

Book Reviews

Britain and Ireland

RICHARD BRITNELL (ed.), *The Winchester pipe rolls and medieval English society* (Boydell Press, 2003). x + 213 pp. £55.

This volume arises out of a conference held at Winchester in 1999 to present new research based on the Winchester pipe rolls. It celebrates the earliest known series of surviving English manorial accounts, beginning in 1208–9 and arguably the first of their kind to be created, which have since 1959 been in the custody of the Hampshire Record Office following a seventy-year sojourn in the Public Record Office. Taking the change from rolls to registers in 1455 as its terminus, the volume includes an up-to-date hand-list of the rolls, giving their former and current references, and an excellent account by the editor of their archival history and custody with a historiographical introduction to the use made of them. Bruce Campbell emphasizes the uniqueness and atypicality of the rolls themselves and the estate that produced them, deploying a vast amount of information about other manorial sources and other estates in England to put them into context. He concludes with a valuable section on the methodological challenge which this presents to historians. Nicholas Vincent rounds off the volume by examining the extensive information they give on the political history of church and state, with many sidelights on the careers of the bishops themselves and other important men like the legist Henry Bracton. The other contributors make detailed use of the rolls to examine particular issues in the economic history of the Winchester estates. Katherine Stocks considers the surviving evidence of payments into manorial courts before 1250, the Winchester rolls providing by far the earliest and the most numerous examples. They give information about the timing, business and administration of these courts in their earliest years, also showing a rapid increase in the proportion of people making payments into court and the overall volume of business.

There follow four major articles of the greatest interest to agricultural historians. Mark Page writes about the peasant land market before the Black Death, emphasizing the primacy of inheritance as a means of transferring

villein land, sharp differences in the pattern of land transfers between different manors, some of them stable and others susceptible to rapid tenurial change, and the existence of a cycle of expansion and contraction on peasant holdings in some manors. He points out that a more complex reality can sometimes be shown to lie behind simple and uniform entries about holdings, which were often more fragmented than they appear because of the need to provide for non-inheriting children, servants or others. John Mullan deals with the transfer of customary estates between the plagues of 1349 and 1361, and confirms that, as suggested by earlier studies elsewhere, there was a clear and steady fall in the volume of transfers between the two outbreaks. A lower proportion of these were transactions between members of the family of the previous tenant. At the same time, however, despite attempts by the bishop and his estate managers to maintain the status quo by raising entry fines back to their pre-plague level, there were innovative practices, such as the registration of life-tenancies and recoveries, which gave the market potential for greater vitality subsequently. Christopher Thornton writes about levels of productivity between 1283 and 1348 on the huge manor of Taunton, where five sub-manors may be compared with each other as well as other manors elsewhere. He uses the Weighted Aggregate Crop Yields (WACY) method of measurement developed by Bruce Campbell. The peak levels of cultivated acreage were reached in the first half of the thirteenth century, before falling off sharply after the 1270s to less than half the earlier levels by the 1330s. This he attributes to a managerial reassessment of profits from assarts on former pasture, not to a decline in fertility. The standard cropping regime was a three-course rotation of wheat, oats and fallow, minor variants being explained by local conditions. The contribution of stock to the arable regime is given due weight, but he concludes that the estate managers failed to integrate corn and stock effectively, with resulting low crop yields characteristic of the Taunton manors. These remained acceptable only because of low demand, mainly local rather than from more distant markets. The quality of marginal land was initially enhanced by large-scale marling, which later

declined as the demesne contracted. Despite this, Taunton contributed heavily to the bishop's cash income, mainly through sources other than the marketing of arable production. The rolls also give information about the employment of the customary labourers, on whose work the estate was overwhelmingly dependent. Another essay on building investment in the early fourteenth century by John Langdon, Jill Walker and John Falconer uses records of the costs of new buildings from 1297 to 1348 to test a hypothesis that there was a reduction in expenditure on construction which contributed to the economic distress of that period. The pattern proved rather to be one of a series of alternate peaks and troughs. Periods of downturn included the famine of 1315–22, with booms in 1310–15 and early in the war with France in 1337–43, although some of this reflected the desire of a new bishop to make his mark after a period of crown custody of the estate.

This wide-ranging book will henceforth provide an invaluable point of reference for further work on this magnificent series of documents.

DAVID CROOK
The National Archives

SANDRA RABAN, *A second Domesday? The hundred rolls of 1279–80* (OUP, 2004). ix + 229 pp. 4 tables; 2 maps. £35.

In response to the question which forms this book's title, Raban's answer is potentially yes, but in practice no. Since the distance between Domesday book and the hundred rolls extended beyond two hundred years, the complexity which the hundred rolls had to address rendered the standardization and compression of Domesday book impossible. The transformations during those two centuries, moreover, disallowed the completion of the project in any form – so this inquisition was abandoned leaving its imprint ostensibly for only a swathe across the Midlands with fragments from elsewhere (comprising *in toto* 56 hundreds and 13 towns and suburbs – p. 92). In reflecting on these issues, Raban has produced the first comprehensive account of the administrative and organizational background to the hundred rolls of 1279–80.

Many readers of this journal will be familiar with the exploitation of the hundred rolls for the structures of landholding, composition of peasant society, and seigniorial extraction from the peasantry. Indeed, one of the most recent attempts has been published here (Barg, *AgHR*, 39, 1991). As well as considering the information in the hundred rolls in her analysis of the structure of landholding, Sandra Raban has long been reflecting on their production and this volume is the result of her mature consideration and is definitive – in so far as

any elucidation of the enigmas and complexities of the hundred rolls can ever be.

Despite the incorporation of a chapter on 'Uses of the rolls' and the evocative title of another, 'An inquiring culture', Raban's principal purpose is a diplomatic study of the composition of the rolls and their administrative context. The 'culture' of inquiry relates to the proclivity of Edward I and his contemporaries abroad to acquire information by sending out justices to make local inquests, sometimes for specific purposes. Presumably here 'culture' denotes a bureaucratic imperative combined with a personal impulse stimulated by a general context of investigation at this time.

Confirmation is amply supplied that the embarkation on the survey was ill-conceived: there was apparently no 'standard set of articles [of enquiry]' (p. 49); the project was too ambitious for the personnel available (p. 36); and the justices collected information at their discretion and that of the jurors, which was difficult to digest (pp. 90–1, 96). The surviving returns conceal the extent of the activity of the original commission, which might have been *started* more widely. The survey was, however, quickly aborted and abandoned, often before the returns were committed to parchment.

Departing from the administrative history of the rolls, the final chapter recapitulates the significant contribution which analysis has made to the understanding of rural society at the zenith of the high middle ages. Here, the concentration is on peasant rents and services (Kosminsky, Kanzaka, Raban), the fortunes of estate management, comparing larger and smaller estate holders, and the regional distribution of the free tenantry. As interesting in this section, however, are the suggestions about inadvertent contemporary consequences of the rolls. The revelation of the magnitude of estates held by the church combined with its failure to show warrant might have occasioned 'a distorted impression of ecclesiastical aggrandizement' (p. 123) which contributed to the impulse to severity in the first statute of mortmain (1279). As another consequence, the rolls provided lords of small estates, not in the habit of record making, the opportunity to keep a copy of the survey (p. 125). On the other hand, annotations that some lords were uncooperative perhaps illustrates a suspicion of a fiscal purpose (p. 128). Moreover, caution should be exercised when deploying the rolls to examine social structure, for the interpretation given by the justices to small tenants is compressed, ambiguous and confusing (p. 127). Nevertheless, the rolls provide one of the few available resources for perceiving the role of smaller estates (p. 131).

In rehearsing the potential reasons for the survey, Raban concedes that there is no firm evidence of any single purpose. It is possible that, in the end, it must be

ascribed to no more than an investigative preoccupation, although there may have been some fiscal motive and she believes that the focus had been diverted from land and tenurial structure in 1086 to franchises, liberties and rights in 1279–80 (p. 41). The significance of that last influence, however, might seem to lose impact in the face of the 1274–5 inquest into those privileges and the inception of the *quo warranto* proceedings about the same time. If, as is asserted (p. 89), the surveys in the rolls bear a resemblance to those in inquisitions *post mortem*, might we not be confronted by a general cadastral survey about *The lordship of England* (Scott Waugh)?

Categorizing this volume as an administrative history, in fact, does its author a disservice, for no one interested in governance and governmentality, literacy, lordship – indeed, the whole range of medieval English history – will be able to ignore this book, not least agrarian and rural historians who intend to exploit the information in the hundred rolls.

DAVE POSTLES
University of Leicester

R. W. HOYLE (ed.), *People, landscape and alternative agriculture. Essays for Joan Thirsk* (Agricultural History Review Supplement Series 3, 2004). xi + 148 pp. Available from the Treasurer, BAHS, c/o Department of History, University of Exeter, Amory Building, Rennes Drive, Exeter, EX4 4RJ, £17.50 post free.

This collection of eight essays is the Agricultural History Society's tribute to the enduring influence of founding member, and two-time President, the eminent and energetic Joan Thirsk. Almost all of the authors were her students, and everyone celebrates her curiosity and originality as they explore and expand themes and subjects that she pioneered.

The collection begins and ends with essays on rural industry: David Hey opens with a finely-drawn reconstruction of the industrial woodland township of Barlow, south of Sheffield, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; Paul Brassley concludes with an equally-acute account of the genesis of the Oxford Rural Industries Survey of 1926/7. Three essays take single commodities for their focus and examine them for their wider significance: Christopher Dyer assesses the extent of medieval goat-keeping, Richard Hoyle looks at the high politics of growing woad in England and Ireland in the 1580s, and John Chartres considers the value to small producers of the eighteenth-century spade-cultivated crop, liquorice. Two essays look more closely at rural social relations: Peter Edwards describes conflicts over common wastes and drainage schemes in early modern Shropshire, and Elizabeth Griffiths uncovers landlords' management strategies in late seventeenth-century

Norfolk. Finally, in a wide-ranging contribution to a collection marked by its attention to both detail and significance, John Broad surveys the regional development of English dairying from 1650 to 1850.

The themes, then, are industries in the countryside, economic policy and projects, peasant economy (including commons and common right), and 'alternative agriculture'. The last is defined in Thirsk's book of the same name (1997) as the agriculture adopted when low prices for 'mainstream' cereals and meat prompt innovations that change both farming and consumption for the long term. How do these essays add to our knowledge of these inter-related themes?

Hey's description of Barlow's charcoal, whitecoal, lead, iron and coal industries recovers a landscape now almost entirely lost. Here is an England of industrial woodland and transhumance to summer moorland pastures. These Peak District woods flourished because they were, in themselves, another crop. Closed to farmers, they attracted iron workers from the Weald and ore-hearth workers from the Mendips. Elsewhere in England, rural industry absorbed local labour and enabled families to settle for generations, but, as far as this scrupulous account can determine, the economies and communities of these farmers, smelters and colliers were as separate as their geographical origins. They invite comparison with the economy of multiple employments followed by free miners in other parts of the Peak, and with the proletarian miners of Whickham.

Deliberate economic policy encouraged some rural industries, either in principle or as specific projects. Hoyle and Brassley look at the politics behind government attitudes to rural industry. In the 1580s, ministerial speculation led to attempts to discourage woad-growing in England and encourage it in Ireland. Private gain was the aim, not finding work for the poor in either place. Woad-growers in England carried on regardless. Thirsk's view that scandals 'were but the scum on the surface of a healthy current of water' seems confirmed. In the aftermath of the First World War momentary ministerial interest in finding alternative occupations to keep agricultural labouring families on the land enabled the survey of England's rural industries by two women (Mrs Helen FitzRandolph and Miss Doriel Hay), themselves far from indifferent. Although official interest quickly waned, industrial employment had become a way to support agriculture and rural culture in general.

Peasant practice in keeping goats and cows, grazing fen commons, and growing niche-crops in gardens allows discussion of Thirsk's notion of alternative agriculture. To this end Dyer rescues the medieval goat (smelly, ugly, lusty, sinister, devilish, destructive, presumptuous and comic) from the silence of the

record. He finds them in hilly and wooded places, on demesnes as well as small farms, in the north west but also in the south east and elsewhere. Good at reclaiming poor land, they were also labour intensive and so women's work. Never as numerous as sheep, which outnumbered them ten to one at Domesday, goats nonetheless survived as 'a large and persistent' population in the north west in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Their presence suggests that in addition to the oscillation of mainstream and alternative agricultures there was a more continuous subsistence agriculture in the hands of peasants or small farmers: an agriculture more for use than for sale. Perhaps some of the turves, peat, conies, fish and fodder taken from fen commons, well-described by Peter Edwards in his essay on inter-commoning conflicts in Shropshire, served a similar purpose. These came under threat in the late sixteenth century when population growth made drainage a profitable operation for those with 'mainstream' ambitions.

Growing medicinal liquorice was a long-term peasant practice that fits Thirsk's view that 'alternative' products were well-suited to small operators who were often their originators. It flourished in the deep, friable soils of Pontefract in the eighteenth century. Chartres notes the scot and lot franchise here and suggests that the votes of the growers also protected their enterprises – though merchants won the lion's share of the profits. In contrast to liquorice, little peasant dairying survived the eighteenth century. Broad, like others including Deborah Valenze who offers a more gendered account, sets the onset of its decline in the second half of that century. His contention that few peasants kept cows in pastoral-industrial villages is more surprising, though no one would argue that cows could be kept without land or extensive commons – as Thirsk pointed out many years ago. The standardization of cheese types in response to the demands of wholesalers completes this description of the tendency of population growth in England to undermine both diversity and small producers.

A final illustration of the strategies pursued in periods of alternative agriculture is the practice of 'letting to halves' in which the landlord shared some of the costs of production and took a share of the return. Elizabeth Griffiths suggests that landlords were more willing to take on responsibilities like this in the late seventeenth century than they were later on. She proposes that a 'cultural shift' occurred in the early eighteenth century as gentry families moved from a close connection with the running of their estates to a more distant reliance on leases and land stewards. Some years ago, Trevor Raybould and John Beckett noted a similar pattern in the exploitation of minerals on aristocratic estates, but here

initial engagement gave way to rentier status a century later. Perhaps the different development of industrial and agricultural 'crops' determined the need for a landlord's involvement, causing this cultural shift to occur at different times in different places. That it happened in farming in the early eighteenth century offers a cultural context for the engrossment of farms and the parliamentary enclosures that followed.

These essays are a fitting tribute to an exceptional historian. They are meticulously researched, alert to large questions, and written with both wit and affection. Together they add to the rich diversity of writing about rural history that Joan Thirsk has done so much to encourage.

J. M. NEESON
York University, Toronto

JOHN BROAD, *Transforming English rural society. The Verneys and the Claydons, 1600–1820* (CUP, 2004). xvi + 292 pp. 13 tables; 8 figs. £50.

Given the amount of scholarly attention that has been devoted to these well-documented Buckinghamshire landowners, it cannot be long before some enterprising institution of higher education starts a degree in 'Verney Studies'. If so, then John Broad's volume on the growth, development and transformation of the family's core estate in the three Claydon parishes deserves to be at the head of the reading list. This volume represents the distillation of Dr. Broad's extensive researches over the last thirty years into the estate policy of the family and the growth of their estates. These are presented in an unusual and impressive amalgam of two increasingly conventional idioms – the local community study and the estate history. By combining the two, this account traces the wider social impact of the Verney family's single-minded pursuit of land and power in north Buckinghamshire, and its effect on fortunes of the three contrasting Claydon villages. In doing so, it illustrates how far a landowner could recast a settlement according to his own priorities, and make its inhabitants' daily life serve his ends. As such, this work provides a valuable addition to the broader social and economic history of rural England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Broad's study of the Verney family traces a cycle of growth and decay – their financial ascent from the return of Sir Ralph from exile in 1653; and their partial collapse in the 1780s under the debts of the 2nd Earl Verney. Both elements have a number of fascinating aspects. Broad demonstrates how the harsh lessons learned by Sir Ralph in the 1640s shaped the financial strategy of the family through his long life, and the two succeeding generations, into the 1740s. In essence, the Verney's

combined a ruthlessly commercial management regime with close personal scrutiny of estate business and of their tenants, particularly in Middle Claydon. Few other rural settlements in later seventeenth-century England can have been under such relentless and pervasive surveillance by their landowner. The family also adopted preferred marriage into prosperous, but unconnected, commercial families over alliances that would bolster their position in the county or in national politics. Until the succession of the second earl in the 1740s, they favoured solvent obscurity to the high stakes (but high risks) of seeking power at court or parliament. Again, they seem to have been perpetuating the lessons learned during the life of the courtier Sir Edmund Verney, whose rewards for service to Charles I were precarious finances and an early death at Edgehill in 1642.

While tight-fisted estate management and a succession of lucrative marriage agreements achieved family prosperity in incremental steps over a century, the dramatic financial disasters of the second earl nearly undid this in a generation. Broad's portrait of this Ralph Verney is subtle and intricate. Diligent and dutiful, rather than the archetypal aristocratic wastrel, he was undone by the two commonplace desires of the eighteenth-century gentry, of building a house and a parliamentary interest. These ambitions brought large debts, but were not in themselves likely to lead to ruin. Verney's rash attempt to fund them by speculating in East India futures was, however. By 1786 his debts totalled £140,095, and he had degenerated into a grasping, destructive and devious character, quite at odds with his previous behaviour. He went into exile, while his trustees sold the outlying estates, and stabilized the situation by his death in 1791.

The rise and near fall of the Verneys had other significant costs. In particular, Broad shows how the open-field, 'peasant' community of Middle Claydon was transformed in the mid-seventeenth century into a tightly-policed estate village. Here the Verneys exercised a hard-edged 'paternalism', ensuring that while their tenants did not have to go to law or go cold in winter, they were sure to pay a market rent, and acquiesce to the family's wishes, particularly the exclusion of migrants. As Parson Butterfield wrote in 1671 'those that are like to multiply may do it for the king, but not for Middle Claydon'. The Verneys depopulated the village and reduced an occupationally-diverse and self-sufficient settlement to a collection of farmers, servants and labourers. In East Claydon, where their landholding brought control rather than dominance, the population stagnated between 1660 and 1800 and some rural craftsmen remained. In Steeple Claydon, which they had failed to enclose in the seventeenth century and where they held only one-third

of the land, the population doubled, and the community retained the characteristics of an 'open' village. Only here did a more varied village economy survive, albeit one impoverished by unrestrained in-migration.

In this sense, the Claydons were the canvas on which the Verneys' financial ambitions and social imperatives were drawn. The great strength of this depiction is that this landscape is full of people, so that estate policy is set in its wider social context, to show the human costs of the Verneys' actions. It would have been enlightening to discover the social consequences in the Claydons of the financial crisis of the 1770s and 1780s, but the main legacy of this period is a sketchy estate archive. Similarly, the extensive correspondence of the first Sir Ralph Verney depicts his paternal interference in the villages more strongly than that of his successors, who may have been equally involved, but who failed to leave such an extensive archive. Of necessity, therefore, this study of the relationship between the family and the Claydons is able to say more about the seventeenth rather than the eighteenth century. Despite this, it remains a comprehensive and enlightening illustration of the social consequences of the widespread phenomenon of the growth of the 'great estate' during the long eighteenth century. It deserves a wide readership, both among scholars seeking to discover where the independent, self-sustaining early-modern village went to, and those concerned to establish where the dependent, tied estate-community came from.

H. R. FRENCH

University of Exeter

PATRICIA E. C. CROOT (ed.), *The Victoria history of the counties of England. A history of the county of Middlesex*, XII, *Chelsea* (Boydell and Brewer for the Institute of Historical Research, 2004). xviii + 298 pp. 76 illus; 16 plates; 10 maps and plans. £90.

This volume covers a small area, a wedge-shaped parish 660 acres in extent in 1900 after small detached portions had been relocated. The southern boundary is the Thames and small tributaries define its western and eastern extent. The surface geology is predominantly Kempton Park gravel over London clay, with some brickearth and silt. The whole parish lies under the ten metre contour. The village which gave the parish its name originated on the Thames bank, a Saxon settlement whose earliest record dates from 785. Mercian kings were thought to have resided at Chelsea in the eighth century, and through the succeeding centuries the parish was a retreat from London and Westminster for royalty, aristocracy and rich citizenry. The building of the grand Royal Hospital in 1680s attracted further well-to-do settlement. In the eighteenth century Chelsea had a reputation as a suburban resort, with pleasure gardens

and inns in a pleasing riverside setting. Artists were also attracted to the picturesque rural village, and remained when, in the nineteenth century, it lost all agriculture and became a London suburb. Much of the volume describes urban Chelsea but here I will concentrate on the agriculture which preceded bricks and mortar.

The medieval manor of Chelsea was roughly coterminous with the parish. For two periods, 1376–70 and in the mid-fifteenth century, the demesne was held by Westminster Abbey. In the first period barley was the main crop, followed by rye and wheat, then oats and a few acres of mixed grains and vetches. Grain not saved for seed or consumed at home was sent to the Abbey's granary or to Battersea and one has the sense that the food demands of London and Westminster, just down the river, were already being felt. Big changes occurred in the seventeenth century, when closes and the two open fields were increasingly turned over to commercial gardening to serve the metropolis or went out of agriculture as formal gardens and parkland attached to residences of incoming gentry and nobility.

Between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries Chelsea was one of a number of parishes near London where vegetables, fruit and nursery produce became of major importance. Unlike the Neat Houses in neighbouring Westminster, where closes of predominantly wet-pasture were converted to gardens, most of Chelsea's vegetables were grown in the open fields, by husbandmen who incorporated spade-cultivated vegetables, particularly roots, into their more traditional grain-based farming. These farmer-gardeners dispensed with fallows, relying on copious amounts of dung from the nearby city to refresh the soil. As elsewhere near London, commercial gardens were eventually superseded by buildings but high rents for garden ground ensured that the open fields of Chelsea, like those of Fulham, survived into the nineteenth century. The gradual encroachment of gardening into Chelsea farming is well described in the section on agriculture but there is no discussion of who the first gardeners were or what was the process of innovation.

Chelsea was particularly famed for its nursery gardens. Beginning probably towards the end of the seventeenth century, the business was well-established by the mid-eighteenth century, supplying a local, national and international market. Nurserymen needed only small areas of land to ply their trade and lasted longer than market gardeners in the area: many opened showrooms in the Kings Road where the larger firms survived into the twentieth century.

There are informative short histories of the leading nursery firms in this volume and from these one can understand the highly specialized nature of this trade.

James Veitch & Sons sent plant hunters to China, produced many important hybrids, and worked with scientific institutions. Joseph Knight, who began trading in Chelsea in 1808, had a large collection of exotic plants housed in a conservatory and other buildings. These businesses were supplying exotic and novel plants to the fashion-conscious gentry; no wonder they could pay rents which kept the builders at bay for so long.

There are some faults in this volume. E. J. Willson is misquoted on p. 152. She wrote that a Frenchman in Chelsea was said to have first grown lettuces successfully in England on a large scale in the mid-eighteenth century; the words 'on a large scale' are omitted here making the statement nonsense. The proof-reader has overlooked the garbled sentence on p. 166 beginning, 'In 1886 it was destroyed by fire in 1807 ...'. A more serious problem is the disappointing maps. There are no maps of market gardening and nursery-ground. Use could have been made of eighteenth and nineteenth century maps to show the spread, and decline, of gardening in the parish, including Thomas Milne's detailed land-use map of 1800. Five of the ten maps and plans are sections of the Ordnance Survey map depicting Chelsea c. 1865. Use of this map has merit but the reproduction is poor: the text is too small to read and the sections of map are grey and indistinct. In contrast, the illustrations in the book are plentiful and well-chosen.

Any criticisms are outweighed by the large amount of careful scholarship in this volume which will be welcomed by historians of London and its suburbs.

MALCOLM THICK
Harwell, Oxfordshire

JON STOBART, *The first industrial region. North-west England, c. 1700–60* (Manchester UP, 2004). xi + 259 pp. 30 tables; 33 figs. £49.99

Most works on the early phases of industrialization in the north west focus on the thickening of the rural population and the increase in rural manufacture as an adjunct to agriculture. Stobart adopts a rather different approach and, using the skills of the historical geographer, subjects the urban structure of Cheshire and south Lancashire and the development of an integrated regional economy to detailed and extended analysis. This analysis is placed within the context of theories of urban growth which are established at the outset and scattered throughout the remainder of the text.

Stobart's argument is developed in chapters on the textile industries, coal-using industries, the service sector and the spatial integration of the urban system. Overall, Stobart develops a strong case for the centrality of the urban network to patterns of regional economic development and he concludes that we need to

'fundamentally rethink our conceptualization of economic development' (p. 222). In particular, he calls for concepts of regional economic development to be not only spatialized, but for regional urban hierarchies and the inter-connectedness which characterized the urban structure to be placed at the centre of such analysis. This spatialization of economic systems and the sensitivity to sub-regional economies and structures are major strengths of the work and raise important conceptual issues that others will need to take on board. Furthermore, the focus on the period before the classic industrial revolution is a major strength, even if one cannot help but read the text with a degree of hindsight.

Whilst the book has many strengths, I have many reservations. As the concept of the region is central to Stobart's analysis and argument, one might have expected some discussion on the definition of the region and some justification for the selection of Cheshire and south Lancashire as the region. My suspicion is that the region was selected because it broadly coincides with the area of jurisdiction of the probate court at Chester, as wills form the major archival resource for the analysis. Perhaps this explains why places such as Frodsham and Malpas are included while other places which were undoubtedly part of the same regional economy such as Buxton, Garstang, Lancaster and perhaps even Ulverston and Kendal are not. Also, given the importance of urban/rural integration in Stobart's model, the exclusion of the Fylde, which was probably the region's most productive arable area in the early eighteenth century, is difficult to comprehend. Moreover, the integrity of the region as Stobart defines it is undermined through the text. In Chapter Three, Stobart establishes a series of distinct sub-regional economic systems, and yet the rest of the book refers to the single region. One is left wondering if indeed we have a single region or a plurality of regions. Furthermore, the interconnectedness of Cheshire and Lancashire is not firmly established. Chester and Liverpool developed the strongest links, undoubtedly the product of the relative decline of the former, and the rapid development of the latter, partly as a result of the relocation of Chester merchants to Liverpool. However, the evidence for further connectedness which would have helped establish the region is not always convincing.

Readers of this journal may be particularly interested to know where the agricultural regime fits in with Stobart's view of an integrated, interconnected regional economic system. On this issue, Stobart is particularly disappointing. He asserts that 'commercial agriculture was important across the region, but dominated much of Cheshire and west Lancashire: ... these specialisms formed the basis of the industrial geography of

north-west England during the industrial revolution' (p. 46). He further asserts that 'western and central Lancashire was, above all, a productive agricultural area ... characterized by arable and mixed farming or market gardening, and by a relatively prosperous resident gentry willing to invest in agricultural improvement' (p. 70). However, at no point in the book does he offer any evidence to support his assertions of a commercial agricultural system and the references to Aikin (1795) are not convincing evidence given the rapid development of agriculture in the late eighteenth century, attested to by a number of studies which Stobart fails to cite. For instance, although cheese production in Cheshire was undoubtedly commercial, and Stobart is right to point out that some of this found its way onto Liverpool and Manchester markets, he fails to mention the cheese trade with London, nor does he refer to any of Foster's work on the subject.

Stobart's comments on the marketing of agricultural produce are also underdeveloped and fail to convince that there was a commercial agriculture connected to a complex web of urban networks. He points to an increase in rural food and drink retailers, although there is little evidence of specialized town-based wholesalers of agricultural products. Indeed, only nine of thirty urban settlements had a cheese or corn dealer. It is possible that a single town was home to a large number of such individuals who coordinated agricultural marketing across the region; it is further possible that a large number were based in rural settlements, but Stobart does not develop his analysis to this level. Nevertheless, in the light of Scola's work on the period after 1770, both seem unlikely. Although the chapter on the service sector contains frequent if sometimes oblique references to agricultural marketing, no firm conclusions about this issue can be drawn from the text. In the end, this discussion turns to the applicability of Christallerian or Loschian 'theories', and Vancian 'ideas', and to the non-specialist in the field will undoubtedly add confusion.

One final criticism is methodological. Much of the study is based on probate documents which Stobart uses to investigate occupational structure, the interconnectedness of the urban structure and the position within the urban hierarchy of individual settlements. Although this is subject to some statistical analysis, resulting in a great deal of mapping and tabulating of data, the appendix dealing with the methodological problems of using probate sources for this type of work is inadequate. Stobart identifies some of the problems, but fails to identify others, though there is insufficient space to explore this further here. Despite the large probate sample, some of the tables are based on very small numbers and there is sometimes a lack of awareness of chronological change

within his period. Stobart thinks and writes spatially – and asks us to do the same thing – and yet his chronological thinking is not as acute as it could have been.

Despite my reservations and the criticisms I have levelled at this book, it ought to be recognized for its many strengths. Stobart has made an important contribution to the study not just of this region, but of all regions. His conclusions and methodologies, omissions and weaknesses will be debated, but the core concepts of spatializing the region and investigating its internal structures and interconnections are of immense value and will undoubtedly encourage others to adopt similar approaches to their research.

ANDREW J. GRITT

University of Central Lancashire

ROGER J. P. KAIN, JOHN CHAPMAN and RICHARD R. OLIVER, *The enclosure maps of England and Wales, 1595–1918. A cartographic analysis and electronic catalogue* (CUP, 2004). xx + 415 pp. 162 tables; 34 figs. £120.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that Roger Kain has been, if not *the* pioneer, then certainly one of the pioneers in the construction of large data sets, and the presentation of those data sets in more user-friendly forms. We need only refer to his work on the tithe files to confirm his place in the historiography of agricultural history and historical geography. In this volume he is joined by two other central figures and pioneers in their own realms, John Chapman, noted for his work on enclosure, and Richard Oliver, a man of maps and of the history of cartography and surveying. In this volume they have brought together their different talents to produce a wonderfully rich source on the enclosure maps of England and Wales from 1595 to 1918 (though we are told that the first map is for 1598 for Haselbech in Northamptonshire). Moreover, they also invite the user to consult the database they have constructed and which is available online through the History Data Service of UK Data Archive at hds.essex.ac.uk/em/index.html. This review therefore will treat the two sources separately.

The narrative in the book occupies more or less half of its pages with the remainder in the form of data appendices. This narrative is divided into three parts. The first is a relatively brief history of the enclosure movement of England and Wales from the late sixteenth to the early twentieth century. It does not tell the reader anything new about this movement. This is not a criticism because the purpose of the book is not to offer a new interpretation or new twists to a well-known tale. Rather it is to introduce the reader to the maps that were generated, including insights into the surveyors and how the maps they produced changed over time.

One distinction that is made in defining what or what not to include in the exercise undertaken is to include only formal enclosures. These are defined as those deriving either from parliamentary legislation, or from formal written agreements. Thus informal enclosures, perhaps the result of unity of possession whereby one individual in acquiring all land and common rights in a place then decided to enclose, are not included.

The second part is a county by county analysis of enclosure map characteristics including the area covered by enclosure maps (in both acres and hectares), the extent of the county and hence the density of cover of the maps, the number of maps and their chronological limits, and the average size of the maps. Thus Bedfordshire has 90 maps covering 67.8 per cent of the county from 1761 to 1890 at an average size of 2249 acres. Incidentally that is the highest proportion of enclosure map coverage of all the counties. In contrast Yorkshire North Riding has 143 maps covering 18.5 per cent of the county from 1709 to 1883 with an average size of 1758 acres, and Cheshire has as many as 75 maps but covering just 4.7 per cent of the county from 1762 to 1883 with an average size of only 405 acres. However, Cheshire is second only to neighbouring Shropshire in the proportion of maps that resulted from enclosure agreements as distinct from parliamentary intervention. The commentary which accompanies each county analysis includes details of map scales and of features such as decorative pictorial cartouches found on maps. Of great interest to most historians will be the lists of surveyors, the number of maps with which they were associated, and the areas those maps covered. Top surveyor in any single county seems to have been Robert Corby of Kirstead in Norfolk, working on 32 Norfolk enclosures amounting to 72,380 acres, followed by John Browne of Norwich, also working in Norfolk on 28 enclosures amounting to 67,843 acres, followed very closely by William Church of Abingdon in Berkshire working in Berkshire on 30 enclosures amounting to 66,169 acres.

The third part is an essay on enclosure maps. It takes the story forward by using illustrations from photographic reprints of original maps, and also from reconstructed county-based maps of the proportion of each county covered by surviving maps, distinguishing enclosure agreements from parliamentary enclosure, and distinguishing the distribution of maps constructed at different scales. This chapter also has something to say about the development of cartographic representation, not least the use of colour in maps and whether features like roads, drains and other depictions are present.

More or less half the book is an alphabetical index of first, the surveyors of the maps and secondly, an index of those places in England and Wales with extant

enclosure maps. This is a large database of names, addresses, counties with which the surveyors were associated and the acreages of land they surveyed. Top of this hit parade is Robert Corby, already referred to above, this time for work on 41 enclosures covering 117,964 acres in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. It looks like an old friend of mine, William Collisson of Brackley in Northamptonshire, comes second with 82,653 acres on his own in 17 enclosures of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Gloucestershire, Huntingdonshire, Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire, and a further 20,341 acres in collaboration with other surveyors in five enclosures in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Hertfordshire. I first drew attention to Collisson in 1977 and noted the enclave of surveyors in and around the town of Brackley, notably the Collisson and Russell families. The latter also figures prominently in this wider study.

The second or hidden half of this work is the website. The book is indexed by place name, and the website also allows a search by place name, but one very useful part of the website is that it also allows the user to put in a county name – say Buckinghamshire – and then produce an alphabetical list of all the places for that county for which there is an extant enclosure map. This information includes a unique number, a date, the type of place involved – dominantly described as townships in the north midland and the northern counties, parishes elsewhere in England and Wales, but also including places described as hamlets, liberties, manors, and tithings, or remaining unspecified – the name of the place itself and the county in which it is located, and a record office reference which is usually a county record office but the National Archives for those enclosures enrolled in the central records, especially those under the General Acts dating from the mid-nineteenth century. Moreover, having once selected a place it is possible to delve further into the detail of the map associated with that enclosure. This is categorized under literally dozens of different headings offering sometimes the most intimate details imaginable for a map.

In summary, this is an immense catalogue of enclosure maps which should be a standard source for generations of future researchers.

MICHAEL TURNER
University of Hull

JENNY BUCKTON, *The best of breeds. A history of Welsh Black cattle* (Gomer Press, 2004). xviii + 146 pp. 2 tables; 203 figs. £19.99.

If the National Eisteddfod, the incomparable Bryn Terfel and the occasional ageing and subfusc pop singer stand as today's Welsh urban cultural icons, then the

Welsh Black cattle breed is foremost among claimants for iconic status in the countryside. Enduringly rugged and capable of withstanding the harshest of environmental conditions, the Welsh Black can be seen as a metaphor both for the landscape itself and for the worthy souls inhabiting it. A modern history of the breed has been long overdue and it was with great pleasure that I opened this handsomely-produced book from the pen of Jenny Buckton and the imprimatur of the admirable Gomer Press. But gloom and disappointment soon descended. Rather than offering a serious study of the biological evolution of the breed and critically discussing the economic (and even cultural) motives which determined temporal changes in its genetic constitution and phenotypic conformation, Ms Buckton takes up more than half of her book trying to explain (via a potted history) the role of cattle in Welsh society. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with this, of course, since as items of trade, tribute and status cattle of all shapes and sizes were of vital social as well as economic significance. The trouble is that Ms Buckton rather overeggs the pudding. Moreover, much of her historical narrative is quixotic and inaccurate and her cause hardly helped by a writing style sometimes so tortuous as to defy comprehension. As she slips confusingly from one historical period to another (using sources which are not only dated, but cited with alarming eccentricity), a fog descends as significant issues tend to get lost in a miasma of irrelevant detail. Throughout the text, mechanisms of change are studiously avoided as the author resorts to infuriatingly unscientific generalizations. Thus the aurochs grew to 'gigantic' proportions, the Neolithic period extended from 10,000 BC to 3000 BC, 'vast ranches' were established in Wales by 1200 BC, and farm tenants between 1790 and 1815 were in a 'pitiful' situation (they were, in fact, doing very well as a result of the Napoleonic blockade). Elsewhere we read of the nineteenth century as the beginning of the Age of Enlightenment, of an enigmatic 'Royal Inquest' of indeterminate date, of the cattle of Wales suffering an 'identity crisis' in the mid-eighteenth century and of the shire (sic) horse becoming a 'new force' in agriculture in the 1700s when in reality the breed was first registered in 1877. The lack of dates in Ms Buckton's text lead the reader down a variety of confused pathways sometimes culminating in statements of some singularity. We are asked to believe, for example, that the celebrated Thomas Johnes of Hafod introduced Friesian cows to his estate in 1840 when the poor man had gone to his reward in 1816. As if all this were not enough, the text is replete with evidence of poor proof-reading. The distinguished *Archaeologia Cambrensis* appears as *Cambrenese*, the well-known Norfolk land agent Hall W. Keary is introduced

as 'Hall Kearny'; we read of 'laying havoc', 'raked rentals' and 'plightlet' (presumably 'pightle' as in Adams *Agrarian landscape terms* or *OED*); *Dunssetae* becomes *Densetae* and so on. This is all rather unfortunate in a work claimed by HRH Prince Charles in his foreword to be a story 'about the precious culture and heritage of Wales'.

The second half of the book, dealing with the period from the establishment of the earliest Welsh Black Cattle Herd Book in 1873 more or less to the present, offers the inevitable parade of animals and breeders which make breed histories such fun for those involved. While readers of this *Review* may be interested in aspects of the finances and membership of the breed society, and the efforts it has made to promote the Welsh Black and to sponsor exports to southern Africa, South America, India, Europe and elsewhere, I suspect they will approach the final chapter, more-or-less a listing of show-winning cattle and their owners (the former with often impenetrable names) with tepid enthusiasm. On the other hand, those with a practical eye will probably enjoy detecting the subtle differences in the qualities of the many animals illustrated in these pages. As Ms Buckton demonstrates, the Welsh Black cattle breed formerly played a distinguished role in the Welsh economy. As a dual-purpose animal and a suckler dam par excellence, it continues so to do, more especially as modern methods of selection involving progeny and performance testing progressively improve its carcass quality and lean meat potential. Ms Buckton's efforts I fear, fail to do justice to her subject and the Welsh Black awaits the arrival of an historian who will provide a more definitive scientific account of its evolution.

R. J. MOORE-COLYER

University of Wales, Aberystwyth

ROBIN HAINES, *Charles Trevelyan and the Great Irish Famine* (Four Courts Press, 2004). xvii + 606 pp. €85. To students of the Great Irish Famine (1845–52), Charles Trevelyan is a controversial and generally disliked figure. Despite being a civil servant he, more than any senior politician of the Famine period, has been represented as responsible for relief policies that were parsimonious and inappropriate. This is a serious charge as, in the space of only six years, approximately one million Irish people died and an even higher number emigrated from Ireland. Moreover, demographically (and in many less quantifiable ways) Ireland never recovered from the tragedy of the Famine.

An unusual feature of the Irish Famine was that both administrative and fiscal responsibility for relief measures from 1845 (when blight first appeared on the potato crop) were given to the Treasury, and this role

continued despite a change of government in 1846, when the Whig leader, Lord John Russell, replaced the Tory, Sir Robert Peel, as premier. This put Trevelyan in a very strong position, as he was permanent secretary of the Treasury and generally regarded as an authority on Ireland. But it also meant that the Treasury principle of balancing the books, and later, modernizing the Irish economy, were sometimes given primacy over the need to save lives.

Despite the abundance of publications that accompanied the 150th anniversary of the Great Famine in 1995, no major reappraisal of Trevelyan was made. On the contrary, most famine publications have been happy to repeat the assertions made in the 1960s by Cecil Woodham-Smith (author of the best-selling *The great hunger*) and Jenifer Hart (an authority on civil-service history), and have followed their characterization of Trevelyan as cold, zealous and moralistic. One article about Trevelyan was even sub-titled 'A Victorian Cromwell?'

According to Haines, Famine historians have almost universally characterized him as an 'omnipotent dictator' and 'parsimonious egotist'. They also suggest that his actions were motivated by his dislike of Catholics and desire to reform the Celtic character (Trevelyan was from Cornwall and described himself as a 'reformed Celt'). Haines provides a corrective balance to this and similar assertions, arguing that far from being an intolerant Protestant evangelical, he liked Catholics. An even more serious charge, for which Haines offers evidence, is that a number of Trevelyan's detractors have offered judgement without ever having consulted his papers. Haines' reassessment, which is based on an exhaustive reading of not only Trevelyan's documents but a wide range of other sources, is therefore very welcome.

Nor is it just historians who have given Trevelyan a prominent place in the history of the Famine. He is mentioned in a popular Irish folk ballad, 'The Fields of Athenry' written in the 1970s (although often assumed to be older). In it, a woman is singing to her lover who is about to be transported because he 'stole Trevelyan's corn, so the young might see the morn'. As a consequence, in popular memory, Trevelyan's central role in famine relief – as a heartless and distant dispenser of food – is confirmed. Yet the folk records of the Famine (which are retrospective anyway) contain few references to any government officials, politicians or even Queen Victoria (who in Ireland is widely remembered as 'the Famine Queen').

Defences of Trevelyan are rare, although in 'Apologia for a Dead Civil Servant' published in 1977, originally in the *Irish Times*, the respected historian P. M. Austin Bourke offered a corrective view of Trevelyan. He

argued, not totally convincingly, that Trevelyan was only a civil servant, albeit a very conscientious one, who did as his political masters bid him. He also briefly suggested that Trevelyan's attitude towards the Irish poor was much more compassionate than traditionally portrayed. These themes are developed by Haines, more convincingly, 27 years later. Haines further claims that by focusing on Trevelyan as the villain of the tragedy, sight has sometimes been lost of the real cause of the Famine, that is, the potato blight (*Phytophthora infestans*). This interpretation, however, contradicts many of the recent histories of the Famine (including my own) which argue that despite the limitations of 1840s communications, more could have been done to alleviate the suffering triggered by the potato blight. Haines, however, concludes that not only is Trevelyan's tarnished reputation not deserved but '*Phytophthora infestans*, not Trevelyan, was the tyrant who brought death and suffering to Ireland on a scale never before witnessed'.

But Trevelyan is nothing if not complex; a cursory glance at the correspondence of many of his contemporaries suggests that he was an exacting colleague, leading to the pejorative reference to 'Trevelyanisms', describing his way of controlling relief provision. Moreover, Trevelyan's authority had the power to intimidate even his aristocratic superiors. There was also consensus, both then and now, that he was a good administrator, honest and hard working. Significantly, Trevelyan was knighted for his services to famine relief in 1848. A strength of Haines' book is that it offers insight into the personal life of Trevelyan, and by doing so, a much warmer person emerges. At the same time, however, Trevelyan was a skilled self-publicist who in 1848 published (at first anonymously) an optimistic view of famine relief. His timing was inappropriate as the potato blight had not run its course and excess mortality, mass evictions and large scale emigration continued; in some areas, on a higher level than in the previous three years.

Overall, Haines' book is well written and engaging. By his own admission, however, he adopts an adversarial style, but this style gives the book much of its energy and clear focus. For some, therefore, it may not make comfortable reading. There are some errors: for example, Thomas Keneally's name is mis-spelt on page 14 (confusing for me and other readers) and in some places the index could have been extended – but in such a large, complex study, a few errors are probably inevitable. In general though, whether you agree or disagree with Haines' interpretation and conclusions, this book is a major addition to famine historiography. It is based on extensive research which is cleverly synthesized and offers a fresh insight into a major event in not only Irish but British history. It is also a further reminder that

many of the significant contributions to our understanding of the Famine and its consequences have come from scholars working outside Ireland.

CHRISTINE KINEALY
University of Central Lancashire

DENNIS R. MILLS, *Rural community history from trade directories* (Local Population Studies Supplement, 2001). 111 pp. 27 figs. £6.

This short book is designed to meet a perceived gap – to provide an introductory guide to the systematic exploitation of a familiar source for the non-specialist. In that respect, it is similar in purpose to the author's well-known and valued guides to aspects of the Census. In attempting to provide a didactic introduction to directories for the rural historian, this does cover methodological ground not easily accessible elsewhere, and perhaps urges the agrarian historian to reflect further on their limits and possibilities as a source.

Mills first sets out to define 'community' as the framework for his book, where he stresses people, their interactions, their relationships in society and space, and occupation, before describing the basic characteristics of directories and their publishing history. Trade directories providing sufficient detail to be useful for the rural communities to be studied are said to appear around 1840, and to flourish for roughly a century, appearing for most counties at a rate of perhaps two or three per decade. By contrast, most previous academic work and source guides to the use of directories, such as that by Norton and by Shaw, has focused on the urban, running forward from the mid-eighteenth century. On that series of premises, Mills then sets out a series of fields, methods, and criteria for directory-based research design. Thus guided, the beginner is shown how to explore trades and crafts; population and the differences of large and small villages; the criteria for the selection of a community for study; the thorny problem of multiple occupational descriptions in directories; declining village 'self-sufficiency' and changing interaction of village with village and with town; and the use of directories as potential sources for comparative history of, for example, milling in Dorset.

This is useful, and there are elements of the text which are particularly valuable. The discussion of rural crafts and trades introduces basic issues of market and scale well, and the discussion of the need to record all occupational descriptors is sensible, and set well into the context of the service hierarchy of settlements. Each theme explored is supported by excellent vignettes drawn from primary research on the source, by the author or his students and from a wide range of agrarian and local historians. Thus the directory evidence for the carrier is discussed to

excellent effect through Morgan's Bristol study and the author's own work on Lincolnshire. The caveats and methods are well covered by such microstudies, and the result is a student-friendly and open invitation to pursue this source for rural historical study.

In that, this book succeeds, but there are, of course, elements with which one might disagree. It would have been useful to see some more discussion on the complex problems of comparing directories, storing and recovering information, and of patching together time-series from counties where multiple sets of directories exist, or where a single publisher provenance is lacking. The conceptualization of 'community' is perhaps a little overstated, and it would have been helpful to explore the township more fully as a problem for those dealing with big northern parishes. The author might also have explored more fully the processes of compilation, of which we still know too little, and here perhaps Parson's work for the classic series of Baines directories covering the six northern counties in the 1820s and 1830s would have offered a challenging case. That said, Mills has provided a very useful introduction and guide, and clearly demonstrated the potential for further methodological and empirical work using the directory as source, where the enthusiastic beginner can add significantly to our knowledge of the Victorian rural community.

J. A. CHARTRES
University of Leeds

PETER WORMELL, *Pinewoods of the Black Mount* (Dalesman Publishing Company, 2003). 94 pp. Illustrated with wood engravings by Christopher Wormell. £15.95 standard hardback edition; £85 limited deluxe edition of 100 copies.

Despite popular ill-considered disdain, conifers are the chief renewable resource of raw materials for the paper, board and light structural framing used in Britain. The sole useful indigenous representative is *Pinus sylvestris*, the Scots pine.

In Scotland, the native pinewoods, scattered remnant fragments though they be, are the glory of their glens, the open woods being now regarded as of the highest aesthetic and biological interest. It was not always so. The woods were 'mined' for timber, subject to fire, and when taken as shelter in winter by sheep and deer all regeneration would fail.

Peter Wormell lovingly describes woods that are fragments indeed, clinging to a number of sites around Loch Tulla, close to the A82 trunk road as it rises northwards onto the bleakness of Rannoch Moor. The woods are at altitude, in a high rainfall area, and on poor morainic soils. An early eighteenth-century laird contracted to allow ruinous exploitation of these woods.

In response to enlightened twentieth-century ownership by the Fleming family, Wormell has himself been instrumental in a vigorous ongoing scheme to restore and extend the native woods by planting and regeneration. In early chapters, Wormell charmingly yet accurately describes the pinewood scene and the perils that challenge its existence. His final thoughtful chapter brings us up to date with recently-developed principles and attitudes underlying good woodland management in the highlands.

The book is well produced and has delightful wood engraving illustrations by Christopher Wormell, the author's nephew. This is an inspiring addition to a widening recent literature which has its roots in Steven and Carlisle's account of the pinewoods at their nadir fifty years ago.

HOWARD OVENS
Talybont, Dyfed

Elsewhere and General

ALBERT J. AMMERMAN and PAOLO BIAGI (eds), *The widening harvest. The Neolithic transition in Europe: looking back, looking forward* (Archaeological Institute of America, 2003). (Available through Oxbow Books). xxii + 343 pp. 47 illus. £29.95.

People have argued a lot, and often not in friendly terms, over why European foragers became farmers between 7000 and 4000 BC. Albert Ammerman and Paolo Biagi have provided one of the latest in a series of edited volumes to tackle this question. The principal question they and their contributors address is whether the Neolithic spread through Europe through the movement of people or through the exchange of ideas and domesticated plants and animals. The volume presents work from a conference in Venice marking the twenty-fifth year since Ammerman and Cavalli-Sforza published their 'wave-of-advance' model for the spread of the Neolithic. It is a volume with many excellent contributions by leading students of the Neolithic transition.

The widening harvest included an explicit brief for contributors to comment on how research has unfolded. As someone fascinated by the debate, I enjoyed the historical retrospectives by many of the important figures in the field, even if it occasionally felt as if some of the contributors are a bit too close to the ongoing polemics to be writing their own history and it might have been useful to include voices from the eminent British group represented by Alasdair Whittle, Ian Hodder, Richard Bradley, Julian Thomas, and Nick Thorpe. Substantively, there is much here for the reader new to the literature or interested in up-to-date summaries rather than historical retrospective. Peter Rowley-Conwy

trenchantly refutes the idea that pigs and cattle may have been domesticated indigenously in Europe. Gordon Hillman's and David Harris's chapters on how palaeobotanical and ecological research on the Neolithic grew and changed are wonderfully incisive. While some may not agree with Paolo Biagi's argument that there were actually very few terminal Mesolithic foragers in Southern Europe to acculturate into farmers, his critique that archaeologists have generally regarded Mesolithic people as 'generic foragers' certainly provides a much-needed tonic for this sometimes tired debate. Both Peter Bogucki and Douglas Price provide well-rounded autobiographical accounts of their research combined with authoritative summaries of present knowledge. Jean Guilaine's chapter, inexplicably the only one in French, is well worth reading, with a broad and thoughtful analysis comparing Cyprus, southern Italy and southern France. If anything, Guilaine's work illustrates the variety of Neolithic transitions even under a single broad rubric such as migration, and the difficulty of finding just one story about it – a theme echoed by Kaczanowska and Kozłowski for central Europe.

Two papers at the conclusion of the volume discuss recent attempts to support or refute a demographic expansion explanation for the Neolithic using the human genetics of modern Europeans. Somewhat confusingly, Luca Luigi Cavalli-Sforza argues that a Neolithic contribution of twenty to thirty per cent to the European gene pool underlines the importance of Neolithic movements of people into Europe, while Bryan Sykes argues that precisely the same figure shows that modern European genes are mostly inherited from pre-Neolithic peoples. Let the reader decide whether the glass is half-empty or half-full.

As for the grand theme of the retrospective, many perceptive moments in the book illustrate that the last twenty-five years have seen important rethinkings of the question. Ammerman is more careful than many of his contributors to note the distinction between the demic diffusion model for agricultural expansion (that farming spread to Europe through the actual movement of people) and the wave-of-advance hypothesis (that what drove this was a wave of population growth that saturated available space and forced farmers out beyond the frontier). As Zilhão and Bogucki demonstrate eloquently, in many areas of Europe, a movement of peoples is quite likely, but there is little evidence for one driven by population pressure on a filled-up landscape. Hence, Ammerman rightly notes that the last quarter century of research has vindicated, at least partially, a movement-of-people model for the spread of farming in Europe, but that the wave-of-advance hypothesis per se has largely been relegated to the status of a useful hermeneutic.

Demic diffusion is vindicated at least partially, as many of the areas of Europe which are widely considered zones of forager acculturation are not covered in this volume – Britain and Scandinavia are obvious examples. But given the patchy nature of Neolithization in areas such as the northern European plain, simply looking at the first farmers within a macro-region such as a modern nation-state does not really account for the whole landscape. As the summary of the final discussion notes, much more detailed studies of farmer-forager interactions within micro-regions are needed.

On another level, as both several contributors and the final discussion argue, saying that agriculture spread through demic diffusion really is describing the 'how' of the event, rather than the 'why'. For the latter, explanatory hypotheses are needed, and as Zilhão and Price note, these may include social scenarios as well as purely ecological or economic ones. Indeed, polarizing the question into simple categories of 'movement of peoples' versus 'movement of things' is undoubtedly too simple. As Colin Renfrew's discussion of linguistic dispersals implies, movement of people can occur in many ways. Some of these, indeed, would appear, both archaeologically and socially, to have much more in common with acculturation than with the traditional idea of folk migration.

JOHN ROBB
University of Cambridge

GÉRARD BÉAUR, CHRISTOPHE DUHAMELLE, REINER PRASS and JÜRGEN SCHLUMBOHM (eds), *Les sociétés rurales en Allemagne et en France (XVIIIe – XIXe siècles). Actes du colloque de Göttingen (23–25 novembre 2000)* (Association d'histoire des sociétés rurales. Bibliothèque d'histoire rurale, 8, 2004). 302 pp. €32.

This is a quite special volume, offering invaluable insights into the present state of research in the agrarian history of France and Germany, together with a highly instructive summary of the way present-day scholars see the work done over the last fifty years. The editors tell us that their agrarian history sank into obscurity in the 1980s and they recognize a fresh start in the 1990s. Strong misgivings had arisen concerning the facile acceptance of narrow economic criteria and statistics in explaining change, and they moved towards broader exploration of other explanatory factors, encompassing social and cultural influences. Some of the judgements on the primacy that was once given to economic history as a discipline are surprisingly harsh. The themes chosen here plainly show a new generation of researchers focusing on a fine analysis of social relations among peasant families. They are noticeably sensitive to the logic and good sense they find in the diverse strategies used by

peasants to survive changing circumstances. Viewpoints have undoubtedly shifted, and the new approaches are stimulating, some connecting with our current interests, some not.

This book of twelve essays springs out of a colloquium at Göttingen in 2000, when the French and German historians decided that they ought to communicate directly with each other instead of working at the same problems in isolation. So they presented to each other their research and reflections on agrarian development during the years 1700–1900, also offering suggestions for future research. They themselves refer to this period of study as the moment of transition from an agricultural to an industrial society, but, in practice, their papers do not pay attention to industrial growth in rural communities. Rather they concentrate on social and cultural investigations into people's dealings with their land. These light up the great diversity in peasants' manoeuvres to acquire and hold land while lords, adopting varying attitudes, held control in the background. With some exceptions, they pay little attention to the way the land was actually cultivated. But they all agree in eschewing large, national generalizations, for everywhere they identify strong regional, and lesser, local differences; in short, their histories exemplify the resourcefulness and ingenuity of humanity, however humble, while spelling the death of single generalizations.

Twelve essays span a large spatial territory. Dealings in the land market are one prominent theme, not something that we English historians examine at present. Werner Trossbach discusses intriguing questions concerning the relations of lords and peasants east of the Elbe when cereal exports from the Baltic expanded massively, yet without stirring protests from an oppressed labouring population living in a distinctly underpopulated countryside. Since the fall of the German Democratic Republic, a group of historians in Potsdam has set to work on this question. Annie Antoine in sceptical mood examines longstanding assumptions about the heavy burdens laid by parasitic lords on French peasants before the Revolution. She favours the study of lordship as one of several other institutions shaping the practical routine of peasants. Jean-Marc Moriceau asks whether the large farms of the Île de France were indeed at the heart of agricultural improvement. They have received all the credit, and still do, but this overlooks the different ways in which small farms were also innovative. Leasing to halves is mentioned as one such device at this point, along with other technical improvements in traction and cultivation; the author also pays welcome attention to the new editions of *Maison rustique* issued between 1721 and 1763 and the new farming methods they publicized as a result. (It is

doubtful if English historians yet realize the influence on the gentry in England of the first editions of that same book in its French original, followed remarkably quickly by two English translations.) This spirited piece leads on to another arresting essay by Jean-Michel Boehler on innovative small farmers in the Rhineland, between Flanders and Alsace, in the eighteenth century. While the Physiocrats set all their hopes on large farms only, small farms were slowly but surely cultivating their small holdings like gardens, using masses of dung, industrial waste, and road sweepings to produce spade-cultivated alternative crops, like carrots, turnips, cabbage, peas, beans, onions, mustard, hemp, flax and tobacco. The whole area has been called a laboratory of invention, engaged in a kind of farming that was totally ignored by the 'salon agronomists'. Boehler cites a significant statement by the Abbé Fauchet in 1789 powerfully denouncing the errors of the economists in believing that small farms were less productive than large. We may hope that that cogent argument will be proclaimed again, as family farmers in the European Union once more fight to save themselves from extinction.

Frank Konersmann explores the variety of social manoeuvres on family farms, paying tribute to the work of Schlumbohm, Medick and Sabeau at the Max-Planck Institute in elucidating family structures and inheritance practices by their local studies. Susanne Rouette discloses the alarming superficiality in old generalities about inheritance customs, revealing instead the common-sense practices that were negotiated within families and between peasants and lords. They modified the nonsensical rigour of theories that would have imposed single heirs or resulted in the excessive parcelling of farms between sons.

The role of women inheriting farms as widows looms large in the essay of Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, emphasizing again the flexibility in their practices and ingenious strategies for keeping families in existence without legitimate heirs. Heide Wunder analyzes the division of labour on farms between men and women, identifying the women's strengths in undertaking tasks of great diversity. It makes a mockery of the convention among historians of allowing only salaried work into their record, and when farms are more finely classified by size, the division of labour presents a yet more complex picture.

Reiner Prass and Nadine Vivier both enquire into the use of commons, dismissing the negative judgement that they were always badly managed, as writers claimed in the later eighteenth century. Chronological and regional histories reveal phases and places with very different experiences: the notion of the commons as 'the patrimony of the poor', they say, was born some time after 1760. Finally, Gérard Béaur and Stefan Brakensiek focus

on land sales, Béaur identifying them as a mirror of family strategies that had different objectives at different times, and were governed by family needs rather than current market conditions, Brakensiek summoning some widely scattered examples of research to show regional variations.

All the papers in this volume are written in French, and follow the publication of a German version of the same essays in 2003. It stirs reflections by this reviewer on the loss of contact that we have suffered in England with German and French scholars. Admittedly, relations with French historians have recently been renewed at Le Mans. But when the *Agricultural History Review* started in 1953, it set a fine example in reviewing the agrarian history of German and French scholars; foreign book reviews were especially numerous in the years between about 1962 and 1982. In contrast, the rich bibliography at the end of this book contains a wealth of references to work that has never been reviewed in the *Review*. So this volume is a precious summary that richly deserves to be widely read.

JOAN THIRSK
Hadlow, Kent

KERSTIN SUNDBERG (ed.), *Work and production on manors in the Baltic Sea region, 1700–1900* (Stockholm: Nordiska museet förlag, 2002). 228 pp. 9 tables; 24 illus; 15 figs. £19.30.

This collection of nine essays arises from a symposium held at the Royal Swedish Academy of Forestry and Agriculture in November 2000. The disciplines represented include ethnology, human geography, economic history, art history and history. All but one of the essays are regional case studies relating to parts of Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Germany (2), Denmark, or Sweden (2). The remaining essay is an art historian's discussion of farm work as seen in pictorial sources of the late medieval and early modern periods across a wide area of continental Europe. Ten of the illustrations are to be found in the latter essay, but the book as a whole is well provided with a variety of tables, maps, pictures and other figures such as graphs.

The text is wholly in English, apart from some technical terms for which exact English equivalents are difficult to find. However, these will not prove troublesome to the British reader without specialist knowledge of continental rural history. For example, the term *corvée* is frequently used to indicate various forms of semi-feudal work services or labour rent, still in use in several areas as late as 1900. On pages 165–6 there are useful definitions and discussion of *Grundherrschaft* and *Gutsherrschaft*.

A feature of the region and period is the large number of international boundary changes, e.g., Scania

from Denmark to Sweden, Estonia from Sweden to Russia. These brought many institutional changes down to the level of individual manors, sometimes involving a change in the language of record-keeping, sometimes a reimposition of work services where paid labour had become commonplace.

There were considerable variations in the sizes of manors both between study areas and within them, and consequently in the levels of sophistication in their management. In some areas, the nobility were non-resident for substantial parts of the year, but they had officials administering many aspects of rural life well outside farming, e.g., oversight of the local legal system, or imposition of rules relating to church-going. Yet there were also areas in which manors were smaller than the typical English parish, and the gentry or officer class were resident for much of the year, therefore much closer to their manorial populations.

A theme running through several studies is the extent to which farms were held in return for work services, the levels of such services, and the various ways in which they were performed. For example, it was not unusual for these services to be imposed only on the larger (but still relatively small) farms, yet the work was carried out by crofters (men with holdings too small for complete subsistence) and landless labourers paid by the larger farmers to work on their behalf. This kept family labour on family farms and sheltered them from the arbitrary way in which estate stewards would summon men to work on demesne lands. Traditional and market-based relationships were therefore simultaneously involved in demesne-farming, which most landlords maintained in preference to the British alternative of letting to tenant farmers paying a straightforward cash rent.

Other topics studied vary considerably from one essay to another, depending on the sources available (remarkably detailed in some cases) and the interests of authors: types of husbandry, marketing conditions, levels of technology, population increases, migration and emigration, enclosure and the dispersal of farmsteads, serfdom, life in a ducal household, architectural matters, the class composition of landowners (nobles, bourgeois, gentlemen, service officers, higher civil servants, the church, municipalities), and so on.

Students of continental farming will fully appreciate the regional detail in this volume, but non-specialists would find it a valuable amplification of the contrast so frequently drawn between Britain, especially lowland England, and the continent. After reading this book, it is not so easy to regard as 'normal' the distinctive features of the English estate system of the period.

DENNIS MILLS
Branston, Lincolnshire

JAN LUITEN VAN ZANDEN and ARTHUR VAN RIEL, *The strictures of inheritance. The Dutch economy in the nineteenth century* (Princeton UP, 2004). xvi + 384 pp. 54 tables; 32 figs. £36.95.

There is only a modest amount of material in this fine book which is of direct interest to agricultural historians, for it aims to be a standard work on the general Dutch economy in the long nineteenth century. It is a straight translation (by Ian Cressie) of a book which appeared in Dutch in 2000 (*Nederland 1780–1914: staat, instituties en economische ontwikkeling* (Amsterdam: Balans)), and much of the agricultural history contained in it is derived from the lead author's trailblazing doctoral dissertation of 1985, which was published in English in 1994 as *The transformation of European agriculture in the 19th century: the case of the Netherlands* (Amsterdam: VU University Press). However, although the new nuggets to be found here about Dutch farming and rural affairs are few in number, what we get instead is an unprecedentedly well founded framework of economic history, both in institutional and quantitative terms, in which to place the role of the Dutch agricultural sector. For this book is intended to be the crowning glory of Van Zanden's great project of the 1990s to reconstruct the Dutch national accounts for the period 1800–1940. The results are available at the website nationalaccounts.niwi.knaw.nl/, which also lists the principal publications which have come out of the project, including several in English. *The strictures of inheritance* is intended to reinterpret the history of the period in the light of the new and authoritative estimates which resulted from the ten-year project.

The authors choose a chronological framework of four periods of about a quarter-century, each of which is allocated two of the main chapters. The theoretical approach is one of political economy, rather than production economics (which led the national accounts project): a great deal of attention is paid to the institutional constraints on economic activity, in the form of political regimes in the four periods, citing the authority of Douglass North in giving primacy to the political sphere in determining the success of the economy. Thus the first of each pair of chapters deals with the political situation, and the second with the economic effects and experience in the same quarter-century. The basic narrative is as follows: the political arrangements of the Republic, which had assisted the Dutch economy to giddy heights in the period up to 1670, became a distinct liability in the eighteenth century, causing economic stagnation, and it took the efforts of the Revolutionary regimes of the French period (1780–1813), the political-economic autocracy of the rule of King Willem I (1813–40), and the constitutional and economic reforms

of the classical liberals (1840–70) to shake off the inheritance of the devolved, corporatist United Provinces, and allow modern economic growth to begin around 1860. No sooner had it begun, however, than a new form of corporatism emerged, to do with the pillarization of Dutch society into ideological organizations along Protestant, Catholic, Liberal or Socialist lines, all of which wanted their share of the state and the economy; this form of 'neo-corporatism', however, proved quite compatible with economic growth, and the Netherlands did very well from then onwards.

The strength of the book lies in its summaries of the economic situation in every other chapter, based on the massive amounts of new data generated by the national accounts work. The chapters on the political situation are also good, but more conventional, based on older sources and not deviating much from received opinion. There is now quite a healthy amount of material in English on modern Dutch history, including economic (and agricultural) history, and this is a welcome addition. The translation is excellent, although the editing is not: difficult Dutch terms and phrases riddle the text without proper translation, sometimes italicized and sometimes not: I found it irritating and others will find it confusing. The parts of special interest for historians of agriculture are a case study on the *marken* or common lands in the east of the country (some of which appeared in an article in the *Review* in 1999), and the passages on the massive growth of agricultural exports in the period after the mid-century (principally to Britain), and on the reaction of the sector to the crisis of the 1880s.

The book is promoted in Dutch as a new standard work on the period: it is indeed that. International comparison takes place, especially with Britain and Belgium, but the relative achievements of the Dutch economy in the period of European industrialization are understated. The insistence on the causal link between politics and economics is useful but a little dogmatic: on the one hand it is assumed that government economic measures were effective, which of course they seldom were, or at least not in the way that were intended; on the other, the concentration on government structures reduces (though does not eliminate) a focus on other cultural determinants of the economy, such as ideas about technology and entrepreneurship, religious attitudes, and the like. This book unlocks the results of Van Zanden's national accounts project to the non-Dutch speaking world: that is more than welcome, but no one book is ever going to be the last word.

MICHAEL WINTLE
University of Amsterdam