Friends of the Department of English Local History

NEWSLETTER

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER NUMBER 5 • OCTOBER 1992

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

The W. G. Hoskins Studentship

This year's Newsletter is dominated by appreciations celebrating the very special genius of W. G. Hoskins. The Editorial must also be dominated by two related announcements: of a large anonymous donation to the University in his memory and of plans for a permanent studentship in his name. Further details of the donation may be given in due course. All that need be said here is that the gift is a highly generous one and will be used to provide an investment income to fund a W. G. Hoskins Studentship. The Studentship will be held by a succession of aspiring scholars registered for the degree of M.Phil. or Ph.D. in the Department. The research topics will be wide open but must lie in one (or several) of the many fields pioneered by W. G. Hoskins.

Further donations are needed to bring the capital sum up to a level which will endow the Studentship in perpetuity. This is obviously an endeavour in which our organization can make a substantial contribution. All Friends to whom I have spoken over the past year are agreed that our main financial aim should now be to contribute to the capital fund for the Studentship although we shall, of course, continue to support our other aims - namely the annual W. G. Hoskins Lecture, the Newsletter, the summer field tour and provision of small facilities in Marc Fitch House. All readers of this Newsletter are therefore invited to make a donation in memory of W. G. Hoskins. If every Friend of the Department and every student in the Department were to give £5, almost £1500 would be raised; just a few donations of £50 or £100 would be a great boost. Please help to perpetuate the name of the founder of the Department and of Local History as an academic discipline, and to assure that future generations of students will be able to carry on his work.

Further means by which the Friends can raise funds are mentioned elsewhere in this Newsletter, p. 7, p. 16 and p. 27.

Credits

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Joan Noel, 1950 - 1992

With great sadness we announce the death during the summer of Joan Noel, a part-time student from Northampton. It is some small comfort to know that she had derived real pleasure from working alongside everyone in the Department during her last year. Always eager to assist, Joan had offered to help with the word processing of this Newsletter but died before she could begin. This issue is dedicated with fondness to her memory.

EVENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DEPARTMENT

Fourth Anglo-American Seminar on the Medieval Economy and Society

The Anglo-American Seminar on the Medieval Economy and Society (the Bruce Campbell Roadshow, as Harold Fox christened it) took place in style at Leicester's Grand Hotel between July 17th and July 20th, the fourth of a series of meetings initiated at Exeter in 1983. English Local History acted as the host department. After the first meal of the weekend (roast meats, salmon, vegetarian lasagne and 'naughty' desserts), the seminar opened with a paper by Caroline Barron on relations between the aristocracy and the merchant class in London between 1200 and 1500. This focussed on the importance of inns or houses in the capital for stocking aristocratic households with luxury goods and, in turn, their importance to the city's economy. She also suggested a growth in shared interests between the merchant and the noble classes in the fifteenth century.

Following closely on the heels of breakfast, Saturday's programme began with Harold Fox's paper entitled 'Counting the "innumerable"'. Without a doubt this was the highlight of the weekend. Here was something original, exciting and firmly based in documentary evidence. Harold introduced us to the ubiquitous but usually hidden landless labourers of

medieval England who appear as *garciones* in Glastonbury Abbey documents. The Hocktide court rolls record the names of these men for each manor and the amount of head tax or *capitagium* that they paid. Annotations indicate those who were exempt from payment because they were living in their parents' households, because they were the lord's labourers, had acquired land of their own, were too poor or sick or were dead. Harold explained that the lists served three purposes: as a proof of villein status, as a method of exploiting those on the manor who did not hold land from the lord and as a way of selecting the best available labour for the lord's own needs. He was able to cite examples of the practice elsewhere (mainly in the South-West) although only in the case of the Glastonbury estate do the actual lists appear to have survived in large numbers. Harold went on to demonstrate how these lists can be used to estimate population totals and trends within individual manors, explaining the differences between manors by an examination of agricultural and non-agricultural resources and the burden of labour services.

The second paper on Saturday morning was Robert Stacey's 'Jewish lending and the medieval English economy'. It charted the introduction of the Jews to England following the Conquest and their twelfth-century shift from bullion exchange to money lending. Stacey showed how by the middle of the thirteenth century 75 per cent of Jewish taxable wealth was concentrated in the hands of ten families. Many Jews made their livings by lending small amounts to rural borrowers for short terms but, in contrast to continental patterns, most Jewish capital was tied up in larger loans to the socially eminent. This pattern changed after about 1250. The socially eminent turned to other potential lenders (Italians and royal clerks) and the Jews shifted from money-lending to commodity broking in the wake of the prohibitions contained in the 1275 Statute of Jewry.

And then there was lunch . . . .

The afternoon symposium on commercialization between 1000 and 1300, chaired by Derek Keene, was rather disappointing. The four participants, Richard Britnell, David Farmer, Nicholas Mayhew and Graeme Snooks, whose papers had been circulated in advance, gave brief summaries of their views. The papers themselves were interesting and threw up a number of issues. Most people were expecting a lively discussion around commercialization and its manifestations during the period. However, the discussion somewhat disintegrated into a contest between the empiricists and the theorists, the contribution of Graeme Snooks dominating the proceedings. His model of the Anglo-Norman economy was found lacking by many present because it was based on misinterpretation of the sources. Important points by Mark Bailey and Ros Faith on the need to find a serviceable model for the period were unfortunately not taken up in the general discussion and an opportunity to debate the other contributors' papers in any detail was lost.

After a brief interlude the participants adjourned to Marc Fitch House for a lavish reception given by the Department with the assistance of the Vice-Chancellor's hospitality fund: more discussion accompanied by large quantities of wine, or orange juice for the less practised, then a brisk walk back to the Grand Hotel for the conference dinner (roast meats, vegetable lasagne, fattening sweets . . .).

Sunday began with Paul Harvey's paper on 'Early manorial accounts: Winchester and elsewhere'. He suggested that accounts developed from twelfth-century leases and that the explosion in their numbers which took place in the 1270s was the result of changes in estate organisation. In the discussion it was pointed out that it would be unwise to assume that lay estates mimicked the administrative practices of their clerical counterparts and that account rolls could have originated with lay landlords.

The guest lecture (funded by the British Academy) was given by Paul Bairoch of the University of Geneva. He contrasted the number of European cities with populations over 50,000 in 1500 and in 1800 with other world regions and used his findings to illustrate what he termed the 'growth of urbanization'. This was seriously questioned by the discussants who believed that urbanization was evident in much smaller communities. Again there was a general feeling that the model presented was divorced from reality.

There followed lunch (roast meats, salmon, vegetable lasagne, creamy puddings, etc., etc.), for some to be consumed rather hurriedly so as to be in time for the coach excursion. I did not join the intrepid travellers as they set out for sunny Leicestershire and Rutland with Phythian-Adams and Fox as their guides, being already well acquainted with the area. However, the afternoon was, by all reports, a great success. The exhausted survivors returned in time for a cream tea, over which they discussed horseshoes, lewd sculpture, the rutting of rams and the people of the wolds - and many other topics which, incredibly, seem to have been introduced during the tour.

The final session of the seminar included two papers on work in progress on the small monastic town of Ramsey, by Edwin and Anne Dewindt. The first paper discussed difficulties encountered in comparison of sources from the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries. The second presented evidence of the Abbey's changing needs for wage labour in the fifteenth century. Edwin Dewindt suggested that the Abbey was not the town's principal employer. Ramsey was not a 'company town' as he put it.

After the concluding vote of thanks to Bruce Campbell for organisation, the participants melted away to bar or street or home. The seminar was an enjoyable experience: to meet old friends and make new ones, to discuss old and new ideas. Already a fifth is being planned for Bristol in 1995.

Lynn Marston

Discussion Session on the Origins of the Midland Village

The Department of English Local History has catholic interests, notable among which is the study of medieval settlement, first fostered there by W. G. Hoskins. Hence it was apt that as a part of the annual conference of the Economic History Society held at Leicester in April the Department should organize a session entitled 'The origins of the Midland village'.

Five papers were pre-circulated in a very attractive volume and briefly summarized at the start of the session. Glenn Foard (who owing to illness was represented by David Hall) proposed a 'great re-planning' of the landscape in the late Saxon period. He maintained that villages were laid out then, but that much of the land within them was not occupied until, perhaps, the thirteenth century. Rosamond Faith argued that ninth-century estates comprised a core area of inland worked by peasant labour; this formed the focus for future development becoming demesne land in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Harold Fox and David Rollason attempted to set villages in, respectively, their agrarian and ecclesiastical contexts. In a 'highly speculative' paper Fox persuasively argued for village origins resulting from the establishment of open, common field systems which solved the problem of lack of pasture in a society where population was growing and where an increasing proportion of this growth was concentrated in towns. Aristocratic residence, notably that of thegns who may have wished to reorganize the settlements on their estates, was seen by Ann Williams as an important factor in the origins of the village. Following the summaries Christopher Dyer who chaired the session proposed a consensus: village origins lay in the ninth or tenth century and were linked to the division of estates and the gathering of peasant holdings around their lords' halls.

The discussion first considered 'objections and alternatives', before moving on to processes and to the social and economic aspects of village origins. David Austin, in a detailed contribution using the evidence from Raunds, maintained that the archaeological evidence did not support Dyer's consensus viewpoint. He claimed that interpretations of the archaeological evidence for nucleation around foci such as lords' halls were wrong and that what had been excavated were not settlements but gardens or orchards. This view gained limited support especially from Paul Courtney and other members of the Raunds project team. Austin, an archaeologist, raised one very important objection to one paper: any exhortation to 'tenurial archaeology' is doomed from the outset. We cannot excavate tenures. Fox and Hall raised discussion of more orthodox archaeological practices with the proposal that sites revealed by recoveries of pottery during fieldwalking can be excavated in order to try to identify traces of dispersed settlement patterns in pre-village phases and that these can possibly be related to habitative furlong names.

The social and economic aspects of village origins were considered by the next two discussants. David Roffe challenged the consensus, by arguing that kinship and the change from kinship- to lordship-based communities had been ignored. He proposed that villages were developed by kinship groups as a strategy whereby they could keep their own land. Chris Thornton related this to Faith's arguments in an attempt to combine her views on lordship and early tributary systems with kinship. Dyer concluded this section by raising processes and the matter of multi-phase models *versus* the 'immediate change' or catastrophe theory models for an understanding of village origins. Other matters were raised by the final discussants. P. D. A. Harvey introduced the problem of land measurement and urged caution over the use of ill-understood Carolingian parallels. Charles Phythian-Adams introduced 'a fact' for consideration: a charter of 1046 referring to an *oppidum* in the countryside. This implied an important transfer of the concept of nucleation.

The emerging orthodoxy is that villages originated in the late Anglo-Saxon period and that the processes which brought this about include changes in the way in which land and people were exploited. More work is undoubtedly required to define and refine current models of village origins. If debate, discussion and dialogue are signs of vitality then medieval settlement studies have a long and healthy future.

Jonathan Kissock

The Third W. G. Hoskins Lecture

Professor David Palliser's W. G. Hoskins Lecture attracted a large audience of Friends, friends of Friends and students, who showed excellent judgement in preferring it to a very wet afternoon in Leicester or the F.A. cup final. It was particularly appropriate that the first lecture after the death of W. G. Hoskins should have been given by a former student who, among a long list of publications, including *Tudor York*, is the author of the Staffordshire volume in the 'Making of the English Landscape' series. Moreover, in taking 'Towns and villages in medieval England' as his theme, Professor Palliser was able to demonstrate with his mentor's breadth and clarity the way that the orthodoxy on the origins of towns and villages expressed in *The Making of the English Landscape* has now changed beyond recognition.

Until about twenty years ago the nucleated village was believed to have been a product of the first Anglo-Saxon settlers, while towns were seen as much later features, not arriving until the end of the Anglo-Saxon period or even until after the Conquest. The origin of the open field system was shrouded in mystery. In contrast, it is now believed that nucleated villages did not arise until the ninth century and that almost all originated in the period between 850 and 1200. They are generally only features of the Midlands

and of the north and east of England as opposed to the dispersed pattern of the south and west where new scattered settlement was also taking place in this period. The formation of villages coincided with the reorganization of field systems (most of which appear to have been laid out on a regular basis), with the origin of manors as large estates were sub-divided, and with the origin of parishes as minster *parochiae* were broken up into smaller units. The development of towns from the Mercian and Wessex *burhs* onwards appears to have been taking place over the same period as the development of nucleated villages.

Following his outline of these new views, Professor Palliser examined town plans in comparison with village plans. He considered that the detailed typologies of villages developed by Brian Roberts and others were sometimes difficult to justify, but that villages could be broadly divided into three categories: those that had been laid out at one time, composite villages with an original core and planned additions and villages arising from the aggregation of two or more foci. He conceded that some nucleated villages may have arisen from concerted peasant action, but towns were definitely founded by individuals, initially by kings and subsequently by lay and ecclesiastical lords. Indeed it may have been that towns came before nucleated villages, which developed from the royal or lordly example of towns. After a helpful discussion session the audience adjourned to Marc Fitch House where we were able to digest a rewarding lecture over an equally rewarding tea.

Philip Masters

Departmental Seminar Programme 1991-92: Autumn Term

E. P. Thompson's account of the rise of working-class consciousness falters when dealing with the largest group, agricultural labourers. This criticism was addressed by Dr Roger Wells (Faculty of Humanities, Brighton Polytechnic) in his paper 'The making of the English working class revisited: the question of rural England'. Newspapers and Home Office reports concentrated on events rather than movements and on London and industrial centres as danger zones. Nevertheless, in his search in the South-East, Dr Wells has uncovered traces of rural political activity and even of associations promoting reform in order that 'all should live by their labour' - which was to be one of the aims of the Captain Swing rioters. The Tolpuddle case was exceptional in its notoriety; but the obscure Dorset rural trade union concerned may not have been. Under changing conditions there was no widespread rural support for the Chartist movement and agricultural unions did not become a major force until the 1870s. Thompson's denial of rural class-consciousness, for the earlier period at least, is belied by the facts.

Dr Simon Keynes (Trinity College, Cambridge) began by sharing his excitement over the recent completion of the English text of a St Albans Abbey charter, quoted by Matthew Paris, from a seventeenth-century transliteration in Brussels. His talk, 'Theodore, *Clofesho* and the diocese of Leicester', started with the synod of bishops at Hertford in 672 under Archbishop Theodore. The English bishops decided to hold an annual council at what was already the 'renowned place called *Clofesho*'. This had been assumed by some to be Brixworth; but the texts of two acts made there in 803 include very full witness lists and the names included - and their order - suggest that *Clofesho* may have been a place in the diocese of Leicester. Detailed prosopographical analysis of the eighth- and ninth-century witness lists, however, shows Leicester bishops and abbots to have had all along some special importance. Dr Keynes explored the possible reasons for this within the political landscape of Mercia (or Middle Anglia).

Dr Richard Holt (School of History, University of Birmingham), in his talk 'Watermills, windmills and technological innovation in the Middle Ages', pointed out that although mills have featured in histories of technology, their social and economic context has been neglected by historians. Whether or not slavery had been a brake on mechanical innovation under the Roman empire, the Domesday Book shows an impressive distribution of water mills in many parts of England. Dismissing some proposed earlier references, he takes the windmill as a sharply defined innovation, starting in the mid-1180s; it has been estimated that English mills of all kinds numbered fifteen thousand by 1300. Unlike the adoption of horses for traction on farms, probably a peasant innovation, the capital cost in erecting a mill meant that it had to be an aristocratic introduction supported by the system of tolls exacted for its use.

Joan Thirsk's 1961 article 'Industries in the countryside' suggested some identity between religious and socio-economic groupings, such as dissent and cloth-working in pasture or wooded regions. Various historians have followed this connection; but Dr Margaret Spufford (Newnham College, Cambridge) is anxious that before it is accepted as orthodoxy this determinism should be tested. Her talk on 'By-employment, trade, nonconformity and the Chilterns of Buckinghamshire' was a progress report on a teamwork project financed by the Marc Fitch Fund. In the early modern period the Chilterns exhibited a group of the familiar pre-conditions - isolated farmsteads, sheep-farming, the export of timber and wood (and possibly already furniture from the High Wycombe area), a concentration of Lollards in the sixteenth century and later Quakers and Baptists. With no local probate inventories and few sources for population figures, it has proved difficult to reconstruct the farming economy in detail. The most detailed work has shown that the local dissenting families were well integrated into all levels of society. The area was in close contact with London and crossed by important

trading routes. Following Dr Spufford's own romance with popular literature, it may be possible to indicate how new ideas and beliefs were disseminated into the remoter parts of the area through contacts with the outside world.
John Goodacre

Departmental Seminar Programme 1991-92: Spring Term

The seminar by David Hall (Fenland Project) on 'Midland open fields' was both interesting and informative. Thanks to his enthusiastic and illuminating presentation none of us will ever pass through the Midland landscape without pondering the purpose of ridge and furrow. The questions which he raised - such as what came before, how demesne was given, when these two- and three-field systems began, where they came from and how and why they were used - sparked off a wide-ranging discussion which roamed from Greek and Roman field systems to the manuring of the land.

When David Unwin (Department of Geography, University of Leicester) spoke on 'Geographical Information Systems and their relevance to local historians', he served to remind our retrospective discipline that the technology for the handling of academic information has advanced beyond the written word. G.I.S., he explained, is 'an entire approach to study'. It allows for the complex computer visual projection and manipulation of associated and spatially variable data. After outlining its potential, he left us to rise to the challenge of tackling this sophisticated resource.

Professor Christopher Dyer (School of History, University of Birmingham) presented an excitingly titled seminar which lived up to expectations: 'Fear and loathing in Shipston-on-Stour: a small town in revolt, 1268-1413'. After giving details of the settlement's emergence, he explained how the contrasting demands of a prospering urban interest and a restrictive ecclesiastical overlordship would break into organized violence and lengthy legal dispute. Shipston, in essence, demonstrated how the prevailing and occasionally intense conflict between monastic lords and the towns was firmly represented at the small urban scale.

The seminar by Professor David Vincent (Keele University) on 'Literacy and locality' analyzed the advent of the Penny Post in 1840 and its effects upon local societies. Cheaper postal rates allowed for more communication among family members and, perhaps, encouraged people to take jobs away from home. But as the ability to communicate was enhanced by central government actions, the localities had to sacrifice some of their unique characteristics. Time, for example, had to be standardized to make postal deliveries and, later, telegraph communications, dependable throughout the country. The seemingly simple task of addressing an envelope caused people to define their home and village more specifically, thus placing them in a wider context.

Dr Jonathan Barry (University of Bristol) re-evaluated the traditional view that local newspapers provide only limited information to historians during his discussion of 'The provincial press in the eighteenth century'. People who see little use for the news articles 'lifted' from London are taking too narrow a view. By focussing on Bristol, Dr Barry showed that the provincial press can tell the historian a great deal about local political and religious issues. There was much debate about the benefits of a free press and many controversial topics which appeared in the papers had to assume an impartial guise. When analyzing newspapers one should not lose sight of the local context: who were the publishers and what were their political and religious affiliations? As well, Dr Barry explained that a newspaper was often a catalyst for debate that would spread to centres of discussion such as coffee houses. When analyzing the eighteenth-century provincial press, one must not overlook the environment into which it was received.
Andy Jackson, Jackie King and Hilary Bourbon Smith

Fourth Research Students' Workshop

The fourth meeting took place on March 7th, organized by Julie Dexter and Jenny Bhatt. As on previous occasions, the intellectual efforts of the participants were sustained and stimulated by the splendid refreshments provided, at an impressively minimal cost, by Julie.

Robert Peberdy opened the proceedings with an account of the current state of his research into the history of Henley-on-Thames. During the early fourteenth century the economic and social structure of the town depended upon the sale of grain to London, which may have obtained a quarter of its requirement from Henley. Following the Black Death, although not necessarily because of it, trade with London declined, and that with other places developed. The London authorities were keen to exercise a firm control over prices, outsiders were required to bring their goods to London to sell, and London merchants were prohibited from buying in outside markets.

John Goodacre considered databases as a form of elementary methodology, reassuring his hearers by pointing out that he belonged to a pre-computer generation, and was not concerned with any kind of hardware/software one-upmanship. Unfortunately your correspondent is not only pre-computer, but also almost protozoic, and may therefore do John rather less than justice. His helpful handouts, however, showed that the database has some very definite advantages over the traditional card-index system, in that it can save a good deal of time and minimise the familiar difficulties arising when the original sequence of the cards has to be rearranged.

Tony Rollings drew attention to the fact that Domesday Book reveals a high concentration of royal and semi-royal estates in the valleys of the rivers Soar, Trent and Tame, which is reflected also in the lands of

the Saxon *antecessores*. While this can be partly explained by the rivalries of the earls following Knutr's organization of the earldoms after 1016, there are grounds for believing that it in fact reflects a similar concentration during the earlier Saxon period.

Graham Jones discussed the ecclesiastical territories within the diocese of Worcester, the boundary of which is also that of the early Saxon kingdom of the Hwicce. At the end of Offa's reign there were thirty monasteries in the kingdom, in addition to churches and other sacred places, but only five fully attested early dedications are known: St Peter at Worcester, St Peter at Gloucester, St Peter at Bredon, St Mary at Evesham, and St Michael at Bishop's Cleeve, all established before 900.

Terry Finnemore considered the Staffordshire and Shropshire hundreds of Cuttlestone, Seisdon and Offlow, together with part of the Pirie Hill hundred, and related them to the surviving ceremonies of beating the bounds on Ascension Day, the Sheriff's Ride on September 9th at Lichfield and the Abbot's Bromley Horn Dance.

Finally Julie Dexter presented a collection of slides made from late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century drawings and photographs, which must be an infinitely valuable archive of industrial archaeology in Somerset, with bell-mines in the coalfield, and unfinished and partly watered canals. Early cars, buses and lorries abounded, and your correspondent (who fancies himself as a historian of the motor car) gleefully identified a Renault car, *c.*1904, with its totally enclosed bonnet.

Tony Rollings

Memorial Service for W. G. Hoskins and Jane Hoskins

The Department arranged for a memorial service to be held at the church of St Nicholas, Leicester on May 19th which was attended by over one hundred people. The address, given by Professor David Hey, is printed in a slightly abbreviated form elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Visits to the Department

Dr Marc Fitch visited the Department in November in order to discuss the English Surnames Survey and to inspect progress in the Library. Mr Roy Stephens and Dr Richard Smith (Marc Fitch Fund) were in attendance.

Mrs Jean Duffield visited the Department and University on May 19th.

Councillor R. Wigglesworth, Lord Mayor of Leicester, and Mrs Wigglesworth visited the Department in June to see displays of rare books and maps and computer displays of the Surnames Survey of Leicestershire. The Vice-Chancellor and Mrs M. McArdle were in attendance.

FUTURE EVENTS

Seminar Programme 1992-3

If you would like to come to any of the following seminars, you will be very welcome. They are held in the Seminar Room at Marc Fitch House, 5 Salisbury Road. *We regret that it is essential that you notify the Departmental Secretary (Mrs Pauline Whitmore, Leicester 522762)the day before as there may be limits on the number of spaces available. It is hoped that it will not be necessary to turn away visitors who have not telephoned.* All seminars take place at 2.15 to 4.00 p.m. (approx), followed by tea.

22nd October. Litigation, status and the making of the legal town-gentry in Shrewsbury, 1500-1730 (William Champion, V.C.H. Shropshire).

5th November. Transportation in medieval England: roads and rivers (Dr Paul Hindle, Department of Geography, University of Salford).

12 **November.** The making of Wessex (Dr Barbara Yorke, King Alfred's College,Winchester).

3 December. Class and community in the Georgian countryside: the diary of Isaac Fletcher of Underwood, Cumberland, 1756-1781 (Dr Angus Winchester, Department of History, University of Lancaster).

17 December. The Western Highlands and Islands before crofting and the clearances (Professor Robert Dodgshon, Institute of Earth Studies, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth).

21 January. Love and death across a Suffolk garden: John Constable's paintings of his family's gardens at East Bergholt (Dr Stephen Daniels, Department of Geography, University of Nottingham).

4 February. The life and death of Sir Henry Unton: an Elizabethan ambassador in his local context (Dr Clare Gittings, National Portrait Gallery).

18 February. Victorian composite photography: intentions and achievements (Emeritus Professor Margaret Harker, Central London Polytechnic).

4 March. Locality and politics in fifteenth-century England (Professor Anthony Pollard, Department of Humanities, University of Teesside).

18 March. Wapentakes, hundreds and manors: local administration in pre-Conquest Leicestershire (Thomas Cain, Queen Mary and Westfield College, London).

Fourth W. G. Hoskins Lecture

It is a pleasure to announce that the fourth W. G. Hoskins Lecture will be given by Dr Elizabeth Roberts of Lancaster University. Her title will be: 'Companionate marriage: some oral history evidence'. Dr Roberts is Director and Research Fellow at the Centre for North-West Regional Studies at Lancaster (see elsewhere in this Newsletter under 'News from other centres'). She is author of *A Woman's Place: an Oral History of Working-class Women, 1890 - 1940* (1984) and *Women's Work, 1840 - 1940* (1988), and has recently extended her research even closer to the present with an E.S.R.C. grant to examine aspects of social change in

the towns of the North-West between 1940 and 1970. The date of the lecture is Saturday 22nd May (all Friends will receive more details closer to the date). Please do come along to hear a well-known expert on a particularly interesting subject and to meet other Friends at Marc Fitch House afterwards.

As usual a booksale will be held in Marc Fitch House after the lecture. On past occasions this has always been remarkably profitable. Please begin now to weed out unwanted books from your collection and send or bring them (marked 'Booksale') to 5 Salisbury Road. In the past the Friends' income has been greatly enhanced by the annual booksale. Please give generously.

Visit of B.A.L.H. and L.L.H.C.

The combined forces of members of the British Association for Local History and the Leicestershire Local History Council will visit the Department for displays (ranging from Domesday to computer cartography, archives and rare books) on Saturday 14th November.

Annual Friends' Field Tour

The annual Friends' field tour will take place on Saturday 12th June, departing from Leicester at 10.30, with pick-up points northwards depending on demand. Titled 'New discoveries in the historic landscapes of the Peak District', it will be led by ex-M.A. student Clive Hart. There could be nobody better to introduce us to the landscape features which he proposes to explore: enclosure, post-medieval industry, assarts and booths, medieval villages and open fields, Saxon, Roman and prehistoric settlements and fields around Bakewell. Please put this date in your diary *now*, because there is bound to be competition for spaces on this highly recommended excursion.

Fiftieth Anniversary Celebrations and a New Departmental Bibliography

The Department's fiftieth anniversary falls in 1998. Various ideas are being put forward for events which might mark the occasion. It is also planned to produce an extended edition of *English Local History at Leicester 1948 - 1978*, the bibliography which marked the Department's thirtieth anniversary. The new bibliography will contain items published since 1978 and will therefore involve a massive programme of collection and collation. It is hoped to include the published work of all ex-students and they are therefore asked to send bibliographical details of any items published *since* their registration with the Department to Margery Tranter or Rosie Keep at Marc Fitch House. This information should include the title, periodical with volume number and date where relevant, place of publication, year, page numbers and, most importantly, a brief abstract (say 150 words) indicating the subject of the publication.

STAFF CHANGES

Professor Hiroshi (Michael) Yoshida

Michael Yoshida, who is visiting the Department for a year, was educated at St Paul's University, Tokyo and is now at St Michael's University, Kobe. He follows a long and distinguished line of Japanese social historians who have come to the Department in order to benefit from its unique approaches. He has a special interest in early modern farming and commercial accounts. We extend a very warm welcome to him, his wife and two daughters.

MARC FITCH HOUSE AND ITS FACILITIES

Gifts to the Library

The following have made gifts of books to the Marc Fitch Fund Library: P. Bone, T. Hickman, M. Sekulla, G. Forster, M. Seal, R. McKinley, C. V. Phythian-Adams, P. Sneath, P. Clark, H. Reed, S. Ball, J. Simmons, A. Yarrington, C. Starr, M. Reed, M. Rubin, B. Elliott, J. Hurst, S. Wright, R. Greenall (on behalf of the Northamptonshire Record Society), R. Leamon, H. Fox. The gift of Professor Simmons includes a large number of guides and pamphlets to add to his previous donation; the Northamptonshire Record Society presented copies of many numbers in its Records Series and a set of *Northamptonshire Past and Present*. The Map Room has received gifts of very useful one-inch Ordnance Survey sets - from L. Edwards, P. Kennedy and M. Higham. The Archives Room has received a donation of slides from the collection of Maurice Beresford which we hope to describe in a future issue of the Newsletter. We are very grateful to you all.

Library Opening on Saturdays

The Marc Fitch Fund Library will be open on the following Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.: 17 October, 31 October, 21 November, 12 December, 23 January, 27 February, 13 March, 8 May, 15 May. The cost of this service is met by the Friends. Please make use of it. This year we shall carry out a census of users of the Library on Saturdays and regrettably we may have to discontinue the service if the demand for it is not great enough.

WILLIAM GEORGE HOSKINS, 1908 - 1992

Obituary

(This obituary appears here by permission of the author and *The Independent*)

No one succeeded as W. G. Hoskins did in showing how the history of the English landscape could be unravelled if you looked at it with a sharp eye, asked the right questions, and then went to the documents

and books in search of the answers. He had started asking questions as a schoolboy in Devon, making his first notes at the age of 15. Seventy years later, his books, his radio talks and his television programmes have inspired thousands of local historians not only in England but all over the world, to go and do likewise. He had a following from North America to Japan.

Hoskins's special gift lay in his style of writing and speaking, which was informal, and instantly captivated his readers and hearers. His manner, his anecdotes and the clear pleasure he took in his subject effortlessly won him followers. But it was his appearances on television, in the successful B.B.C. series *Landscapes of England* (1976-78), which made his name. His viewers saw a rubicund face and heard the down-to-earth voice of a countryman; his smile beamed benevolence and a great sense of fun. Behind that view was a man never happier than when setting out to explore a fresh place. When, in his Oxford days, his wife, Jane, acquired a car (he never drove himself, and, in truth, despised cars), every free day was an invitation to go somewhere, and he fretted restlessly to depart.

Hoskins's work and reputation built up slowly from modest beginnings. He took a first degree from University College, Exeter, the university of his home town where his father and grandfather were bakers (as a result he was always sensitive to the quality of bread and never agreed that Mother's Pride was truly mother's pride). An M.A. thesis on the serge industry of the south-west was followed by a Ph.D. thesis on landownership in Devon from 1650 to 1800. These equipped him with the skills and insight (he already had the imagination) to investigate all aspects of Devon's history. They gave no clue as yet to the field which Hoskins would make his own, but the choice of county was a lucky beginning. It had innumerable ancient features in its landscape: winding lanes, boundary banks, and small enclosed fields, dating sometimes from Domesday and earlier; they, and the many old farmsteads tucked away in quiet corners of moorland, cried out for an informed interpreter. This they received, finally, when Hoskins published his large book on *Devon* in 1954. It contained a history from the Bronze Age to the present and a gazetteer as well.

Long before that, however, Hoskins had benefitted from the experience of pastures new. His first teaching post was at Bradford Technical College, where he was introduced to the Midlands. Then in 1931 he moved to University College, Leicester, and plunged with excitement and relish into the study of Leicestershire and Rutland. Plainly, he felt a strong sympathy with the peasantry of Leicestershire, and in the 1930s and 1940s articles on Midland yeomen and deserted medieval villages in Leicestershire jostled with others on Devon themes. Books like *The Heritage of Leicester* (1946), *Midland England* (1949) and tourist guides taught an appreciation of red and yellow brickwork that was just as sensitive as that of the more scenic oolitic limestone.

The war interrupted Hoskins's career by moving him to London, where he worked for the government's Central Price Regulation Committee. Plainly the landscape of London and Middlesex did not inspire him, as his silence on those subjects bears witness. But his return to Leicester inaugurated the most fruitful period in his life, when he made friends with F. L. Attenborough, principal of University College, an Anglo-Saxon historian turned administrator who was also a keen photographer. They became companions on many field trips, and Attenborough's photographs adorned the published results. Attenborough's support was instrumental in the setting up of a new Department of English Local History in 1948 of which Hoskins became the head and only member. The move recognized local history as a branch of academic history studies, and gave Hoskins greater freedom to pursue his work. But an invitation to Oxford in 1951 to become Reader in Economic History was an honour he could not forego. And he moved on, leaving behind a department which under H. P. R. Finberg and then Alan Everitt built up a splendid reputation on the foundations which he had laid. Indeed, the department goes from strength to strength having recently received a most generous benefaction from Marc Fitch.

For Hoskins, the move to Oxford was probably a mistake. He influenced many students and supervised some graduates who have become distinguished historians; but the syllabus at Oxford could not make room for much local history, and most of it crept into his lectures under the guise of economic and social history. For other reasons, too, Hoskins did not find Oxford a congenial home. He was not given a college fellowship, though one was about to be offered him just as he left, and he chafed at the university's privileged status. For his part, he did not show much patience with the constraints of Oxford's traditions, and without a college fellowship he lacked the means to acquire the necessary inside knowledge of how colleges work.

Nevertheless, Oxford gave Hoskins the sabbatical terms and long vacations which enabled him to stand back and survey his subject more generally. He wrote his most influential book at this time, *The Making of the English Landscape* (1954), and launched a new series of county histories of the landscape which he edited; he published a textbook on *Local History in England* (1959), and greatly enlarged the significance of his studies of domestic buildings with an article on 'The rebuilding of rural England, 1570-1640', in *Past and Present* (1953, later reprinted in *Provincial England*, 1963).

While teaching at Oxford, Hoskins had already somewhat distanced himself from its life by moving back to his native Devon, and in 1965, when Leicester University sought another head for its Local History

department, on the retirement of H. P. R. Finberg, he agreed to return. This was another mistake, for both the University and Hoskins himself had changed in the meantime, and, after three years, during which he published *Fieldwork in Local History* (1967), he retired, 'in despair', as he wrote in his entry in *Who's Who.*

Advancing age did not deal kindly with Hoskins. He always had strong pleasures and prejudices: writing from Exeter, his letters to his friends were addressed from 'The Elysian Fields' or 'The Shores of Paradise'; he hated the oppression of the poor by the rich in all ages, and vented his wrath on Henry VIII with a textbook entitled *The Age of Plunder* (1976). But, in earlier days, a witty joke or a beaming smile moderated the indignation, whereas in later years he became more irascible, intolerant, and self-centred, and at times a sore trial to his family. A series of minor strokes brought his writing to an end, and he turned instead to the novelists, poets and essayists who had long ago enriched his ideas and language when he read much in the byways of literature. Cecil Torr's *Small Talk at Wreyland* (1918) had been one favourite, while the *Handbook for Travellers in Spain* (1845) by Richard Ford (buried in Exeter) had been another. Such works brought solace at the end when he lost interest in local history.

Hoskins's last days were sad to behold. But he leaves warm memories of a *bon viveur*, enjoying good food (especially Jane's), good wine and witty conversation. His students treasure the very positive encouragement he gave to men and women in equal measure. And his books will always preserve the record of a colourful and genial personality with a seeing eye and a flowing pen.

Joan Thirsk

W. G. Hoskins and the Real England

It is just forty years since I first discovered W. G. Hoskins's work, when I was beginning research on my Ph.D. thesis, and at once it seemed to open a new world to me. At Leicester a few years later, Joan Wake used those precise words following a talk I had given to the Society of Archivists; the murmur of assent that went round the room showed how many of us had experienced the same sense of revelation. Every article of his I could lay hands on, often in obscure journals, I read with avidity. Yet at first sight there was nothing in common between Hoskins's work and my subject, 'The gentry of Kent in the Civil War and Interregnum: a political study'. He had been educated as an economic historian, his grasp of political history was sketchy, and the great issues involved in the English Civil War meant nothing to him. The only essays he wrote bearing directly on my themes were his studies in family history and his article on 'The estates of the Caroline gentry' in *Devonshire Studies* (1952). What was it, apart from his compulsive readability, that attracted me?

I had not been long at work myself before discovering paradox and complexity behind the political loyalties of Kent. I found nothing resembling a society neatly divided between Cavaliers and Roundheads my training hitherto had led me to expect. Gradually I was driven back upon a study of Kentish society for its own sake, upon a systematic survey of the family history and social relationships behind the façade of the Civil War, and more and more deeply into the world of homely human experience with which the political events of that period, though few yet admitted it, were at every turn interwoven. It was the magic of Hoskins's art in bringing the world of ordinary folk to life that awakened my interest in his writings, despite the fact they dealt with such different topics from my own.

Though my work is not here the point, there is one fact that I must mention. Every day I could spare, every hard-won penny I could afford, I spent in seeking out the family-homes and manor houses where my people - some hundreds of them - had once lived. It was fortunate that in Kent, as in Hoskins's Devon, so many of them survived, if often much altered: enlarged, embellished, truncated, decrepit, derelict, or even ruinous: many of them down stony lanes, half-buried in woods, or in lonely valleys: and they told me one supremely important fact. With only a handful of exceptions, these were not the grandiose homes of powerful families, set in great parks, like Burghley or Longleat. Most of them had originated as medieval farmhouses, and many were still surrounded by their barns: homely patchwork places, as a rule, built piecemeal over the centuries, as if they had grown up out of the ground they stood on, like the families that once lived there. Such was the kind of deeply-rooted, intractable, provincial world in which the Civil War, at least in Kent, had taken place. Above all it was a profoundly localized and agrarian world, as letters diaries, account-books, family-histories, autobiographies, and innumerable tracts and pamphlets also told me. In short, what I found was just one other aspect of the real England that W. G. Hoskins, in essay after essay over the past twenty years, had been bringing back to life.

Since retiring I have had the opportunity to ponder much on the writing of English local history, past and present. Over the last two years I have, for various reasons, re-read many of Hoskins's publications. Viewing his work as a whole, what dominant impressions remain? First, one realizes now the marvellous efflorescence of his genius - for what else can one call it? - in those thirteen golden years between 1950 and 1963: with the publication of *Essays in Leicestershire History* in 1950, *Devonshire Studies* (with H. P. R. Finberg) in 1952, *Devon* in 1954, *The Making of the English Landscape* in 1955, *The Midland Peasant* and *The Leicestershire Landscape* in 1957, *The Westward Expansion of Wessex* in 1960, and *The Common Lands of England and Wales* (with Dudley Stamp) in 1963. In much that led up to that time, Hoskins was gradually

breaking free from the constraints of the English economic tradition in which he had been educated. In his later and more popular works he can at times seem superficial, occasionally uncritical in drawing on the work of others, too readily misled by the mercurial opinions of archaeologists, and impressionistic in his handling of place-name evidence. Hoskins was always at his best in drawing on his own work and his own experience; that was what gave him his unerring skill in selecting the luminous yet typical example. And in those fertile years it seemed as if a new dawn was breaking in our understanding of the past.

Secondly, it is not only the number of new trails he started that impresses me, through such seminal essays as 'The deserted villages of Leicestershire' or 'The rebuilding of rural England', both of which have given rise to a veritable industry. It is also the remarkable range of sources he had at his command, the systematic nature of his early exploration of them, and in many cases, such as probate inventories and the crop returns of 1801, his pioneering spirit in recognizing their potential. In reality, Hoskins was one of the most learned historians of his generation, although perhaps because of the breadth of his interests, over many centuries, and the tendency of others to greater specialization, he has rarely been given credit for it by his peers.

Thirdly, and partly in consequence of that breadth, one sees that behind all he wrote on the landscape, all that made his name a household word, was the expert economic and social historian: not in the modern abstract and emasculated mode, but in the more ample tradition of R. H. Tawney and Eileen Power, and in his own instinctive human sense. Though few archaeologists, geographers, place-name scholars, or historians themselves, alas, now seem to recognize the fact, there can be no true interpretation of landscape history, or of the evolution of English settlement, without something of Hoskins's profound understanding of the development of English society behind it. The moment one opens his pages, as a consequence, one feels what one so often does not feel today, that one is entering a real world, peopled and indeed created by living men and women, as human as ourselves, as vivid and true to life as Chaucer's pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales*.

Finally, there are two books of W. G. Hoskins's, I believe, which occupy a unique place in his work, and in which the deep vein of poetic idealism in his nature was supremely expressed: *The Making of the English Landscape* and *The Midland Peasant: the Economic and Social History of a Leicestershire Village*. In many ways they are complementary works; but if the former, as Dr J. R. Maddicott remarked, is one of those rare books that create a new subject, the latter is surely one of those, equally unusual, that re-create a new world - that of English peasant society. By many *The Midland Peasant* was ungraciously received at the time; its message, indeed, has often been silently by-passed by historians ever since. The title itself, some said, was misleading. England was different from other European countries; its yeomen, husbandmen, and villeins had never called themselves 'peasants'; and so the term itself was at best inappropriate, at worst positively mischievous. It all seems very strange today. But the truth was that the narrow canons of English economic and political history could not readily accommodate the unexpected vision of reality that Hoskins, with such meticulous patience and originality, had opened up before us: in the very same year, moreover, as Joan Thirsk's companion-piece, *English Peasant Farming*.

Hoskins felt deeply, even passionately, about his great theme: the origins, evolution, efflorescence, inward decay, and eventual destruction of English peasant society, as he found it in the history of Wigston Magna and its common fields. But in *The Midland Peasant* the passion sometimes strongly expressed in his work is remarkable for its restraint, as the argument also is for its breadth and balance, and the story as a whole for the skill with which family history, agrarian development, and village custom are woven together. The great range of his work on provincial society over the previous 25 years enabled him to place Wigston, step by step, in its Leicestershire setting, and the county itself in that of the Midlands and the country at large. No book devoted to the study of a single village, as a consequence, has ever shed so much light on English history generally, either before or since. Thirty years later, one still returns to it and finds fresh understanding. If it was youth in Devonshire that first awakened W. G. Hoskins's ever-questing mind to the evolution of the English landscape, it was Leicestershire, and the life of one homely village there, unknown to fame, that opened his eyes to the peasant economy of Midland England. The dramatic contrast he found between the two counties became, as a consequence, the most illuminating event in his experience as a scholar. There are lessons here, I believe, that many of us may care to ponder. The message that Hoskins has left us is one that will never grow old.

Alan Everitt

William Hoskins: Address

(What follows is a slightly abbreviated version of the address read by David Hey at the memorial service held at the church of St Nicholas, Leicester, 19. 5. 1992)

It is entirely appropriate that the life and achievements of William Hoskins should be celebrated here in the heart of historic Leicester a few months after the family service in his beloved Exeter and a few months before a commemorative day-school at the University of Oxford. Each place can rightly point to its importance as the setting for and the inspiration of his work. Exeter, his birth-place and retirement home, naturally had first claim to his affections. I well

remember how, upon a visit there, I rose substantially in his esteem when he discovered that one of my grandmothers came from the West Country and that her maiden name was derived from a remote farmstead in Devon.

But Leicester can fairly claim to have been the place where he developed his most influential ideas. It is with the Department of English Local History, which was formed for him, that his name is associated in the public mind. It was here in the centre of Leicester, in classes held at the old Vaughan College in the 1930s, that he tried out many of his ideas for the first time, with a receptive audience. He inspired the Vaughan Archaeological Society and wrote many of his earliest articles for *The Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*. The contrasts between the Leicestershire landscape and that of his native Devon set him thinking about a subject he was to make his own. And we now know from the notebooks that he gave to his old department that his renowned study of Wigston Magna - *The Midland Peasant* - was conceived and written before and during the war, long before it was eventually published after he had become famous through other works. In all these ways then Leicester and Leicestershire stimulated his thinking and proved a congenial home. We must remember too his involvement with *The Victoria County History of Leicestershire*, his volume on the county in the Hodder and Stoughton series on landscape which he edited, and his *Shell Guides* to Leicestershire and Rutland. In the guides his sense of fun and the enjoyment of life kept breaking through the restrictions of the format of the series. I remember with particular affection the guide to Rutland for the invaluable advice it gave on how to prepare for an enjoyable day's sightseeing.

> Red wines are better than white for this form of travel as white wines tend to become tepid in a car and therefore rather horrid. An excellent way of getting over this difficulty, if one can do it, is to buy a bottle of white or *rosé* wine, chill it for an hour or so in a refrigerator, and then transfer it to a vacuum flask before departure . . . . If one can do this, it is perhaps the ideal treatment for a luncheon-wine as red wines in summer, especially at mid-day, tend to be highly soporific. Not that that really matters on a warm day in Rutland. So one is all set for a good morning among the churches; not more than three in a morning is sufficient for enjoyment, and perhaps another one or two after tea; and the afternoon perhaps spent lying in a field in the Midland sun, quietly unwinding. I have found Tixover churchyard a pleasant place for an afternoon doze.

William Hoskins was fortunate in his wife Jane, whom we also commemorate today. He dedicated his most famous book - *The Making of the English Landscape* - to her and the dedication in the *Shell Guide* to Leicestershire is particularly apt. It reads 'To J. H., whose domestic skill enables the author to live and work in Victorian comfort.' It was Jane of course, having been taught by Joan Thirsk, who drove William on his trips into the countryside. He never seemed to mention this in his frequent denunciations of the motor car.

William was also fortunate in having, as a good friend, F. L. Attenborough - men were usually known by their initials in those days and even today most of William's readers know him as W. G. Hoskins. It is inconceivable that any current Vice-Chancellor could create a new department for one of the academic staff and make him head and sole member, so that he could concentrate on his research and writings, but what rich dividends have been reaped from that decision. The Department of English Local History has helped to make the University of Leicester known throughout the land, and abroad. It is the centre for post-graduate studies in all branches of Local History that we associate with the name of William Hoskins.

In this age of the specialist it is difficult to grasp how one man could be a pioneer in such diverse fields as those of agricultural history, urban history, vernacular architecture and the reconstruction of peasant society from Anglo-Saxon times through to the Industrial Revolution. As he himself recognized, the fate of the pioneer is to be overtaken by fresh studies, many of them made by former pupils. But it is noticeable that his work is never attacked in a scornful dismissive way, such as is only too common in academia. Instead, William is acknowledged for pointing the way, for his inspiration and for his many kindnesses.

There can be few academics whose reputation is equally high amongst professional colleagues and the general public alike. William Hoskins's concern, from his early days when he was teaching evening classes here in Leicester, was to make Local History and British social and economic history accessible to all. In the introduction to his *Local History in England* (now in its third edition) he wrote: 'This is mainly a book of advice and encouragement for local historians in any part of England.' After he had retired from academic life as Hatton Professor of English History - curiously, the word Local was omitted from this title - he became a television star and helped to stir interest in what is now known as the Green Movement, that consciousness of the precious value of our environment and its importance as evidence of man's activities in the past. 'The English landscape,' he wrote, 'to those who know how to read it aright, is the richest historical record we possess.' He, more than anyone, has taught us to value such things.

His landscapes were always peopled. Even when he was describing the deserted villages of Leicestershire his principal concern was to tell the story

of the people who had lived in them. He anticipated the modern surge of interest in family history and through his ancestors he felt a strong sympathy for the old peasant society. He always regretted having to cut a final chapter from *The Midland Peasant* which traced the farming families of this parish through the centuries. His sympathies with the ordinary people of England are made clear throughout his work. Our surroundings this afternoon make a fitting context for a quotation from the introduction to his large book on Devon, with which I shall end.

> Baring-Gould, in *A Book of Dartmoor*, published in the year 1900, says, 'I recall the church before modern ideas had penetrated to Chagford. At that time the clerk, who also led the orchestra, gave out the psalm from his seat under the reading-desk, then, whistling the tune, he marched slowly down the nave, ascended the gallery with leisure, and the performance began.' This clerk, I discover, was my great-great-grandfather Richard Thorn, who became parish clerk in the year 1800 at the age of 24 and held the office all his life until he died at the age of 77. He farmed 32 acres of his own land at Thorn, a hamlet in the parish from which his ancestor had long ago taken his name, where Thorns had lived ever since Robert atte Thorne back in 1332, back no doubt to the first moorland peasant who broke up the ground around the solitary thorn-tree, perhaps in the closing years of the twelfth century or the first years of the thirteenth. First the ancient tree gave its name to the farm, then the farm gave its name to its first owners; and still there are Thorns in Chagford. Richard Thorn was succeeded as parish clerk by his son John Thorn, who is described in the directory as 'Saddler, Harness-maker, Postmaster and Parish Clerk' - a man of many useful parts. Father and son were parish clerks of Chagford for 82 years between them. These things delight me when I come across them. This is the immemorial, provincial England, stable, rooted deep in the soil, unmoving, contented and sane. Those are my forebears, who have made me what I am whether I like it or not.

We celebrate today the achievements of a great scholar, whose writings are admired across the world from America to Japan and whose name will forever be associated with Leicester and Leicestershire.
David Hey

The Countryside in May with W. G. H.

The Leicester branch of the Geographical Association, moribund for most of the 1940s, sprang into life again with a full programme of lectures and field excursions in 1948. W. G., then Reader in the newly-formed Department of English Local History, led the first trip into Leicestershire countryside on a sunlit May afternoon when all the hawthorn hedgerows (many of them now vanished, alas) were ablaze with light. The whole excursion of four hours was spent in Hallaton. Geographers who had never met this kind of field exploration were fascinated, spell-bound perhaps, as William unravelled the history of a single Leicestershire village in that flat, unaccented tone slightly coloured by the speech and sound of his native Devon. From the lonely castle mound, thrown up early in the twelfth century, we moved to St Michael's church which William treated as evidence of Hallaton's economic history rather than a museum piece of medieval architecture. Then followed a succession of cottages around the Green and up the High Street where we were introduced to vernacular architecture. For myself, an historical geographer brought up in the Cambridge School of the 1930s and on H. C. Darby's *An Historical Geography of England before 1800*, Hoskins in Hallaton was indeed a revelation. For the first time I realised that for both historians and geographers the landscape is indeed a document, requiring different skills perhaps from those of the researcher in the muniment room, but equally rich in its rewards.
Roy Millward

With Mud on his Boots
(This poem was written to celebrate the 81st birthday of W. G. Hoskins and appears here by permission of the poet and Guardian Newspapers)

For fourscore years and one you have travelled
Uncatalogued libraries of footpath and parish,
You bicycled leagues of manorial rolls,
Over aerial photos you flew like a kestrel.

In your lectures and books we heard Saxons and navvies
Wield axes and spades, your diagrams smelt
Of Steeple Barton and ledgers, of markets and mills,
And the palimpsest landscape came alive in the archives.

You translated the scribble of hedgebanks and boundaries,
Midland students were smeared with red Devon marl,
Your eyes in your boots found lost hamlets and highways
- Sir, you smudged mud on our maps, here's mud in your eye!
C. R. T. Nankivell

OTHER OBITUARIES

Peter Mary Gerard Eden, 1913 - 1992

In 1966 when Peter Eden came to Leicester University the Department of English Local History, under the leadership of W. G. Hoskins, was embarking on a pioneering venture, the M.A. course in English Local History. As Senior Lecturer in English Topography Peter was responsible for teaching topographical skills and the historical interpretation of man-made features in the English landscape to

students from a wide variety of academic disciplines. Succeeding generations of students benefitted from his linguistic abilities as well as from his skill in cajoling historians and other sceptics into accepting Ordnance Survey maps as valid historical documents. Not a small part of his success in achieving the latter resulted from his ability to provoke a reaction in his students; this was supported by the fieldwork he organized in Leicestershire and Derbyshire. Voluntary (though nearly always with a full attendance) weekends in youth hostels strategically placed in areas of topographical or archaeological interest further contributed to his aims. At Leicester, too, he built up the Department's Map Room, especially by obtaining facsimiles of estate maps, and he helped with the teaching of vernacular architecture. These two subjects - the history of cartography and of architecture - cover the majority of his publications.

From 1955 until his Leicester appointment Peter was employed by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments as an architectural investigator. After working on the West Dorset and City of Cambridge inventories, he took up the West Cambridgeshire survey as editor and head of the Cambridge office. The resulting inventory, published by others in 1968 after he had left the Commission, broke new ground in its unusually long and thorough introduction, and in its attention to topography. A feature of the West Cambridgeshire inventory was its classification of smaller house-types and Peter, previously regarded as a specialist on churches, later widened the scope of this classification in two important publications: 'Smaller post-medieval houses in Eastern England' (in L. M. Munby, ed., *East Anglian Studies*, 1968) and *Small Houses in England, 1520-1820* (Historical Association pamphlet, 1969). He also became involved with the Vernacular Architecture Group, helping to organize its Spring meeting at Norwich in 1967 and making all the arrangements for the 1974 meeting at Leicester.

Peter's other publications were in the field of cartographic history. In 1966 he took over the project which was eventually to yield the *Dictionary of Land Surveyors of Great Britain and Ireland 1550-1850* (1975-9). This project had been started by Francis Steer in 1958; Peter transformed the work from a list of maps by particular individuals to a wide-ranging study of the practitioners themselves. For the next two decades, his major academic pursuit was the study of land surveyors. He built up and maintained a voluminous correspondence with scholars and research workers all over the country, and with the assistance of Avril Thomas (*née* Ardil), John Andrews and Sean McMenamin, and Ian Adams, Ralph Hyde, Heather Lawrence and Douglas Lockhart among others, he published a first edition of the *Dictionary*. This was always seen as an interim statement, and thereafter his studies continued. Peter was a true scholar, and he collected information about the surveyors himself as well as assessing and editing the contributions that were sent to him. He demonstrated the potential of a wide range of sources and showed in particular the valuable contribution which periodicals, local newspapers and estate and institutional accounts could make to the study of local map-makers. All of his findings were recorded in meticulous detail; Peter loved his notebooks (which usually had pink covers) and in them one can trace his journeys all over the country and further afield in the search for new material. From the *Dictionary*, Peter Eden demonstrated the many varied ways in which surveyors supplemented their earnings from map-making: as estate stewards and agents, as schoolmasters, as farmers, as architects and engineers, as booksellers and printers, for example. He was also particularly interested in surveyors who practised in Norfolk, and in surveying in the Tudor period and the influence of Lord Burghley; his publications on these subjects, too, have become standard works.

What can be said in this short obituary is by no means a complete record of Peter's life. He was a man of many parts, collaborating with John Betjeman on work on parish churches and with Kenneth Hudson on industrial archaeology. He wrote the texts for two of the Christmas Books published by Cambridge University Press and now much sought after by bibliophiles. His practical skills included photography, linguistics (at various times he studied Sanskrit, Bulgarian and Arabic as well as the major European languages) and gardening.

Peter and his wife Hermia, who supported him loyally in all his activities, bought a derelict cottage at Salthouse on the North Norfolk coast in the year following the floods of 1953, and this became the focus of the family which meant so much to him. Those who were Peter's students at Leicester in particular remember the warmth and kindness of the Edens' hospitality at their flat on London Road, especially the informal term-time lunches fortified by home-made wine. Those who were his colleagues at the R.C.H.M. office at Cambridge remember the family atmosphere there and also the way in which Peter's own family affairs managed to permeate the work of the group. One close collaborator sums him up: 'despite all the knowledge, over so many fields, to those who knew him well it was his colourful personality that mattered most'.

(This composite obituary is the work of many hands. We are grateful, among others, to Sarah Bendall, Margery Tranter, Michael Laithwaite and Tony Baggs)

Margaret Midgley, 1899 - 1991

'All contributors to this volume owe a great debt to Miss Margaret Midgley, M.A., F.R.Hist.S., who collected so much of their material for them in record offices all over the country. They wish to record here their deep appreciation of her work.' With these words Dr Joan Thirsk, editor of *The Agrarian History of England*

and Wales, IV, 1500-1640, handsomely acknowledged the part played by Margaret Midgley in the compilation of that monumental volume. This work, the first volume of the *Agrarian History* to be undertaken and the first to appear (in 1967) was nurtured in Leicester's Department of English Local History, though not its offspring. The General Editor of the series, H. P. R. Finberg was Head of Department; Joan Thirsk was its Research Fellow; and Margaret Midgley held her post of Research Assistant in Agrarian History in the Department although her salary was provided by the Nuffield Foundation. Her function was to visit all the record offices of England and Wales searching for material relevant to the planned chapters of the *Agrarian History*. For this work she was eminently qualified in both scholarship and inclination. She loved archives and was never happier than when 'fossicking' (as she called it) among them. With this delight in the raw materials of history she combined meticulous accuracy and expertise in transcribing documents and also a sure sense of what was important to transcribe.

Her previous career had afforded first-hand experience of both researching and writing history. For her M.A. thesis (Manchester, 1930) she examined the accounts of the earldom of Cornwall in 1296-7; her expanded transcript of this manuscript (the only complete surviving account of all the lands of Edmund, earl of Cornwall), with a clear and concise introduction, was subsequently published in two volumes of the Royal Historical Society's Camden Third Series (1942 and 1945). From 1935 to 1940 she was part-time assistant to the General Editor of The Victoria County History, L. F. Salzman, who was based at the Institute of Historical Research in London. Part of her work was editorial, but she also did the research and writing necessary to produce characteristic V.C.H. contributions in the volumes (*Oxfordshire* I, 1939; *Sussex* VII, 1940; *Warwickshire* III, 1945 and IV, 1947) which were in production at this period. 'The bare bones of history' was Margaret's own description of the V.C.H. style of writing; and it was a style to which she was attuned. It was always the basic material of history that attracted her rather than the literary and interpretative work of the historian.

Consequently, her next appointment, as William Salt Librarian in Stafford (a post which was virtually that of county archivist, since the William Salt Library held manuscript and printed collections relating to the history of Staffordshire), was particularly congenial. Happily she brought order and necessary cataloguing to the existing collection and welcomed numerous accessions.

But in 1947 she was lured away from Stafford by an opportunity which proved irresistible to this archive-archaeologist. The Pilgrim Trust, at the instance of the Master of the Rolls, was prepared to finance a survey of the archives of the cathedrals of England. It was an appointment for a term of years only; but it involved visiting every diocese and hunting out ecclesiastical records which were stacked away in basements, attics and various other mostly unsuitable places which could be spared for the purpose by cathedrals officials. During the next four years, Margaret and her one assistant became experts on the clinging properties of various kinds of dust, and also on the previously unsuspected scale of survival of episcopal and capitular records. Her 'Survey of the principal collections of archives of the Church of England', produced in 1951, and distributed in typescript dropped a bombshell into historical and archive circles. It publicised the crying need for proper repositories for diocesan records, and its effects in spurring bishops to put things right were remarkable.

Her Pilgrim Trust mission completed, Margaret's next move was back to Stafford, as editor of its V.C.H., in 1951. Two volumes (IV, 1958 and V, 1959) resulted from the work she compiled as editor, and she had commissioned material for two further volumes before she returned to the kind of work she loved best, searching out the fascinating contents of unexplored archive deposits.

So the *Agrarian History* project and the Department of English Local History were fortunate in the learned and experienced Research Assistant who joined them in 1957; and Margaret was fortunate in being once more engaged in archive exploration. Without the technical aids researchers today have come to take for granted, she produced neat handwritten transcripts with carbon copies for circulation to the contributors to volume IV, enabling them to use a much wider range of archive material than would otherwise have been possible. Her work was completely reliable and efficient, as she made her way systematically from county to county, content to be feeding the raw material of the *History* to those who were to digest and interpret it.

For Margaret, with all her talents, was the most modest and selfless of historians, delighted to be part of the historical process by doing what she knew she did best. When work for volume IV was complete, she went on to collect material for the volume III (1348-1500) until she reached retirement age in 1964. Not that her retirement was anything but nominal. She continued active research (for Maurice Beresford) and calendaring (for the Historical Manuscripts Commission). In 1979 she finished a calendar of the large collection of deeds of the Augustinian Priory of St Thomas near Stafford (in 1977 she had published information about the reeves and bailiffs of Stafford, derived from these deeds, in *The Transactions of the Staffordshire Historical and Civic Society*, 1974-6); and her edition of a 'census' of 1701 of part of Stoke-upon-Trent parish is to be published posthumously by the Staffordshire Record Society. She died in December 1991, aged 92.

A. K. B. Evans

Victor Hatley, 1924 - 1991

Victor Hatley, a research student in the Department during the early 1980s, once said that he did not like to be thought of as *the* local historian for Northampton - quite rightly since his interests included the American Civil War, naval history, architecture and railways, but his extensive library of local books, articles, pamphlets and cuttings, his painstakingly accurate lectures and writing on local subjects and the overwhelming breadth of his knowledge meant that a very large number of professional and amateur historians turned to Victor for information and advice, which was always given so freely.

Victor's articles for *Northamptonshire Past and Present* included 'Northamptonshire re-vindicated: more light on why the main line missed the town' (1959), a sequel to Miss Joan Wake's article published in 1935; 'Some aspects of Northampton's history 1815-1851' (1965/6) covering housing, industry, politics, religion and public administration; 'Monsters in Campbell Square! The early history of two industrial premises in Northampton' (1966/7); '"Blaze" at Buckby' (1967/8), a brief note on the woolcombing industry in Long Buckley in the late eighteenth century; 'Literacy at Northampton, 1761-1900' (1971); and 'Lords, locks and coal: a study in eighteenth-century Northampton history' (1980-81), on the politics and economics of the River Nene Navigation. Among his reference works are: *Shoemakers in Northamptonshire 1762-1911: a Statistical Survey* and *The Northamptonshire Militia Lists, 1777*. At the time of his death last November Victor was working on the 1851 religious census for Northampton, among other projects. Fortunately he often worked with others, and it is hoped that his 'collaborators' will wish to complete joint projects in his memory.

Sadly, for various reasons, Victor Hatley's magnificent library has been dispersed, with some volumes at the Institute for Historical Research in London, the larger part of his local books with the Northamptonshire Record Society and others with the Local Studies Collection of Northamptonshire Libraries. His papers have yet to be sorted but will eventually be catalogued and made accessible at the Northamptonshire Record Office at Wotton Hall. The final destination of his large slide collection (including many otherwise unrecorded views of Northampton before the road and housing improvement schemes of the 1970s) has yet to be decided, but it will remain locally. During his lifetime Victor generously made his library and his knowledge available to all who were interested and he would have welcomed full use being made of it all now and in the future.

Judith Hodgkisson

DEPARTMENTAL PUBLICATIONS

P. Austin

'Sherrards Park: an ancient wood', *Hertfordshire Countryside* 47 (1992), pp. 17-18.

P. S. Ell

'The geography of religious worship in England and Wales: 1851 census', *Gimms Newsletter* 12 (1991), pp. 6-7.

H. S. A. Fox

'Land, labour and people, 1042-1350', *Journal of Historical Geography* 17 (1991), pp. 457-64.

ed. *The Origins of the Midland Village: Papers Prepared for a Discussion Session at the Economic History Society's Annual Conference, Leicester, April 1992* (1992), 106pp.

Social historians who study early modern England have begun to realize that significant differences existed between 'the land of villages' and regions where settlement was dispersed. They quote Lord Radnor on social control - 'nothing more favours irregular and lawless habits of life among the inferior class . . . than scattered and sequestrated habitations' - and a long line of similar observations going back to John Norden in the early seventeenth century. They have found that nucleation may often (but not always) have engendered patterns of labouring life very different from those where pools of village labour were absent or distant. They have pointed to expressions of popular culture which, though not peculiar to village life, were very strongly associated with nucleated settlements: football, a ritualized combat between communities, especially those with strong habits of internal co-operation, or festive rogationtide processions at which a sense of communal identity was expressed and a sharp look-out kept for encroachments onto village field systems.

Those who study earlier periods are inevitably drawn towards problems of village origins. The distant origins of the English village have an intrinsic fascination, because living in nucleated settlements was to influence the quality of life for many centuries. They also have a fascination to historians of the landscape because the village is such an obviously striking feature of the scene in many parts of the country, though not in others. Origins have a renewed fascination, too, because of the turbulence of current ideas on how and when villages were created. It was not too long ago that historians were still writing of 'ready-made' and 'free' village communities in the earliest English centuries. But in the last twenty years or so there has been a reappraisal of that view and the origins of villages are now being placed in the rapidly evolving and buoyant social and economic climate that marked the last centuries of the Old English state. Before that revised chronology can thoroughly convince, we need much discussion of the various contexts in which villages may have arisen. Over recent years very great strides forward have been made in the science of village morphology, perhaps at the expense of studies of early village history. This collection is

aimed at redressing the balance: five students of Anglo-Saxon England were asked to consider topics relevant to the formation of villages in the Midlands and to present their papers to a team of discussants and an informed audience at the annual conference of the Economic History Society held in Leicester in April 1992. The papers offer some harmonies but there are also disagreements between them, ranging from the interpretation of individual texts to deeper issues. That is exactly right at this stage. If the hare which this collection has set up has a good running in front of it, then the papers will have served their intended purpose. An idea of their contents is given in Jon Kissock's report of the meeting elsewhere in this Newsletter (see 'Events associated with the Department').

The collection of papers was prepared for pre-circulation to those who attended the meeting: members of the Economic History Society, of the Medieval Village Research Group and a few Friends. Spare copies were rapidly snatched up by people who had heard of the meeting but could not attend. It may be possible to run off a few more copies from the A4 pages which were used for reproduction of the A5 booklet distributed at the meeting. If there is sufficient demand these extra copies will be sold at £8, a price which includes a profit margin for the Friends. If you are interested write to Harold Fox by 1st December.

'The agrarian context', in H. S. A. Fox, ed., *The Origins of the Midland Village* (1992), pp. 36-72.

In a paper published over ten years ago I discussed some of the contexts in which fully-fledged Midland field systems might have developed. I also gave a good deal of attention to the dating of the system. Finally, in a throw-away line - inserted very cautiously, for when it was written our thinking on village formation was still tremulous with change - I stated that the adoption of Midland field systems in the late Saxon period might possibly account for 'a trend towards the fusion and nucleation of settlements'. In the discussion paper summarized here I elaborate on each of these topics, drawing upon over a decade's-worth of published research and intermittent discussion with friends, not least my colleagues and students. First, I try to imagine how we can logically connect village formation and the formation of field systems: how and why do the common rights (which underpin Midland field systems) develop? why does a single field system encourage the nucleation of a single settlement (a question which takes one into a discussion of scattered strips)? what were the roles of lords and peasants in these developments? Secondly, I argue that research on the dating of nucleation and on the dating of the Midland system both point to origins in the late Saxon period. This does not prove that the two were inter-connected, but it is highly suggestive. Third, the paper asks about the contexts - local, regional and national - which might have encouraged a reorganization of agricultural systems (and, by extension, the origin of villages) in late Saxon England, touching upon the immediacy of lordship, colonization, taxation and urbanization.

ed. *Friends of the Department of English Local History Newsletter* 4 (1991), 31pp.

L. Garrison
'From Africa to Britain: mapping out a heritage', in *1992 & the New World: 500 Years of Resistance* (1992), pp. 12-15.

D. A. Postles
'Choosing witnesses in twelfth-century England', *Irish Jurist* 23 (1991 for 1988), pp. 330-46.

The choice of witnesses to charters in the twelfth century, before the introduction of wider methods of assurance, was flexible and purposive, reflecting social and legal norms, and through which witnesses bore testimony to the event (livery of seisin) rather than the document (the charter). Choice of witnesses was therefore significant and specific: wives (to bar dower); heirs (to prevent the *retrait lignager*); honorial barons and local courts (for public security); young as well as mature (the latter to extend memory in a society in which the written word was an extension of the technology of remembering); and women as attestors for women grantors or beneficiaries. Witnessing had a similar function and nature in contemporary Normandy, as Tabuteau has illustrated.

'Tenure in frankalmoign and knight service in twelfth-century England: interpretation of the charters', *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 13 (1992), pp. 18-28.

By taking the most intractable of problems of services (knight service) for religious houses, as it is represented in charters, it is possible to refine further notions of free alms in the twelfth century. Whilst the importance of canon law and the development of the common law are undoubtedly important, changing social norms also bore on changing notions of free alms, and such changes can best be perceived in those charters which show how problems were worked through pragmatically. Free alms developed first (and perhaps partially remained) as a form of gift-exchange, reflecting honour and reciprocity, in which intention and will were the primary characteristics in the early twelfth century. Intention and will were gradually circumscribed by what was pragmatically possible during the century in Milsom's 'truly seignorial world', climaxing in Glanvill's legalistic notion of free alms as just another form of tenure. The reissue of Magna Carta 1217 *c.* 39 was thus the end of a process as much as the beginning of legislation on mortmain.

'Demographic change in Kibworth Harcourt,

Leicestershire, in the later Middle Ages', *Local Population Studies* 48 (1992), pp. 41-8.

K. D. M. Snell

'Pauper settlement and the right to poor relief in England and Wales', *Continuity and Change* 6 (1991), pp. 375-415.

This article provides an assessment of the English and Welsh laws of pauper settlement, with attention paid to the period from 1662 until the mid-nineteenth century. It emphasizes the poor-law definitions of settlement, and stresses that there was an intimate and pervasive connection between settlement and the poor law, that settlement was itself an indispensable part of the poor law, and operated in such a way. As such it is intended as a detailed critique of a recent view, widely rejected by other settlement historians, that the settlement laws were primarily intended to 'monitor immigration'. In addition, it provides arguments doubting suggestions sometimes made that the settlement laws comprised a major hindrance to personal mobility, although it recognizes that this would have been the case for those whose vulnerability to poor relief was most apparent to parish authorities. The article is intended to complement K. D. M. Snell's article 'Settlement, poor law and the rural historian: new approaches and opportunities' in the latest number of *Rural History: Economy, Society, Culture.* The latter article develops this view of settlement further, using a diagram to indicate the many different categories of settlement case, and appraising further matters of settlement practice. In addition to analytical treatment here of settlement records, administration and the study of labour mobility, it raises further a number of original ways for rural historians to handle and analyze other classes of poor-law records (such as overseers' accounts). These, it is suggested, are a major source for historians of rural society, with considerable, as yet unfathomed, potential.

'Deferential bitterness: the social outlook of the rural proletariat in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England and Wales', in M. Bush, ed., *Social Orders and Social Classes in Europe since 1500: Studies in Social Stratification* (1992), pp. 158-184.

This chapter examines the social sentiments of the rural proletariat in England and Wales, assesses the extent to which rural workers may be considered as a class, explores the regional differences in their social and political priorities, and examines the many factors that had led to a growing estrangement between the rural classes by the mid-nineteenth century. Stress is laid on the ways in which 'deference' should be interpreted, and it is argued that deference cannot be taken as an alternative option to class antagonism in the nineteenth-century countryside: the two concepts may often both be taken as existing together. The discussion raises matters to do with the self-definitions of the rural work-force, the ways in which it handled the dismissive and belittling stereotypes of 'Hodge' that became so common in the nineteenth century, and the endeavours its members made to seek self-respect through religion and social and political action. In particular, stress is laid upon the biblical exegesis of rural workers, on the ways in which they used the Bible, on how their exegesis differed from other and sometimes more radical groups of workers, and how they sought social and political justification for themselves in the Bible.

ed. *Rural History: Economy, Society, Culture* 2 no. 2 (1991) and 3 no. 1 (1992), 134 and 132pp. (with L. Bellamy and T. Williamson)

C. Starr

St Mary the Virgin, Little Bromley, Essex (1991), 5pp.

E. M. Tranter

'Early medieval settlement: problems, pitfalls and possibilities', *Derbyshire Miscellany* 12 pt 6 (1991), pp. 159-63.

M.A. DISSERTATIONS FOR 1991

Sue Bird

'Watlington, 1660-1740: a market town?'

This South Oxfordshire community is often regarded today as a large village and the dissertation examines, in the light of the criteria of Clark and Slack, the justification for an urban status with special reference to the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. A variety of sources, including hearth tax returns and the Compton Census, was used not only to estimate the town's population throughout the period but also to rank it on a county and regional basis in order to give an indication of its significance beyond the parish boundaries.

Close examination of parish registers and quarter sessions records enabled the occupational details of virtually the entire male head of household population to be established for 1705. The wealth generated by the population was scrutinised on a county basis *via* the hearth tax and at a local level *via* probate records and a parochial poor rate listing to gain some idea of the social structure as well as the economic reality behind contemporary comments. Specific connections beyond the parish boundary were analysed by an examination of places of origin for individuals recorded in the parish registers; a definite bias towards the Chilterns and London was revealed. Probate records were re-examined to reveal other urban characteristics, most notably an extremely active land market, as well as participation by the population in the rights and royalties of the manor. Finally the visual evidence of prosperity and urban expansion was used to support the contention that the period

scrutinized represented the apogee of what was indisputably a small market town.

Chris Draycott
'The Soke of Peterborough.'

This study begins with a discussion of the nature of a 'soke', its functions, early-medieval use and similarity to ancient land-units. These general observations are followed by a description of the Soke of Peterborough, its extent and the importance of the indications which suggest that, at its inception, it was larger than the area between the Welland and the Nene which bore the historic title until its assimilation into Cambridgeshire in 1974. The various names by which the Soke's caput was known in medieval times are then discussed and their significance examined. There is a lack of detailed documentary evidence concerning the Soke of Peterborough in the Anglo-Saxon period. Its authentic charters, though useful, are few and its foundation manuscripts are unreliable: thus is research hampered and understanding clouded. The chronological setting of these problems and a description of the classes of evidence to be used in tackling them lead into the two main parts of the investigation. The picture of the Soke which the Domesday Survey entries present is the subject of Part 1. The territorial arrangements which are discussed include the ecclesiastical and hundredal divisions. In Part 2 settlement patterns and relationships, place-names and archaeological evidence are examined, to illuminate what lies behind the late Saxon arrangements within the Soke. Some possible solutions to the problem of territorial origins are postulated, with particular reference to certain of the minor land-units of the Tribal Hidage. The study concludes with a description of the area's relationships to neighbouring land-holdings and with comparisons between the Soke of Peterborough and other sokes elsewhere in England.

Susan Harris
'Some aspects of education and society in Market Harborough, 1869-1913, as seen through school logbooks.'

Market Harborough, a small town set in a prosperous agricultural district on the Leicestershire-Northamptonshire border, possesses a broad High Street once regularly blocked by cattle on market days and during the April and October fairs, until a market built elsewhere in 1903 removed this reason for two of the children's holidays. This was one of the details to emerge from the mine of information discovered in the logbooks of the town's National and British schools, whose managers were mainly drawn from the devotees of the dignified neo-classical Congregational Church and the lofty-spired Anglican Church which still stand on the same street.

This dissertation attempts to discuss the development of education in the schools and the evolution of the town's social activities during the period between 1869 and 1913. The particular aspects of education examined are the obsession with attendance figures and government inspections, the training of teachers and the struggle to provide adequate accommodation at a time of population growth. The arrival of greater professionalism and bureaucracy in the education service is also noted. Reasons given for pupils' absences (and occasionally lesson content) reveal much about the town's interests and activities in the period, ranging from agricultural shows to church-sponsored excursions, from the celebration of royal events or Empire Day to the local importance of the temperance movement. Farm work apparently kept few children away. Another cause for non-attendance and school closure was the amazingly frequent outbreak of illnesses such as scarlet fever and measles. The New School Health Service, initiated locally from 1910, busied itself diagnosing physical defects, though despite good cooperation between school and doctors, small progress seemed to have been made in eliminating or improving overall health before 1914.

W. F. G. Hayes
'The working poor in mid-nineteenth-century Torquay.'

The rapid development of Torquay as a fashionable Victorian watering-place brought not only the rich and famous to the town, but also large numbers of workers. The resort could offer skilled and unskilled employment at a time when most of Devon was suffering from a decline in its traditional agricultural, cloth-making and paper-making industries. This study investigates aspects of the lives of the working poor who lived in the back streets of the town out of sight of the wealthy occupants of the terraces, crescents and villas situated on the hills. By using enumerators' books from the 1851 census and local directories it is possible to establish a migratory pattern and an occupational structure. Action (and the lack of it) by the religious denominations to encourage the poor to attend church and chapel is examined both in the provision of places of worship and the establishment of Sunday schools. The work is also concerned with the role of the churches in the establishment of day schools long before local boards were set up in 1870. A detailed analysis is made of housing, disease and public health, revealing conditions of squalor hardly to be associated with a town famed for the beauty of its landscape and its health-giving properties. The controversy over the publicity given to the cholera outbreak in 1849 is discussed, with evidence provided by contemporary local newspapers.

Judith Hodgkisson
'Changing standards of living in the smaller house in the Northampton area, 1850-1940.'

This dissertation is based on a photographic study made between 1984 and 1991 of unmodernised, mainly three-bedroomed terraced town houses, with

the aim of analysing the facilities provided when the houses were built. It begins with a discussion of urban housing in England in the early nineteenth century, and developments such as improvement acts which affected the exterior appearance and floor plan of houses. The next section deals with the development of Northampton in the early nineteenth century and prosperity resulting from the expansion of the shoe trade. Because there was employment for both men and women, incomes were good enough to ensure that there was little demand for low grade housing. Although the sample used as evidence of change within the home was small - only sixteen houses being fully recorded - they were reasonably widely spread across the town; there were also two examples outside the urban area. These last were, however, the only examples found between 1984 and 1991 which had had little or no structural changes since they were built. The next section looks at the provision of services in Northampton - water supply, sanitation, lighting. The conclusion is then drawn that although Northampton was similar to many other manufacturing towns, standards were good as employment levels were high, and it was possible to see some noticeable improvement in basic facilities over the period between 1850 and 1940.

T. E. Owen
'Poor relief and parliamentary enclosure in Leicestershire, 1750-1830.'

Arguments about the effects of parliamentary enclosure have, generally, fallen into two categories. On the one hand the Hammonds and their followers maintained that enclosure was a totally negative process whereby landowners 'confiscated' open and common lands. Consequently, small farmers, cottagers and squatters were driven off the land. On the other hand Chambers and Mingay argued that enclosure produced positive developments including population growth, expansion of the volume and regularity of employment and an increase in smallholders. More recently these generalised claims have been challenged by historians such as Crafts and Snell who produced detailed studies showing, for example, that population growth and increased employment did not necessarily follow parliamentary enclosure.

This dissertation attempts to examine in detail some of the social and economic consequences of parliamentary enclosure in seventeen Leicestershire parishes during the period between 1750 and 1830. The research focussed on parish records and, in particular, the papers and accounts of overseers of the poor. Figures for annual poor relief expenditure for up to ten years prior to, and ten years following, enclosure were compiled for each of the seventeen individual parishes. The parishes were grouped according to common patterns of poor-relief expenditure at the time of their enclosure. The statistics for each of the four resulting groups were then analysed in relation to factors such as parish size, soil type, farming practice, percentage of the parish enclosed, landownership patterns, population figures, customary rights in existence and employment/occupation statistics. The resulting analyses assess the relative significance of the noted factors in contributing to variances between parishes in poor relief expenditure. The dissertation's conclusions provide an indication of the importance of parliamentary enclosure in producing social and economic change in both individual parishes and groups of parishes.

Cynthia M. Thomas
'Population, poverty and partible inheritance in Rothley, 1660-1670: a century of economic and social change in a Leicestershire village.'

Rothley, a village in West Goscote Hundred, lies in the Soar valley along the route from Leicestershire to Derby and Nottingham. It was one of the places where framework-knitting and wool-combing were to give much needed employment in the eighteenth century to those who could no longer sustain themselves from the land. Following the Dissolution, the manor and soke of Rothley were purchased eventually by the Babington Family, in whose hands they remained until 1845, and many interesting documents relating to the place survive among the Babington papers from Rothley Temple. Some of this evidence was used, together with parish registers, hearth tax returns and lists of freemen and apprentices, to study Rothley under the headings of population, material life and agriculture and to compare it, where possible, with the Leicestershire village of Wigston Magna, explored by W. G. Hoskins in *The Midland Peasant*.

The main difference between Rothley and most other Leicestershire villages was the survival of the custom of partible inheritance, rather than the more usual primogeniture. In Rothley, where some landholdings were divided beyond what was possible for subsistence, more people had right of settlement than there were waged labour opportunities, encouraging the development of proto-industrial activities. High exemption rates from the 1670 hearth tax returns, and the marriage tax listings of 1695 which showed half the village in receipt of alms, reflected poverty. Parish register figures revealed change in the seasonality of marriages over the period under study, indicating transition from a community dependent upon the farming year to one with additional types of occupations. These created opportunity for earlier marriage, resultant larger families and eventual enlargement of the village in the second half of the eighteenth century.

R. Stuttard
'People with small means and high hopes: co-operation in Leicester, 1860-1990.'

This dissertation seeks to meet the following aims: to provide materials and observations on the main areas of co-operation in Leicester; to provide a

map of Leicester showing the extent of co-operative work and to pinpoint the areas and complexes where co-operation was active; to provide photographic and oral records of co-operative shops, warehouses, factories and workers; to use the minutes of two co-operative initiatives to give a picture of their activities; to discuss recent co-operative endeavours and to seek to assess their possible future influence. All of these topics are set in the context of the expanding City of Leicester itself and are related to the changes that have taken place during the last 130 years. These aims were met by a general introduction outlining the development of co-operation in Leicester as shown by the activities of the Leicester Co-operative Society, the Co-operative Wholesale Society and the Co-operative Productive Federation. The introduction also highlights the neglect of co-operative history by most local and national historians.

There are five chapters. The first two deal with Leicester as a co-operative metropolis. They pinpoint co-operative locations and the recollections of some of the people who lived and worked in them. These range from an elderly woman talking about her home, as a young girl, in the Stable House in South Bond Street to the celebrations which marked the development of the local society, the C.W.S., and the efforts of co-operators linked together by the C.P.F. in printing, hosiery, housing and the boot and shoe trade. Chapter 3 outlines the united efforts of past co-operators to establish co-operatives in the town. Chapter 4 uses thirty hours of taped interviews dealing with a range of experience at work, training and involvement with the Trade Union movement. The last chapter outlines the beginning of a Welfare Fund at the L.C.S. Dairy, the setting up of the Co-operative Development Agency, and the development of a Credit Union project with help from the City and County Councils. Co-operation is a movement to meet people's needs. Future needs will be met as they are being met now and have been in the past. Acknowledgements are paid to numerous co-operators and co-operative organisations. The dissertation is indeed the result of tremendous co-operative encouragement and assistance.

Lorne Ali
'The social and economic history of the Hope Valley from the mid to late nineteenth century.'

Kristin Nurss
'The transmission of culture: process of naming, marriage and death in the colonial Chesapeake.'

(Note: some of these dissertations have not yet been approved)

ANNUAL FIELD COURSE, 1992

Authorized Version

Becks, gills and fells provided a lively *divertimento* and Skiddaw alternately glowered and beamed as this year's M.A. students pondered the real Cumbria. Putting aside motleyness, vegetarianism and periodization as stumbling blocks of unity, we did as Cumbria has, and 'got on with it'. Why else, in rain and freezing sleet, would we gather around a stone in the middle of a sheep field and count ourselves fortunate, or fight the wind to a bleak atmospheric Castlerigg and allow ourselves to stand mystified? We learned to see with alacrity and to avoid tourist spoonerisms despite 'magical' lakes, 'majestic' fells and 'fascinating' Roman walls. No potted history for we modern-day invaders, but physical hands-on experiences which, though they sometimes blurred our lenses, convinced us for ever that history happens locally and makes cultural humus. What Philistine could step within religious houses such as Greystoke or Carlisle and not be uplifted by spiritualized artistry? Hogbacks became friendly, symmetrical and recognizable, and the debateable land purposeful and measurable. Maybe next year somebody will guess what Appleby is redolent of, find Cumwhitton and, passing at speed, spot all dropped lintels and Baroque pediments. We puzzled over Bewcastle's cross, admired Dorothy's cliometrical expertise, were amazed at Kate's place-name knowledge, at Philip's penchant for pre-dawn photography, and by the quantities of food and drink we all needed to ward off hypothermia. Tea shops *en-route* to intricacies of urban development side-tracked all but the dauntless, as did toffee and the elemental joy of marzipan fudge. Hitherto confined to oblivion, the concept of *PAYS* revived as a useful tool when these wretched things emerged as inescapable infrastructure of the region. Sellafield's downside provided us with a sobering consideration or two. Extrusions of war whether in Roman precision, ubiquitous pele towers or camouflaged airports were satisfactorily subsumed into present landscape through modern agriculturists' use and the meanderings of ruminating cows. The industrial revolution, which fired Cumbria's west for a brief sensational burst fifty years ahead of the rest of Britain, has long subsided. Today Whitehaven awaits a contemporary Lowther dynasty with entrepreneurial inventiveness, wealth and vision. Twentieth-century countryside, which revealed its layering to us, is also the fabric upon which Cumbria's future will be built. We can but hope that it will continue to be a living landscape and escape sanitization and pre-packaging concomitant with the worst of modern tourism. May it continue to provide an interface for Leicester's Local History M.A. students, preserve the old as a meaningful part of the present, and always be a place where people can live and work creatively.
Maureen Massam

The Ballad of Lazonby Fell

The first day of the field course,
Charles left us all alone;
With his notes which we learned off by heart.

The second day of the field course,
Charles led us to the wall;
We saw two Roman forts,
With his notes which we learned off by heart.

The third day of the field course,
Charles set us all a test;
We saw three village greens,
Two Roman forts,
With his notes which we learned off by heart.

The fourth day of the field course,
Charles trudged us through the rain;
To see four Viking hogbacks,
Three village greens,
Two Roman forts,
With his notes which we learned off by heart.

The fifth day of the field course,
We braved the snowy dome;
And saw five disused mines,
Four Viking hogbacks,
Three village greens,
Two Roman forts,
With his notes which we learned off by heart.

The sixth day of the field course,
Charles chivvied us along,
To see six Solway towns,
Five disused mines,
Four Viking hogbacks,
Three village greens,
Two Roman forts,
With his notes which we learned off by heart.

The seventh day of the field course,
Charles hit the industrial trail;
We saw seven ships in dock,
Six Solway towns,
Five disused mines,
Four Viking hogbacks,
Three village greens,
Two Roman forts,
With his notes which we learned off by heart.

Marion Aldis and chorus

BOOKS WRITTEN BY FRIENDS

Bruce S. Elliott, *Irish Migrants in the Canadas: A New Approach* (McGill-Queen's University Press and Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University of Belfast, 1988. xvii + 371pp. £16.50).

This study investigates the chain migration of people from North Tipperary and adjacent Shannonside parishes in Offaly, Clare and Limerick to various communities in Canada during the nineteenth century. By tracing the movements and economic lives of nearly 800 families, both at home and after their arrival in Canada, it is able to explain emigration in terms of the actual conditions prevailing in a specific region. It also shows how emigration and internal migration were incorporated into the family economy as strategies for providing for the rising generation. Migration thus emerges as a rational family decision, not as the last resort of the desperate. The book's main focus is on Protestant families, although there are also sections on the major Tipperary Catholic communities in Ontario. The analysis of social and economic conditions in Shannonside illuminates the problems faced by members of all faiths at every level of society. Accounts of town and village foundations, of the dislocations of the Famine years and of the tensions in rural society provide much new material of interest to Irish historians and social historians studying migration. Readers familiar with the Leicester School of English Local History will find evidence of its influence in these pages. The exploration of settlement patterns, village morphology and contrasting communities, and the application of the open and close estate typology, are legacies of the author's time at Leicester on the M.A. course between 1977 and 1978. Friends may also be interested to note how the determination of a migration field helped to delineate a social region.

Steph Mastoris, *Around the Welland Valley in Old Photographs* (Alan Sutton/Leicestershire Museums, 1991. Available from Leicester Museums Service, £7.95).

This book looks at the topography, economy, life and tradition of the upper part of the Welland Valley through the eyes of many photographers working during the last hundred years. The area covered straddles the first thirty miles of the Welland's river valley, extending from Naseby and Husbands Bosworth in the west, to Great Easton and Rockingham in the east, and from Kibworth in the north to Kelmarsh in the south. This border country - part in Leicestershire and part in Northamptonshire - has formed a discrete economic and social entity for centuries, largely due to the influence of the pastoral type of agriculture practised here until the 1940s, and the influence of Market Harborough, the only sizable town, which lies at the heart of the area. Most of the photographs which make up the book form part of the collection of the Harborough Museum, a branch of the Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service. Although the Museum began life in 1982 with a collection of historical photographs accumulated by the local historical society, the past few years have seen extensive additions to its holdings. Many of these have been donated, but even more have been actively sought by staff from personal family collections, and copied while on short-term loan to the Museum.

In general, the book has been designed to complement an earlier volume, *Around Market Harborough in Old Photographs*. Whereas that work dealt

to a large extent with the town and its industries, this one concentrates on the surrounding villages and local agriculture and rural trades. Both books try to tell the story of people and their interaction with local places and events, but this volume examines community life more extensively. Viewing images of past life is an emotive experience which often engenders a frustration with the present. It is hoped that the interpretation offered with these photographs will diffuse such nostalgia. Many details have been culled from oral tradition still preserved amongst senior members of the village communities and this information suggests that much of the change recorded here has been definitely for the better. The large number of photographs of the past century should not blind us into thinking of earlier times as an idyll, unchanging and lacking social or economic problems. Change is the very process of history and we should just be grateful that (as was not the case with earlier social revolutions) photography has been available to record at least some of the making of modern life.

Rosemary Leamon, *Historic Landscape of Shaw: A West Berks. Manor* (available from the author, Short Acre, Brimpton Common, Reading, Berks. RG7 4RY, £3.95 + 50p. for postage).

Shaw was a small manor on the southern edge of the Berkshire Downs on the north side of Newbury, separated from it by the River Lambourn, a tributary of the Kennet. Most of the documents derive from periods when the manor was held by Winchester College, the Dolmans, the Duke of Chandos and Sir Joseph Andrews; the tithe and estate maps helped elucidation. Each chapter portrays an aspect of the landscape: the boundaries, one of which follows an Anglo-Saxon charter bound mapped by the author; archaeology of which there is little of note; woods from the medieval to the modern period giving names and acreages; farming, showing evolution from messuages to tenant farms and land use which still reflects the influence of relief, drainage and soils; settlement, referring to the medieval manor house whose site is unknown and the present Shaw House, completed in 1581 by Thomas Dolman, a Newbury clothier; the site, shape, and industries of Shaw village, influenced by the river. Tanneries were important in the village for about 170 years and information from inventories casts light on the houses and wealth of the tanners. The text is illustrated by aerial photographs, bar graphs and extracts from documents, maps and plans. Of particular interest are the plans which show changes in the formal gardens and pleasure canals during the eighteenth century. These are no longer visible having been replaced by school buildings, sports facilities and road works.

LOCAL HISTORIANS IN THE MUSEUM WORLD

Who are the Coventry Kids?

The editor has asked me to write a few words about the work I do at the Herbert Gallery and Museum in Coventry in order to prove that M.A. students have or are capable of getting gainful employment. Being employed by a local authority is hardly 'gainful', but at least I'm getting the chance to do the sort of work I want, which, in a nutshell, is to help local societies come to an understanding of themselves. This understanding is achieved by the creation of a partnership between the Museum and the local people which seeks to define the local society as it is now and to unravel the historical process by which it has come to its present state. It seems to me that most local authority museums are uniquely placed to do this and that the benefits would be tremendous. An enormous amount of knowledge would be gained, for example, which would further the understanding of the history of the British people. The discipline of history would be democratised with many 'ordinary people' participating in the exploration of a subject which is of great relevance to them. Finally, a museum's exhibitions and publications, arising as they would out of distinctive local societies would themselves become distinctive and characterful. Unfortunately much of museum work today is dictated by political dogma or professional fashion and therefore, being imposed from beyond, rather than having risen, as it were, from the grass roots, tends to be bland and artificial.

An example of the sort of work I advocate is the 'Who are the Coventry Kids?' exhibition which opened at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum on 4th April 1992 and runs until April of next year. The exhibition examines the structure of the local society by the simple device of exploring attitudes to the term of local identity, that is 'a Coventry Kid'. We did this by instigating a mass participation research project. This involved handing out one thousand questionnaires (four hundred of which were returned) and giving over seventy talks to local groups which were in fact question and answer sessions. We appeared on radio phone-in shows, local cable programmes and in the feature pages of the local press where we started a lively, indeed virulent, debate in the correspondence pages. Not only did we manage to collect a mass of material by these and other techniques, but we also alerted thousands of local people to the forthcoming exhibition. It is not really up to me to describe the exhibition, but up to you to come and see it. Suffice to say that it not only reveals people's attitudes towards the concept of the 'Coventry Kid' but also traces the reasons for these attitudes over a span of one hundred and fifty years. It describes both the historical evolution of a local society as well as its contemporary situation. It is a multi-media exhibition featuring amateur film, typed reminiscence and photographs of the city, as well as the more usual museum objects. Fortunately for all our reputations and job prospects, it

worked! Over eight hundred people attended the opening and visitor figures were up by fifty percent in the first three months. The remarks in the visitors book were not only positive but also often inordinately long, mini-essays in fact on local historical themes. It appears, then, that we struck a chord and it is this raising of enthusiasm for the study of something as rich and complex as a local society which is one of my job's main satisfactions.
Nial Adams

Yogurt Pots and all That

As a museum professional who has recently escaped from the museum world proper (after more years than I am prepared to reveal) the editor's request for an article on 'something interesting you have done in a museum recently' caused me some heart-searching. However, though I may have sought to escape museums by going into teaching, I failed dismally. These days, the establishment of collections for teaching purposes is increasingly common, and it is currently my lot to curate two of them.

Job number one is at Staffordshire Polytechnic (sorry: Staffordshire University) where I look after the grandly named Design Archive. This was established in the early 1980s. We have collections of costume and textiles - Staffordshire concentrates on 'street' fashion (Stoke-on-Trent is not exactly noted for its *haute couture*) and twentieth-century design. Most of our collections are donated by staff and students, and we acquire some weird and wonderful things. One student recently presented us with a pair of Utility fleecy-lined boots, which had been given to her by her grandmother as being currently trendy-looking. Grandmother had barely worn them because the soles were too stiff. Rebecca regretfully handed them over because, fifty years on, they were still just as uncomfortable. Another student, a reformed punk, gave us some of her collection of torn and safety-pinned black T-shirts. A member of staff discovered a very posh gas mask holder for us, made like a smart handbag with concealed false bottom. There is also a collection of small 'industrial design' items - we major in hoovers and radios, but also do a nifty line in razors, cameras, hairdryers, yogurt pots and milk bottles with advertisements on their sides. In addition we have a huge collection of magazines, ranging from *Picture Post* and *Illustrated* for our photographers, through *Wireless World* for our industrial designers and 1950s fanzines for our media studies students, to a whole range of 'down market' women's magazines for our street fashion buffs - *Woman's Weekly, Woman, Woman's Own, Home Chat, Girls Own Paper* and many more, the sort of thing that the average library does not deign to keep. Many of them go back to the turn of the century, and having been cheaply produced on poor quality paper are now often very fragile. I am always amazed by how little the format for women's magazines has changed - even back in the 1860s the formula of stories, token 'improving' articles, patterns for knitting and sewing, fashion advice, household hints, articles on childcare, readers letters and agony columns was firmly established. On the local history side we have a growing catalogue of information about fashion - well clothes, anyway - in Stoke-on-Trent, amassed by fashion history students who as part of their second-year course are expected to do a project on some aspects of the local garment trade as an (occasionally successful) way of introducing them to the use of primary sources. For the last three years it has been part of my remit to help them turn their researches into an exhibition. Two of these have reached a wider audience: 'The Edwardian Lady' went on to be shown at the Pankhurst Centre in Manchester and 'Painted Hussies' (as the pottery paintresses were described by a disapproving Victorian clergyman) was hired by a local shopping centre. At least two of the students involved have gone on to do museum studies, so it must have been a misleadingly enjoyable experience.

Job number two is much more up-market. I have a research post, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, to catalogue the Special Collection at Central Saint Martin's College of Art. The Central School of Arts and Crafts was established in 1896 as the educational arm of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, and the architect W. R. Lethaby was its first principal. The school was, and is, in Southampton Row, all of ten minutes walk from the British Museum. This, however, was not good enough for Lethaby, who set out to build up a collection of objects from which to teach his students. In true Arts and Crafts tradition he acquired early botanical illustrations, Japanese prints, illuminated capitals and illustrations cut from fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts (these cost from 2s.6d. to 30s. apiece, according to size) and lots and lots of books. Central School was noted for its printing, bookbinding and book production, and books were acquired because they had pretty bindings, unusual endpapers or interesting type, rather than for their content, so a volume of Elizabethan case law sits alongside a Greek New Testament and an incomprehensible collection of prayers in old Flemish! Over the years, the collection acquired samples of student and staff work - calligraphy by Edward Johnston, woodcuts by Eric Gill, printed textiles by Joyce Clissold, to name a few of the more famous examples. Until now no one has seen fit to make a list of the collection, which is where I come in. What really interests me now is how the collection was originally used. (Is there anyone out there who studied at Central School before the War?) When the catalogue is complete or the funding runs out (no prizes for guessing which will come first), and when I have finished my M.A., who knows, the subject might just make a Ph.D. . . . .
Pam Inder

NEWS FROM OTHER CENTRES OF LOCAL HISTORY

The Centre for Local History, Keele University

The Centre for Local History acts as a focus for work in the Keele region, both within and without the University. It comprehends a resource base with research, teaching and publishing roles. Currently the Centre has no staff of its own - indeed it even eschews its own door plaque - but membership includes active local historians in the University, the staff of the three counties which the Victoria County History has in progress in the region (Staffordshire, Cheshire and Shropshire), the staff of the regional office of the R.C.H.M.E. at Keele and other active local historians. The physical focus of the Centre is a local history library, currently housed in the Department of History, which includes the collections of Ernest Warrilow, Jim Gould and George Ewart Evans. There are close links with other cognate centres in the University, including the Centre for Life Histories.

An open-access programme leading to a Certificate in Local History has run for twenty years, with the recent addition of a part-time M.A. in Local History. An annual summer school in Latin and Palaeography for local historians attracts students from throughout Great Britain, and occasionally from further afield. A guide to reading manorial records by Denis Stuart, reflecting the experience of teaching at the school, is currently in press and a small research team of regular students is engaged in producing an edition of the chronicle of the Cistercian abbey at Croxden. The biennial Earl lecture (the text is invariably published) is the Centre's major event but there is also a seminar series, funded by the Jack Leighton Trust, which meets termly and is used to introduce scholars from elsewhere who are working on the region's history. The centre maintains its own research projects, notably a continuing programme to compile a Bibliography of Staffordshire history and, since 1989, has been able to offer a Jack Leighton Research Studentship. The current holder, Mrs Deborah Marsh, is working on courts and culture in the northwest Midlands from 1400 to 1600. The first recipient, Dr Wayne Johnson, now at the College of Ripon and St John, worked on Primitive Methodism in north Staffordshire. The importance of regional universities in supporting research on the history of the regions is tellingly illustrated by the fact that of 127 theses on Staffordshire history since 1924, some 59 were submitted at Keele. Publication plays a major role in the activities of the Centre. Three volumes in the Staffordshire Heritage Series have already been issued, the most recent a study of John and Thomas Gilbert, the canal pioneers, and a gazetteer of water mills in the borough of Newcastle. The centre also publishes *Staffordshire Studies* (formerly *North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies*).

It is hoped that the near future will bring considerable developments to the Centre. The work of the extra-mural department, with a lengthy tradition of research classes in local history and of publication, and a tenured lectureship in local history, is likely to be assimilated into the Centre. A Centre Press is a real possibility. The appointment of a modern, hopefully twentieth-century, local historian is part of current strategy papers. We may even buy a plaque!

Philip Morgan

The Centre for North-West Regional Studies, University of Lancaster

The centre was effectively founded in 1971, after a Regional Studies Panel - a cross-departmental committee of the university - had been in existence for two years. It was then recognised that the University of Lancaster needed a centre or research unit which could organise and co-ordinate regional research in the 'North-West', which was then seen to cover the old Lancashire and the Lake District. One of the Centre's earliest main research projects concerned itself with the History of Lancashire County Council to 1974, and three departments (Politics, History and Economics) contributed. Meanwhile, the centre acquired an Administrative Officer in Mrs Marion McClintock (1974), and it began to concentrate on oral history, through the researches of Dr Elizabeth Roberts, and regional demographic history. When Dr J. D. Marshall became its first full-time Director (1976), it also provided a regional focus for industrial and architectural history, and it is also worth remembering that it identified itself with literary history through its associated Cumbria Poetry Centre. Through conferences and lectures it built links with local history societies, and its then Director was in fact one of the founders of the Federation of Local History Societies in the County Palatine of Lancaster (1971). In 1978, the Centre became a teaching unit, providing an undergraduate course in the History and Archaeology of the North-West. Six years later, it worked jointly with the University of Liverpool in promoting a Local History Diploma Course. This has since flourished and has recently been taken over by the University of Lancaster, under the general direction of Dr Angus Winchester.

Meanwhile, the Centre had become effectively the University's regional publishing body from 1974, and its achievements here owe a great deal to the efforts of Mr Oliver Westall, who has been responsible for its Occasional Paper series. By 1991, this series had published its Occasional Paper No. 20, a revised edition of *Windermere in the Nineteenth Century*, a group of essays by different contributors around one theme. The intervening papers had dealt with subjects such as popular leisure in Bolton, early Quakers, traditional houses, weavers' dwellings, industrial archaeology, oral history, a local diarist, and regionally-related theses on the North-West. The most recent publications in this series, besides *Windermere*, are *A Traditional Grocer: T.*

D. Smith's of Lancaster (by Mike Winstanley) and *Reginald Farrer: Dalesman, Planthunter, Gardener* (by John Illingworth), both published by the Centre in 1991. It should be stressed that the Centre has also acted as publisher for economic and political studies in the region, notably for a major *History of Lancashire County Council.*

The Centre organises regular Study Days for local historians, and within the last two years these have dealt with topics such as the social history of transport in the region, vernacular architecture and family history. These meetings are invariably over-subscribed, and they rest on a very valuable network of social contacts - a network which is further reinforced by an institutional arrangement providing for Friends of the Centre. Those who subscribe get easy or reduced-price access to a variety of activities and publications. In addition, the Centre publishes what is effectively its own journal, *The Regional Bulletin,* which includes contributions from local historians and from diplomates in the university's course in that field.

Finally, the Centre is known as an important archive for oral history and as a unit concerned with original research in that field through the work of Dr Elizabeth Roberts, the present Director. Dr Robert's surveys of domestic and women's life in industrial towns in the North-West have found expression in her book, *A Woman's Place* (1984).

J. D. Marshall

NEWS OF RESEARCH PROJECTS ELSEWHERE

English Settlements and Landscapes in the Middle Ages

A research project under this title began in the School of History at the University of Birmingham on 1 January 1992. This is possible because of generous funding from the Leverhulme Trust. The Medieval Settlement Research Group supported the application, and assisted with the preparation of the proposal. The director of the project is Christopher Dyer. The staff are Patrick Mitchell-Fox, whose expertise is primarily historical, and Carenza Lewis, a field archaeologist on secondment from the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England. It is hoped that there will be a continuing co-operation between the project and the Commission as the work develops.

The assumption behind the project, and set out in the initial proposal, is that there has been a transformation in our understanding of settlement history in the last twenty years, and that research must continue in order to resolve some of the problems posed by recent discoveries. We now realize that the old assumptions about the origin of villages are wrong. The countryside has been occupied and utilized on a large scale since prehistoric and Roman times, and migrants from Germany in the post-Roman period were accommodated within an existing framework of settlements and fields. The mainly small settlements of the period 400 - 850 often shifted their sites. The period of village formation came later, between 850 and 1200, but large parts of the country retained - or further developed - a pattern of dispersed habitations. Throughout the medieval period and beyond, villages, hamlets and farmsteads were subject to expansion, reorganization, shrinkage and desertion.

The outstanding problems are numerous. We are unsure about the precise dates of village formation. There seem to be gaps between the desertion of small settlements (in the ninth century and earlier) and the first phases of large nucleated villages, which can often be taken back no earlier than the eleventh or twelfth centuries. Although we are aware of regions in which nucleated villages predominate, and others with a high proportion of dispersed settlement, the exact boundaries are uncertain. There is a strong assumption of a coincidence between settlement forms and types of rural landscape, such as the link between nucleated villages and regular open field systems, but the precise relationships need further investigation. The history of nucleation needs also to be connected with the development of estates, manors and peasant communities, with the growth in population and with the expansion in the market in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

This project is based on a region, the four East Midland counties of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. The first stage of the project is to map the forms of settlement together with field systems and land use, with a view to defining the zones of rural landscape and settlement patterns - the *pays* of the region to use the Leicester terminology. Maps on the same scale will record historical data on population, landlordship and taxable wealth, together with other relevant information such as place-names and soils. The aim of this part of the enquiry will be to define more closely the differences in rural landscape in an area already known to contain a considerable variety of settlement types. We can test various explanations that have been offered for the local distribution of nucleated villages, planned villages and so on. We expect to publish the results of this survey work, and hope that this will generate ideas and debates about the nature and origin of these regional variations.

The second stage of the project is based on the recognition that great advances have been made in settlement studies as a result of large scale and long term research projects at such places as Wharram Percy and Raunds. The strength of these projects lies in the large territories chosen for research, and the fruitful multi-disciplinary nature of the investigations. The excavation work at Wharram has come to an end. The work at Raunds is moving towards final publication. It is time for us to find a place where a new long term programme of research can begin. Wharram and Raunds, which have proved so successful, were

selected for initial work almost by accident. Their successor ought to be chosen more carefully. The East Midlands seems a suitable area because there are both surviving earthworks and fields under cultivation, enabling both earthwork surveys and field walking. There is a local pottery-using tradition which provides dating evidence in the early middle ages, and there are areas both of dispersed settlement and nucleated villages. Therefore the project's goal will be to define locations suitable for a future programme of archaeological, historical, geographical and environmental research. In fact it is likely that a number of places will be thought suitable, and a final decision will have to be made from a number of candidates.

Christopher Dyer

The Portbooks Programme

The Portbooks Programme is a major research initiative funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Leverhulme Trust based in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Wolverhampton. It is concerned with the study of trade and material culture in pre-industrial England and Wales and has an international reputation in the utilization of information technology in historical study. The Programme supports a diverse series of databases of free-text, structured and statistical sources, currently in excess of 50 Megabytes. these have been created in an ongoing data collection and updating process since 1982 to the extent that the Portbooks Programme is now one of the largest historical research projects in the UK.

The Programme's main sources are the coastal port books for England and Wales. These were kept from 1565 to 1799 for the 122 legal ports and major harbours as part of the national system of customs administration. Unlike the allied overseas port books, which recorded duties collected on foreign trade, their purpose was to prevent customs evasion by merchants trading, or claiming to trade between domestic ports. To this end they noted coastal vessels passing in and out of each port and itemized in detail the cargoes carried. Each entry described a single voyage, giving the date, the name of the boat and its 'home' port, the master and merchant associated with the cargo, the ports between which it was moving, and the quantities and types of goods transported. Because such documents were in essence more administrative than fiscal devices, they remain largely free from such variables as smuggling, the colouring or falsifying of cargoes, malfeasance of officials and the general delinquency of the customs system, all of which have been seen by historians to blight the reliability and integrity of the overseas books.

Since the pioneering use of coastal port books by N. S. B. Gras and T. S. Willan, historians have come to regard the source as vital for the study of pre-industrial trade. Coastal port books have been used increasingly to illustrate the economic developments of individual ports and regions and to shed light on the movement of a wide variety of goods and commodities. However, the utilization of the source has been severely constrained by the immense logistical problems of analyzing systematically the vast quantities of information it contains. To this extent, the full potential of the coastal port books to studies of English internal trade can only be realized after studies have been completed to investigate their detailed interpretation, to demonstrate their applications, and to establish nationally applicable methods for analyzing their contents through computerization.

For the past ten years, research at Woverhampton Polytechnic (now the University of Wolverhampton) has focussed on the coastal port books for Gloucester and the trade of the River Severn which they record. This work was expanded in 1988 with substantial funding from the Economic and Social Research Council and the Leverhulme Trust to examine the computerization of port books for the study of English internal trade from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries and to pursue related research. The recipients of these grants were Dr Malcolm Wanklyn of Wolverhampton Polytechnic and Dr Barrie Trinder of the Ironbridge Institute, representing a team of eight scholars who continue to contribute substantially to the Programme. The current Programme Director responsible for the continued development of the research is David Hussey.

The principal focus of the work is a comprehensive computer database of the information contained in the 170 extant and reproducible coastal port books for the Port of Gloucester between 1575 and 1765. The vast operation of data collection is now complete, and work has begun to analyze trade patterns represented in the series and to compare the database with other port books from around England and Wales. Sample databases for some of the 122 other ports and creeks are being created to assist in the design of a standard database format for similar work by other scholars. It is envisaged that this database will eventually be published in a microcomputer-compatible version on compact disc for use in libraries, record offices and educational institutions. Until such publication is possible, the database can be consulted by scholars at the University of Wolverhampton and from 1993 through the E.S.R.C. Data Archive at the University of Essex.

Research from the databases is pursuing several different themes. An annotated summary of trade through Gloucester from 1575 to 1765 is being compiled as a means of presenting selected data for ready study alongside other evidence of English trade and economic development. Case studies are being undertaken into the trade and navigation of the River Severn, the early development of the Ironbridge Gorge industrial communities, the river port of Bridgnorth, the trade in non-ferrous metals, and the traffic related to other selected commodities and industries. These are being carried out by members of the Programme team,

by postgraduate students at the University of Wolverhampton and the Ironbridge Institute, and by specialists from other institutions. The most substantial case study being undertaken is of the organization and patterns of trade in the Bristol Channel, and the extent to which these were mediated by Bristol as the regional metropolitan centre. This study is being carried out as a doctoral research project by David Hussey, funded by the Leverhulme Trust.

A *Guide to Coastal Port Books* is in the process of being compiled which will assemble evidence to address problems such as the varying reliability of the source, the kinds and quantities of traffic that may have been omitted, the interpretation of terminology, and the extent to which evidence from the port books can be used to assess the contrasting trade of different ports or to quantify comparative changes in the long-term volume and character of trade.

It is envisaged that the Programme as a whole will provide a springboard for further studies of port books by showing how the information they contain can be computerized and interpreted. In the long-term it will provide a readily accessible data resource which can be applied by scholars to a wide range of historical questions.

David Hussey

RESEARCH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
(all volunteers should write to the Newsletter's editor)

An Early Report on Leicestershire's Lost Villages

Antiquarians and county historians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries reported upon the sites of deserted villages without much surprise or curiosity, perhaps because the decay and destruction of houses was still a familiar feature of their own times. Nichols (for Leicestershire), Bridges (Northamptonshire), Dugdale (Warwickshire) and Wright (Rutland) all noted 'depopulated places', the last two even plotting them on their county maps. In the twentieth century these 'lost villages' were of course rediscovered and their historical significance and archaeological potential thoroughly explored by William Hoskins, Maurice Beresford, John Hurst and many others. In between, during the nineteenth century, very little interest was taken in England's thousands of deserted sites, apart from a few excavations made almost by chance.

A mid-nineteenth-century description, recently discovered by John Hurst, of some of the deserted sites of east Leicestershire is therefore of great interest. Thomas Wright, in the first edition of *The Celt, The Roman and the Saxon* (1852) has a late inserted footnote citing an article in the *Leicester Chronicle*. The article describes 'ancient villages of which not a fragment is now visible above-ground' and goes on to say that the 'ordinary passer-by would not notice these curious sites and the peasant may daily pass over their broken surfaces without experiencing any emotion of curiosity or interest'. Unfortunately, Wright does not give the number of the issue of the *Chronicle* in which this report was written; nor does he give details of the author except to note that he was 'a careful antiquary'. Who was the author? How much of his description of Leicestershire's deserted villages was transcribed by Wright? Was the article part of a series?

The only local set of the *Leicester Chronicle* covering the years immediately before 1852 is in the library of the *Leicester Mercury*. This call for help, on behalf of John Hurst, is for a volunteer who has time to search the relevant, and no doubt flaking, issues of the *Chronicle* in order to locate the article on deserted villages and to answer some of these questions. It is hoped that it will be possible to describe the fruits of the research in this Newsletter and in the *Annual Report of the Medieval Settlement Research Group.*

Marc Fitch House and its Early Inhabitants

Those who show visitors around Marc Fitch House are frequently asked about its early history. For whom were the two houses built? Who was the architect? What of subsequent inhabitants? At this point the guide usually tries to change the subject for, shameful to relate, we know very little of the early history of what is now Marc Fitch House. A volunteer researcher is needed to delve into the relevant census enumerator's book and into deeds and other documents. It would also be illuminating to have some information on the residents of neighbouring houses so that some idea can be gained of the social composition of the elegant surroundings of Salisbury Road before take-over by the University. Findings from the research will be printed in the Newsletter.

STOP PRESS: IMPORTANT SALE OF OCCASIONAL PAPERS

Leicester University Press has decided to sell off remaining volumes in the Occasional Papers series (except the 4th series) as a means of saving on warehouse charges. The Friends have bought up the entire stock and will be selling volumes at £4.50 each, all profits going into our funds. The volumes are: K. Allison, M. Beresford and J. Hurst, *The Deserted Villages of Oxfordshire* and *The Deserted Villages of Northamptonshire;* L. Burgess, *The Origins of Southampton;* B. Davey, *Ashwell;* H. P. R. Finberg, *The Local Historian and his Theme;* C. Hart, *The Hidation of Cambridgeshire* and *The Hidation of Northamptonshire;* J. S. Morrill, *The Cheshire Grand Jury;* K. Naughton, *The Gentry of Bedfordshire;* C. Phythian-Adams, *Continuity, Fields and Fission;* B. Schumer, *The Evolution of Wychwood;* J. Thirsk, *Fenland Farming in the Sixteenth Century.* Please send orders to Harold Fox at the Department, sending no money in the first instance. Each copy sold will help in our fund-raising.