indicating the depth and diversity of research, fieldwork and thought that were packed into those thirty-five years: articles on linguistic subjects mingle with books and papers on detailed aspects of Scottish material culture and country life; thoughts on museum developments and proposals lie alongside discourses on the nature and future course of ethnology. With such a body of work emanating from a single pen, one can only regret once more the failure early on of most British universities to follow the lead of their continental counterparts and take the budding subject of ethnology to their hearts and nurture it into a fully-fledged and established academic discipline. We can only imagine what fruit might have been borne through the accumulated expertise and combined output of generations of staff, students and researchers pursuing their studies throughout these islands. Those few, like Sandy Fenton, who in the British context have beaten the subject into shape provide an inspiration for the way forward while at the same time pointing spectacularly to what we have missed.

In addition to Hugh Cheape's introduction, thirty-six papers have been assembled here from amongst the many in Britain and Europe who, whether as contemporaries or followers, can acknowledge a debt to Fenton's work. Scotland, over which he has, of course, exerted a particularly powerful influence, is well represented but there are contributions too from the, albeit small, corps of leading British ethnologists. Trefor Owen's essay on Welsh

aspects of the social organization of harvesting, focusing on the 'Cross Wages' system practised in the Vale of Clwyd, is a nugget of research drawn from a lifetime of experience in ethnological study and typical of the best writing in the *Festschrift* genre.

The contributors from mainland Europe are led by Professor Axel Steensberg of Denmark who, in a piece entitled 'Wörter und Sachen/Terms and Realities', puts Fenton up alongside six other 'grand masters' of European ethnology – Kustaa Vilkuna (Finland), Sigurd Erixon (Sweden), Branimir Bratanić (Yugoslavia), Jorge Dias (Portugal), Paul Leser (Germany), and Paul Scheuermeier (Switzerland). It was in 1966 at a conference on ploughing implements in Sweden organized by Erixon that Steensberg and Fenton planned a new journal, *Tools and Tillage*, under the auspices of the International Secretariat for Research on the History of Agricultural Implements. With Grith Lerche of the secretariat, and another contributor to this volume, as the third member of the editorial team, *Tools and Tillage* first appeared in 1968 and has in the intervening years gone far beyond its eurocentric origins to become a worldwide research periodical.

As its title suggests, *Tools and Traditions* explores within the European dimension the diverse specialities, from material culture to traditional culture and language, that can be accommodated beneath the umbrella heading of ethnology. Following the opening essays that are concerned with theory and methodology, there is a grouping of eleven on agricultural topics where object-based studies predominate. They include the typology of Bulgarian ploughs (Marinov), Hungarian hay wagons (Paládi-Kovács) and cattle restraining devices used in Schleswig-Holstein (Lühning). From these, smaller groupings of contributions on food and drink, and architecture provide good examples of regional-based studies. The final section before the bibliography turns to linguistics, the subject that set Fenton off in the beginning and has always been part of his work. Overall, it is inevitably a miscellaneous selection but one that will prove of value and remind us that Britain can be part of mainstream European ethnology.

ROY BRIGDEN

JACK GOODY, *The Culture of Flowers*, CUP, 1993. xvii+462 pp. 61 plates; 3 tables. £40 (hbk); £13.95 (pbk).

The title is precise. The book examines the culture of flowers, and not their cultivation except in an incidental manner. Like T S Eliot, Jack Goody equates culture with religion, though without Eliot's sleight of hand which transforms culture as an aspect of religion into culture as identical with religion (*Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, Faber

and Faber, 1948, p 28 'incarnation' and p 30 'same thing'). Goody writes as a social anthropologist. Flowers are a part of culture, 'because they have been brought under cultivation by mankind, and ... because they are used throughout social life ... above all in establishing, maintaining and even ending relationships, with the dead as with the living, with divinities as well as humans' (p 2). The author wishes to 'draw attention to the interrelation between ecology, economy and usages of a symbolic as well as a practical kind' (p 25). A key word here is 'symbolic', where flowers are signs and symbols: this is an exercise as much in semiotics as social anthropology.

The introductory chapter is followed by one chronicling the growth in the culture of flowers in Western Asia and the Mediterranean. The gardens of the ancient world were not only a creation of the centres of socio-economic power, but were also the foci of artistic endeavour. Flowers were grown for garlands and perfume; gardens were designed as representations and homages. Chapter 3 reviews the Fall of Rome and the decline of flower culture in Europe. Botanical learning actually decreased, and through their association with pagan worship flowers and Christianity became inimical. The texts of classical botany, largely medicinal in purpose, were merely copied, but Goody is quite wrong to argue that there was a failure to improve the illustrations of such books over 1500 years, and while the advent of printing encouraged new writing it is ironic that many of the associated woodcuts compare poorly with manuscript herbal illustrations. Chapter 4 discusses how the Far and Near East provided major resources in the later culture of flowers in the West. The contents of chapter 5 are summarized in its title, the return of the rose in medieval Western Europe, but not just 'rose as flower' but also 'flowers as icons'. Goody traces the cultural history of flowers in Renaissance Europe 'as a paradigm for the interplay of religious reform, an expanding market and a measure of secularisation over the whole domain of culture' (p 163). A further interplay, that between icons and iconoclasm, is explored in the following chapter. The Tudor period saw a gardening revolution: the plants involved and the contexts into which they were placed are described, though insufficient emphasis is perhaps given to the 'curious' plant – recently-introduced species whose virtues were as yet unknown. The general development of the economy in Europe was accompanied by a growth in the urban market, including the market for flowers and exotic plants, a theme developed in chapter 7. Goody stresses the importance of cut flowers, but underestimates the economic and cultural significance of growing plants in park and garden, the

rise of the nursery, and the development by these nurseries and by horticultural patrons of trade links. Chapters 8 and 9 look at symbolic language using flowers in France and North America, respectively, while chapter 10 returns to the popular culture of flowers in Europe in modern times. The last three substantive chapters paint a series of pictures from the author's own experiences in India and China.

The book is well referenced. Monochrome illustrations occasionally pepper the text with varying effectiveness. Eight pages of colour photographs waste cost and opportunity. Goody achieves his aims in a synthesis that is certainly a *tour de force*, though at times often rather self-indulgent in style. The fresh approach to an old topic is very welcome, but will be of marginal interest to the majority of readers of this journal.

P J JARVIS

DAVID GARY SHAW, *The Creation of a Community. The City of Wells in the Middle Ages*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993. xiv + 334 pp. 2 figs; 6 maps; 11 tables. £40.

This scholarly account of the medieval history of one of our more attractive small cathedral cities is a welcome addition to the relatively small stock of recent urban biographies. Wells was a new town, created within a large rural manor by its owner, the bishop of Bath, in the twelfth century. It flourished, not least because its proprietors added during the thirteenth century a cathedral and palace to the more humdrum institutions of a medieval planned foundation. This means that the history of Wells must concern itself chiefly with the later medieval centuries, and the nature of the archival sources emphasizes this fact. The city was never particularly large, reaching a population peak of rather more than two thousand in the fourteenth century; but in a region characterized by small towns Wells established and maintained a very respectable niche towards the top of the local hierarchy. Its status as a centre of ecclesiastical administration was one source of wealth, but it was also a market centre and, more importantly, the focus of a sturdy textile industry. The book has very little to say about the agrarian economy of the community. These days one always wants to know how a town fits into the thesis of late medieval urban decline. There is clear evidence of shrinking population after about 1380 (Wells bounced back from the initial shocks of plague), and by the 1520s it had lost about a third of its people, with peripheral building sites reverting to garden plots – but on the other hand the survivors seem prosperous and there is an air of vitality about the place which suggests that population shrinkage need not be synonymous with general stagnation.

Wells was controlled by its bishops, who owned the manorial rights and the market and prevented the acquisition of a royal charter conferring self-governing privileges. As the author rightly points out, such communities are under-represented in the literature, perhaps because the absence of a sophisticated governing structure discourages the creation of that extensive municipal archive which must underpin the specialist historian's work. However, one of the most interesting features of Wells is that the citizens did manage to develop an independent system of communal administration while never successfully challenging the rights of the bishops beyond a period of a few months in the mid-fourteenth century. A surprisingly large property estate was acquired whose revenues supported communal activity. The citizens' partial independence was expressed in the Borough Community, a guild which controlled the admittance of burgesses as a vital part of its role and whose records made the writing of this study possible. In the fourteenth century about half the adult males in the city became burgesses, so this was a highly representative system – surely one of the sources of its strength. While the external trappings of episcopal control apparently survived until the reign of Elizabeth, this shadowy rival developed as an increasingly significant complement to it, acquiring by the fifteenth century a formal head in its master and the beginnings of an oligarchic tendency. Dr Shaw analyses this Borough Community in its social and cultural dimensions at some length.

As one would expect from a rewritten PhD thesis, this book works thoroughly and competently through the surviving documentation, adopts an admirably elaborated structure and draws cautiously judicious conclusions. There are few surprises: here is a workmanlike exercise in filling in the gaps in our knowledge, but we shall not need to adjust our general ideas very much to accommodate its findings. It is well aware of the wider historiographical picture and asks all those questions which thesis examiners expect to be addressed. But one gets the feeling that everything that could possibly be said is set down here; this does mean that the measured pace of the writing is eminently digestible, but the press could have usefully insisted on condensing the text, thus saving their readers some time.

ALAN DYER

KENNETH MORGAN, *Bristol and the Atlantic Trade in the Eighteenth Century*, CUP, 1993. xxii + 281 pp. £35.

The eighteenth century was the 'golden age' of Bristol, when the city was at the height of its prosperity, the leading port outside London and

the 'metropolis of the west' dominating the economic life of the west country. This prosperity is still evident in the public buildings and in the merchants' houses on the heights of Clifton and throughout the surrounding countryside. With its favourable geographic position and tradition of Atlantic trading ventures, Bristol became the 'gateway of Empire' and trade with the American colonies and the West Indies developed rapidly. But this growing wealth concealed the relative decline of Bristol which by the end of the century was outstripped as a port by Liverpool and Glasgow, and as a manufacturing centre by the towns of the Midlands and the North.

This important book provides a detailed examination of the success of Bristol merchants in the Atlantic trade and of the reasons why this surge of fortune could not be sustained. In his thorough analysis of the surviving evidence the author has cast his net wide, and has pursued his research among archive collections in Britain, the West Indies, many places in the USA and even in Australia where he has made good use of the papers of a Bristol merchant family which are now deposited at the University of Melbourne. He also cites extensively the work of other scholars, and includes references to a formidable number of published works and unpublished theses from both sides of the Atlantic.

As well as examining the trade of the port, its commercial organization, the characteristics of the merchant community, the industries and complex trading links, the book also provides an admirably detailed analysis of the three principal cargoes – slaves, tobacco and sugar – of which the West-Indian sugar trade was the most important and profitable, 'the greatest success story in Bristol's eighteenth-century Atlantic trade'. These commodities provided the basis of numerous trades and industries within and around the city, from ship-building to glass-making, and from sugar, cocoa and tobacco processing to brassware and gunpowder manufacture. The commerce of the port and the fortunes of the merchants engaged in trade across the Atlantic are described with clarity. Much previous work has been done by other scholars, but this over-view and analysis of the whole subject is extremely useful.

Kenneth Morgan also discusses the reasons for Bristol's relative decline as a port. Inevitably, the fact that ships had to travel seven miles up the winding river Avon and through the Avon Gorge was a great disadvantage, especially as ships increased in size, notwithstanding the help of the second largest tidal range in the world. Moreover, the slow progress made by the Society of Merchant Venturers in improving port facilities, the high harbour dues,

a largely agricultural hinterland, and the failure of Bristol merchants to diversify or adapt to changing conditions, all played their part in the relative decline of trade. Also important was the alacrity with which Bristol merchants bought estates and established their sons as landed gentry, and we are reminded of John Wesley's verdict that the chief sins of Bristolians were love of money and love of ease.

This well-written book provides a good account of the complex transatlantic trade of this period, and is a valuable addition to the historical studies of Bristol.

J H BETTEY

JOHN LANDERS, *Death and the Metropolis: Studies in the Demographic History of London, 1670–1830*, CUP, 1993. xxiii + 408 pp. 108 figs; 7 maps; 69 tables. £40.

The London Bills of Mortality provide a unique source for the study of mortality and mortality change in the capital, but despite the wealth of publications describing England's historical demography the bills themselves have received scant attention; that is until now. John Landers' *Death and the Metropolis* provides a major statistical analysis of the bills which complements his earlier family reconstitution study. Parts of the book have appeared elsewhere as articles in *Social History of Medicine* and *Population Studies*, but much is new. The first two chapters discuss mortality theory and London's economic and social history; the rest is concerned with confirming the thesis, originally propounded by W H McNeill, that London was subjected to a 'high potential' mortality regime during the 'long eighteenth' century. McNeill predicted that in densely populated metropolitan centres outbreaks of epidemic disease were rare since most diseases had become endemic. Exposure was therefore high, and consequently each section of the population experienced a different mortality regime. Nursing infants inherited immunity from their mothers but as nursing ceased they were subjected to diseases spread by contaminated food. Children initially lacked immunity and endured high mortality although those who survived experienced relatively low mortality as adults. On moving to London many rural migrants suffered high rates of mortality since often they had not already been exposed to the pool of endemic diseases.

By examining the spatial and temporal variability of the bills and by establishing relationships between mortality, prices, temperature, and seasonality, Landers is able to confirm McNeill's thesis. Early-childhood mortality was especially severe but infant mortality was also high (over 300 per 1000 live births during the early eighteenth century), and

Landers is forced to conclude that a significant proportion of mothers must not have breastfed their infants. Typhus and bronchitis were important causes of death for adults but much of London's excess mortality was concentrated amongst infants, children, and migrants. Mortality was far from constant. It increased to reach extremely high levels during the early-eighteenth century; then from the late-eighteenth century it steadily decreased so that by the 1850s mortality in London was lower than in many large industrial cities. A healthier district emerged in the west and 'the decline of mortality was associated particularly with neonatal mortality and mortality among older children, adolescents and young children with fever and smallpox being prominent among causes of death that decline' (p 354). However, Landers is reticent about drawing any conclusions as to exactly what caused such a profound change in London's mortality regime. Instead the evidence is largely left to speak for itself.

Much of the book is concerned with establishing statistical associations between variables, and consequently those without a statistical background will have difficulty following some of the argument. For example, the technique of principal components analysis (which occupies 33 of 108 figures) is introduced without additional explanation as follows:

The overall configuration of these relationships can conveniently be described by means of a principal components analysis carried out on the matrix of pairwise correlation coefficients. The results in figure 3.13 reveal a first component, accounting for half the total variance, which splits the age-groups into two clusters, children and adults, with the teenage score falling between them but rather closer to the former than the latter (p 114).

By adopting an overtly statistical approach Landers substantiates McNeill's hypothesis although a wider

discussion of some of the assumptions inherent in these statistics would have been useful. This is especially the case when some of the associations, such as those between mortality and seasonality, are at best weak and only hold over long periods of time. Likewise, problems concerning the bills' accuracy are dealt with in two pages even though 'some observers dismiss the information they contain as worthless' (p 91). Although the book contains many figures some are not up to the usual high standard of the rest of the books in this series. Here are some examples: fig P.1 has no key (p xx); fig 2.2 an unlabelled moving mean (p 54); fig 8.2 an error on the scale (p 318); fig 8.3 no scale (p 319). More importantly when one is invited to make comparisons between a series of crisis mortality ratios (figs 7.1-7.12) virtually each figure is drawn with a different scale which makes comparison very difficult indeed.

Death and the Metropolis is to be welcomed since it provides a thorough analysis of mortality patterns in London during the 'long eighteenth' century, but by adopting an almost exclusively statistical approach Landers has laid himself open to two serious criticisms: first, the foundations of the whole book rest on the accuracy of the bills, and Landers does not convince the reader that they are sufficiently reliable to warrant statistical manipulation, even though this is probably the case; second, in order for us to understand the reasons why mortality changed a greater effort is needed to relate the statistical associations to the capital's history. Unfortunately, much of London's social and economic history remains uncharted and the demographic history of Europe's largest city is therefore still fertile ground for research as indeed it was in 1662 when John Graunt published his pioneering *Natural and Political Observations made upon the Bills of Mortality*.

CHRIS GALLEY

Shorter Notices

E DAWSON and S R ROYAL, eds, *An Oxfordshire Market Gardener, The Diary of Joseph Turrill of Garsington 1863-67*, Alan Sutton, Stroud, 1993. xv + 174 pp. £14.99.

This is a well-produced book with an attractive dust wrapper, which has been prepared for publication by members of Garsington Local History Group. Maps show Garsington and the surrounding area in 1867 and topographical features named in the diary. The text is interspersed with contempor-

ary photographs of the area, some taken by Turrill himself. The footnotes are well-researched and both the glossary and histories of local families mentioned in the diary add to the enjoyment of the text. A short introduction by Raymond Dawson describes Garsington in Turrill's time.

I must admit to a liking for diaries. This one is full of the personality of its author: a taste for newspaper reports of sensational crime and major political events, delight in the changing seasons,

guilt at staying-out courting until the small hours, an appreciation of choral singing. Turrill also reveals much about rural life. He notes the introduction of new machinery on larger farms and the gangs of men forced to roam southern England to find work. Garsington was a poor village, visited by outbreaks of cholera and smallpox. But community spirit is discernible in the efforts to cope with these outbreaks and in cricket matches, club suppers, church attendance, and Whitsun festivities.

Turrill lived with his mother in the Red Lion pub and lived by renting gardens and small pieces of land for market gardening. The diary covers the early years of his career. It is not possible to judge what profit he made but we can admire his industry, frequently digging by moonlight late into the night and working in all weathers. He records the work carried out in his gardens and the struggle against pests, diseases and weather. Others started market gardening at Garsington, supplying Oxford markets, and the industry survived on some favourable soils into the present century. The publication of this diary is a welcome addition to the firsthand accounts of life in the countryside a century ago.

MALCOLM THICK

NEIL PHILIP, *Victorian Village Life*, Albion Press, Idbury, Oxon, 1993. 160 pp. Illus. £9.99.

Despite its title, this short book is primarily concerned with the lives of labouring people in Victorian village society rather than with any broader examination of the rural scene. There are chapters on the doings of the children, on the employment opportunities and living standards of men and women, and on their sexual encounters and marriage. Other topics covered include leisure and entertainment, religious observance, charity, rural crime, political radicalism, and the effects of outward migration and increased mechanization on the fabric of rural society at the end of the nineteenth century. The inclusion of some of Myles Birket Foster's wood-engravings as illustrations at the beginning of each chapter adds a touch of nostalgic charm.

Unfortunately, the book has several significant weaknesses. First, it neglects the important regional differences which affected both farming and the character of village life, including the activities and earnings of the working population. Second, it has little to say on the great changes which were taking place in agriculture during the final quarter of the nineteenth century as a result of food imports and the consequent depressed state of certain farming sectors. Although migration from the villages is touched upon, it is nowhere analysed. Nor is there any discussion of the effects of the inward move-

ment of 'townees' into rural areas surrounding the major conurbations.

However, the book's most serious weakness is its copious use of lengthy extracts, mainly from the works of such popular writers on rural affairs as Richard Jefferies, Flora Thompson, George Sturt, Augustus Jessopp, and Edwin Grey. The extracts are not subjected to any critical examination and their inclusion in such profusion makes the book fragmented in its approach. The difficulty of this method is compounded by the failure to include any footnotes, which would permit the interested reader to follow up the quotations on his or her own account.

Overall, this is a disappointing book. It would have benefited from a stronger editorial hand, pruning the number of direct quotations and encouraging a more analytical approach. While quotations from contemporary writings can evoke a vivid sense of the past when used with discrimination, in such large numbers they serve to disrupt the flow of the text and fragment its arguments.

PAMELA HORN

ROBIN HILL and PAUL STAMPER, *The Working Countryside 1862-1945*, Swan Hill Press, Shrewsbury, 1993. 159 pp. £14.95.

This is an well-produced book and one which transcends the limitations of the particular format on which it is based. Consisting of a collection of 144 photographs of scenes of agricultural life in Shropshire between the years 1862 and 1945, it is more than a 'farming as it was' volume. This is largely due to the expertise of the two authors and their awareness of the wider agricultural world. The pictures, themselves, have been arranged into thematic chapters and illustrate many of the key changes which took place in the period under review. Clearly, the book will have the greatest appeal in the county of Shropshire but it can be used with profit by agricultural historians elsewhere in the country. Because of the diversity of Shropshire's agricultural regions, many others will find the photographs a valuable source of information.

What distinguishes this book from most others of this genre is the quality of the accompanying text. Each section begins with a general introduction, putting the individual themes into context and highlighting the most important developments. These points are then followed up in the detailed captions, providing the reader with a brief but informative account of events. The text succeeds on a personal level too. Because the authors visited the homes of the people who provided so many of the photographs, their comments have a remarkable freshness and immediacy.

Although the book deals with the traditional concerns of the countryside – agricultural practices, the production and marketing of foodstuffs, farm equipment and the workforce – the underlying theme is one of change and development. Some issues, like the growth of mechanization, readily lend themselves to a visual approach and the transition from muscle to steam (and petrol) power is well illustrated. Among other important issues covered are woodland and estate management, the decline of rural industries, the role of women and children in agriculture and the impact of two world wars.

This is a very interesting and readable book, full of evocative photographs. The overall quality of the pictures is good, as is the range of subject matter they cover. The best ones are those in which the camera unobtrusively depicts people getting on with their work, though inevitably there are the posed shots and the portraits of individuals dressed in their Sunday best. Shropshire south of the Severn is better served than the district to the north, but at least the major farming specializations (and some minor ones) are all represented. It is evident that the collection has been put together with care and the authors are to be congratulated for unearthing such an important source of information and for making the material available to the public.

PETER EDWARDS

G STURT, *The Wheelwright's Shop*, CUP, 1993. xxi + 236 pp. £6.95.

This reprint of George Sturt's original edition of 1923 appears in the 'Canto' series of paperback reprints of classical texts produced by CUP, and includes a brief seven page foreword by E P Thompson. In this he reminds us that George Sturt (1863–1927) was first 'discovered' not by historians but by students of English literature, among them F R Leavis who, in the 1930s, commended Sturt for his 'lucid and economical English'. The present reviewer first 'discovered' George Sturt as 'George Bourne', a pen name which he took from the small village near Farnham where he spent most of his life. My discovery was made during the late 1960s, in dusty original editions shelved under 'B' in the basement vaults of Reading University Library. I too was delighted by the finely observed detail in Sturt's text, and the easy grace of his style. From this latter in particular, I deduced that 'Bourne' must have been the younger scion of a gentry family, almost certainly Oxbridge educated, for those first editions contained no forewords, nor background information of any kind on their author. I began my reading with *The Bettesworth Book* (1901), *Change in the Village* (1912), *Lucy Bettesworth* (1913), and *Memoirs of a Surrey Labourer*

(1907). Gradually, the whole canon emerged and it was only with *A Small Boy in the Sixties* (1910) and *The Wheelwright's Shop*, the last book that Sturt wrote before his death, that I discovered to my great surprise that Sturt had in fact received only enough education to qualify him as an elementary school teacher, a profession which he took up at the age of fifteen, in 1878. In 1884, however, the illness and later death of his father obliged him to leave teaching to take over the running of the family's wheelwright shop, where he spent the rest of his working life. Sturt's great ambition, however, was to become a writer, an ambition which he achieved in his later years, despite a prolonged battle against recurrent illness. His trenchant observation and warm sympathy for the poorer countryfolk of his day set his texts among the classic sources for social historians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: they rank with Flora Thompson's *Lark Rise to Candleford* and Lilius Rider Haggard's edition of *I Walked by Night: by the King of the Norfolk Poachers*. The appearance of Sturt's books in affordable paperback editions is very much to be welcomed.

J R WORDIE

F G EMMISON, ed, *Essex Wills: Vol 8. The Commissary Court, 1558–1569*, Essex Record Office Publications 124, 1993. xxv + 274 pp. £14.95.

B W QUINTRELL, ed, *The Maynard Lieutenancy Book, 1608–1639*, 2 vols, Essex Record Office Publications 123, 1993. xcvi + 450 pp. £18.

Although neither are of immediate use to agricultural historians, there is room to notice these two new Essex Record Office publications. The first prints in abstract over 1000 Essex wills. This volume, and the series more so, is a massive labour but one which will save much work in the records. Searchers out of curiosities will enjoy the rhyming will of Roger Coker, rector of Hazeleigh (1563), written in eight quatrains each with a Latin refrain. The second offers the text of a letter book composed in 1639 and mainly containing letters dealing with the militia and trained bands in Essex. This has been exploited by a number of authors from the Rev Andrew Clark onwards but now we can see what it contains in total. There are a few letters on taxation, purveyance and famine relief. Most of the material dates from the 1620s and 1630s. If there is a complaint to be made about both volumes, it is the omissions. In the *Essex Wills* preambles are usually excised without comment unless they are unusual, in which case the editor has marked them '[Religious preamble]'. In the *Maynard Lieutenancy Book* (which runs to 548 pages of introduction, text and indices), Quintrell, quite reasonably, only

abstracts letters printed in the *Acts of the Privy Council*: but this does mean that to find, say, the letter of Charles I of 7 July 1626 demanding a free gift, one has to follow the cross references to a well stocked library. But these are minor matters in two welcome additions to the Essex texts in print.

R W HOYLE

MARIE HARTLEY and JOAN INGILBY, *A Farm Account Book from Wensleydale*, North Yorkshire County Record Office, Northallerton, 1992. 31 pp. Illus. £3.00.

This booklet is a useful addition to a valuable series of publications by North Yorkshire County Record Office. The detailed study of a farm account book and its context is undertaken by two leading dales' historians. The account book which covers the periods 1846–55 and 1889–1900, belonged to a minor gentry family who tenanted three farms in Wensleydale. The accounts of the mixed farm of West Bolton in the lower dale were recorded by Henry King from 1846 to 1855 with a valuation on leaving in 1878. In 1889 two remote upper-dale sheep farms were rented by Henry's son William and the accounts, which treat the farms as one holding, are recorded until 1900 when the tenancy was given up. The study provides tantalizing insights into farming practices and local industry in the periods of high farming and late nineteenth-century depression. The West Bolton accounts reveal a period of dynamism and expansion followed by departure in 1878 when 'prospects was diminishing'. Conversely, the records for 1880–1900 demonstrate the losing battle of farming in a marginal area against a backdrop of falling prices. It is a story of rent rebates, loans being raised and, particularly from 1895, a significant decline in returns.

The authors have included a wealth of background information which, with useful maps and photographs and the detailed analysis of accounts, makes interesting reading and provides an excellent basis for further study of the topic.

CHRISTINE HALLAS

EURWYN WILIAM, *Welsh Long-Houses. Four Centuries of Farming at Cilewent*, University of Wales Press, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, 1992. iv + 44 pp. £3.95.

This publication, written by the curator of the Welsh Folk Museum, is intended to serve both as a guide to Cilewent — a farmhouse transported from its original location in the old county of Radnorshire and re-erected at St Fagans — and to explain to visitors something of the origin and development of the long-house in the context of the former rural economy of Wales. The term

long-house is often the cause of misunderstanding; it is derived from the Welsh *tŷ hir* (lit long house), used locally to describe those farmhouses of south-west Wales in which man and beast were accommodated, at opposite ends, under the same longitudinal roof, with entrance by a common lateral doorway. It was adopted as a scientific term, in its English translation, by the late Dr Iorwerth Peate. Its definition has been the subject of some debate and, although the term is now widely used, it must be emphasized that many long-houses are in fact quite short; some fieldworkers, particularly in Ireland, prefer the term house-and-byre.

The author, in the space of forty-four pages, succeeds in providing a remarkable amount of information. The greater part of the text is devoted to the origins of the long-house (including its distribution in England, but without reference to the European mainland), early long-houses in Wales, regional farmhouse types, the long-house tradition in south-west Wales, and the evolution of the Welsh farmhouse; it is only at p 27 that we finally read of Cilewent itself, built about 1470. Drawing on documentary, oral and iconographical evidence — as well as on detailed studies of the structure of the building — the history of the farmhouse is brought vividly to life. Comparison is made with other buildings and parallels are cited where appropriate. The story continues with details of the eighteenth-century rebuilding of Cilewent and life within the house; an account of nineteenth-century husbandry completes the account.

Less satisfactory is the attempt to date the cruck trusses by dendrochronology. Whilst the difficulties of dating by this technique in Wales, where so little work has so far been done, must not be underestimated, it simply will not do to offer — in a publication such as this — two alternative dates, not even when an explanation is provided. Dendrochronological science is absolute dating and until a unique date emerges for a timber, based on a satisfactory minimum number of rings (eighty is the internationally-accepted norm) and with a sufficiently strong correlation coefficient, provisional results are best confined to the laboratory. Where the statistical process fails to produce a unique date the layman can only be misled and the specialist tempted to speculate.

This is an attractively-produced publication, printed to a high standard and about 50 per cent illustrated; many well-chosen historic photographs, drawn from the Museum's collections, are of considerable ethnological interest. *Welsh Long-Houses* is a publication of considerable value to the specialist as well as an attractive and intelligent guide for the museum visitor.

GWYN MEIRION-JONES