



RURAL HISTORY TODAY

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Beresford's lost villages

The noted jurist and historian FW Maitland once said that "...a place that is mentioned in Domesday Book will probably be recognised as a vill in the thirteenth century, and a civil parish in the nineteenth century" (F.W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond: Three Essays in the Early History of England*, Cambridge University Press, 1897, p. 12).

Whether it is fair to take these words rudely from their text or allow the qualification 'probably' to act in defence, nonetheless it was a lapse in an otherwise seminal work on English history and law. Maitland had either failed to say or simply did not know that over 2,000 and perhaps as many as 4,000 places in either the Domesday Book or in later medieval records had disappeared from general view by the nineteenth century, whether at the hand of population decimation by plagues and famines, deliberate eviction by landlords, or simply a sort of withering on the vine as villages became isolated farmsteads or declined to nothing. Some places seemed to have disappeared but actually have succumbed to encroachments by urbanisation and industrial and commercial development. Milton Keynes has probably been the most rapacious devourer of places in recent times. This of course is not a new story but the development of a new website allows it to be a more accessible story than otherwise has been the case.

Whether we talk in the language of deserted medieval villages or lost villages, terms used interchangeably by many historians of the lost/deserted village/settlement change genre, nonetheless the one name that heads the list of academic studies of such landscape change is Maurice Warwick Beresford. His near pioneering work (at more or less the same time that W.G. Hoskins was also researching the incidence of, broadly speaking, village desertion) was made all the more notable by collaborations with J.K.S. St Joseph and the aerial photography they brought to bear on the palimpsest landscape of a lost past. At the same time, John Hurst the professional archaeologist and 'man from the Ministry' was working with Beresford and a veritable army of willing hands tot put the most famous of all deserted or lost village sites, Wharram Percy in the heart of the Yorkshire Wolds, on the map. The County Gazetteer of places that in 1968 made up the known or supposed history of one-time Domesday places but which were subsequently lost from sight was put together by John Sheail and incorporated in the Beresford and Hurst edited book (M.W. Beresford and J.G. Hurst, editors, *Deserted Medieval Villages*, originally Lutterworth Press, 1971, republished by Alan Sutton in 1989). It also forms the bedrock to the website which we are offering to wider public use at www.dmv.hull.ac.uk

When he died in 2005 Maurice Beresford left a not inconsiderable sum of money to the University of Hull to be used for appropriate research. Why Hull you may ask as indeed did we in 2007 when the University invited applications to use the bequest. Beresford had received an honorary degree by the University in 1997 and subsequently he deposited working papers with the University Archives. We were awarded the lion's share of the bequest in 2009 for a project to create a website of deserted medieval village sites.

We did not start from a blank canvas; the 1968 Gazetteer listed 2263 sites alongside the corresponding six figure Ordnance Survey grid references. Initially we focussed on Bedfordshire, Berkshire, and Yorkshire East Riding. By 2010 the super-structure of the database and website was in place, but only for Berkshire did we supplement the 1968 list fully by reviewing the Medieval

Continued on page 3

Above: the ruined church at the deserted village of Egmere, Norfolk. See this page.

The directors of this project, Dr Helen Fenwick, archaeologist and, Professor Michael Turner, economic historian, both at the University of Hull describe their ambitious project to produce, with the help of web designer, Richard Green and the research associates, Dr Steven Clarke, Johanna Greaves and Jayne Marsh, a website to cover all known sites of Deserted Medieval Villages in England. The project was initially funded by a bequest from the estate of Maurice Beresford and to whom it is dedicated, and our thanks also to Professors John Chartres and Chris Dyer for their support.

Also in this issue

Pathways to history – 2

The implications of extreme weather events – 4

Feedback: sheep hurdles – 5

Work in progress – 5

Reflections on watermedows – 6

A new book – 7

Forthcoming conferences – 8



British Agricultural
History Society



Swaythorpe, East Yorkshire.
(Hull University Archaeology collection – undated)

Pathways to history

Studying the number and geographical distribution of footpaths, bridleways and byways raised a number of key questions which we sought to address through fieldwork and research:

What factors have influenced the uneven distribution of rights of way across the county?

How have individual routes evolved?

Are there patterns in the 'archaeology' of routeways? The project investigated those which are sunken, those which are bounded by ancient hedgerows and those which follow or form part of parish boundaries.

What factors have been most significant in leading to the decline in the total number of routes over time?

Working with a dedicated team of volunteers allowed us to expand the scope of our fieldwork, with nearly 70 volunteers surveying a total of 265 kilometres of paths in the initial twelve months of the project. Using simple recording sheets volunteers were asked to assess the physical character of routes – width, surface depth (or indeed height), the existence and character of any boundaries, what landscape features the path connected and any known names. An immediate distinction could be drawn between the 'green lanes' – routes with clearly defined boundaries on either side – and those paths which existed as a notional right of access, but without any defined physical features – typically footpaths crossing fields.

Alongside the fieldwork element of the project, the project team and volunteers have carried out archival research exploring the development of individual routes. Initially this involved a systematic survey of relevant maps which in some parishes allowed paths to be traced back to the sixteenth century; although many

*Volunteers examining a footpath in Little Walsingham.
(Jon Gregory)*

are of course much older. It became clear that many modern footpaths had once formed part of the wider road network, in some cases until the early twentieth century. A combination of chance, deliberate closure or lack of use caused some routes to dwindle in status where others were metalled and continue to form part of the modern road network – this was a process which affected around 800 kilometres of the modern rights of way network in the county. Research also revealed that the names of individual paths and lanes might change from century to century, becoming fixed only when recorded by the Ordnance Survey in the nineteenth century. Documentary research also allowed us to investigate issues of public and private routes; distinctions which, historically, had more to do with responsibility of upkeep than issues of access.

Research has made it clear that at least in certain parts of the county there has been a marked process of attrition in the total number of routes. To investigate this the project focused initially on relatively recent developments. Norfolk's location and landscape character have made it an attractive location for military activity, and the creation of airfields and military training areas led to the closure of a number of routes. The impact of such activity is particularly marked in the south-west of the county, where the creation of the Stanford Battle Training Area during the Second World War has created a prominent 'black hole' in the modern network of roads and rights of way. Sturston, lying at the heart of the Battle Area, has the distinction of being the only parish in the entire county which contains no public roads and no public rights of way.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many routes were closed through legal means. The 1773 Highways Act made provision for a new form of road closure order, making it easier for landowners to divert or close routes they considered to be inconvenient. This 'inconvenience' in many cases arose from the proximity of a road to a mansion or park, something which is often clear on associated maps but rarely stated explicitly. Road closure orders replaced the earlier and more cumbersome process of obtaining an *Inquisition ad quod damnum*, early eighteenth-century examples of which have helped to illustrate the chronology of expansion at major Norfolk parks such as Holkham, Houghton and Raynham. The process of parliamentary enclosure also played a key role in shaping patterns seen today, through the creation of a more rationalised network, particularly in the north and west of the county where enclosure acts tended to deal with a higher proportion of the land within a given parish.

Such developments help to explain in part, why the current pattern of rights of way in Norfolk has a marked north-west/south-east split. In the claylands of the

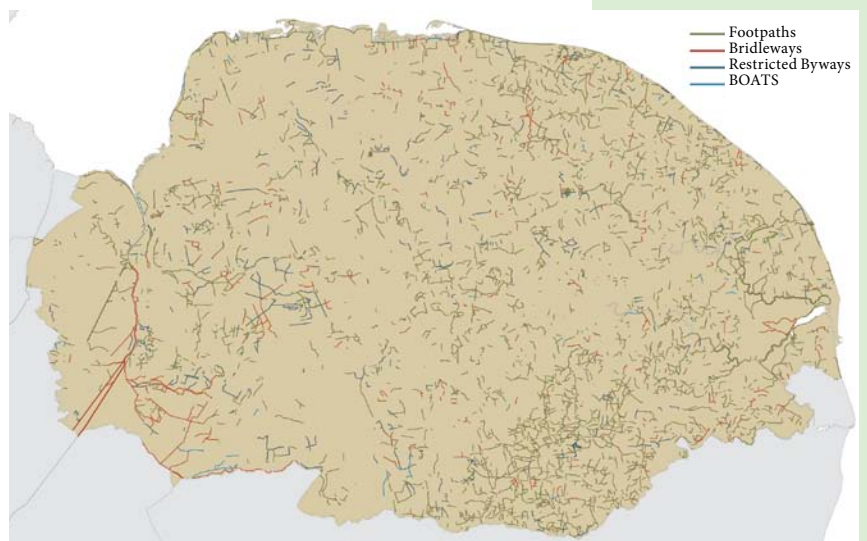
One of Oliver Rackham's definitions of 'ancient countryside' was the large number of public footpaths.

Dr Jon Gregory and Dr Sarah Spooner of the School of History, University of East Anglia describe The Pathways to History project which they led, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, which ran between February 2013 and February 2014 and sought to investigate the history and landscape context of Norfolk's public rights of way network. The work was supported by students, volunteers across the county and organisations including Norfolk County Council, the Norfolk Record Office, the Norfolk Rural Communities Council and the CPRE.



south and east of the county the absence of large landed estates and the relatively light impact of parliamentary enclosure have undoubtedly influenced the density of routes which is evident in this area today. The parish of Wacton, to the south of Norwich, contains a remarkably dense network of rights of way: 60 metres per hectare, compared to the county average of 10.5 metres per hectare. The nearby parish of Tibenham, meanwhile, boasts the highest total length of footpaths with just over 24 kilometres. Of the 14 Norfolk parishes which currently contain no public rights of way thirteen lie to the west of an imaginary line bisecting the county.

The results of fieldwork and research have been mapped and collated using GIS, allowing the patterns outlined above and various other issues to be explored further. This dataset will also be made available online through a website which is, at the time of writing, under construction. Initial results have raised new questions relating to both the longer term history of routes into the medieval and prehistoric periods, and also the more recent past in terms of the creation of the *Definitive Map* in the 1950s and the decisions which were made when some routes were metalled and others not. The project has also served as a reminder, if one were needed, of the depth of public interest in the history and use of their local landscapes.



The current network of footpaths, bridleways and byways in Norfolk. (Jon Gregory)

Continued from front page

Village Research Group (MVRG) archive in Swindon and sources and websites associated with the National Monuments Record (NMR) and locally the Historic Environment Record (HER). By 2013 we had a 'skeleton' data set for all 1968 sites but it went far beyond bare OS grid references. For Berkshire we present in addition sites added since 1968 as well as a review of those added to the list by this date. Alphabetically for Bedfordshire through to Durham, including Yorkshire (East Riding) we present the settlements known in 1968 with full descriptions or pen portraits for each of them. For all other counties we provide skeleton data sets for all 1968 sites, but without full descriptions, bibliographies, or fieldwork histories. The basic geography is the pre-1974 county structure. The ensuing dataset for all places starts with Domesday Book, then lists where available the 1291 taxation of ecclesiastical income, the Lay Subsidies of 1334, 1524, 1525 and 1543, The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381, the number of households in each Diocese in 1563, and the Census population of 1801 and 1841, all of which are evidence of settlement and habitation. These are the standard records for places, but supplemented where possible with seventeenth-century Hearth Tax returns, and details from the National Monuments Record (NMR) and the local Historic Environment Record (HER). In addition we detail fieldwork where it has been carried out, and plans, photographic and bibliographic references when available. Finally there is a Google aerial image for every village. For the 12 most complete counties we have also reclassified the type of settlement suggesting one or

other of deserted, shrunken, shifted, migrated village, or whether doubtfully suggested as a deserted village in the first place.

To our knowledge there has been no *systematic* updating of the 1968 Gazetteer. The MVRG archive contains reviews and additions such that by 1977 the identified sites stood at 2,813. Additions to that archive ceased in 1988 when over 2,000 outstanding sites were assigned to different categories, at which time the number of identified deserted villages had increased by 241, shrunken villages by 532, leaving 1,701 sites for future review. This will form a second phase of this project as well as reviewing additions to the NMR records and HERs.

Our website presents full pen portrait descriptions of 404 villages from the originally listed 2,263, with a further 80 settlements identified for Berkshire. Of these 484 sites, we class 281 as Deserted Medieval Villages, 60 as Deserted Medieval Hamlets, 48 as shrunken, 12 as migrated, 12 as shifted and 71 we suggest are doubtful. That indicates how far medieval village studies have advanced but also gives a foretaste of the mountain yet to climb. The website we offer is organic and growing as we work on producing full descriptions for all the 1968 listed sites. We now seek large funding to update and complete the website, but we also seek help from the wider community of rural history to add to or correct details where we have omitted them or simply got them wrong (for which our email address is dmv@hull.ac.uk

Spaces of experience and horizons of expectation: the implications of extreme weather events, past, present and future

This Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) project will use archival sources from local, regional and national collections along with oral history approaches, to investigate the timing, frequency and impacts of historical and contemporary extreme weather events in various case study regions across the United Kingdom.



Consideration has been given to the climatic context within which historical events and processes have taken place and the importance of climate as a factor, in contributing to harvest failure, influencing the extent of cultivated land or giving rise to periods of famine, whether that be the ‘Great Famine’ that struck Europe between 1315 and 1317, or later famines in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But what about the impact of weather extremes?

Previous articles in *Rural History Today* by Dr. John Martin, have explored the impact of ‘The bleak-midwinter of 1947’ (Issue 18, January 2010) and the ‘Long Hot Summers Revisited’ (Issue 19, July 2010). Similarly, at the spring conference David Stead (University College Dublin) delivered his paper titled: ‘Agricultural policy lessons for Ireland from the hot, dry summer of 1976.’

We are all too aware of the recent history of extreme weather events: the winter of 1947 which affected Britain and Europe more widely, the Lynton and Lynmouth flood disaster of 1952, the Boscastle flood disaster in 2004, the floods in Carlisle in 2004, and the floods, gales, heavy rainfall, tidal surges and storms which hit the United Kingdom in February 2014, dominating the national news. The widespread effects had a dramatic impact on communities, resulting in the flooding of land, damage to buildings and property with people evacuated from their homes, the tragic loss of life, the disruption of transport, with roads closed, train services cancelled and affecting other aspects of economic life.

The project, ‘Spaces of experience and horizons of expectation: the implications of extreme weather events, past, present and future’, is an investigation of extreme weather events in the United Kingdom such as droughts, floods, storm events and unusually high or low temperatures between the late 17th century and the present day, and also projecting into the future.

This three-year project, funded as part of the ‘Care for the Future: thinking forward through the past’ programme of the AHRC began in December 2013. It takes an interdisciplinary approach, seeking to provide insight into how and why such events become inscribed into the memory of a community or an individual in the form of oral history, ideology, custom, behaviour, narrative, artefact, technological and physical adaption, including adaptations to the working landscape and built environment. The project involves eight researchers based at the Universities of Nottingham, Glasgow, Aberystwyth and Liverpool.

Using a combination of archival research and oral histories the project seeks to develop a set of local and regional climate histories in order to identify periods of unusual weather and extreme events. It will investigate the scale of impact and the nature of human responses to these events and the way in which time and place-specific contexts may have influenced both impact and response. It will examine how individual and community responses to climate variability, including the recording and recollection of events, have varied over the course of recent centuries and are still changing. We are also exploring how social memory of and adaptations to past events may have influenced perceptions of relative resilience and vulnerability. An interactive website and a user friendly database (called TEMPEST: Tracking Extremes of Meteorological Phenomena Experienced in Space and Time) of extreme weather events and their implications will be created through a dialogic process, with memories and experiences of extreme events being recorded and preserved.

A set of case study regions in the United Kingdom have been identified for investigation by the project. Based on previous research, future predictions and the Department for Environment Farming and Rural Affairs’ 2012 Climate Change Risk Assessment, these areas are currently recognised to be vulnerable to climate change and extreme events. They are north, west and south Wales, the East Anglian coast, and northwest Scotland have been identified as being at risk of flooding and storm events. The Midlands and Central England region is vulnerable to flooding, water scarcity and drought. The south-west of England is projected to suffer most acutely from storm events and

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flooding as well as heat waves.

In addition to instrumental meteorological data, a wide range of original unpublished historical sources are being consulted as part of the project, such as eighteenth and nineteenth century literature concerning agriculture and rural life; farmers' diaries and weather diaries and logs; school log books; estate accounts; traveller literature; newspapers, folklore collections, topographical accounts and chronicles; works of flora, fauna and natural history and maps and surveys, photographic collections and artistic and illustrative works.

Whilst intended to inform members of the British Agricultural History Society about this exciting research project and raise its public profile, this article is also a call for support. We would encourage anyone with information which would be of interest to the project to contact James Bowen j.p.bowen@liverpool.ac.uk

The findings of research will be posted on the project website and published in a variety of formats. Conferences and public engagement events will be organised along with project partners which includes English Heritage, the international Atmospheric Circulation Reconstructions over the Earth

initiative (the Met Office) and the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers.

► For further information about the project, visit the project website and blog at the following addresses:

www.nottingham.ac.uk/weatherextremes and <http://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/weatherextremes>

The project email address is:

weatherextreme@nottingham.ac.uk

Twitter feed: @Weather_Extreme

Facebook link: www.facebook.com/weatherextremes

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funds world-class, independent researchers in a wide range of subjects: ancient history, modern dance, archaeology, digital content, philosophy, English literature, design, the creative and performing arts, and much more. This financial year the AHRC will spend approximately £98m to fund research and postgraduate training in collaboration with a number of partners. The quality and range of research supported by this investment of public funds not only provides social and cultural benefits but also contributes to the economic success of the UK. For further information on the AHRC, please go to: www.ahrc.ac.uk

British Agricultural History Society: work in progress

The BAHS is currently revising its list of work in progress. This will include research on British or Irish rural or agrarian society (social, economic, political or technical) of an historical dimension from any period up to the end of the twentieth century. The Society would like to hear from all those (students, academics and non-university scholars) who are working in any of these fields.

► For further details and the appropriate form, contact Dr Nicola Whyte N.M.Whyte@exeter.ac.uk

Feedback: sheep hurdles

It is not often that an article in *Rural History Today* excites so much interest amongst readers, but Gavin Bowie's article on 'walking and working sheep' in the January edition (no.26) did just that.

Stephen Podd queried the use of hazel for open (gate) hurdles as his Suffolk hurdle-maker father used ash, while sweet chestnut (a hard and durable wood) was the usual material in Kent.

He believes that coppiced hazel rarely exceeded one inch diameter, while three inch diameter was needed for 'gate' or openwork hurdles. Gavin Bowie maintains that hazel was the usual material in the chalks with coppice being harvested every five, seven, ten, or even fourteen years according to intended use and that the older poles were thick enough. The resulting hurdles were usually five-bar and wheat straw could be woven through to

make them windproof. These would have been used for summer movable folds. The solid hurdles were much heavier to move about and used for winter strip grazing on fodder crops and so were little used until the general introduction of roots in the eighteenth century.

The system of year-long folding in hurdles, on grass in the summer and roots in the winter was one which another correspondent, Derek Pearce, found in use when he became a farm manager near Cirencester in 1951. Gradually however, electric fencing replaced the hurdles. He 'regrets not taking photographs of the fold and making notes then. I was not very interested in history in those days'.

The hurdles shown in this picture by the Norfolk artist James Stark (1794–1859) do not conform to the designs described by Gavin Bowie of Stephen Podd. Is there some artistic license at work here?



Penning the Fold by James Stark (1794–1859)
(Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery)

Reflections on bedwork watermeadows

In this article Gavin Bowie reflects on the changing usage of watermeadows.

In two recent works Joe Bettey and Tom Williamson describe the introduction, function and environmental impact of bedwork watermeadows on the Wessex chalklands in the 17th and 18th centuries (Joe Bettey, 'The Floated Water Meadows of Wessex: A Triumph of English Agriculture' in Hadrian Cook and Tom Williamson (eds), *Water Meadows, History, Ecology and Conservation*, 2007, pp 8–21; Tom Williamson, *An Environmental History of Wildlife in England, 1650–1950*, 2013, pp 38–39).

Both historians appear to link these watermeadows with the working of the sheep and corn system in the early modern period, a link proposed by Eric Kerridge in the early 1950s as part of his belief that there was an Agricultural Revolution on the Wessex chalklands in the 16th and 17th centuries (Eric Kerridge, 'The Sheepfold in Wiltshire and the Floating of the Watermeadows', *Economic History Review*, vol 6, 1954, pp 287–88). This short note will explain why this link was not actually made until the late 18th century.

To introduce briefly the subject, bedwork watermeadows were constructed in the vales of the Wessex chalklands from the early 17th century. The construction process involved converting the boggy parts of floodplains that could otherwise be only used for summer pasture into drained and irrigated meadow land. Note for example the conversion of Twyford Moors (immediately to the south of the village of Twyford in the Itchen Valley, Hampshire) into bedwork watermeadows in the late 17th century. Work started in autumn 1670 and was completed at the end of 1672; about 100 acres of the Itchen Valley floodplain was converted into watermeadow in this project (Hampshire Record Office, Mildmay Estate, 46 M 72/E2/ff 93–94). The investment was usually paid for in 7 years, because of the increased rental value of the improved meadow pasture.

Bedwork watermeadows provided both a reliable hay crop in mid-late June, and an early spring grass growth, or 'bite', during March–April and, because of the chronic shortage of dry meadow on these chalk uplands, had a significant impact on the pastoral (grazing) part of the regional farming economy. However the necessary primary source evidence is lacking for the assumption that the practice of folding ewes and their lambs on watermeadows during the day, and on the barley fallows at night, existed since the introduction of bedwork watermeadows in the 17th century.

Moreover, it can be shown that wether flocks actually provided the spring barley fold for most of the 18th century. Edward Lisle, who farmed at Crux

Easton on the northern edge of the Hampshire downs in the first few years of the 18th century, explains how the system worked. He writes that the "principal value" of the wether flock was for folding on the fallows in preparation for sowing spring barley: "You may have the benefit of the fold for barley when it does most good ... on the fallows between the latter end of February and the middle of April, when the ewes cannot be folded". He reminds us that the ewes needed a "clean layer at lambing time, which the fallows do not provide", and also that the lambs needed fresh pasture and feed rather than be pastured on stale arable fallows (Edward Lisle, *Observations in Husbandry*, 1757, pp 179; 181–83).

Whatever the origins of the watermeadow – spring barley fold system, it can be shown that the link between the early spring grass 'bite' and the arable barley fold was not made generally until the late 18th century. In fact just at the time when the traditional form of sheep and corn husbandry was in terminal decline (principally due to the enclosure of common pasture), the practice of walking and working sheep was adapted for a new function. This innovative practice involved folding 500 'couples' (500 breeding ewes and their lambs, about 1,000 sheep) to the acre on a watermeadow during the day, from about mid-March to the end of April. The couples were then walked to and folded on an acre of barley fallow for the night, and returned to a new fold on the watermeadow next morning. Usually the barley seed was broadcast and harrowed in the same day, and the adjacent acre of fallow prepared for the next night fold. The activity was continued until the barley acreage was sown.

The traditional practice on most of the Wessex chalks was to lamb between mid-March and mid-April. However the change to using ewes and their lambs to provide the spring barley fold necessitated a shift to lambing between Christmas and the end of January. This was because the lambs had to be at least 6 weeks old when the early bite became available, and thus strong and sturdy enough to withstand being folded on and walked between the 2 folds. In practical terms this meant tupping (when the ram was let in with the ewes) between mid-August and mid-September so that the last lambs born were 6 weeks old by the end of the second week in March, the time when most watermeadows were available for pasture or folding. Thomas Davis explains that the flock was put into the watermeadows "as soon as the lambs are able to travel with the ewes" (Thomas Davis snr, *General View of the Agriculture of Wiltshire*, 1794, pp 68–69).

Thomas Davis is the first author to mention this novel practice in the first generation of the local county

Acknowledgements:

Joan Thirsk and
Ted Collins

General Views: “when folding the water meadows the sheep are penned on the barley land” (Davis 1794, p 17). He also implies that this novel practice began in the Salisbury area, south Wiltshire. However the authors of the *General Views ... of Dorset*, 1793, and *Hampshire*, 1794, simply describe the traditional practice of grazing only 4–5 couples to the acre on the spring ‘bite’, and do not connect this with the fold for spring barley. This suggests that this watermeadow – spring barley fold system originated in south Wiltshire and spread from there (J. Claridge, *General View of the Agriculture of Dorset*, 1793, pp 34–35; A. & W. Driver, *General View of the Agriculture of Hampshire*, 1794, p 19).

The couples provided a better quality of manure than wether sheep, principally because they were fed on lush watermeadow pasture during the day, and such flocks replaced wether flocks in the provision of the spring barley fold. The couples provided more urine,

the source of the nitrogen, than wether sheep, and it was claimed that such couples fed on watermeadows provided 8 bushels extra of barley per acre compared with a wether fold (Davis 1794, pp 38–39). Meanwhile the ‘early’ lambing was turned to advantage, the aim being to rear a single fat lamb that was in a forward condition to sell in June–July so that only the flock’s stock lambs remained to be looked after for the rest of the summer.

To conclude, bedwork watermeadows can be regarded as an important innovation in the Wessex chalk and vale country in the 17th century. However the lack of a link with the sheep and corn system at this time makes them less significant as evidence for an Agricultural Revolution on the Wessex chalklands in the early modern period. It should also be recognised that this new function of bedwork watermeadows was a major reason for their continued relevance in the 19th century.



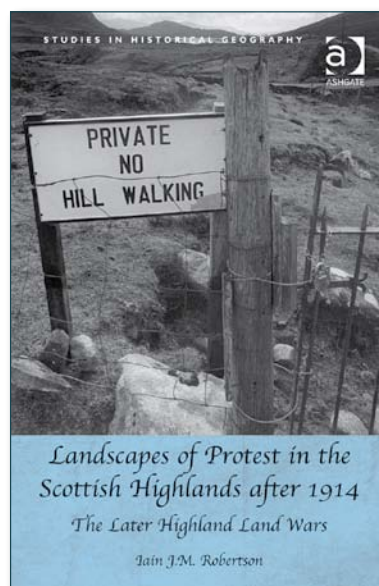
Gavin’s timely article coincides with the publication of English Heritage’s downloadable publication on watermeadows in their ‘Introduction to Heritage Assets’ series. The nine-page leaflet begins by describing the history of their development and the decline in their use in late-19th century. There then follows a description of their appearance in the landscape and a discussion of their regional distribution and variation as well as methods of dating surviving examples.

► The leaflet is fully illustrated with aerial photographs, plans, archive photographs, and details of construction. It can be downloaded at www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/criteria-for-protection

NEW BOOKS

Ian J.M. Robertson *Landscapes of Protest in the Scottish Highlands after 1914: The later Highland Land Wars*. Ashgate 2013

While the nineteenth century clearances have received much academic coverage, there has been less published on the period of protest following the First World War when returning soldiers were often faced with the same economic and social conditions that they had left. The promise of ‘a land fit for heroes’ often seemed beyond their grasp. The result was a period of protest and land raids the details of which are described in this book. However the book is far more than a chronological history of events. It concentrates on formulating explanation and interpretation from within, looking at nature/culture interactions, vernacular ecological beliefs and the dynamic and formative role of landscape. ‘This is an insightful book about landscape and power, memory and morality, politics and resistance’. As such, it is relevant to all those studying rural protest from any period and in any part of the British Isles.



FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

Historic Farm Buildings Group

19–21 September 2014, Lancashire

The HFBG 2014 Annual Conference is to be held in Lancashire on the weekend 19–21 September. It will be based in the pastoral Ribble valley around the market town of Clitheroe, with an excursion to the coastal plain. The programme will combine lectures and visits showing how Lancashire farmers seized the opportunities presented by the increasing urbanization of the historic county from the 18th to the 20th centuries. The supply of fresh milk, vegetables and potatoes became the mainstay of the region. The county is noted for the high quality of its stone buildings, and brick is well represented in the lowlands. Timber framing was formerly widespread and we shall visit both cruck and aisled barns.

Historic
Farm
Buildings
Group



► More details and booking form from blrd80@hotmail.co.uk www.hfbg.org.uk

Farmers, consumers and innovators: the world of Joan Thirsk

20 September 2014, University of Leicester

This conference at the Centre for English Local History in the University of Leicester where Joan Thirsk worked for fourteen years is intended to identify her relevance for historians now and to display new work which has been influenced and inspired by her. Applications by 27 August please.

► Further information from Professor Chris Dyer, Centre for Local History, University of Leicester, 5 Salisbury Road, Leicester, LE1 7QR
cd50@leicester.ac.uk

British Agricultural History Society Winter conference

6 December 2014, University of London

Rural Worlds in motion:
histories of migration and migrants.

British Agricultural History Society Spring conference

30 March – 1 April 2015, University of Bangor

► Details of both these conferences available on the Society's website www.bahs.org.uk

Rural History 2015

7–10 September 2015, Girona, Spain

The second congress of the European Rural History Society (EURHO). The call for panel proposals closes on 30 September 2014 and there will be a later call for papers opening 1 December 2014 and closing 31 January 2015.

► Further details www.ruralhistory2015.org

Rural History Today is published by the British Agricultural History Society. The editor will be pleased to receive short articles, press releases, notes and queries for publication.

Articles for the next issue should be sent by 30 December 2014 to Susanna Wade Martins, The Longhouse, Eastgate Street, North Elmham, Dereham, Norfolk NR20 5HD or preferably by email scwmartins@btinternet.com

Membership of the BAHS is open to all who support its aim of promoting the study of agricultural history and the history of rural economy and society. Membership enquiries should be directed to the Treasurer, BAHS, Middle Blakebank, Underbarrow, Cumbria, LA8 8HP
Email: taxcaddy@aol.com.

Enquiries about other aspects of the Society's work should be directed to the Secretary, Dr Nicola Verdon
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It is with great sadness that we learn that the Royal Agricultural Society of England has found it necessary to sell at auction on July 11th many of its treasured possessions including trophies awarded by the Society since its foundation in 1838, portraits of the founding Council and later presidents as well of other prominent agriculturalists. Many will remember working in the library at Belgrave Square and will be sorry to see its library also being dispersed. It is to be hoped that the relevant national institutions will have been able to raise the funds to purchase the more important items and keep this important evidence for a Society that has played such a significant part in agricultural change, together and in the public domain.

