

Book Reviews

Britain and Ireland

STEPHEN PARRY, *Raunds Area Survey. An archaeological study of the landscape of Raunds, Northamptonshire, 1985–94* (Oxbow Books, 2006). xx + 292 pp., 101 tables, 117 illus. £30.

The Raunds Area Project was one of the major cutting-edge British landscape research programmes of the later twentieth century. Its objective – to define and contrast changes in the landscape of the area around the small town of Raunds in Northamptonshire from the Neolithic to the end of the medieval period – was intended not only to provide a context for a number of large rescue excavations in the area but, of much wider relevance, to extrapolate from this research and advance more generally knowledge and understanding of the character and process of the development of the English landscape. The project was designed from the outset to be large-scale, interdisciplinary and multi-period, and was intended to be a model of historic landscape investigation, avoiding the pitfalls and limitations of earlier, less formally scoped or holistically planned landscape projects.

This handsomely produced volume presents the results of the resulting six years of fieldwork and subsequent analysis. It begins with an introduction to the project area (40 square kilometres east of the River Nene in east Northamptonshire), and objectives, including three particular themes: the ceremonial landscape of the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age; agricultural expansion in the Iron Age and Roman periods, and the process of village formation in the Saxon period. An extended methodological statement then reviews the aims, scope and methods of the archaeological, environmental and documentary research. Field-walking is discussed in particular detail, reflecting the strategic emphasis of the project on field-walking as widely as possible across the project area. Next 'The Natural Landscape' reviews the geology and topography of the project area, and the environmental evidence for human impact on the natural landscape. This is followed by a detailed chronological review of the character and development of the settlement pattern and agricultural land-use, based on archaeological and documentary evidence, spread over two chapters. A substantial (129-page) 'Settlement and

Land-Use Digest' then presents detailed descriptions of the individual sites, including pottery distribution maps, magnetometer surveys and even some excavation plans. This is followed by a short final section presenting the project's main conclusions, which firstly summarises the inferred development of the landscape, and then considers the implications of the project for similar projects in the future.

The Raunds Area Project succeeded in field-walking more than 70 per cent of the project area (c.3,000 ha), revealing c.70 new sites which, assessed alongside other archaeological, environmental and documentary evidence, provided a solid empirical base for the reconstruction of spatial and chronological patterns of settlement and land-use across a range of land types from sub-alluvial floodplain to boulder clay plateau. Despite some limitations, such as the lack of opportunity for excavation on any of the boulder clay sites, these data allowed the authors of this report to suggest with some confidence that (for example), the Neolithic valley landscape of mixed woodland and open pasture grazing was almost completely cleared of trees during the Bronze Age; that the Iron Age was characterised by increasing numbers of farms, including some on the boulder clay by the fourth century BC; that an increasing intensity of settlement and agriculture in the early Roman period was followed by a decline in both from the second century AD, especially on the boulder clay, and was apparently accompanied by an early period of settlement nucleation in the valley; that settlement in the early/middle Anglo-Saxon period showed a preference for river valley sites but did not altogether withdraw from the clay plateau, of which substantial areas continued to be cultivated; that an infield/outfield system was in operation around the villages in the late Saxon period, but that the open field system was probably instituted at some point during these centuries; that population expansion in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries led to the creation of new minor settlements rather than infilling of open spaces in existing villages; and that widespread desertion of village fringes and complete abandonment of the hamlets in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was accompanied by a reversion to grassland in much of the region. These and more general assertions, all highly pertinent to major

academic debates, such 'there is no simple development from Roman villa to medieval manor' (p.95); 'boulder clay constitutes no hindrance to a champion landscape' (p.129) or 'the Saxon folk movements and subsequent adjustments greatly affected the local landscape' (p.274) can be examined at almost any level of detail in this publication.

Reading the volume from cover to cover, however, does generate considerable frustration over the grindingly long time lapse between the end of fieldwork and final publication (16 years), and even between completion of the written report and its eventual publication (12 years). This is compounded by repeated references to the limitations of the unfinished state of post-excavation analysis which leaves authors to make 'incomplete and interim' statements (e.g. p.31). After such a long wait, it seems unacceptable to be left to wonder whether such work has now been completed, and if so, whether the published statements still stand. The delay has also denied authors and editor the opportunity to consider their observations in the light of other major settlement and landscape projects of the 1990s and 2000s which, ironically, have themselves benefited from the information and ideas generated by the Raunds Area Project. These have, of course (and rightly so), filtered out over the years before this publication, with the consequence that much of the material presented here, which was so novel and exciting a decade and more ago, has since either been challenged, or become the new orthodoxy: its impact, to the informed reader, is therefore somewhat muted.

However, this should not ultimately detract from the tremendous value of this volume. It contains a vast quantity and range of information and ideas which are, and should continue to be, of great interest to anyone studying any aspect of the development of the rural landscape. The volume is extremely well-presented, with only a few errors and inconsistencies, and accompanied by clear, useful illustrations including 12 large foldout maps packaged separately as part of a rather sumptuously presented boxed set. The delay in publication feels frustrating now, but this will become less of an issue over time. This is definitely a volume to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.

CARENZA LEWIS
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IAN BAILEY, DAVID CANT, ALAN PETFORD and NIGEL SMITH (eds), *Pennine perspectives. Aspects of the history of Midgley* (Midgley Books, 2007). vi + 346 pp., 149 illus, 2 maps. £18 from Midgley Books, 4 Lane Ends, Midgley, Halifax. HX2 6TU.

Midgley is a Pennine township and part of the parish of Halifax in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The village

is situated on a hillside with the township boundary running along the river Calder in the valley below. In terms of the industrial development of the area, much of the action takes place on or near the valley floor. It is suggested that the population of Midgley grew from about 25 in 1332–3 to c.348 in 1545 to 1,209 in 1801 and reached its peak in 1871 at 3,193. As its title suggests, this is not a comprehensive history of Midgley. The stated aims of the book are to increase public awareness of the range and depth of sources in the public domain and to draw attention to the value of such sources for our understanding of the rich heritage of local communities. The publication evolved out of an initial WEA course from which the Midgley History Group was formed. *Pennine perspectives. Aspects of the history of Midgley* comprises the reflections of 25 members of that group on different facets of Midgley's past. The result is an interesting but uneven volume of 23 chapters with some frustratingly short snippets of useful information that are not placed in a broader context. However, once the reader accepts that, at best, s/he is going to get only a tantalizing taster of Midgley, there is much that is of interest both for the mainstream historian and those researching narrower fields. Fascinating chapters range from prehistory, geology, medieval settlement, and early farming to more esoteric topics, such as the uses of water on Midgley Moor, the development of local public houses, radicalism, boundary disputes, and local sports and pastimes including the annual Pace Egg play. Other chapters include self-help, religion, use of child labour, and the Luddenden Valley Railway.

It is difficult to get a sense of continuity. For example, there is a detailed analysis of farming before the nineteenth century, but there is nothing on the topic thereafter. The chapter on 'Population and People' which is the work of three contributors is interesting but very uneven. It provides a useful outline up to the late eighteenth century but also examines in great detail family names for one short period (1538–1624). Some interesting sources are used but are not always fully exploited. For example, the names of people who were part of a levy in 1588 are presented but it would have been helpful if this could have been accompanied by some analysis in terms of population and the distribution of wealth. The period from the late eighteenth to the twentieth century is accorded five lines and part of a graph. A little more information is given on this latter period in the chapter 'Village Trades and Services in the Victorian Era'. Continuity is found within some of the chapters such as the study of Murgatroyd's textile mill which follows the family's involvement in textiles from pre-factory days through the commencement of building the mill in 1846 and onto its final closure in 1982. The

excellent study is based on detailed research using an extensive archive deposited in the local record office. Murgatroyd's mill was the only textile mill constructed in the township and it is argued that it gave stability and economic security to the community for over a hundred years.

Other contributory factors in the unevenness of the book are the writing style of authors and the length of chapters. In a conventionally edited book the editors can exercise strong editorial control and standardize the submissions. This control has been kept to the minimum here. Some of the contributions demonstrate a thorough researching of the topic with clear detailed analysis, historiography, references and supporting tables and figures. Other chapters are presented in narrative form, some based on oral sources and others from observations with little or no accompanying academic apparatus. Chapters vary in length from what is little more than a comment of six pages to almost article length of 24 pages. The chapter 'Of Meres and Bounders: Disputes, Maps and Boundaries', is very brief. It is well written and referenced but with fewer than three pages of text and five of maps, it is little more than a comment. In order to give the reader some context and a sense of continuity, more benefit might have been gained if it had been incorporated into the earlier chapters dealing with field boundaries.

The book is published privately. It is beautifully presented on excellent quality paper and all the maps, photographs and graphs are reproduced to a very high standard. Some chapters conclude with a useful select bibliography. Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive bibliography at the end of the book, though there is a helpful index. Also included within the back cover are two lovely pullout maps.

Overall, despite its flaws, it is a book to be recommended to anyone interested in the history of a small rural community.

CHRISTINE HALLAS
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TOM BEAUMONT JAMES and CHRISTOPHER GERRARD, *Clarendon. Landscape of kings* (Windgather Press, 2007). xviii + 268 pp., 86 figs. £25.

The site of the royal palace of Clarendon today seems remote and secluded, its upstanding remains are scanty, and it is rarely a target of tourists' itineraries. Yet Clarendon was a favourite retreat of medieval monarchs, and remains rich in historical associations. In its heyday it must have been spectacular: the most sumptuous royal house in the West Country, standing on a prominent bluff near the centre of the largest royal deer park in England. However, royal visits declined in frequency

during the later Middle Ages, the Tudor monarchs preferred residences closer to London, and Clarendon fell into decay. The property was relinquished by Charles II, subsequently a new mansion was built elsewhere in the park, and the old palace became a neglected ruin.

Clarendon is archaeologically important as the only great rural royal palace to retain evidence of its complete medieval ground plan. The site underwent extensive archaeological exploration in the 1930s, with further investigations in the 1950s and 1960s, but much of that work remained largely unpublished until 1988, when one of the present authors co-authored a substantial report based upon the earlier excavation records and finds (T. B. James and A. M. Robinson, 'Clarendon Palace', *Reports of Research Committee of Society of Antiquaries of London*, XLV, 1988).

The volume reviewed here expands the perspective, providing a comprehensive summary of the palace's archaeological, historical and geographical setting, derived from multidisciplinary research over the last three decades. After an introductory chapter discussing aims and approaches, Chapter 2 examines the evidence for land use prior to the park's creation. By about 2000 BC little woodland cover survived, and during the middle Bronze Age extensive rectilinear fields were laid out, not only over the chalk downland, where they are clearly revealed by aerial photographs, but also within many of the now-wooded areas, where they survive as earthworks. Continuity of occupation of prehistoric farming settlements is evident through to the end of the fourth century AD, and the land now within the park supported a larger population in Romano-British times than at any other period. From the beginning of the fifth century, however, settlements and farmland seem to have been abandoned, and some secondary woodland regenerated. A royal hunting ground may have been designated long before the park became formalised within defined boundaries.

Chapters 3 and 4 are devoted to discussion of the medieval palace in relation to its gardens, the 'inner park' within its livestock-excluding pale, the much larger outer park, itself with very distinct zones of open launds with rabbit-warrens, enclosed coppices and wood-pasture, the even more extensive royal forest and the farmland and settlements within and beyond.

Chapters 5 and 6 bring the story forward to the present. Following extensive plundering of timber and deer during and after the Civil War, much of the park was broken up into separate farms with enclosed fields. Clarendon finally passed out of royal hands in 1661; three years later it was acquired by Edward Hyde, who had already been created Earl of Clarendon. The new mansion in the south of the park, ostensibly dated to the

early eighteenth century, is here shown to incorporate fragments of a previously unknown earlier building, probably of Hyde's time. The Bathurst family, who held the estate from 1707 to 1801, added a geometric parterre and a small lake and planted Scots pines and three oak avenues. Further ornamental modifications were undertaken by their successors, the Hervey-Bathursts.

The medieval palace and later mansion were both places of social exclusion and privilege, manifestations of wealth and power, in which the active recreations of hunting and coursing could be enjoyed alongside the more cerebral appreciation of landscape aesthetics. Increasingly, however, the high life could only be sustained by profitable forestry and game management and by sufficient rents from tenant farms on the estate. Although the park landscape is the primary focus of investigation, readers of the *Review* will be pleased to note that its economic support through agriculture is not neglected. The Hervey-Bathursts retained the estate through fluctuating fortunes until the agricultural depression of the late nineteenth century dealt a fatal blow, and in 1900 the estate was sold up.

The final chapters explore changing perceptions of the aesthetic, symbolic, economic and recreational significance of the landscape, as viewed by academics, royal and aristocratic owners, estate managers and the public at large. Topics include the practical problems of reconciling the demands of archaeological research with structural conservation and public presentation.

The book is attractively produced, with numerous excellent plans, drawings and photographs, including many colour plates. The text is refreshingly readable. Thirty pages of endnotes are linked to a substantial bibliography, and there is a helpful index. Only a couple of minor slips caught this reviewer's eye: the Cockey Down long barrow, said on p.17 to lie east of the Fussells Lodge long barrow, is shown on figure 8 to the south-west; and a view of the mansion in 1791, referenced to 'Back Cover' on p.134, is actually placed as a frontispiece. Overall the authors have succeeded admirably in their aim of demonstrating the great richness of the Clarendon landscape to a wider readership.

JAMES BOND
Walton-in-Gordano

JOAN THIRSK (ed.), *Hadlow. Life, land and people in a Wealden parish, 1460-1600* (Kent Archaeological Society, 2007). 210 pp., illus. Distributed by Heritage Marketing and Publications Ltd, Hill Farm, Castle Acre Road, Great Dunham, Norfolk, PE32 2LP. £19.95.

This volume combines a scholarly edition (in English) of the 1460 rental and survey of the manor of Hadlow with

a wide-ranging reconstruction of life in the parish in the late-fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Dr Joan Thirsk has assembled a team of local historians – 'local' also in the sense that they know the locale from long residence – who have succeeded in locating and mapping the holdings and houses recorded in the manorial survey, as well as assembling a mass of historical detail on the landholding families of the parish in these centuries. It is an accessible and well-illustrated local study that should prove of interest both to local residents and to social and economic historians more generally.

Although the limitations of the single-parish study are well known, the authors of the present study are at pains to place the parish of Hadlow within a wider, regional context. Throughout, they relate Hadlow to the powerful lordship of Tonbridge and its aristocratic owners, who were the lords of Hadlow until the fall of the Duke of Buckingham in 1521. And they present the details of estate management and manorial courts at Hadlow in a scholarly and comparative fashion: the reader is always aware of how practice in the manor of Hadlow compares to what is known of seigneurial institutions elsewhere. In particular, this is a valuable study of how late medieval estate administration operated in an area of early enclosure. The manor of Hadlow was represented by both a manor court (the court baron) and the lowest level of civil court, the court leet. The authors conclude that, in comparison to a number of manors elsewhere, the Hadlow court 'impinged less on everyday life' and 'represented not only the lord's will but also that of the community'. Their account of what the tenants owed the lords of the manor of Hadlow is also fascinating. The survey reveals a fully differentiated structure of landholding in Hadlow. Holdings varied widely in size, and even the comparatively low customary rents varied from one holding to another. The survey records a bewildering array of dues and services that the tenants of 1460 owed the lord; but it remains uncertain to what extent these had been commuted to money payments, either in 1460 or even in the sixteenth century.

The portrait of daily life in late fifteenth and sixteenth-century Hadlow is equally fascinating: we learn about the importance of the rivers Medway and Bourne to the economic life of the parish; of the changing fortunes of North Frith Park whose woodland covered a large part of the parish of Hadlow at the time of the 1460 survey, but which had been heavily cleared by the late sixteenth century. We learn too that nearly half the land-holding families recorded in the 1460 survey were still resident in Hadlow in the 1580s, when the original survey was copied out and annotated.

This study shows that Hadlow's inhabitants led anything but insular, enclosed lives: their links with

the places and people of the wider region or *pays* were crucial to their everyday lives. This is an intriguing account of a Wealden parish at the end of the middle ages, which wears its scholarship lightly. It is also a fine example of what local historians are always being urged to do: study history on the ground!

MICHAEL ZELL
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MARGARET THORBURN, *The lower Ouse valley. Lewes to Newhaven – a history of the brookland* (Lewes: Withy Books, 2007). 60pp., 6 illus, 16 plates. £9.99.

This modestly-priced local publication sets out to narrate the history of the lower reaches of one of Sussex's most important rivers, the Ouse, as it cuts through the South Downs at Lewes and runs with some difficulty to the English Channel at Seaford and later at the New Haven (Newhaven today). It traces both the prehistory and history of the lower Ouse valley, demonstrating the complex interactions between human residence and economic activity on the one hand, and the vagaries of this riverine environment on the other. When farms and parishes can first be discerned it is clear that such interactions resulted in the well-known strip pattern whereby downland sheep runs, chalk scarp-foot settlement and open-field farming, and the Ouse meadows, were well integrated into a sheep/corn farming system, reliant on droveways, tracks and hedgerows running at right-angles to the river. Saltings as well as abundant meadowland are recorded in Domesday Book.

The Ouse was rarely, however, entirely compliant. For centuries it proved difficult to harness it to human requirements, and flooding was always a danger. Margaret Thorburn details the schemes to alleviate this danger, beginning with the cooperative efforts of the medieval period which frequently involved the large priory of St. Pancras on the southern edge of Lewes, and which overlooked the brooklands and had proprietary rights there. Ditches had to be kept open, mills controlled, dykes and sluices cared for. Such activities were intensified in the early modern period, with greater attention to repairs to the river embankments and the levying of scots to ensure the cleaning of the tributary sewers. The pattern of drainage channels extended to Lewes itself, or more particularly to its eastern suburb at Cliffe, growing up around the river. Periodic flooding remained a problem however, and engineering reports in the eighteenth century recommended widening and straightening the main channel to allow for a better flow whilst not obstructing the river-based trade between Lewes and the coast. The work to maintain the river defences has been continuous and not always successful.

The book demonstrates how even as recently as 2000 the Cliffe area and the lower brooklands were badly flooded, and in 2002 a Flood Defence Strategy was drawn up. The modern Environment Agency continues to face an issue that has simply not gone away.

This book, by a local author, perhaps assumes too much local knowledge of places around Lewes and there are instances where unfortunate errors have crept in. A reference to coombe formation on the South Downs should place the process in the glacial period before 12,000 BP (p. 2), Ashburnham was not a medieval ecclesiastical estate (p. 12) and Sir William Dugdale was writing in the seventeenth century, not the eighteenth (p. 13). In terms of agricultural history there are some errors too: the integration of arable with animal husbandry was certainly not a 'new formula' in the later eighteenth century but had been a practice since at least the medieval period if not before. And the work of the nineteenth-century improvers certainly ended neither the practice of fallowing nor the existence of permanent pasture on the downland tops (pp. 28–9). These, together with some proof-reading problems, will detract a little from what is otherwise a good synthesis of published material on this fascinating landscape. Primary sources are also deployed, drawing on local archival material from the eighteenth century and the later records of the commission of sewers. There is something in this valuable book for the landscape historian as well as those with interests in agrarian history.

BRIAN SHORT
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PAULA SUNSHINE, *Wattle and daub* (Shire Publications, 2006). 40 pp. £4.99.

Among the voluminous mass of misinformation I absorbed as a small boy at Great Oakley (C of E Controlled) village school, the allegedly miserable and shiftless life of the Anglo-Saxon peasant featured prominently. Our teacher, the otherwise admirable Miss Bowring, a maiden lady of Scots extraction, took a rather jaundiced view of Hengist and Horsa's henchmen whom she portrayed as bloodthirsty villains bent on rape and pillage and destructive of all that lay in their path. They lived, she explained, in dank and fetid houses of wattle and daub, shivering by their open fires and muttering murderously into their mugs of mead. That such people should live in huts of wattle and daub should have come as no surprise; this was a barbarous building material employed by a barbarous people!

For the inimitable Ms Sunshine, though, wattle and daub is the very reverse. As she emphasizes in this valuable addition to the wholly excellent Shire series, wattle and daub is strong, flexible, and of high

insulating value, besides being of foremost importance in the conservation of timber-framed buildings. In forty lavishly-illustrated pages she writes of the role of green coppiced hazel in wattle making, of mortise and tenon work in traditional building, of the distinction between wattle and daub and lath and plaster and concludes with a consideration of the decline of wood and wattle building as brick became more affordable and timber increasingly scarce in the eighteenth century. During the course of the journey Ms Sunshine discourses on the techniques of building timber-framed structures and for good measure offers an explanation of the origins of 'knocking a square peg into a round hole'.

As she laments the destruction of so many traditional buildings in the mid-twentieth century and the spoiling of others as decaying wattle and daub was replaced with inflexible cement and gypsum, she suggests that the older technology might with benefit be used in modern timber-framed structures. And to prove it she includes a detailed section on the construction of wattle and the manufacture of daub from clay, straw and pebbles. This is accompanied by rather fetching pictures of Ms Sunshine as she puddles daub in her Wellingtons and dons her rubber gloves to apply the stuff to hazel wattles. Readers of the *Review* will be pleased to learn that while 'treading can be exhausting work', the craft of wattle and daub walling can offer a satisfying and rewarding experience. It is, moreover, an exercise in applied sustainability and as such deserves the attention of us all.

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BRUCE M. S. CAMPBELL, *The medieval antecedents of English agricultural progress* (Ashgate, 2007). xiv + 348 pp. £65.

This volume consists of ten papers published by Bruce Campbell between 1983 and 1998 in journals and edited collections. They appear as they did in their first publication, with original page numbers for ease of reference. Campbell has provided a new introduction and the entire volume is indexed.

All the papers address the issue of the relative importance of supply- and demand-side restraints in the history of English agriculture. In contrast to the work of Postan and Brenner, who emphasized the importance of different supply-side restraints on agricultural development, Campbell demonstrates the responsiveness of medieval cultivators to demand. Two classic early articles on agriculture in Norfolk show the adoption of yield-raising techniques often associated only with later centuries. These include the sowing of legumes, the application of marl and manure and the adoption of mixed farming systems. Later work included in this

collection shows that a positive relationship existed between yields and population, both in the middle ages and later centuries. Agricultural productivity was determined not only by the fertility of land but also by the proximity and size of urban markets. Overall, Campbell's work reflects the 'uneven development' (X. 31) of medieval agriculture: when economic rent was sufficiently high, yield-raising techniques were adopted; the reason such techniques were not more widely adopted was that low levels of economic rent lay 'like a shadow across much of the country' (IX. 853). This interpretation is important in differentiating medieval development from later agricultural change but Campbell also points out that increased productivity in the middle ages occurred at the expense of labour productivity. Only when land and labour productivity rose together was there 'agricultural revolution'.

Some of the innovative methods devised by Campbell to address these questions are reflected in these articles. His studies of manorial accounts are not restricted to those from a single estate. The sheer volume of data involved necessitated the development of methods of categorisation, including cluster analysis, which are described here. Despite the breadth of documentation used, Campbell is at pains to discuss any deficiencies and points, in particular, to the difficulties caused by the weighting of his samples of accounts. Methodological precision is accompanied by valuable discussions of terms such as 'productivity' and 'yield' and the impact of definition on interpretation.

The chronological range of Campbell's work is also impressive. Two studies published with Mark Overton compare medieval seigneurial agriculture with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century farming practices. They reveal the lack of change in arable yields in parts of England in contrast with the significant increase in stocking densities over the same period, demonstrating the relative under-development of the pastoral sector in c.1300. Closer examinations of trends across the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries reveal the reduced impact of the market after the Black Death and the substitution of land for labour by cultivators facing sudden changes in the structure of supply and demand.

There are many points in the papers in this volume at which Campbell sets the agenda for future research. He has developed many of the avenues himself, including the comparison and mapping of data from all over England in *Seigniorial Agriculture* (2000) and *England on the Eve of the Black Death* (with Ken Bartley, 2006). There are frequent references to and discussion of the peasant sector, which was larger though less well documented than the seigneurial to which most of Campbell's evidence pertains. Campbell is generally

positive about the representativeness of his evidence of agricultural output as a whole, citing the fact that practices on manorial demesnes tended to reflect those in the particular locality in which they were situated rather than those on other manors on the same estate. However, he raises the possibility, on the basis of aggregate calculations, that commercialisation may have been more marked in the non-demesne sector up to 1300 and even questions the assumption that stocking densities were lower on peasant holdings.

Many of the issues discussed in this volume are treated further in Campbell's publications since 1998. Nevertheless, the breadth of Campbell's work and the quantity and range of material he has dealt with in the papers presented here mean the volume is of much more than historiographical interest. The importance of Campbell's assault on the older supply-side models used to understand economic change, his discussion and measurement of commercialisation, and the innovative methods and approaches he has adopted mean the availability of a number of his studies in a single volume is very welcome indeed.

BEN DODDS
University of Durham

BEN DODDS, *Peasants and production in the medieval North-East. The evidence from tithes, 1270–1536* (Boydell, 2007). xix + 205 pp., 25 tables, 20 figs, 3 maps. £50.

This important book reminds us that tithes as indicators of agricultural production were much studied on the continent and especially in France in the 1960s and 1970s, but only now are historians beginning to make sustained use of the English tithe records. The French work was focussed on the early modern period, and the statistical series was interpreted in the light of the prevailing Malthusian view that a period of growth came to an end in the late seventeenth century. Here the period under examination stretches from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries, and the records are seen as supporting the interpretation that peasants, though buffeted by external changes, were sensitive to the market and adjusted their production accordingly.

Dodds suggests that tithe records for England have been neglected because the wealth of manorial accounts (unique to English estates) have attracted most historical attention. Tithes, however, provide information about aspects of agriculture which are otherwise obscure. The manorial accounts tell us mainly about lords' demesnes in the period 1270–1430 – but as the title of this book shows, tithes reflect peasant production, and sometimes the series continue into the sixteenth century. This book is based on the tithe records of Durham Cathedral

Priory, which have survived in unusual quantity. There are methodological problems to be overcome, as only occasionally do the records itemize the tithe receipts in terms of quantities of grain gathered into the barn. In the records used here, only those for Billingham provide this information over a long period. Instead the monks of Durham recorded sums of money agreed with a purchaser of the tithes, which is taken to reflect the quantity of crops. The calculation is helped by statistical devices such as the use of a deflator as pioneered by the continental scholars. The problem of evasion must also be faced, and we have to put some faith in the vigilance of the collectors, who under the system of cash sales were directly rewarded for diligence. Collection took place in the open and public space of the fields after the harvest, as the tithe buyer's men picked one sheaf in ten from those standing in the stubble. Our trust in the calculations is encouraged by Dodds' open and fair discussion of the problems. It would be difficult to believe that the overall pattern of high tithe receipts around 1300 and low figures after 1430, or indeed the more subtle movements from year to year, simply reflected changes in the honesty of the cultivators and the efficiency of the collectors.

The research is based on the rich archive of Durham, which reminds us that high quality documents are not confined to eastern, midland and southern England. The parishes which belonged to the Durham monks on the low-lying eastern side of the county grew a range of crops not dissimilar from those found further south, including good quantities of wheat. The results of this research are not therefore only applicable to a peculiar northern province, but to a substantial part of lowland, arable England, though Durham did have a special characteristic in its abundant wastes, which meant that the villagers had ample sources of pasture and opportunities to expand their arable fields. This was not a region overshadowed by Malthusian threats.

Much of the book is taken up with presenting the series of tithe records. They show a rising trend in the late thirteenth century, continuing up to about 1310. Then Durham suffered doubly, from bad weather, culminating in the famine of 1315–17, and the Scottish raids of 1312–22. Production plummeted, but then began to recover in the 1330s and 1340s. In the half century after the Black Death of 1349 grain production halved, though this was not a continuous process, as there was a rising trend in the 1360s, and the main period of decline came in the last years of the fourteenth century. After 1430 corn production remained generally low, though with signs of short-term recovery in the late 1450s. Poor returns from arable crops persisted until the end of the series of records in the 1530s. The early sixteenth century appears, as in other works, as a paradoxical period, with signs of

growth, but also suffering from an apparent malaise that held back demographic and economic expansion.

The survey of trends is followed by a useful appraisal of peasant economic behaviour, which identifies peasants' responses to market conditions, and which argues against the view that they were primarily concerned with subsistence. A chapter on the tithe buyers shows that many of them were peasant entrepreneurs.

This book is about local trends in agricultural production based on a single source, but it avoids the traps of narrowness and localism. The analysis of the influences on production brings into the picture towns, trade, rents, taxes, industry, fishing and other features of the regional economy. This inevitably means making use of a variety of sources. The approach is comparative throughout, with constant reference to the findings of other historians in all parts of England. But even more exemplary are the very relevant parallels drawn with continental Europe in the middle ages and early modern period, or the references to peasant societies in the contemporary Third World. At each stage the various influences on trends in production are identified and assessed with imagination and a cool logic. This is a broad-minded book in every respect, and it shows that new sources, new approaches and new insights are opening up avenues of future research in the history of agriculture and rural society of the Middle Ages.

CHRISTOPHER DYER
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JOHN WALTER, *Crowds and popular politics in early modern England* (Manchester University Press, 2006).
xiii + 224 pp., 1 map. £55.

John Walter has long argued that popular protests and rebellions must be understood in the context of political cultures that reveal a popular political awareness. This goes against the wisdom of earlier social historians such as Eric Hobsbawm, who had insisted that such protests were pre-political. This popular awareness is not always easy to discern because individual protests at first glance might appear to be 'spasmodic episodes, discontinuous in time and space' (p.3). However, interdisciplinary approaches and comparative historical studies over the last several decades have allowed social historians to recognize that members of the crowd did possess an informed political consciousness. This was especially true with regard to their knowledge of the law of public order, which made them aware of the legal distinction between protests limited in geographical extent and confined to very specific goals (which lawyers and magistrates would view as no more than the offence of misdemeanour riot if three or more persons used force or the threat of force to accomplish a goal within one

community), and the more serious crime of levying war against the king, or treason, which involved going from place to place to voice their discontent. Thus, the protesters might wish to hide their awareness that their complaints were influenced by more generalized grievances than those peculiar to one community. This knowledge of the law and how to exploit it to enforce administrative orders or laws that the governors had already expounded but were not enforcing is one of the best evidences we possess of the political awareness of the crowd in popular protests. So skilfully was this done that the magistrates were often forced to recognize the legitimacy of popular complaints.

In Professor Walter's excellent essay on the Oxfordshire rising of 1596, he recognizes that the leaders of this aborted protest made a connection between dearth, the demise of common use-rights, and the poverty of persons made homeless by enclosure. The levelling of hedges was the most common form of agrarian protest in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, although the Oxfordshire protesters later spoke of 'cutting down gentlemen rather than their hedges' (p.81). It seems that those Oxfordshire landlords who enclosed arable lands did not institute convertible husbandry, as Eric Kerridge insisted was usually the case, but rather pursued the unpopular course of depopulating villages and turning to the more immediately profitable business of sheep- and cattle-raising. These landlords were upstarts, recently arrived in the ranks of the gentry, who were insensitive to the expectations of their tenants concerning employment and nutritional sufficiency.

Seven essays are reprinted in this volume of which four are finely nuanced investigations of dearth and poverty in their regional and local contexts. (Regrettably, three lack endnote citations acknowledging sources). In the 'Social economy of dearth', Walter states that the crises of subsistence would have been worse in other parts of England besides the north-west had not gentry landlords and farmers sold corn to their neighbours at below market prices and even granted them credit for such purchases. Servants and tenants were often paid in kind or allowed to purchase grain and other consumables at below prevailing market prices. These forms of relief or even outright charity reinforced hierarchical relationships and avoided discontent, but were sometimes resorted to only after veiled threats had been made. Such endeavours often occurred in parishes that had not yet worked out systems of poor relief. Similar measures were also taken in urban communities. All of this argues that early modern England was far from being a fully developed market economy as some economic historians have insisted. However, access to the benefits of food-crisis relief required membership in the local

community attested to by substantial householders, and vagrants and masterless persons were given short shrift.

Professor Walter tends to view the gentry as a monolithic class largely made up of magistrates wielding authority and determined to uphold the status quo. This is because the popular protests involving dearth which he discusses occurred most frequently in south-eastern England. Enclosure riots were the more predominant form of popular protest – especially in the Midlands – and these he discusses only tangentially. Some of these disturbances reveal that not all gentlemen possessed seigneurial authority. Especially on large Duchy of Lancaster manors, many lesser gentry were tenants, and therefore frequently shared the complaints of their more humble neighbours concerning enclosure or fiscal seigneurialism. Even when they did not share the grievances of smallholders and cottagers, the lesser gentry and their elder brothers were proficient at manipulating others, and often procured the destruction of enclosures and seigneurial deer and game or used such protests to mask the vindictive violence of their feuds.

ROGER B. MANNING
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JOAN THIRSK, *Food in early modern England: phases, fads and fashions, 1500–1760* (Hambledon Continuum, 2007). xx + 396 pp. £30.

In this important book, the celebrated agricultural historian Joan Thirsk turns her attention from the fields to the kitchen. Put that way, it seems a short and logical step from how food was grown to how it was eaten; but it would appear that, hitherto, agricultural and food historians have existed in separate academic boxes.

As Thirsk remarks, the printed record of food in early modern England – in other words, the cookery book and its close ally the book of dietary advice – is familiar and well studied: Andrew Boorde and Thomas Elyot in the sixteenth century, through Gervase Markham and Robert May in the seventeenth, to Charles Carter in the eighteenth. Yet Thirsk rightly notes that they were written by people familiar with upper-class food and cookery. There were in fact ‘two food worlds’:

The one was inhabited by food writers who ... pontificated about food and were happy to pronounce authoritatively, though none of them knew as much about food throughout England as they liked to think. The other world was inhabited by women and some men cooking food according to their social, local and family traditions, while adapting them in each generation to suit changing tastes and circumstances. The two worlds interacted all the time, but coexisted and were recognisable different (p.x).

After setting the scene of English food before 1500, Thirsk looks at the printed record for the period 1500–60. Then five further chronological chapters follow, entitled ‘The widening world of food, 1550–1600’, ‘Science and the search for food, 1600–40’, and ‘War and a renewed search for food, 1640–60’, ‘Food in a quickening commercial world, 1660–1700’, and ‘On the edge of the next food world, 1700–60’. The final two chapters before the conclusion are especially novel and fascinating. Chapter 8 discusses ‘Regional and social patterns of diet’, showing a rich pattern of regional diversity in taste. And chapter 9 takes a closer look at various foodstuffs: bread, butcher’s meat and rabbits, eggs and poultry meat, fish, dairy foods, vegetables and herbs, fruit, drinks and condiments.

From a wider historiographical point of view, Thirsk’s most important thesis is that ‘It has become a conventional assertion among historians who have not studied food history in any detail to say that our forebears ate a monotonous and boring diet’ (p.xi), and she sets out to put an end to this mistaken conclusion. As a sociologist who has contributed to food history, I am one of the people who must probably plead guilty as charged. I think I took over that conventional assumption from Marc Bloch, and from Theodore Zeldin who was my mentor when I embarked on my book *All Manners of Food* (1985). In mitigation, I can claim that I was explicitly more concerned with the food and cookery of the upper classes than with that of the urban and rural poor, and more especially my interest was in comparing the development of ‘culinary culture’ – not just the cookery but the attitudes towards eating – of England and France (from the late Middle Ages until around 1980).

Yet although Thirsk convincingly shows that the poorer people ate a large variety of foods, and that what they grew underwent change during the two and half centuries before the conventional beginning of the Industrial Revolution, I don’t think she quite blows Bloch and his perhaps slightly uncritical followers like me out of the water. Bloch was well aware, of course, of the Columbian exchange. More to the point, though, he was arguing that in the field of food as in so much else, differential modes of time were simultaneously in play. The *longue durée* in food was more evidently at work at the lower end of the social scale, while the rapid succession of food fashions (sufficiently rapid to qualify as *histoire des événements*, I think, and increasing in pace over the centuries) could best be observed in the upper reaches. I am not sure that he meant that no change took place at all in the food of the peasantry. So I will admit to not having given sufficient attention to the pace of change in the food of the lower orders, but I am not yet convinced that the traditional model of differential rates

of change can be discarded – even if our measures need to be carefully recalibrated.

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NIGEL GOOSE (ed.), *Women's work in industrial England. Regional and local perspectives* (Local Population Studies Supplement, 2007). xiv + 402 pp., 58 tables, 40 figs. £14.95.

This collection of fifteen papers grew out of a 1996 Local Population Studies conference. It contains seven chapters that have been published elsewhere and eight new ones. All examine women's work in nineteenth-century England, if the nineteenth century is stretched a bit to include the very end of the eighteenth century and the very beginning of the twentieth century. The previously-published chapters are already important papers in the field, and a student of women's history will find it convenient to have these works easily accessible. The new chapters add breadth and depth to our knowledge of women's work in the nineteenth century.

While edited volumes are often difficult to review because the chapters are so varied, in this case my work is easy. The chapters are so closely linked that they meld together into a book that has one clear thesis and two additional themes. The book argues that the nineteenth-century censuses are reasonably accurate and the information they provide about women's work should be trusted and used. In addition, it also examines the labour force participation rate of married women, and the wide variety of work that women engaged in during the nineteenth century.

The book as a whole makes the case that the censuses are generally reliable and should be used. The most strident critic of the census data is Edward Higgs, who argues that the number women counted as domestic servants is seriously over-estimated because some women labelled with terms such as 'housekeeper' were family members who kept house and not servants, and because some women counted as domestic servants were actually farm servants. Higgs's chapter, however, is followed immediately by a chapter in which Michael Anderson refutes his claims. Anderson shows that examining a national sample, rather than a local one, reduces the extent of the problem, and argues that the clerks who calculated the aggregate totals seem to have been aware of the ambiguity in the term 'housekeeper' and did not include all women so designated in the aggregate totals. Leigh Shaw-Taylor also concludes that Higgs's concerns about domestic servants are exaggerated.

The book contains other chapters that criticize the census. Like Higgs, John McKay criticizes the census for

over-stating employment, but for a different reason. He notes that dropping married women with occupations such as 'farmer's wife' or 'shoemaker's wife' from the employed category greatly reduces the measured rate of married women's labour force participation in 1851 and 1861, making the decline in married women's labour force participation in the late nineteenth century appear much less dramatic. Other authors, such as Eilidh Garrett, suggest the censuses under-count rather than over-count women's work.

Other chapters in the book specifically defend the census. Shaw-Taylor argues that census enumerators accurately recorded the regularly-employed women; they did miss casual female labour, 'but largely because the G[eneral] R[egister] O[ffice] did not want to know about such work' (p.40). In addition to the chapter directly critiquing Higgs, the book contains another chapter by Anderson in which he argues that 'many of the concerns about reliable reporting are exaggerated' (p.185), and that work in textile factories in particular was well recorded in the censuses. The high rates of female participation evident in certain industries also argue against the under-recording of female labour. Nigel Goose finds participation rates for married women as high as 74 per cent in Harpenden. Most of the chapters use the census as their source, which by itself suggests confidence in the accuracy of that data. Thus, while the book contains both criticism and defences of the census data, it seems to favour the defences and encourage use of census data.

Reading the various arguments about the accuracy of the census presented in this book, it becomes clear that the debates about how well the censuses measure women's work are in large part debates about the definition of what it means to be 'working'. Shaw-Taylor argues that the censuses did a good job of recording regular employment, and only missed the casual employment that they never intended to record, though he admits that it is not entirely clear what 'regular' means. While it may be true that the censuses were not intended to record casual labour, I am still uncomfortable about the accuracy of a count of female labour that excludes such work. The term 'employment' itself might be ambiguous; Garrett notes that the definition of employment seems to change during the late nineteenth century. The census, 'changes from gathering information on "tasks in which one's time was spent" to "tasks for which one received financial remuneration"' (p.327). This is one example of how changes over time in the instructions to enumerators make it problematic to compare employment totals across censuses.

The employment status of wives is often ambiguous. Both Anderson and Garrett calculate what participation

rates would be if women in households with lodgers were counted as employed. This addition assumes that these women were generating income for the household by providing services for lodgers, and thus should be counted as employed. McKay and Christine Jones both remove from employment wives who were given an occupational title that describes their husband's occupation. However, it may be that a farmer's wife did a great deal of farming work and really should be counted as employed. While such categories disappeared in the late nineteenth century, this disappearance could be the result of changes in women's work patterns. As Higgs notes, 'At the heart of the matter lies the definition of an occupation and work, and the relationship between economic work and the home' (p. 259).

In addition to the accuracy of the censuses, the labour force participation of married women is an important theme in many chapters, and this book provides a valuable resource in this area. As we have already seen, McKay argues that the occupational aggregates from the census overstate married women's labour force participation because they include relational 'occupations' such as 'farmer's wife'. Removing these categories, McKay concludes that married women's labour force participation was only about 13 or 14 per cent in the mid-nineteenth century. Goose, Anderson, Osamu Saito, Jones, and Garrett all measure the participation rates of married women in different populations, and we find that participation rates varied substantially by industry and location. Anderson finds an above-average participation rate of 26 per cent for married women in Preston in 1851. For the late eighteenth century, Saito finds much lower rates of participation for married women in Corfe Castle, Dorset (nine per cent) than in Cardington, Bedfordshire (68 per cent), a difference which was still evidence in 1851. While participation rates were generally low for married women, certain industries seem to have drawn a large number of married women. Nicola Verdon concludes that most of the women employed in agricultural day-labour were married. The straw industry also employed many married women. Goose finds that, among the registration districts of Hertfordshire, the presence of the straw industry increased married women's labour force participation. He finds that, while there was substantial variation, for the county as a whole one-fifth of married women were employed. Jones looks only at women over 45, and finds that ever-married women had participation rates of 22 per cent.

A few chapters examine changes in participation over a married woman's life-cycle and find that children affected married women's labour force participation more through the income they produced than through the demands they put on their time. Instead of reaching

its lowest point when she had young children, a married women's labour force participation declined as her children aged. Anderson, examining Lancashire and Cheshire in 1851, finds that participation rates for married women declined with age, and that wives with working children were less likely to be in the labour force than women with children too young to work. Garrett finds that in 1921 the labour force participation of married women still declined as they aged, just as Anderson found for 1851. Marguerite Dupree shows that female employment in the pottery industry rose when children's employment in the potteries was prohibited, which also suggests that child labour was a substitute for married women's labour.

In the opening chapter Goose notes that

The factory as a locus for female employment dominated contemporary discussion out of all proportion to its significance, and, in consequence, until relatively recently historians of industrial England have also tended to concentrate their attention upon the employment of women in factories (p. 5).

This book helps to correct that tendency by providing information on a wide variety of women's occupations. Goose demonstrates the importance of the straw-plaiting industry in Hertfordshire, and argues that normally the wages in this industry were reasonably good. Owen Davies examines the work of women as healers, which was marginalized but persisted in spite of increased requirements for formal medical credentials. Stana Nenadic examines the businesswomen of Edinburgh and suggests that, while businesswomen did well financially, business ownership did not draw in many women from the middle class because it was not considered feminine. Dupree examines women's work in the pottery industry, and Verdon notes that women were extensively employed in the growing of hops, particularly in shaving poles, and in tying and picking hops. For those interested in agricultural employment the book includes two chapters. Pamela Sharpe's chapter discusses the work and wages of women in agriculture before 1850, while Verdon's chapter on Sussex examines the period after 1850.

There are other links between the chapters as well. Both McKay and Garrett argue that there was little change in female labour force participation during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Both Dupree and Anderson discuss child care arrangements. The reader is invited to find more connections. Anyone interested in measuring women's work in the nineteenth century will find this book a rich source.

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R. W. HOYLE (ed.), *Our hunting fathers. Field sports in England after 1850* (Carnegie Publishing, 2007). xv + 320 pp., 12 tables, 47 figs. £18.99.

At a time when hunting, shooting, and fishing are controversial activities, politically and socially divisive and arousing strong emotions, the history of the sports is not merely of topical interest but also is essential for understanding both participants and opponents. Richard Hoyle is to be congratulated in assembling a team of historians to have a first stab at writing the recent history of a wide selection of these sports. The publisher's hype is perhaps a little over the top in claiming that 'this book is the first attempt to offer a proper historical perspective on the subject of field sports in England,' as hunting and shooting, at least, have not been entirely overlooked by rural historians. For the history of otter hunting, wildfowl shooting, salmon fishing, and hare coursing, however, the book can deservedly claim a first. It is more important that the book succeeds in drawing the attention of agricultural historians to the fact that agriculture is not the only, or necessarily the most important, function of the countryside. This is the underlying message of the volume's eleven essays – three of them by the editor – which present a great variety of approaches, in style and scope as well as in specific subject matter, to the history of how half-a-dozen or more different animals have been chased by our hunting fathers.

Benjamin Britten's 1936 song cycle, 'Our hunting fathers' was by no means the first public critique of the chase. Seventy-odd years later the chief chase had finished, and Richard Hoyle's *reprise* verges on a funeral lament, for almost every essay in this splendid volume records the rise of agitation against cruel sports and the legislative extinction of many of them. Thus five of the eleven essays are concerned with sports that are now outlawed, one with a sport whose field of prey has been narrowed by statutory protection of selective designated species, plus a couple of sparkling essays by the editor ranging over a large number of sports. That leaves three contributions devoted to the two survivors from the traditional trio of hunting, shooting, and fishing which have so far have been left largely alone by the state. Two of these three essays are case studies in shooting history. The third, by Harvey Osborne, describes how the lower orders were squeezed out of salmon fishing as it was successfully appropriated by the upper classes as an elitist sport. Edward Bujak shows how shooting pheasants and partridges in huge numbers became the main support as well as the chief occupation of landed society in late Victorian Suffolk. The Elveden estate, for example, at first in the hands of Duleep Singh and then of the Guinneses, became simply a very large game preserve.

Poor soils continued to be cultivated only because pheasants did not care to stay on uncultivated land; and in the county as a whole it was reckoned that two-thirds of the country houses were occupied by shooting tenants. Grand battues in which thousands of birds were shot in a season climaxed in Norfolk and Suffolk in the years before 1914, and Bujak reveals that the best shots, who went to shooting parties from estate to estate, were unofficially graded like seeded tennis players. Mark Rothery homes in on the shooting parties on a single estate, that of the Sibthorps on the outskirts of Lincoln, and in a masterly demonstration of record linkage uses the long run of shooting books recording those present to reconstruct the family, social, and patronage networks of the Sibthorps: invitations to shoot, but not to stay in the house, came to include professional men from Lincoln, its leading industrialists, and one or two of the more gentlemanly tenant-farmers.

Farmers, of a reasonably well-heeled sort, were more numerous on the hunting field, making foxhunting easily the least socially exclusive of the sports discussed in this book. That is, if hare coursing, discussed by Ian Roberts, is disregarded: this was essentially a spectator sport, and certainly there were thousands of cloth caps among the crowds drawn to big events, where the betting proved so popular that coursing rapidly morphed into greyhound racing after mechanical hares. Depending, of course, on our ancestry, our fathers are probably more likely to have gone to the dogs than to shooting parties or meets of hounds. They are definitely extremely unlikely to have gone deer stalking and grouse shooting at Balmoral, pheasant shooting at Sandringham, let alone tiger shooting and pig-sticking in India, as recounted in a delightful chapter on royalty and field sports by the editor, which magnificently interprets the book's sub-title of 'field sports in England' in cavalier-imperial spirit. Some of our fathers, if from farming stock, may well have served in county yeomanry regiments, where the close correlation of hunting gentry, farmers, and farmers' sons with yeomanry officers, NCOs, and troopers, is demonstrated by Nicholas Mansfield. Few will have gone otter-hunting, the subject of essays by Daniel Allen and Charles Watkins, notwithstanding Allen's revelation that the ruthless sport was passed off as a mere pretext for a pleasant riverside picnic; while fewer still will have ventured into the solitary, silent, pursuit of punt-gunning for wildfowl, whose rise and fall is evocatively examined by John Martin.

It is irrelevant to the interest and importance of this book whether or not any or all of these sports were literally pursued by our fathers. It marks a serious advance in providing an historical perspective on the priorities of the landed classes for the countryside and

its animals. It also furnishes an entertaining lesson in the pitfalls of dependence on running script through 'spell-check'; for we learn that the anti-field sports folk have always been 'weary of criticizing fishing', and that gamekeepers were on the lookout for 'predatory birds, crowns, magpies, hawks' and others, while the introduction of the 'breach-loading shotgun' must indeed have had remarkable effects!

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PAMELA DEARLOVE, *'Go home you miners!' Fen Drayton and the LSA* (The author, 2007). vi + 137 pp. £10.20 incl. p&p from Pamela Dearlove, 8 Common Lane, Hemingford Abbots, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE28 9AN.

The Land Settlement Association was a unique experiment in the 1930s to give work on smallholdings to unemployed miners and dockworkers from Durham. In 1934 some miners had been out of work for fifteen years. Oldies among us still live with vivid memories of the hunger marches, so it is heart-warming to be reminded of this constructive effort to alleviate their misery. Moreover, we have reached almost the last moment when it is possible to capture relevant living memories. So Pamela Dearlove's book is a historical treasure, giving a sober account of the scheme's vicissitudes from the point of view of the smallholders and the local people who absorbed them, plus a rich store of photographs, posters from the early days, maps and plans. The background depicts what amounted in the end to a horticultural revolution rising out of a whirlpool of ever-changing commercial circumstances.

Yet the story is not well-known; a recent history of agriculture in Lincolnshire which had two Land Settlement estates ignored it entirely. It deserves wider publicity since the function of smallholdings must contribute to current debates on the global future of agriculture, while the story told here is instructive on the way tenants on these LSA estates devised significant labour- and time-saving innovations, and some of us can testify how traces of the whole venture survive in our local landscapes.

Pamela Dearlove's book is focused on one estate, Fen Drayton in Cambridgeshire. When the scheme started in 1934 as the brainchild of Percy Malcolm Stewart, Chairman of the London Brick Company, government support was half-hearted and Stewart himself bought the first estate at Pottton in Bedfordshire. Twenty estates emerged, and they are listed here, each no doubt having its own distinctive history. They occupied nearly 10,000 acres in 1,000 smallholdings, supporting 800 families.

To Fen Drayton came miners and dockworkers from

Sunderland, Newcastle, and West Hartlepool, and later from Wales, from the Rhonda valley. Some returned home, unable to acclimatize; miners did not all like working outdoors in all weathers! The locals had to accustom themselves to speech they did not understand, a camaraderie and singing- and chapel-going tradition that were unfamiliar, and they had to watch houses built for LSA tenants that had far superior facilities to theirs: it is a fascinating account of the meeting of two cultures, most easily enjoyed perhaps by the northern children moving into the countryside, skating in the winter and picnicking by the river in summer. Economically, however, it was a hard, precarious life in the depression of the thirties. But it improved gradually with the wartime demand for home-produced food; the smallholders fed many airbase camps in East Anglia with salad foods. Incomes were positively buoyant in the 1970s. Vegetables, pigs and poultry as basic produce changed their relative importance in course of time, and bulbs and flowers added to the mix. The rules governing the LSA became irksome and constraining, though the government remained paternally supportive. But Margaret Thatcher's policies spelt an abrupt, cruel end to the LSA in 1982, and now in 2007 only three people remain in Fen Drayton from the LSA era. Meanwhile, the South Cambridgeshire District Council plans for the future, looking for 'new forms of sustainable living'.

This book is a thought-provoking survey spanning diverse experiences that agricultural historians need to ponder. In the 1960s and 1970s the LSA attracted visitors to England from countries stretching from Algiers to India, while one FAO report in 1959/60 described it as a lesson 'in developing a prosperous peasant economy, without... destroying incentives for production and profit'. This book, readably and pictorially, admirably blends the economic with the social ingredients in that challenge.

JOAN THIRSK
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JOHN RHODES, *Yeller-belly years. Growing up in Lincolnshire, 1930-50. 'Remember'd with advantages'* (The author, 2007). i + 205 pp., illus. £9.50 incl. p&p from 13 Hill Rise, St Ives, Cambridgeshire, PE27 6SP. For agricultural historians the particular interest in this book lies in the chapter entitled 'Potato-picking sixty years ago' (pp.135-42) and the section on Brigg Fair (pp.56-61). These are, of course, recollections of boyhood rather than academic accounts, but nonetheless they record some sharp insights. John Rhodes describes the organization and routines of potato harvesting during the second world war: the carts, the horse-drawn and tractor-drawn machinery, the stints, the osier baskets,

the clothing, keeping hunger at bay when out in the fields all day, the hours kept, the pay, the back-ache, and the gangs of German and Italian POWs and of local 'ladies'. Your reviewer *now* knows why the coarseness of the latter caused his father, as foreman, to prevent him from going out with them, whereas working with the POWs was encouraged (good for the Latin!).

Rhodes lived in the small town of Brigg, made famous for its Fair by Percy Grainger and Delius, still an important event in the 1930s, especially for the horse trade. The latter attracted many 'gyppoes' from afar, who would parade horses and ponies at the trot down the main streets. Rhodes was just old enough to be a little more than an enthralled spectator. At the age of 8–9 he was entrusted by one owner with the task of holding a shire horse for quite a long time in the hustle and bustle, whilst the stranger went 'for a drink'. Even town boys in the 1930s were sometimes able to get to know horses and their feeding and handling, as some horses were still used for haulage work: in Rhodes' case drawing the UDC dust carts and dilly carts (for night soil), in his grandfather's charge.

However, the book has a wider appeal too, because it was written by one of a relatively small, but clearly defined age cohort of boys. We were too young for wartime service, but old enough to remember something about pre-war days and still more about the war. We were old enough to pass through our teens before the term 'teenager' came into vogue, not young enough to agree too readily with the 'Angry Young Men'. We were the cohort born c.1927–35 (Rhodes was born in 1930), when the birth rate was at the lowest levels so far recorded, and we fell into jobs easily in a period of labour shortage – we had 'never had it so good'. Widening access to grammar schools in the inter-war period coincided with the low birth rates, both factors helping us to compete well with returning ex-servicemen for university places in a period of rapid expansion. Our youthful experiences must have coloured our views of the post-war world and may help to explain the effects we had on the rest of the country.

So John Rhodes, one of the first-generation grammar school boys, from his very sharp youthful observations, has painted a remarkably detailed picture of life in a small market town. The topics include his council estate and elementary school, Brigg Grammar School for Boys, 'culture, comics and books', 'church, cubs and the cinema', the war, 'leisure and pleasure', 'teenage angst and the sap rising', as well as the topics mentioned above. The prose is as clear, correct and eloquent as one expects from an Oxford graduate in English, who taught the subject for many years and became the head of a comprehensive school. The price of the book is modest, the production

professional. And, by the way, 'yeller-belly' means 'born in Lincolnshire', one traditional explanation being that the term alludes to the yellow waistcoats of the Lincolnshire Regiment in pre-khaki days.

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PHILIP SHEAIL, *The life and times of a Hampshire blacksmith* (Molewood Hawthorn Publishing, 2007). 81 pp., illus. £12 incl. p&p from Philip Sheail, 41 Cowper Crescent, Hertford, SG14 3DZ.

The blacksmith in question is Walter Murphy, grandfather to the Sheails, Philip and John, who worked in the village smithy at Preston Candover for nearly seventy years until 1983 when old age obliged him to quit. On that level, this is a family portrait painted by a respectful grandson, with happy memories of summer holidays in this Hampshire village in the 1950s, and with illustrations taken from the family album. It is the flesh on the bones of the twentieth-century story. A young widowed mother is forced by circumstance back into domestic service and her son Walter, born in 1900, is brought up by her brother and ultimately follows him into the Candover smithy. There in that small rural community and occasionally buffeted, albeit obliquely, by world events, he makes a living with his hands and his wits, and moves with the passing decades from irresponsible youth into esteemed village elder. Succeeding generations of the family benefit from the education that he never had and progress into middle-class professionalism elsewhere. The smithy is eventually converted into accommodation for the groom of its new owner. It is a common enough script but these are real people living lives in real time.

There is, however, a great deal more to this as well because an almost complete set of accounts survives for the smithy from 1910 through to the 1980s, the exception being the years 1914–25. These figures are closely analyzed by the author to add substance to the story and thereby raise it from a family memoir into a detailed and significant study of change and decline for the village blacksmith. In the years leading up to the First War, for example, an average of 110 horses were being shod annually, with an average tally of 3,713 shoes per year, and this accounted for 63 per cent of the work by value. The two other principal categories of work at the time were service and repair of farm equipment, at 13 per cent, and buildings-related works, such as stoves, guttering and door/window fittings at 11 per cent. Between the Wars, the number of horses did not decline dramatically but the number of times they needed to be shod did fall away sharply as more of the heavy work was taken over by tractors and more tradesmen

acquired delivery vans. Sporting horses kept by the local gentry, including a team of polo ponies, helped to keep things going but even so the number of shoes fitted in 1938 was 38 per cent below the 1910–14 average. New lines of work, such as fitting tractor draw bars to wagons and implements could not compensate for the drop in income that resulted. The Second War brought machinery upgrades, electricity and new welding skills to the smithy and in 1944, for the first time, income from farm work outstripped that from horse shoeing. The boom continued into the post-war years as a host of new machines and trailers appeared on the farms, all needing servicing and repair. Murphy's best year ever for income in real terms was 1951. Thereafter, progressively, this kind of work moved more towards the specialist dealer and the village smithy made do with the supply of accessories and secondary items such as the sledges that were towed behind pick-up balers. This in turn fell away in the 1960s and, with the shoeing now almost completely gone, construction works relating to the improvement of farmsteads and building and restoration of houses featured more prominently.

The text also features at regular intervals biographical vignettes of leading landholding families in and around the Candover valley through the twentieth century. If slightly distracting, they do help to colour in the wider social context of the rural community and show, as in his dealings with the innovative dairy farmer Rex Paterson, the points at which Walter Murphy came into contact with this other world. The distinctive element of the work, though, is embodied in the graphs, figures and other detail that track the passage of this village smithy on its path to oblivion, and for that it is much recommended.

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BRIAN SHORT, CHARLES WATKINS and JOHN MARTIN (eds), *The front line of freedom. British farming in the Second World War* (British Agricultural History Society, Agricultural History Review Supplement Series 4, 2006). xviii + 238 pp., 41 tables, 29 figs. £17.50.

Here we have a book whose title indicates that its primary concern is with the experience of British agriculture during the Second World War, but behind that lies an interest in the way that the wartime contribution of farming has been portrayed. The contributors therefore regularly address the various stereotypes that have arisen from both the obvious importance of food production in total warfare and the substantial official histories of agriculture written in the immediate aftermath of hostilities. The volumes by Keith Murray,

R. J. Hammond and Laurie Lee are, of course, now very elderly, and inevitably rather celebratory, and to modern thinking their sponsorship by the government and their production so soon after the events they covered may count as intrinsic reasons to doubt their reliability. The tone here is certainly predominantly critical. An aspect of the book that is not so obvious is the special attention paid by many contributors to the war as the setting of what the editors call, in the title of the first chapter, a 'state-led agricultural revolution', which served as a foundation for agriculture's transformation by mechanization, science and state support during the post-war years.

The book's impact is rather weakened by being a loosely organized collection of independent essays which are very different in approach, while the final two contributions, on the use of the National Farm Survey data to study post-war changes, are tangential to the main theme. Some treatments are analytical, notably the chapter by Brassley, but others concentrate on a simple narrative treatment of their chosen theme, most notably that on the Women's Land Army by Clarke which offers few new insights. This can work well, however, as with Sheail's illuminating demonstration of the impact that scientific and determined rodent control could have on wastage after harvest. Others most resemble commentaries on existing views in selected, often very specialized areas, rather than definitive treatments in their own right. There are common themes that appear regularly, but they often do so in a repetitive and overlapping manner, and the lack of overall unity is symbolized by the separate abstracts that preface each contribution. Readers would have been better served by a substantial extension of the Preface to gather together explicitly the major themes as an overall agenda, which contributors could then have worked around. The unevenness and fragmentation militates against the completion of the large tasks the book sets itself, and it mostly lays out a new agenda for research rather than in any sense replacing the existing official histories.

Thus, it may well be that wartime achievements were less spectacular than has generally been believed, but this is never comprehensively demonstrated, and the use of statistics in the analytical chapters do not prove the matter beyond peradventure. Paul Brassley estimates a modest increase of output by volume of about eight per cent between the pre-war and later war years and a thirty per cent decline in total factor productivity over the same period. He attributes the latter to diminishing returns to increased inputs of labour, capital and management. Non-statistically inclined historians may wonder about some of the 'heroic assumptions' (p. 38) required by the econometric approach that produced these estimates,

especially given the author's prefatory reflections on the difficulties of measuring changes that were both quantitative and qualitative. The editorial team do not doubt the heavy reliance on imported food in the inter-war years, or the actual improvement in nutrition seen among the mass of the population and achieved despite virtual siege conditions (p. 6). Self-evidently, the United Kingdom was alone among European belligerents in avoiding a real and lethal wartime food crisis even though it had been the least self-sufficient, certainly among the major nations. To achieve this when this collection shows that large areas of good arable land were taken by the government for defence purposes, that other areas were severely hindered, in the early years at least, by the direct overspill from urban bombing and indirect impact of refugees, while many skilled workers disappeared into the services, still seems remarkable. It must have formed a major contribution to keeping the war going, if not directly to winning it.

The evolution of the new attitude to agriculture's importance and methods of production is often handled as a purely technical exercise, and at times the context of a war on a scale and intensity never seen before somehow seems to fade. Thus, although the urgency and explicit short-termism seen when defeat seemed closest is deprecated, what else could have been done? (pp. 31–4). Sticking to a tried and tested tractor design that many farmers knew how to use, rather than seeking to innovate, may seem an incorrect decision with hindsight, but in a time of crisis it surely had a great deal to recommend it (p. 99). The revisionist case actually seems to defeat itself in the reconsideration of the effectiveness of the management of agricultural production in some of the most thoroughly evidence-based analyses, from Waymark, Short and Rawding. These show that while wartime expedients certainly created some victims, most obviously through disposessions set in train by the WAECs, these were few in number, and in some notorious headline cases at least, those involved largely brought disaster on themselves. Under the conditions of the time, these committees mostly come over as sensible and keen to create a consensus, and no credible proof of routine and inappropriate authoritarianism emerges here.

The chapter on organic farming by Conford is less about farming in wartime than about the impetus through reaction that the wartime drive to maximize output gave the fledgling organic movement. Conford shows that the organicists' proselytizing worried the manufacturers of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and prompted them to mount a counter-attack. While this is interesting, it also serves to draw attention to the volume's biggest lacuna: a direct study of the forces, individuals and

firms who created the sense of inevitability about the productivist vision of the future based upon chemicals. Then we might have learned not only about the specific contributions of the agro-chemical industries to the wartime productivity drive but also why so few limits were placed on these industries for so long, and so few doubts expressed effectively until very recently.

Reading the book, one sometimes has the sense that some of its contributors see the agriculture of the second half of the century as essentially predetermined by what had been put in place by 1945. The material they present is perhaps more conducive to the view that the changes of wartime were a kind of preparation for a future revolution of an indeterminate kind. By 1945, it was generally accepted that the nation could not risk a return to food production regime of the 1930s and that farmers simply deserved better. There was also a strong resolve not to repeat the mistakes of the years after victory in 1918. Implementation of productivist policy was reinforced for several years by the chronic lack of both trade partners and foreign exchange, and then by the rapid transformation of the options for mechanization of mixed British farms in the 1950s, especially after the tractor and three-point linkage implement system pioneered by Ferguson had been refined and universally copied. This long-term, peacetime new deal after 1945 was intensified after Britain's accession to the European common market, despite there being plenty of food available elsewhere by that time. It was indeed the war years that set the nation firmly on the road to productivism, but that first step of a renewed interest in agriculture was all that had been established firmly by 1945 – and the experience of the aftermath of the First World War shows that even this could have been abandoned in the 1950s if costs and problems had mounted up in embarrassing ways.

Overall, then, there is plenty of interest here on particular topics, but taken as a whole the book cannot be counted a definitive reassessment of farming in Britain during the Second World War.

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IAN WALTHER, *A place in my country. In search of the rural dream* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2007). x + 310 pp. £12.99.

This is a very English sort of book falling broadly into the 'good life' genre. Yet it manages to go a little further than most examples of the genre which tend to irritate and exasperate in equal measure. In brief, the author, a high-flying media man, used to the fleshpots of Amsterdam, Brussels and Paris, is posted to London and rather than put up with the horrors of living in that city, he decides

to abandon his job and to buy a cottage in the Cotswolds where he goes to live with his young Australian wife. She becomes pregnant at last (fresh air and wholesome veg. presumably), he is able to confront and come to terms with the earlier loss of his father and elder brother, and the pair of them gradually become integrated into village life. In doing so, they meet the usual *dramatis personae* of earthy characters, loveable rogues, cynical and hypocritical incomers and less than pleasant members of the 'county set'. Despite his own upper-middle class background, the author finds little point of contact with the latter, appears to despise the 'white settlers' (of which he is, of course, a prime example) and prefers to seek the company of the worthy indigenes among whom he learns a great deal of the rhythms of country life. Accompanying the small working farmers, game keepers and tractor drivers about their various tasks, he comes daily into contact with birth, death and decay, causing him to question some of his own values. Meanwhile he glimpses the darkness behind the rural façade as he comes face-to-face with local vandalism and crime and the sheer hypocrisy and moral cowardice of many of the dwellers in Arcady. It is a world of deep social divisions and despite the genuine efforts of the Rector to blur distinctions of class, the orbits of those few working folk still living in the village and those of the barn conversions, former farmhouses and 'artisan' cottages rarely converge.

All this will be familiar to those who know Cirencester and its surrounding villages or who have walked or ridden through Lord Bathurst's great park. The peer himself will be less than delighted by the author's unenlightened criticism of estate farming, given that the 'Marsham' estate is almost certainly modelled on his own, while the authorities at the Royal Agricultural College will deprecate the rather snide descriptions of some of its students. I think I recognize the village in Walthew's account, and am certain I know the pub which features so prominently in his daily life. Indeed, given the number of nights that he staggered home after long hours of beer, cider and tequila, it is quite remarkable that Walthew ever managed to set pen to paper, let alone produce what at one level can be read as a serious and coherent critique of developments in the modern countryside.

In a manner reminiscent of H. J. Massingham (with even a hint of his rhapsodic descriptive writing) the author attacks the supposedly dehumanized face of modern farming, where economic rationalism has driven the people from the fields and labourers from their cottages and where agrochemicals have ushered in a sanitized landscape of cereal monoculture. He contrasts this with the smaller-scale mixed farming system followed by his

friend and mentor, Norman. The author admires this kindly, gentle bachelor who represents an older, less ordered world and we are expected to sympathize with him as he struggles to survive in a tough physical and economic environment. The trouble is that for all his warmth and strength of character, and for all his deep roots in the Cotswold countryside, Norman is the farmer from Hell. He is technically incompetent; his livestock die in the fields for want of a vet, his wheat remains un-harvested in October when all around have already planted next year's crops, his gates hang drunkenly from their hinges, his cattle and sheep wander at will and he is the quintessentially past master of the botched job. His two hundred acres yield little and despite Walthew's unconcealed sympathy, Norman's relative poverty is the product of his own inability to confront the demands of modern farming. It would be nice to think that this island could afford to support a countryside populated with backwoods yeomen of the Norman type with their poppy-infested fields, ancient tractors and homespun 'wisdom'. But this is a notion as absurd as it is impracticable in a desperately overpopulated land. The idyll, if it ever existed, is dead and gone. It gave way long ago to a wholly different world of wholly different values. As America converts its vast acres to producing bio-fuel, India and China absorb ever greater amounts of food from the world market and climatic change exerts its insidious effects, we shall need all the food we can possibly produce. If I am right, the Normans of this world will disappear forever along with the inherently inefficient organic systems so enthusiastically supported by the urban middle classes, and the ridiculous notions of extensification proposed for some of our most fertile acres.

Ian Walthew, of course, would be appalled. Yet towards the end of his charming and arresting book the need to earn a living forces him and his little family back to the metropolitan life and, in a sense, back to reality; the reality of the Britain of graffiti, pierced navels and *Hello* magazine. We are left with the feeling that Walthew's friends including Norman, the folk in the pub and the other Cotswold denizens in his pages would have little alternative but to confront their own reality by awaiting the inevitable change and the tide of 'white settlers' which would finally engulf them.

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CLARE V. J. GRIFFITHS, *Labour and the Countryside. The politics of rural Britain, 1918-1939* (OUP, 2007) xv + 404 pp., 10 illus. £60.

The history of the Labour Party in rural areas is not, to any kind of radical, a happy one. In the accepted

accounts, with exceptions of 1945 and 1997, Labour has had virtually no impact in the countryside outside a small number of seats, typically in East Anglia. At one level this is perhaps not surprising. A substantial section of the party nationally regarded the rural areas as politically backward, trapped by some version of Marx's famous phrase – 'the idiocy of rural life'. More moderate voices saw Labour as the party of the urban areas, fostered and protected by a mass trade union movement, conditions which clearly did not exist in the countryside. Finally, there were those who argued that the 'tyranny of the countryside' meant that farm workers, rural craft workers and even tenant farmers were so under the control of the Conservative squirearchy as to make the free expression of political views impossible.

Against this a slightly longer view would suggest a possible different line of argument. In 1910, and especially in 1906, the Liberal Party held a huge number of rural seats, as well as drawing on the more traditional urban areas of radical support. Further, Socialism had a special relationship with the countryside through the radical ruralism of the Chartists, William Morris and Robert Blatchford. However, between 1918 and 1939 most of the old Liberal urban areas went to Labour (though not all) while virtually none of the rural ones did. Seen in this way there was no 'natural' link between the rural and Conservatism, rather Labour in some way failed to address the countryside in such a way as to create a critical mass of voters.

The 'conflict' between these two sets of ideas forms the hub of this extremely important book. However this grossly oversimplifies what is a complex and subtle account. What Griffiths gives us is not only the first study of Labour in the rural areas which is based on detailed academic research but one which will shape the field for years to come.

The first section of the book consists of three fine chapters on what she calls 'political landscapes'. These look essentially at the labour movement's own sense of their history of the countryside. Beginning from the notion of 'dispossession' – that the land was 'stolen from the people' – she moves through a discussion of the idea of the rural voter to a sustained account of the rural idyll and Labour. This is not simply an introduction; rather it is a nuanced, intellectual history, of the shaping of the inter-war labour movement and Labour Party. There then follows a section on the rural labour movement looking at the national campaigns in the rural areas, at rural Labour parties and finally at trades unionism. The final section looks at the development of Labour policy on agriculture and rural areas.

At one level, as Griffiths says, the narrative is one of minor success and even progress. By 1935–9 the Labour

Party had had some real successes in rural areas. For example there were practically no rural constituencies without a Divisional Labour party, in stark contrast to 1918. By 1939 it had nearly doubled its number of rural seats, although it still held less than 20. More striking still, its share of the vote had increased significantly. In a similar way Labour policy towards rural areas although still based around land nationalisation and a living wage in agriculture, had moved, albeit pragmatically, to a real policy for the whole of agriculture and the countryside. As she writes in the conclusion these changes and the work taken to achieve them were not simply about the countryside but 'about establishing a presence across the country as whole ... They helped to bolster Labour's aspirations to be a mature political party, which represented more than sectional interests ...' (p.339) nor should we, she reminds us, forget the real achievements of Labour's brief periods of office. Indeed with hindsight they are of real importance. The 1924 government reinstated the Wages Board, and a national minimum wage, encouraged rural house building, but also introduced the sugar beet subsidy which many historians now see as a key element in the survival of many arable farms in the inter-war period. The 1929–31 government was responsible for the introduction of marketing schemes which are universally recognised as a central part of the 'recovery' of sections of agriculture in the 1930s, for the genesis of the 1932 Town and Country Planning Act, and the recognition of the need to support agricultural prices. Few inter-war Tory governments made such an impact on the countryside.

Yet this kind of narrative, as Griffiths says, is too simple. The 'national policy' for agriculture meant, by the mid 1930s at the latest, looking to the farmers for support, and to the 'defence' of agriculture by subsidy. This was an anathema to most rural trade unionists and many rank-and-file country members. I remember Jack Boddy, the Norfolk-born National Secretary of the NUAAW saying that Labour's 1947 Agriculture Act which made subsidies permanent was the real 'great betrayal' of the farm worker who got nothing from it. Nor was the progress simple. Griffiths documents carefully and with real understanding the huge difficulties involved in building and, above all maintaining Labour Party branches over large geographical areas and among a largely non-unionised workforce.

Above all she stresses the unevenness of the process, and here I will quote at length again from the conclusion.

For all the party's rhetoric about the importance of its new political battleground, there was no such thing as 'The Countryside' to be won over – no stereotypical

landscape, where a model electorate might respond to a magic formula. Instead, there were many distinctive economies and social geographies, where political traditions and contemporary priorities could produce varied political outcomes (p.330).

The whole book is testimony to this complexity – and is full of insight into region, tradition and, dare one say it, mere chance, all of which had a key part in Labour's success or failure between the wars. Two examples will serve. In many areas political Liberalism remained a real force. In the 1920s the Liberals always fielded over 300 candidates, many in rural seats. By 1931 there were 119 and in 1935 161. The presence of a Liberal candidate could work for or against Labour either splitting the radical or the conservative vote depending on local conditions. Also more two-way fights meant Labour had to move to a much broader base of support, rather than relying on a small, sectional group within a rural area, for example miners, to win at the margins.

That takes me to my second point – and one already touched on. Who were countrymen and women? Even in 1921 there were only 141 constituencies (less than a quarter) where more than 20 per cent of the population were employed in agriculture. Even in these areas Labour's appeal to the farm worker or even the small farmer was clearly missing huge numbers of voters. The party recognised that by the late 1930s with an appeal to the 'countryside' as a whole. How successful that was is impossible to determine. Although 1945 saw huge gains in the rural areas we cannot judge, without work like Griffiths' on the post-war period.

As I said earlier, this is a very important book. This is not only because it looks at Labour and agriculture, or is another study of inter-war policy, although it has both those elements. It is important because it presents a history of the politics of inter-war rural Britain in the context of economic, social and cultural change at both national and grass roots levels. It challenges a lot of assumptions and demands that we look at the other parties in the same way. It also cries out for somebody to look at 1945–51 to see what happened next.

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Europe and Elsewhere

ERIK THOEN and LEEN VAN MOLLE (eds), *Rural history in the North Sea area. An overview of recent research (middle ages – twentieth century)* (Brepols, CORN Publication Series 1, 2006). 320 pp. €60.

CORN, for readers unfamiliar with the acronym, is the Comparative Rural History of the North Sea Area

research network, financed by the Flemish Fund for Scientific Research from 1995. No one who has been involved in CORN conferences will doubt the considerable contribution the network has made to establishing connections between scholars working in similar fields but within their own national communities. Many of its meetings have been given permanent form by earlier volumes in this series, and with this volume Erik Thoen, the network's mastermind, and Leen van Molle put us further in their debt.

This is the first of the CORN series by number but at least the eighth to appear. It is based on the papers given at one of the earliest CORN conferences but revised in 2004–5 so that they offer an up-to-date and indispensable account of the historiographies of the contributing nations. That said, readers should be warned that there are some important omissions. Most regrettably there is no account of French rural history after 1800. The area adopted is very much the southern North Sea area so there are no essays describing either Scottish agrarian history or that of the Scandinavian countries. Moreover, Drendal takes the whole of France as his remit and Blickle – in one of the shorter chapters – the whole of Germany. The accounts are generally weak on post-1945 developments. This is, in effect, an account of national schools of history writing and an appraisal of their strengths and weaknesses. Some contributions drift towards being annotated bibliographies: others are more ruminative discussions of what has been done and still needs to be done. Most readers will value the book for the individual accounts, but reading the volume all the way through, one cannot but be impressed by just how different the national schools are, and how far we are from an agenda for *European* rural history.

A number of the authors make comments on the recent fortunes of their national schools. There is an element of common experience between England, France and North America (as described by Doug Hurt in a recent paper in the *Review*). The great enthusiasm for agricultural history in the 1960s has ebbed away. Drendal, for instance, comments that the 'Postan-Duby' thesis of economic change within a Malthusian context 'achieved a canonical status so widely accepted that, unlike in Britain, hardly any one discusses it any more' (p.97). Historians turned to the new questions posed by the "linguistic turn". Beaur speaks of the 'thirty glorious years' in French rural history, 1945–75, then 'the wind changed very quickly during the 1980s, rural history suffering a decline in proportion to its previous ascent ... It became fashionable to declare ... that there was nothing much to say any more, nothing to prove and no more discoveries to be made' (p.119). In some countries rural history has never really come to the forefront: this

point is made by the Belgian contributors and Blickle doubts whether there is enough work in nineteenth and twentieth-century German rural history for it to count as a sub-discipline. Overall though, the contributors end on positive notes, a number talking specifically of the reinvention of the discipline in the 1990s, in some cases with new journals or societies taking the place of the moribund. The volume's editors, in their opening chapter, date the turning point to the establishment of *Rural History* in 1990, although whether that that journal has ever achieved its initial aspirations (which are helpfully reprinted in a footnote) must be doubted. (It is odd judgement too given that the three authors writing on England, Campbell, Overton and Collins, are decidedly not *Rural History* people and that journal makes a weak showing in their bibliography.) My own feeling is that agricultural or rural history has probably gained by ceasing to be a tool for the explanation of the big events of history, whether the Industrial Revolution in England or the French Revolution, concentration on which served to focus historian's interests on limited periods and directed them towards certain conclusions.

If this volume often shows that rural history is no longer a *fashionable* discipline, it proves that it is a *mature* discipline. The danger, in a way, is that contained in one of the editor's judgements. Challenging Hurt's assessment that rural history is now 'practiced virtually everywhere [but] it lacks visibility and respect as an autonomous sub-discipline', Van Molle and Thoen point to the 'renaissance in agrarian and rural history within the context of food history and environmental history, which are both in full expansion internationally and comparatively' (p.22). I incline to the view that when a discipline is seen to inform everything, to be so internalized an element in historical thought that everyone is doing it, it has actually disappeared from the agenda. In many respects this has been the fate of economic history. Lots of people claim to be economic historians in some respect or another: fewer of them do anything which is recognisably economic history. There is an important argument to be made for maintaining agricultural or rural history as a distinct discipline. Moreover, it needs to hold its place in the undergraduate curriculum and here perhaps is our greatest present weakness. It is fashionable to speculate about what people thought, but not to discuss what they ate, where it came from and how it was produced, to describe their experience of work, but not the products they made. This is a general problem of the relative standing of the economic against the cultural. It is found as much in twentieth-century history as medieval, and in Geography as much as History. And, one has to say, that there is a deep-seated prejudice in the minds of

many colleagues in favour of the urban (modern, vital, weekday) over the rural (backward, stagnant, weekend). Of course, historians are deeply present-centred in that they take what seems interesting in their own times and investigate it in the past, and so it may be that the increased political interest in food supply may yet divert some into historical enquiry of the same issues. This book, and the CORN network as a whole, makes the case for rural history very thoroughly by mixing evidence of achievement and vitality with an agenda for the future.

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ERNST BRUCKMÜLLER, ERNST LANGTHALER and JOSEF REDL (eds), *Agrargeschichte schreiben. Traditionen und Innovationen im internationalen Vergleich* (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag. Jahrbuch für Geschichte des ländlichen Raumes 2004). €29.90.

This volume announces the emergence of a new annual publication on rural history ('The yearbook of rural history') based in Austria but with editorial input from across central and southern Europe. The publication aims to promote new trends in the study of the agrarian world, especially 'actor-centred' models of rural behaviour and the influence of cultural history (the editors point to the British journal *Rural History* as an inspiration). Now that the series is some three volumes old (beginning in 2004) it is not yet clear that the themes of the new journal are really so far removed from the preoccupations of more 'traditional' publications such as *Agricultural History Review* or the *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie* which have been by no means moribund in recent times. But the *Jahrbuch* is certainly to be welcomed.

With the founding of the series, it is entirely appropriate that this first volume is devoted to historiographical reflection on rural history in several European countries, setting out the traditions on which current agrarian history can both draw, and seek to supersede. This is perhaps a particularly germanophone preoccupation, as the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of historical writing tend to be more explicitly addressed in germanophone scholarship than elsewhere. In this and many other areas, a little international comparison draws out strongly the preoccupations of particular nations and regions. The chapters cover east-central Europe (or more accurately, work on regions traditionally seen as being dominated by the manorial and demesne economies called *Gutsherrschaft* in German) by Markus Cerman; the GDR by Arnd Bauernkämper; Austria by Ernst Langthaler; Germany by Robert von Friedeburg; Italy by Margareth Lazinger; the Alps by Jon Mathieu; Switzerland by Peter Moser; France receives two chapters

by Gérard Béaur and Nadine Vivier respectively; and Spain by Gloria Sanz Lafuente. Additional pieces examine the works of Austrian agrarian historians Karl Grünberg and Hermann Wopfner, and there are reviews of the CORN (Comparative history of the North Sea area) book series, and Michael Kearney's 1996 challenge to peasant studies.

While the editors are to be congratulated on pulling together such a diversity of perspective for both this volume, and the editorial oversight of the journal, it seems a shame that England and the Low Countries have not been included. Much scholarship in recent years has challenged the idea of the 'backwardness' of continental agriculture, including some work valorized in this volume. It would have been interesting to involve directly historians from those countries bordering the North Sea who in the CORN series have generally taken the view that this was indeed the core (perhaps a better acronym?) region of agricultural development during and after the early modern period. As it stands two new book series have now emerged in recent years that seem to reflect the pricing zones – one for the European north-west and the Baltic, and one for the central and southern regions of the continent – that were identified by Braudel and Spooner for the early modern period. The *longue durée* indeed! It is to be hoped in the future that more historians than Béaur and Vivier will seek provide a bridge between these zones.

Reading the contributions collectively, it is striking the degree to which the development of agrarian history in each country is perceived as being largely driven by developments within, and peculiar to, that same country. Apart from a few mentions of *Annales*, one would get the impression that cross-border co-operation among historians was only in its infancy. This is less true within the germanophone world itself, where personnel have moved easily between institutions in different countries and language presents no barrier. Yet only the discussion of Alpine historiography by Jon Mathieu brings international comparison in any depth, as part of an argument that the complex linguistic, environmental and political boundaries of this mountain region have both necessitated and facilitated such comparison.

Many of the authors point to specific domestic political constellations as being critical in providing impetus to important phases in conceptualizing national agrarian history. These range from the late nineteenth-century debates over labour-shedding and agrarian crisis in Germany, classically interpreted by the 'Historical School' of national economy around Theodor Knapp; to the resurgence of Marxism in post-war Italy and the response to the land reform of 1950; or debates around agricultural reform in Switzerland in the mid-1980s. In

some cases the influence of these phases has proven enduring, especially the inheritance from late nineteenth-century reformers, who saw agricultural progress as a socio-political question linked to the behaviour of the *Junker* landowning class and state protectionism, that in turn promoted the idea that a dominant legal and political regime, the *Agrarverfassung*, determined agrarian change (or the lack of it). German agrarian history has given a prominent position to the legal status of peasants and land, and social structural analysis, ever since. Yet the balance of themes within germanophone work also represents a particular definition of 'agrarian history' that has been more broadly conceived than in Britain. If social historical themes such as histories of legal status, the village commune, and peasant revolt have predominated over economic concerns, it seems incorrect to claim, as Robert von Friedeburg does in this volume, that agricultural history has been neglected compared to England. From this reviewer's point of view (writing from England, but having conducted research in Germany), this divergence reflects the way sub-disciplines have been categorized rather than actual research.

Yet for all this particularism, there are shared developments that emerge from these texts. The nineteenth-century juridical training of historians across Europe generated a strong preoccupation with tenurial and legal relations as the bedrock of agricultural history. This combined with a view of the peasantry that saw it as fundamentally antithetical to modernity, often linking tenurial and legal forms to rural ethnography. Across a range of countries the rapid dissolution of the old rural world in the early decades of the twentieth century inspired a strong political and historical interest in agrarian studies, which from the 1930s tapped into new serial and quantitative techniques of study epitomized in the work of Labrousse or Abel. By the 1970s, however, dissatisfaction was emerging with sociological models of rural society and regional studies that did not seem to be advancing the discipline. The central economic preoccupation with 'progressive' farming on the English model superseding peasant and feudal inertia began to look increasingly unsatisfactory, in underplaying the capacity to innovate of 'traditional' agriculture, the experience of social differentiation (within and between households) and rural industrialization, and giving insufficient attention to individual choices. By the 1980s, agrarian history was stagnant and unfashionable, a decline particularly precipitate in France, but has recovered from the early 1990s. Multiple new foci have emerged: gender studies, 'alternative agriculture', ecological approaches to modelling rural change, and especially anthropologically-influenced approaches that examine the farmer

as innovator and actor, and the micro-politics of rural communities.

The chapters thus leave many questions unanswered. Did the international exchange of ideas among historians have more influence than is credited here? Or did agricultural history respond to common changes in the economy, society, and intellectual fashion that were exogenous to agricultural history itself? A clearly divergent region is Spain, where the 1980s saw the rise of agrarian history to one of the most prominent themes in history. This anomaly is not addressed, though it seems hard to divorce it from a flourishing of interest in the dynamics of rural society after the Franco era, in a state where the old regime and a large agricultural sector persisted to a very late date.

The volume gives a broad if uneven view of historic and current developments in agrarian history. It is unlikely that anglophone readers will go to a book published in German for a digest of recent developments in Italian, Spanish or French agricultural history (although they are all fine essays). Ernst Langthaler's discussion of Austrian agrarian history and Peter Moser's of Switzerland are particularly worth visiting, however, both indicating how the myth of the soil-bound and virtuous peasant influenced agrarian history throughout the twentieth century. By exploring the paradox of a 'peasant' and rural political discourse purveyed by a state that ruthlessly pursued industrialization both generally and within the agricultural sector, Moser offers a particularly nuanced exposition of recent Swiss work, including his own; and may provide some comparative insights for other countries.

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CORINNE BECK, RENAUD BENARROUS, JEAN-MICHEL DEREX and ALAIN GALLICÉ (eds), *Les zones humides européennes: espaces productifs d'hier et d'aujourd'hui* (Estuarium, 2007). 514 pp., 11 figs, 12 tables, 43 maps, 17 illus. €30.

When I was an undergraduate at University College London in the early 1960s, Professor H. C. Darby stressed the importance of marshland drainage as a contributory process in making the English landscape. He placed particular emphasis on the drainage of the Fens whose 'agricultural improvement' from the seventeenth century onwards he had investigated during the 1930s. After exposure to British examples, we learned about marshland drainage in France, the Netherlands, Germany and Russia, adopting the same perspective of 'improvement' and paying little attention to the needs of local people whose livelihoods linked to fishing, fowling and grazing were destroyed in the name of progress.

Now, problematic marshes have been renamed 'wetlands' whose resources are valued for nature conservation and tourism. As Jean-Michel Derex remarks in the present volume: 'Today, wilderness has become desirable' (p.15). In addition, researchers insist on incorporating palaeological evidence rather than relying on the archival record and surviving landscape features. The thirty papers contained in *Les zones humides* provide a splendid example of interdisciplinary progress and demonstrate how the range of research on wetlands has expanded in recent decades. They were presented at the colloquium organized by the Groupe d'histoire des zones humides and held at Le Blanc (on the margins of the Brenne wetland) in October 2005. Almost all focus on French examples, with a handful considering case studies in Belgium, Spain and northern Italy.

Wetlands as contested spaces form the key theme underlying the first cluster of essays that explore environments as diverse as Flanders, Burgundy and the valley of the Loire. Powerful landowners and monastic houses managed, indeed sometimes created, wetlands in medieval times to implant fishponds and damp pastures, sometimes sweeping away peasant landholdings and erasing traces on previously occupied landscapes. Townsfolk valued the fish, meat and firewood that wetlands provided and struggled with local farmers over their control. A second conflict revolved around the challenge of producing more cereals to feed hungry mouths that could be met by marshland drainage in the Marais Poitevin, Bas-Languedoc and countless other pays. Following the Revolution of 1789, wetlands that survived repeated attempts at 'improvement' were opened to hunting by the rural poor, but, after half a century, legislation was introduced to control the ensuing free-for-all by defining 'open seasons'. This issue remains hotly contested to the present day.

A multiplicity of source materials – palaeological, archaeological and archival – serves to reveal the fluctuating fortunes of French wetlands from the Camargue and the Brière to the coastal marshes of Brittany and Normandy. Not surprisingly, pride of place is given to the environmental history of the Grande Brenne with two lengthy contributions employing palaeological techniques to complement scant written records in order to trace how landowners managed natural wetlands and created more extensive fishponds in medieval times. The reappraisal of wetlands as valued environments to be protected in the name of nature conservation or as an expression of 'green tourism' forms the guiding theme for the final cluster of examples, extending from coastal lagoons on the Mediterranean, through the internal wetlands of the Sologne, Brenne, Bresse, Champagne humide and Armagnac, to damp valleys in the uplands of the Massif

Central where abandoned millponds now form foci for nature reserves. As in the past, the introduction of new uses for wetlands does not pass without opposition, as farmers contest the precise definition of recreational areas, huntsmen challenge controls on their traditional activity, and locals demonstrate about the impact of EU directives for environmental protection. This attractively produced volume amply demonstrates how research on the environmental history and historical geography of French wetlands has moved beyond the stories being recounted almost half a century ago.

HUGH CLOUT
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PHILIPPE MADELINE and JEAN-MARC MORICEAU (eds), *Acteurs et espaces de l'élevage (XVIIe–XXIe siècle)* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2006). 328 pp., 25 figs, 16 tables, 10 maps. €32.

This volume is the ninth to appear in the *Bibliothèque d'Histoire Rurale* series of the *Association d'Histoire des Sociétés Rurales* and edited by Jean-Marc Moriceau of the University of Caen. Working with his geographer colleague, Philippe Madeline, Professor Moriceau has drawn together texts arising from a number of seminar presentations at the *Maison de la Recherche en Sciences Humaines (Pôle Rural)* during 2003–2004 and the proceedings of a small conference held at Saint-Christophe-en-Brionnais in October 2004. The result is a fascinating collection of twenty papers by historians, geographers and other social scientists who examine the development of livestock husbandry in various regions of France (especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), and highlight changes and challenges arising during the past quarter century. The editors provide a general introduction to the book plus an excellent bibliography of publications on livestock husbandry in France, with particular emphasis on cattle rearing. Overview articles, source materials, specialist journals and the great regional monographs by historians and geographers are listed to assist further study.

The first cluster of five papers includes a thorough discussion of the notion of agricultural specialisation by Annie Antoine who emphasises the importance of improved communications and growing urban demands for meat and milk toward the end of the *ancien régime* and throughout the nineteenth century, especially following the construction of the railway network. Reading this paper reminded me of the nineteenth-century *cartes gastronomiques* that placed sketches of dairy cows, hens, vines and other products on the appropriate section of the maps of France. Maps and diagrams are found in abundance in most chapters of *Acteurs et espaces* but are curiously absent from Antoine's overview. In

the next chapter I was reminded of another form of nineteenth-century iconography that displayed differing cattle breeds. Bernard Denis outlines how important efforts were made to enhance cattle breeding from the 1880s onwards and how the spatial distribution of cattle breeds changed substantially over the subsequent hundred years. Bertrand Vissac picks up this aspect of the changing agricultural geography of France in a later chapter.

Methods of research are explored by geographer Armand Frémont who presents an account of his research itinerary that began in the 1950s in the Pays de Caux and expanded into a major doctoral thesis on livestock rearing across the whole of Normandy. Frémont stresses his debt to earlier geographers and to his doctoral *patrons*, as well as discussing the strengths and weaknesses of using official agricultural statistics and undertaking interviews in the field. His doctorate summarized the historical evolution of livestock farming in the province, placed animal husbandry into the context of Norman society, and highlighted its spatial variations across a broad stretch of country from the Cotentin peninsula to the Pays de Bray. Finally, Frémont reveals how livestock farming has declined over the past quarter century and, widening his gaze, identifies three types of countryside in Normandy: areas where commuting to urban employment is significant; those where modernised agriculture is vibrant; and others where rural depopulation and decline of local services continue apace.

The second part of the book focuses on a dozen case studies that emphasize the diversity of livestock husbandry in France. Olivier Fanica demonstrates the existence of urban cow keeping in and around Paris during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and reveals how this phenomenon disappeared as long-distance milk supplies were brought by rail. Bernard Garnier shifts the focus from milk to meat, analysing the movements of cattle 'on the hoof' to the slaughterhouses and market halls of the capital. Cheese making enters the discussion in Eric Bourdessoule's account of pastoral life on the high pastures of the Cantal and in Jacques Rémy's study of livestock rearing in the Alpine Tarentaise. Very different environments are introduced by François Spindler, who shows how animal husbandry was once important on the rich lowland of Alsace (but has declined massively since 1970), and by Fabrice Poncet, who analyses the impact of dairy specialization around Isigny and in other parts of western Normandy. Eugène Calvez reveals the dramatic impact of food-processing corporations on the structure and organisation of dairying in western France, Michaël Bermond summarizes changes in farm

structure and production between 1970 and 2000 with the help of some fine coloured maps derived from detailed statistical analysis. The final cluster of papers moves to the Roannais-Brionnais area of central-eastern France, showing how cattle rearing became increasingly important during the nineteenth century, land-use patterns changed from mixed farming to permanent grass, and local markets coordinated the dispatch of cattle to other areas for fattening and to Lyons and Paris for slaughter and distribution to butchers' shops. Jean-Paul Diry draws this attractive volume to a close by sketching how *ruralité* has taken on new meanings in our own time with farming being just one of many activities to occur in the French countryside. His challenging overview makes a useful connection back to Frémont's ideas expressed earlier in the book. *Acteurs et espaces* provides further evidence of the vitality of rural research and communication at the University of Caen, and will be appreciated by those concerned with French agriculture – and the countryside more widely – past, present and future.

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ROSA CONGOST and JOSÉ MIGUEL LANA (eds),
Campos cerrados, debates abiertos. Análisis histórico y propiedad de la tierra en Europa (siglos XVI–XIX) (Pamplona: Universidad Pública de Navarra, 2007). 396 pp. €21.

There are two major themes to this edited volume: enclosure and the consolidation of exclusive property rights over the centuries, and the initiation of an open debate (minus any strong conclusions) on the relationship between property rights and social change in the countryside. The papers included are largely based on presentations made to the Sociedad Española de Historia Agraria (SEHA) at two seminars held in Girona and Pamplona in 2002 and 2004. Among the aims of the participants was to bring out the diversity of the enclosure process in Spain and, to a lesser extent, other European countries and to emphasise the persistence of common lands until much later than is often admitted by historians and social scientists. English-speaking readers seeking some flavour of this debate should consult Rosa Congost's excellent article 'Property rights and historical analysis. What rights? What history?', *Past and Present*, 181 (2003), pp. 73–106.

As Congost informs us in her introduction to this book, all of the contributors are agreed on the need to revise the dominant historical focus on property rights, seeing them not so much as social constructions but as legal products. The studies published here are grouped into three blocks: a) Property rights and their historical

significance, including contributions by Gérard Béaur on France and Guiliama Biagioli on central and northern Italy; b) Four case studies by Tine De Moor (Flanders), Jacinto Bonales (the Catalan Pyrenees), Fernando Esteve & Javier Hernando Ortego (Madrid), and Iñaki Iriarte and José Miguel Lana (Navarre), bringing out the complex relationship between communal property and the development of modern capitalism; c) Four studies on enclosure, consisting of an analysis of enclosure south of the Pyrenees as expressed in both the literature and legislation by Felipa Sánchez Salazar, followed by three case studies on Catalonia (Montserrat Pellicer) and Andalusia (Antonio Luis López Martínez and Juan Diego Pérez Cebada).

It is difficult to do justice to so many contributions in a brief review. Congost's seminal chapter is, in essence, a summary of her magisterial 2007 book, *Tierras, leyes, historia. Estudios sobre 'la gran obra de la propiedad'*, recently reviewed in the *Review*, in which she firmly rejects a 'linear view' of rural history as determined by changes in legal codes. For my part, I was much taken by Jesús Izquierdo's splendid chapter on late nineteenth-century attacks, not least from the great Aragonese polymath Joaquín Costa, on 'the excesses of liberalism' in the Spanish countryside combined with a rejection of private property as it was set out in Spain's civil code of 1889. As well as Costa, contemporary Spanish historians such as Rafael Altamira and sociologists like Gumersindo de Azcárate saw the *ancien régime* as 'a stage of complex conviviality between communal and private property'. While the old order is often viewed by scholars as a mere link in the long evolutionary chain towards a modernity dominated by private property, Izquierdo stresses that the peasantry in particular was profoundly interested in the survival of communal property. In their chapter on the 'moral economy' of the *ancien régime* in early modern Madrid, Esteve and Hernando Ortego emphasise the vitality of peasant communities along with their resistance to change within the communal regime. Iriarte and Lana nicely outline the state of the debate on public versus private property in Spain. Whereas in the 1980s most studies tended to focus on civil disentailing, the following decade witnessed a proliferation of studies on public property, including forests, which escaped privatisation. In their opinion, both lines of research have become far too compartmentalised.

With its detailed bibliography and providing much new data, this is one of the most interesting and stimulating collections of essays I've read on the agrarian history of modern Spain. Let's hope that it serves as a springboard for further research.

JOSEPH HARRISON
University of Manchester

ELVIS MALLORQUÍ (ed.), *Toponímia, paisatge i cultura. Els noms de lloc des de la lingüística, la geografia i la història* (Universitat de Girona, Documenta Universitaria, 2006). 183 pp., 26 figs. €17.31.

In this nicely produced and useful little book, based on short papers presented to a conference at the University of Girona in 2004, researchers with backgrounds in linguistics, geography, history and sociology, debate the importance of rural place names in Catalonia (north-east Spain) for the point of view of their own academic disciplines. As the historian Elvis Mallorquí points out in his tidily written introductory essay, toponymy, defined by the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* as 'the place names of a country or district as a subject of study', can provide invaluable information for both amateur and professional investigators on the evolution of a particular locality over the centuries. In particular, considerable emphasis is placed on the original significance of names, on subsequent changes and, in a number of cases their disappearance. Some place names are fairly self-explanatory (for instance rocks, ravines or mountains), some descriptive (mills and monuments), whilst others make little or no apparent sense.

According to Ramon Amigó, the doyen of Catalan toponymists, it was not until the 1970s that studies of place names were first carried out in the Principality, mostly covering the south of the region, above all the wine growing area of the Priorat (Tarragona). While many of these accounts were based on archival research, others were derived from oral evidence including interviews with peasant farmers, shepherds, fishermen. Place names on the region's maps, he tells us, are often far from reliable. Even so, by Amigó's reckoning, such studies, published in a variety of sources, cover no more than ten per cent of Catalan municipalities: hence the urgent need for further research, not least in the under-researched province of Girona. In his own contribution, Mallorquí pays tribute to the English secondary school teacher John Field whose pioneering work *English Field-Names* (1972) demonstrated how men and women perceived a particular territory over time and how the latter supported a succession of social practices. Mallorquí then uses local place names, found in seigniorial ledgers (*capbreus*), in an attempt to reconstruct the Catalan landscape during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Such a source, he argues, provides much detailed information on such topics as crop types (e.g. beans), land use (meadows) or economic activity (mills). By consulting similar sources for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when viticulture took off in the Principality, he also shows how, at this stage, the names of cereals were frequently replaced by those of vines.

The study of rural place names south of the Pyrenees

is clearly in its infancy, and often takes the form of amateur enthusiasts compiling lengthy alphabetical lists. This valuable little pocket book, with its exhaustive bibliography, informative maps and excellent photographic illustrations may go some way to further the progress of a sadly neglected area of research.

JOSEPH HARRISON
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PETER J. ATKINS, PETER LUMMEL and DEREK J. ODDY (eds), *Food and the city in Europe since 1800* (Ashgate, 2007). xvi + 260 pp., 14 tables, 6 figs. £55.

For a collection of essays drawn from conference proceedings, this volume hangs together remarkably well. With the exception of only a few articles in the final sections, this book aptly traces practically all the important issues regarding food supply in the past two centuries in a fascinating range of European locales. We are taken to Berlin and Paris, London and Barcelona, Brussels and Bordeaux, Oslo and Prague. We are introduced to problems of supply and distribution, the battles over conflicting jurisdictions in food safety, arguments over nutritional theory, the replacement of small shops with supermarkets, the impact of exotic and immigrant food, and cultural issues of consumption. In a nutshell, this book traces everything that has gone wrong with food in the modern era, and why. Rather than an overarching theoretical summary of the history, this is a series of concise snapshots that bring into close focus the problems and processes that constitute the greatest transformation of the human diet since the Neolithic Revolution. The details are not always surprising, but they inform in a way that most food histories with their broad brushstrokes never manage to accomplish. Here are the results of meticulous research which will someday be used to paint a more complete picture of how we got into this mess in the first place.

Admittedly, the articles do not always depict a bleak picture. There are bright spots, just as there are some very good things about the way we eat today. Food is undoubtedly safer, we know more about nutrition, while famines are a thing of the past, at least in Europe. There are a wide range of affordable and interesting ingredients, good restaurants, and a thriving 'foodie' culture. But somehow, the problems, particularly those in the first half of the book still seem to confound us. We still suffer serious food scares and problems with adulteration. The public is still confused about what constitutes a health-promoting diet. Our food still travels great distances, and its price is still inflated mostly by superfluous handling, packaging, advertising, marketing and retailing. And of course there are still gross inequities in food accessibility, not merely among social classes within Europe, but

around the world. Many of these articles, unwittingly perhaps, provide a stern caveat for developing nations: learn from the mistakes of European cities. The book is entirely historical in scope, but its implications are timeless for the modern era.

It would be impossible to summarize the contents, but a few examples should illustrate the strengths of this collection. Peter Atkins discusses the structural and institutional differences in Paris and London after 1850 and how the two cities differed in managing their food supply. The role of the state in urban planning, the desire to allow free trade, and even differences between Covent Garden and English street vendors and Les Halles and fixed retail shops, explain how these two food cultures diverged. Corinna Treitel focuses on German physiologist Max Rubner to show how nutritional theory interacted with state policy in dealing with the urban poor. Peter Scholliers examines Belgian legislation in the great era of food fraud, detailing the actors' motivations, and how advanced chemical technologies changed the very definition of adulteration. Derek Oddy reveals the fascinating interplay among rival agencies in London dealing with analysis of food for safety, and how public demand for pure food influenced legislation. Alessandro Stanziani takes a similar look at Paris and the administrative problems of laboratories testing food clashing with other experts in assessing food quality with very different criteria. Vera Heirholzer shows how grass roots efforts to ensure food safety were co-opted by the government in late nineteenth-century Germany, a story which would be replayed many times in the next century right down to the present. The Dutch dairy industry and the impact of canned condensed milk is examined in an article by Adel den Hartog, again evoking *déjà vu* for readers who are accustomed to seeing products sold with explicit health claims while dangers are carefully left off labels. Jukka Gronow details the bizarre ideological inconsistencies in Soviet food culture, embracing both grim workers canteens and opulent department stores and restaurants for elite consumers. Peter Lummel's article on German supermarkets is a concise account of how and why food retail changed in the twentieth century, a process that of course is still under way. Final contributions detail foreign food in Amsterdam, immigrant cuisines in London, efforts at natural food reform beginning in the nineteenth century (which are certainly still in process, even though the definition of natural keeps shifting), plus another article by Virginie Amilien on how social classes in Oslo maintained distinction in culinary terms. The twentieth chapter by Isabelle Téchoueyres offers a fascinating discussion on the emergence of open air markets in Bordeaux, and their role as an elite or tourist leisure activity.

This collection provides not only some extremely interesting studies of the difficulties in feeding cities well, but a fascinating glimpse of the roots of problems with which we still grapple.

KEN ABALA
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ROBERT DAVIES (ed.), *Letters from an American Farmer, Hector de Crèvecoeur* (Serendipity, 2006). xii + 85 pp. £7.95.

This volume contains a series of extracts from a minor classic of eighteenth-century American literature. Originally published in England in 1782, the *Letters* were a much larger, more amorphous work, ostensibly describing rural life in Pennsylvania in the preceding decade, through the eyes of an 'American farmer'. They covered a wide range of topics, from descriptions of the realities of mixed farming in the middle colonies, the home-spun rural economy, prospects for new settlers, the flora and fauna of the region, and some contrasting observations about other areas, such as Nantucket in the north, and Charleston in the south.

However, while these were based largely on the author's experiences, there was more literary artifice in de Crèvecoeur's account than first meets the eye, as the editor's very helpful introduction makes clear. For a start, he was hardly the typical 'American farmer', in whose name he wrote. His name was Michel-Guillaume St Jean de Crèvecoeur. He had spent a year with English relatives in Wiltshire learning English, before leaving for the French army in Canada in 1755. There he fought against the British, until he was wounded in 1759, after which he made for New York. He took up tenant farming, became a British subject in 1765, and eventually bought land in southern New York colony, near the Pennsylvania border. He lived there, with his wife, family, and several slaves, until 1779. By this time, the War of Independence had forced him to choose sides, and he offered (tacit) support to the Loyalists. He returned to France in 1780, became an American citizen in 1783, and returned to New York as the French Consul-General until 1790, when he returned to France for good.

Similarly, while his vivid, direct descriptions of rural life were undoubtedly based on his own experience, they also conform to contemporary literary genres. The letters privileged bucolic American 'self-reliance', over corrupting, metropolitan consumption and dissipation. They epitomize 'Enlightenment' attitudes to man as the arbiter and improver of nature. They idealize the home-making wife, the 'noble savage' and contrast the docile subordination of the black slave in the northern colonies, with the cruelties of the southern 'slave' colonies. In this respect, it is easy to understand why no less a

commentator than George Washington described de Crèvecoeur's work as 'highly coloured'.

So, these letters refract the world through a series of preconceptions and contrivances. However, this does not necessarily make them any more or less reliable than, say, de Crèvecoeur's contemporary Arthur Young. Instead, they are read best as an introduction to life in what Tony Wrigley has termed the 'organic economy', where consumption was tied directly to production, and in which the conservation of materials was more important than the minimization of effort. This world is depicted to greatest effect in chapter III, 'Food and drink', where de Crèvecoeur sums up the colonial subsistence economy by observing that 'the philosopher's stone of an American farmer is to do everything within his own family, to trouble his neighbours as little as possible, and to abstain from buying European commodities', and chapter V, 'Winter', in which this self-reliance is tested. His description of the austere, whaling community of Nantucket is also fascinating, not least for his stray comment that, 'a singular custom prevails here among the women ... of taking a dose of opium every morning'!

As the editor notes, de Crèvecoeur's writing is most powerful when it describes the simple routines and happenings of daily life, rather than in grappling with contemporary philosophical or political generalities. It may therefore be of interest to readers of the *Review*, both as a contrast to the more familiar English discourses of agrarian improvement in this era, and as an engaging illustration of the waste-not, want-not realities of farming on the American frontier.

HENRY FRENCH
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LIN FOXHALL, *Olive Cultivation in Ancient Greece. Seeking the ancient economy* (OUP, 2007). xvii + 294 pp., 8 tables, 66 figs. £65.

It is a commonplace that the olive was one of the pillars of Mediterranean agriculture, one part of a celebrated triad with cereals and the grapevine. Yet it is surprising how little serious scholarship exists in English on the economic and social history of this remarkable tree. Now at last we have a detailed and up-to-date account of the olive in the ancient Greek world, pulling together the threads of 30 years of scholarly research in which Foxhall has been a world leader. This book is a real gem and a rare delight to read. It surely will be hailed an instant classic and is a fine example of what all academics should strive for – being beautifully written, clearly structured, well illustrated and cogently argued.

The book is based on a series of key themes that allow the reader to understand the botanical characteristics of the plant, its place in the Mediterranean farming calendar,

its economic and social significance in the Greek world and some of the fundamental differences between that world and the Roman empire that succeeded it (when the nature and scale of olive cultivation and trade seems to have changed considerably). Readers of the *Review* will find the introductory chapter on the nature of the olive and chapters 5 and 6 on cultivating the olive and processing its fruit of particular interest. The argument is liberally peppered with fascinating facts and examples from the ancient texts, archaeological discoveries and modern ethnographic observations of traditional practices. In chapter 7 Foxhall explores the evidence of arboriculture more broadly in ornamental gardens in Greece, debunking a commonly held view that the Greeks did not go in for pleasure gardens. Here she gathers in textual and iconographic data to supplement a comparatively meagre archaeological record of excavated garden features.

There is also some excellent discussion about the relative level of economic sophistication of Greek farming economies and particular emphasis on the centrality of households in Greek productive industry (chapters 2–4 and 8). Domestic production and domestic consumption of olive oil was far more prevalent than large-scale surpluses passing out of factory-like pressing facilities and on to long-range trading networks (as seems to have evolved in some regions in Roman times). Indeed, I particularly liked the way Foxhall has made this a book about the ancient economy in general through the careful exploration of so many different aspects of the olive in Greek society. This case study of the olive can be seen in the end as a characterization of the economy overall. A key conclusion of the book is that to understand the true importance of the olive we must first grasp the closeness of fit of the olive with both the cultural and the agricultural spheres of Greek society. Foxhall makes an unanswerable case for the integration of study of Greek farming with a profound examination of social structure and social context of economic activity. The products and practices of farming simply cannot be studied in isolation. Many decisions about what and how to cultivate, what products to produce and how to use and dispose of them were founded on social or cultural desiderata, not market-driven economic motivations.

This is an outstanding and transcendent piece of research. It is also a fascinating work to read and engage with. It is going to be very influential in the fields of ancient history and archaeology, at which it is primarily aimed, but it will also find a receptive and enthusiastic readership beyond those core constituencies.

DAVID MATTINGLY
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