

RURAL HISTORY TODAY

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New policies affecting farm buildings

Recent work by English Heritage seeks to place the understanding of historic farm buildings and agricultural history at the heart of conservation policy.

by *Jeremy Lake, Characterisation Team, English Heritage*

Historic farmsteads and their buildings are prominent contributors to regional distinctiveness and landscape, but they are now both largely redundant for modern agricultural uses and subject to a high demand for their conversion into other uses, overwhelmingly housing. Recent research commissioned by English Heritage and the Countryside Agency has examined the state of the listed resource, the pressures driving upon it and the effectiveness of current polic. National planning policy is now requiring local authorities to take a more flexible and positive approach to the sustainable reuse of redundant rural buildings, and place more emphasis on both better quality design and greater use of place-specific guidance and directions. The majority of planning guidance at local level reflects limited knowledge of the nature and character of historic farmsteads, whether at a local scale or in their broader context. The appearance in 2005 of the new Agri-Environment Schemes, which fund farmers for the delivery of environmental benefits (historic as well as natural, including buildings) has further revealed that there is far less information available at a *landscape scale* about farmsteads and their buildings than other aspects of the cultural landscape, such as settlement patterns, field systems and boundary features.

A revised policy on traditional farm buildings, which will highlight these requirements and the role that these buildings will play in the diversification of farm incomes, rural development and the maintenance and enhancement of a high-quality rural



Barns are generally the largest farm buildings to be found on farms. Barns built for solely storing and processing crops are most common in arable areas. This example of a field barn on the chalk downs north of Weymouth in Dorset exemplifies the sheep-corn economy that typified this area from the 14th to the 19th century. The low building to the right is a very rare example of a sheep shelter. (Bob Edwards)

environment, will be published by English Heritage and the Countryside Agency in July 2006. One key recommendation is that solutions must take account of regional and local diversity and circumstances – differences in patterns of settlement, redundancy, dereliction and conversion, and in farmstead and building character – and the implications this has in terms of strategies for re-use. Eight preliminary regional character statements have, in response to this need, drawn together a wide range of available information as a first step in presenting an information base for a broad diversity of users with an interest in researching, understanding and managing historic farmsteads. These place regional developments into a national framework, and extend to summary statements outlining the agricultural development of each of the Joint Character Areas.

Recent techniques in digital mapping and developments in characterisation can enable us to inform the options for change to farmsteads

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Gargunnoch Farmers' Club

by Susanna Wade Martins

The establishment of The Highland and Agricultural Society in 1784 as a national forum for Scotland stimulated interest in the founding of local ones but the Gargunnoch farming club, near Stirling, may well be unique in that the records of this still flourishing club go back to its foundation. These consist of a collection of letters and notes of meetings from 1796 to 1817 and minute books from 1847 to the present, all kept in an inlaid chest with two keys which also contains a small but equally elaborate ballot box.

The club was set up in 1794 by John Fletcher Campbell of Boquhan. In 1784, the Clackmananshire Club had been founded and it was there that Campbell looked when seeking a model for his and so he sent for its rules. Their activities consisted of four dinners a year at which members wore blue coats and scarlet waistcoats with buttons stamped with a plough and wheat stalk, as well as the running of ploughing matches. New members were proposed at one meeting and elected at the next. Their object was the 'Improvement of Agriculture'. Armed with this information, Campbell wrote the rules for Gargunnoch. Membership was restricted to those living in the near by parishes 'The design of the farmers' club is to collect the knowledge of facts chiefly with regard to agriculture and to judge of what improvements may be introduced with success in this part of the country, each member furnishing information in particular that falls under his own experience and is connected with his situation and profession, the effect also of which it is to be hoped will be to connect the Tenant with the Landlord as members of the same society'. Meetings were to be once a quarter. The initial membership was 23, but when it reached 30 (later increased to 40) the role was closed and new members were admitted by ballot. Membership included landowners, farmers and members of other professions, such as clergymen, medical men, surveyors, engineers, merchants and manufacturers who could be useful to farmers.

There was one surgeon, one clergyman, two 'writers' and John Smith of the Deanston iron foundry and inventor of the sub-soil plough. The quarterly meeting consisted of a dinner and discussion. At these dinners, the president was to promote 'cheerfulness and good humour while preserving decency and mutual respect'. Members were expected to come suitably attired in coats of 'Presbyterian blue with silver buttons' on which was engraved the club's emblem. A cash book for 1806 shows the cost of dinner and the only other major expenditure at this time was prize money. At this time five guineas was awarded for the best bull, with three guineas for the second and two guineas for the third prizes. For the first time, because the Club wanted to encourage the introduction of the Ayresshire breed into the area there were also prizes for Ayresshire bulls.

Little is known about the club's founder. Like many Scottish landowners, he spent much of his active life away from his estates which were managed by the Reverend Tait of Kincardine. Tait was also an early secretary of the Club, dying in office in 1812 'owing a considerable amount to the club'.

During the first fifty years of its existence the club was responsible for promoting a whole range of activities. It followed the example of the Clackmannen Club, where the earliest ploughing matches in Scotland had been held in 1784, and so organised its own. The matches in 1804, 1805 and 1807 were specifically to prepare a drill for turnips. In 1804 there were 19 entries. The furrow should be five inches deep and nine inches broad and whoever was straightest and nearest the gauge would win. At meetings in 1814 and 1816 it was decided not to hold the match that year as work on the farms was so backward as a result of the stormy weather. A notice for the 1823 ploughing match lists prizes of between one pound and five shillings. 'No Ploughman will receive a Prize, but such as perform their Work at the rate of an Acre in Ten Hours and Half' By 1855, entrants had to be 'regular servants'. A competitor who was 'merely a weekly servant' was disqualified. A further incentive to farm servants staying on the same farm was given by a premium to the servant who had been ploughman on a member's farm for the longest. However to

Both Nicholas Goddard and Harold Fox have published on the subject of farmers clubs and Richard Glass gave a short paper on Suffolk clubs at the Leicester conference last year. However all of them have concentrated very much on England, and particularly the period after the founding of the Royal Agricultural Society which saw the greatest increase in their number.

Susanna Wade Martins has recently come across the records of a Scottish Society dating from the 1790s and is anxious to know if similar records survive elsewhere.

qualify, a certificate of moral character had to be produced. In 1817, the premium was won by Mr Spicer's servant who had 'held the plough for twenty years'. This effort to include a moral element into the prizes was typical of the clubs in both England and Scotland and reached its most popular in the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1847 Gargunnoch was offering a premium to 'the farm servant under twenty five years of age who has conducted himself with the greatest propriety for the longest period'.

As well as ploughing matches there were also trials of new implements such as ploughs. In 1833 eleven ploughs were tried by John Smith of Deanston, the author of the influential *Thorough Drainage and Deep Ploughing*, published in that year, and three other farmers. Four were wooden and seven made of iron. The depth of the furrows were all measured using a 'dynamometer' or draught measurer..

Other trials include the testing of the 'Hainault scythe' in 1827. The scythe was a small version of the large implement with which we are familiar and there was no cradle for holding the cut crop. 'The work was pronounced to be superior in regard to close cutting and clean gathering to that of the sickle and the swathe laid in complete order for the binders. They (the committee) do not consider the instrument as one likely to be used by women'.

Other premiums were offered for standing crops and so field inspections of wheat, hay and turnips were regularly reported on in the early 1800s. Prizes were also awarded to the best stallions and bulls, but there is no indication that a regular show was run in the early years. Although one of the stated aims of the club was the presentation of papers, the reading of only two is recorded.

In 1814 the club received an advertisement for Sir John Sinclair's *General Report on Scotland* (three volumes), which they appear to have bought, as in February 1816 it was reported that the members north of the River Tieth had not as yet finished reading it and requested retaining it until the next meeting, on the understanding that it would be forwarded from one to another. This along with Thomson's *Chemistry*, White's *Ferriery* and Munro's *Guide to Farm Bookkeeping* was the extent of the club's library.

There is a thirty-year gap in the record from 1817 to 1847 when the second volume of the minute book begins. By this date the functions of the club were similar to those it performs today. The annual show was now well-established

Ploughing Match.

THE GARGUNNOCK FARMERS' CLUB will hold a **PLOUGHING MATCH**, on **TUESDAY** the 4th day of **March**, on a **Lea Field** belonging to **Mr Henry Richardson**, of **Wester Culmore**, when the following **Prizes** will be given :—

- 1st Prize, One Pound.
- 2d, Do. Fifteen Shillings.
- 3d, Do. Ten Shillings.
- 4th, Do. Seven Shillings and Sixpence
- 5th, Do. Five Shillings.

The Ploughs to be on the Field by half-past Nine o'clock.

N. B.—No Ploughman will receive a Prize, but such as perform their Work at the rate of an Acre in Ten Hours and a half.

Ploughs from those who are not Members of the Club will be admitted.

Stirling, 21st Feb. 1823.

Stirling—Printed at the Journal Office, by G. Munro and Co

with classes for Cydesdale horses and both Ayreshire and shorthorn bulls and cows, as well as for butter and cheese. Prizes for implements included ones for drainage ploughs and a 'green crop grubber'. Gradually more classes for poultry, sheep, collie dogs, Freisan cows, donkeys and riding ponies were included. Classes specifically designed for farmers' wives were also included with oatcakes, scones, ginger and sponge cakes alongside butter, cheese and eggs. Ploughing matches were still important. However, the dinners were not well attended and were gradually discontinued with the one on the day of the show only remaining. Gradually various sporting events were also introduced with musical chairs on horseback being included in 1927 for the first time. Musical chairs in cars lasted until the 1990s when it was banned on safety grounds!

Today's club is very different from that of the 1850s. The show includes a much greater variety of classes and while the number of children's ponies has increased, farm stock still plays a very important part. The Gargunnoch show is still a significant event in the local farming calendar and is attended by both urban and farming folk. Whilst its original aim was the improving of agriculture and the informing of farmers, it is now a means by which the farming community can keep in touch with the public at large.

Dugdale and his Warwickshire

16-17 September 2006

A conference is to be held at Stratford-upon-Avon, sponsored by the Dugdale Society and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

Sir William Dugdale lived between 1605 and 1686, and was one of those early intellectuals who seemed to be an expert in every subject. He was a herald, and wrote a book about drainage and sea defences. But he is best remembered as one of the founders of modern historical scholarship. He edited a large collection of documents relating to the monasteries, and painstakingly gathered information about the history of his native Warwickshire, published as the *Antiquities of Warwickshire* in 1656. To mark the 350th anniversary of that book the Dugdale Society (which is the Warwickshire Record Society) has

organised a conference which promises to be a lively and stimulating feast of 17th century history.

There are papers about Dugdale as an historian and member of the county gentry. His background will be indicated by papers about the Warwickshire of his day, from country houses to the rural poor who were left out of the *Antiquities*.

Contributors include experts on the gentry and their antiquarian interests, such as Jan Broadway, Richard Cust, Ann Hughes, Vivienne Larminie, Graham Parry and Stephen Roberts. Those who contribute on Warwickshire society in Dugdale's period, are Nat Alcock, Steve Hindle and Catherine Richardson, and specialists on country houses and towns are Geoffrey Tyack and Peter Borsary.

Anyone who wishes more information or to register for the conference should contact Mrs Cathy Millwood at the Shakespeare Centre, Henley Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6QW, and by e-mail at records@shakespeare.org.uk

John Speed's map of Warwickshire



Rethinking the rural: land and the nation in the 1920s and 1930s

4-6 January 2007

INTERWAR RURAL HISTORY RESEARCH GROUP

An International Conference to be held at Royal Holloway College, University of London, Egham, UK. Organised by the Interwar Rural History Research Group

The 1920s and 1930s were a key period in the emergence of new relationships between land and the nation. The agricultural depression – one of the first truly global economic events – provoked different reactions in different countries, but everywhere it influenced shifts in attitudes towards the rural sector. Alongside the economic travails of farming in many countries, this was also a period of interesting reconfigurations in the relationship between landscape and national identity, and reformulations of the meanings and significance attached to folk culture and rural society. New demands on land use for resources such as building land, water, wood and minerals, radically altered agricultural landscapes in the interests of urbanisation/suburbanisation,

industrialisation, and transport/communications infrastructure, pressures which led to increasing state involvement in rural life and often to a sense of the countryside as something under threat from modernity.

This interdisciplinary conference will explore these themes, bringing together geographers, literary, art, and performance historians as well as political and socio-economic historians. Keynote speakers include Dr Jan Bieleman (University of Wageningen), Professor David Danbom (North Dakota State University), (Professor Kate Darian-Smith (University of Melbourne) and Professor Alun Howkins (University of Sussex). Contributed papers covering a wide range of topics will be presented by speakers from a variety of countries including Australia, Chile, Israel, France, and the USA, as well as the UK

The conference is sponsored by the British Agricultural History Society.

The provisional cost of the full conference is £146. For more details contact enquiries@irhrg.org.uk

Anyone who would like to contribute a paper should look at the **Call for Papers** on the group's website www.irhrg.org.uk. The closing date for abstracts passed at the end of May 2006, but it may still be possible to incorporate some extra papers into the final programme, which will also appear on the group's website during the summer of 2006.

BAHS Winter conference

Saturday 2 December 2006

The BAHS Winter Conference will be held at the Institute of Historical Research, Malet Street, London WCI beginning at 10.45.

The theme this year is families and farming from the medieval period to the 20th century, and the speakers are P.J.P. Goldberg, Leigh Shaw Taylor, Nicols Verdon, Mark Winters and Matt Lobley. Full details and downloadable application forms are to be found on the Society's website at www.bahs.org.uk

HFBG Autumn conference – a reminder

15-17 September 2006

The Historic Farm Building Group's Autumn conference will be held in Ipswich.

It will include lectures and visits to Suffolk farm buildings lead by a team of experts. Details and application forms are to be found on the Group's website at www.hfbg.org.uk or contact the organiser at scwmartins@hotmail.com

STOP PRESS

In the last twelve months agricultural history has lost several influential exponents of the subject. In the last issue of *Rural History Today* we recorded the death of the medievalist, Maurice Beresford. Since then Gordon Mingay, a pioneer in re-interpreting the period of the 'agricultural revolution' has died as has Marie Hartley, whose hundredth birthday we reported on in our last issue. The subject is poorer for their loss.

Records of Social and Economic History

Professor Chris Dyer draws attention to an essential reference series and appeals for proposals for new volumes.

Enquiries and suggestions about the series should be sent to Christopher Dyer, the chair of the committee which supervises the series, by post to the Centre for English Local History, University of Leicester, 5 Salisbury Road, Leicester LE1 7QR.

The series of Records of Social and Economic History are published by the Oxford University Press for the British Academy. The series had an active life in the early decades of the twentieth century, and was revived after a lapse of years in 1972, and since then has published 40 volumes. They are now appearing at a rate of about two each year.

These substantial green volumes are essential aids for anyone researching and writing rural history because they include reliable editions of the basic reference sources which tell us about the population and wealth of communities from the lay subsidy of 1334, through the poll taxes of 1377-81, until the Compton Census of 1676. We have just added the diocesan lists of families of 1563 and 1603, and hope in the not too distant future to publish authoritative totals from the early nineteenth-century censuses.

Alongside these very useful but inevitably dry and factual lists, the series also publishes letters, diaries and journals which are of more immediate human interest. Ralph Josselin's diary has probably been cited more often than any other publication in the series, but Henry Best's farming books, the travel journals of Matthew and George Culley, and pauper letters from nineteenth-century Essex are examples of social history to which many readers can easily relate. Books of accounts, such as those of Richard Latham in the early eighteenth century, or those produced by late medieval households,

are a constant theme, and also medieval manorial surveys, such as those compiled in the twelfth century by the abbeys of Glastonbury and Shaftesbury.

Any student contemplating researching a dissertation as part of their degree could well think of basing their work on one of these volumes, and those advising such students should remember their existence. They are quite expensive to buy, but every decent library keeps them, and those which sell well appear eventually in paperback, as has happened recently in the case of the Essex pauper letters.

The committee which oversees the series is anxious to hear suggestions for documents suitable for editing. We have adopted a policy of adding to the national listings of people and wealth represented by the tax and census records mentioned above. We are also anxious to extend the list of social history texts packed with human interest which will attract students and contribute to the sources available to those teaching social and economic history.

We are also pleased to hear from potential editors with proposals for new volumes. We cannot pay editors, though we can help with some research costs such as travel to archives or the making of microfilms. The cost of printing the books is covered by the sale price, so no financial subsidy is needed. Our editors gain much honour and satisfaction from their association with the series, and many distinguished scholars have edited or are editing volumes. The combined efforts of the historical community is gradually building a formidable collection of material which reflects fully the richness of the source material for British social and economic history.

New policies affecting farm buildings

Continued from front page

strategically. Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) has been developed by English Heritage and its partners as one way of ensuring that understanding that 'the historic' is considered on its own but instead threads through our understanding of how woodland, fields and indeed the whole rural environment has developed and changed over millennia. (*Conservation Bulletin* 47 winter 2004/5 and www.english.heritage.org.uk/characterisation) A pilot project in Hampshire, now being extended into Sussex and the Weald of Kent, has demonstrated that the density and time-depth of farmsteads as well as the rates of survival of different types of steading and building are closely related to patterns of historically-conditioned landscape character and type. This is testing and amending the results of Historic Landscape Characterisation and contributing to a more integrated and richly-textured understanding of both buildings and landscapes

outlined the character and landscape context of historic farmstead types and buildings, and are enabling us to make positive recommendations based on an understanding of those features or elements that contribute to local distinctiveness and countryside character.

The findings of this research have been reported upon in greater depth in the spring 2006 edition of *Landscapes* journal (Lake, J. & Edwards, B. 'Farmsteads and Landscapes: towards an integrated View' *Landscapes* 7. 1 1-36) and are summarised in the latest edition of Landscape Character News (landscapecharacter.org.uk). The report 'Historic Farmsteads and Landscape Character in Hampshire' by Bob Edwards of Forum Heritage Services with contributions from Jeremy Lake, is available on CD Rom: e-mail jeremy.lake@english-heritage.org.uk. The regional character documents will in July 2006 available for consultation on English Heritage's HELM website: www.helm.org.uk

The Richard Jefferies Society – 2006 Birthday Lecture

The Richard Jefferies Society was founded in 1950 to help and encourage the study of his work both as a writer and naturalist.

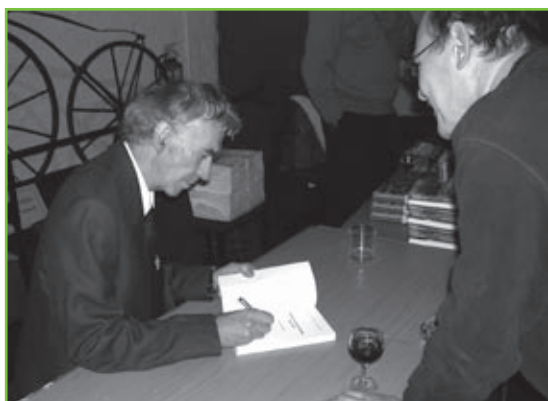
Best known to rural historians for his writing about Wiltshire country life, Jefferies was born in 1848 at Coate, near Swindon. His home, now a Museum, is open on the first and third Sundays of the month between 2pm and 5pm or by special arrangement. Newsletters with information about the writer, current events, publications and services are circulated to members. In addition they receive a copy of the Society's Journal containing hitherto unpublished writing by Jefferies, new articles, research, and book reviews. There are meetings for rallies, readings and discussions, as well as visits to places associated with the writer.



The 2006 Richard Jefferies Birthday Lecture, entitled *William Morris and the English Countryside* will be given by the cultural historian, Martin Haggerty on Saturday 14th October at 2.30pm in the Church Hall, Chiseldon, near Swindon. Admission is free and no advance booking is required.

Important new publication on farming in Lincolnshire

The History of Lincolnshire Committee has recently published the second in its new series of authoritative studies of particular aspects of the county's history.



Jonathan Brown signing copies of his book at the launch

In this volume Jonathan Brown examines almost a hundred years of farming in Lincolnshire from the 'Golden Age' of the first half of Queen Victoria's reign to the dawning of the new era ushered in by the exigencies of the Second World War. Meticulous study of the 'June returns' of cropping and livestock numbers underpins this peroration of the ups and downs of a century of animal husbandry and cultivation of the diverse soils of the county. The book considers the extent to which the renowned, mid-nineteenth century 'high farming' of Lincolnshire was maintained in the periods of depression and recovery, which followed. The story is enriched with abundant references to the experiences of individual farmers, landowners and labourers. It draws on a wide range of sources: farm accounts, diaries, estate records, government figures, newspaper reports and a body of literature which embraces local studies as well as erudite academic works. From this narrative a clear picture emerges of the distinctiveness of the different farming regions of the county and the diversity of human experience. Dr Brown's position at the Museum of English Rural Life has enabled him to illustrate his account with photographs from the museum's archive as well as from Lincolnshire collections.

Jonathan Brown,
Farming in Lincolnshire 1850–1945
(History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005)
295 pp. *Illus.*

Available from The Society for Lincolnshire Archaeology, Jews' Court, Steep Hill, Lincoln LN2 1LS (tel. 01522 521337)
Hardback £29.95 + £4 postage and packing,
paperback £14.95 + £3.50 postage and packing.
Please make cheques payable to 'Lincolnshire Heritage Limited'.

A note from the editor

Rural History Today is published by the British Agricultural History Society.

The editor will be pleased to receive short articles, press releases, notes and queries for publication. She would particularly like articles on European projects, kindred societies and news from museums, all of which she hopes will become regular features.

Articles for the next issue should be sent by 30 November 2006 to

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Membership of the BAHS is open to all who support its aim of promoting the study of agricultural history and the history of rural economy and society. Membership enquiries should be directed to the Treasurer, BAHS, c/o Dept. of History, University of Exeter, Amory Building, Rennes Drive, Exeter EX4 4RJ. Enquiries about other aspects of the Society's work should be directed to the Secretary, Dr John Broad, Dept. Humanities, Arts and Languages, London Metropolitan University, 166-220 Holloway Road, London, N7 8DB
Tel: 020 7753 5020
Fax: 020 7753 3159
j.broad@londonmet.ac.uk



Action Women: the real story of the Women's Institutes

A touring exhibition exploring the history of the WI, founded in 1915 and with rural roots, has been developed by The Women's Library and was launched at the Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading, on 30th May. The exhibition will run until 27 August 2006.



A programme of talks has been organised to coincide with the exhibition:

15th June Dr Caitlin Adams & Dr Philip Kiszely, *Interwar Amateur Drama and the WI*
29th June Jean Sheppard, NFWI Public Affairs Committee, *From Local Concerns to National Campaigns*

6th July Antonia Byatt, Director, The Women's Library, *Why The Women's Library?*

13th July Dr Nicola Verdon, *Women, Work and Welfare in the Interwar Countryside*

20th July Dr Maggie Andrews, *The Acceptable Face of Feminism: The Women's Institutes as a Social Movement*

All talks start at 4.30pm and are free. To book, tel 0118 378 8660 or email j.moon@reading.ac.uk

BRITISH AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS

Back numbers of *The Review*

The update of the Digitisation of the back numbers of *The Review* is now complete, and it is now possible to follow links from the chronological list of articles from 1953-2001 direct to the full text and review articles.

The Society has now made available all backnumbers more than 5 years old on its website free of charge to all users. This currently takes in all issues from 1953-2001. Individual volumes can be viewed as a whole, but the computer files are large and not suitable unless you have a broadband connection. However, it is possible to search the content of a whole volume for any word or phrase, or if you have the full version of Adobe Acrobat, then you can search all the volumes simultaneously.

Individual articles can also be viewed and downloaded from the searchable index of articles available on the website. The articles have been listed chronologically and can be searched by any word from author or title. All articles and review articles, but not book reviews or other writing have been included. The listing will be updated annually.

We hope that this facility will enable members and readers world-wide to access the whole body of scholarly output as easily as possible. To view, go to www.bahs.org.uk and select **Search Backnumbers**. If you have any comments or suggestions please e-mail j.broad@londonmet.ac.uk

Work in Progress British Rural and Agrarian History – new edition 2007

Dr Nicola Verdon makes a plea for researchers to contribute to the updated list of *Work in Progress* to be published in 2007.

At intervals the British Agricultural History Society revises its listing of work in progress on rural and agrarian history. We are currently undertaking a new survey which will appear in *Agricultural History Review* in 2007. This will cover any research on British and Irish rural/agrarian society (social, economic, political or technical) with a historical dimension from any period up to the end of the twentieth century. No one is excluded from these lists: they are open to all scholars of rural society working in the British Isles or researchers based abroad concerned with the rural/agrarian history of the British Isles. We encourage all researchers to respond: post-graduate students, established academics and non-university scholars.

Whether you have contributed to our work in progress list before, or are a new or returning researcher in these fields, please make a return by filling in the form. This can be found inserted in Part 2 of the *Agricultural History Review* (2006). Please return the form to Dr Nicola Verdon, History Subject Group, Faculty of Development and Society, Sheffield Hallam University, Collegiate Crescent Campus, Sheffield, S10 2BP by 1 January 2007. Alternatively you can access the form on the BAHS website (www.bahs.org.uk) and submit it online. We look forward to receiving your new submissions and hearing about all your latest projects and research.