

REVIEWS

John McN. Dodgson, *The place-names of Cheshire, V (2): Introduction, linguistic notes, and indices, with appendices*, ed. Alexander R. Rumble. Nottingham: English Place-Name Society, LXXIV, 1997. xxiii + 391 pp. ISBN 0 904889 54 8.

The English Place-Name Society's set of volumes on Cheshire was left incomplete by the untimely death in 1990 of their editor, John Dodgson. Dodgson began collecting materials for the survey of Cheshire as early as 1953, began publishing important articles on the county's names in 1957, and over the period 1970–81 brought out six meticulous and learned volumes—numbered I–IV, V (1:i), and V (1:ii)—which marshalled the evidence and discussed all the county's place-names, but leaving the vital introduction and indexes for the projected volume V (2). It is that volume which has now appeared, brought to completion by Alex Rumble.

The index of place-names, which occupies 176 pages in double column, makes the whole corpus of names in the earlier volumes (including the lists of addenda and corrigenda) accessible in a way which it was previously not, since—apart from an index to the street-names of Chester in volume V (1:i)—there was previously only an index to the names of townships in each volume.

Dodgson had completed a final draft of only part of the introduction when he died, covering geography and geology, the distribution of habitative and nature-names, and the Scandinavian element in the names, together with a rather brief note on field-names and a fuller, highly technical set of linguistic notes. Rumble has sensibly not tried to guess what Dodgson might have said in the rest of the introduction, but instead reprints five of his earlier articles on Cheshire toponymy: they concern the name of the great battle of 'Brunanburh' fought in 937, the English arrival in Cheshire (reprinted from these *Transactions*, volume 119), the place-names and street-names of Chester, alliterative place-names which may cast light on the English settlement, and the Welsh element in the field-names. Where appropriate there are additional notes, by Rumble or by Dodgson himself, indicating further reading or second thoughts. The volume also has a short piece by Denise Kenyon on 'The environmental background', and (folded into a pocket) a copy of the map of Cheshire parishes and townships first published by the county record office in 1987. It completes what is a fundamental and superbly executed resource for historians of the county.

Alan Crosby, *A history of Lancashire* (Darwen County History Series). Chichester: Phillimore, 1998. 152 pp. + 166 illus. £15.99. ISBN 1 860770 70 3.

The publishers trumpet this beautifully-presented book as the successor to Bagley's *History of Lancashire*, a thin and overrated book which justified none of its reprintings. As the author's earlier work would lead us to expect, this is in a different league altogether. As Alan Crosby remarks, he has the unenviable task of covering 10,000 years in 42,000 words, and this necessitates a highly selective approach to themes and arguments, especially as he is determined to enliven his text by example and anecdote, and succeeds admirably in presenting fresh material in lively style. The book is strong on what have become the traditional themes of local history: landscape, agriculture, townscape, industry, transport, religion, and administration. The illustrations, with their full and informative captions, are a particular triumph, and the author's intimate knowledge of and delight in the topographies of obscure parts of the county are evident everywhere. I particularly admired his efforts to make sense of the ill-documented medieval and early modern periods, with their clear synthesis and exposition of difficult issues. The book is an easy and at times a lively and eloquent read. It will be much enjoyed by local history buffs and Lancashire patriots.

This is, of course, qualified praise, and I move on to comment on what is missing, with the proviso that Dr Crosby is writing to the expectations of an established publisher and a defined market, and cannot be expected to transcend those expectations. As so often, the bibliography is the key to much else. Dr Crosby has listed those sources he has consulted (there are no footnotes), and a strangely eclectic bunch they are. There are more citations from the *Lancashire Local Historian* than from the wealth of debate on Lancashire themes in the major academic journals, from the *Economic History Review* and *Historical Journal* to *Northern History*. Quite astonishingly, the only worthwhile book on the cotton industry to be listed is Timmins' (excellent) *The last shift*: no Gatrell, no Farnie, none of the debate on the rise and fall of Lancashire's most famous and emblematic industry. Nor is there anything useful on Liverpool, or on big themes like Chartism or women's suffrage. The interaction between society, politics, and popular culture is a non-existent theme: where, for example, is any allusion to the seminal work of P. F. Clarke, or the controversies sparked off by Joyce? There is, in fact, practically no debate at all: instead there are encapsulated judgements. Where these are as wildly subjective as the dismissal of George Orwell's *The road to Wigan Pier* as 'patronising' (p. 134), or the assumption that all popular campaigns for the franchise were fuelled solely by hunger (pp. 101–2), this is deeply worrying. Should a book of this sort really be presenting history as consensual (with the author defining the consensus) rather than contested terrain? And why is there no discussion of the problems of the county as a basis for analysis? These issues are resolved merely by a facile appeal to local patriotism, despite the existence of a considerable literature on regions and identities.

Ultimately, then, this attractive book (in so many ways) fails to satisfy. It appeals to an existing local history community, plays to its expectations and challenges none of its assumptions. A reading of J. D. Marshall's *The tyranny of*

the discrete (Scolar Press, 1997), a much more expensive and less well publicized book, would be a useful corrective, and so would perusal of the Marshall *Festschrift* edited by Edward Royle, *Issues of regional identity* (Manchester U.P., 1998). As it stands this book, with all its virtues, is a missed opportunity.

University of Central Lancashire

John K. Walton

Michael Nevell and John Walker, *Lands and lordships in Tameside: Tameside in transition, 1348 to 1642*. Stalybridge: Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council with University of Manchester Archaeological Unit, 1998. 110 pp. £11.95 pbk. ISBN 1 871324 18 1.

This book, which forms part of a series with the general title of 'A history and archaeology of Tameside', explores the development of pre-industrial society in the area, i.e. it considers the land itself, settlement patterns, the large estates with their great houses on the one hand, and humbler farms and cottages on the other. Possibly some readers, who are unfamiliar with Tameside, would dismiss it as nothing more than a political division of Manchester. They would be wrong. If there are such people, then this book certainly enlightens them for, as the preface states, 'this borough has a rich and interesting past'.

The book, which has a useful glossary and an index, both too often omitted these days, is well illustrated, and I especially liked the cartouches, each of which is printed against a buff-coloured background, making them easy to find if the reader wishes to refer back to them. Each cartouche is appropriate for a particular section of the book, and each provides illustrated explanatory notes on subjects as diverse as dendrochronology, the cruck-framed Newton Hall, and the excavations at the Haughton Green glassworks. Especially welcome was the illustrated description of the Nico Ditch, an important, but hitherto little understood, landscape boundary feature.

Publications of this type are often so technical in their language as to be barely readable and it is refreshing to find a book which brings together so clearly and competently such diverse strands of history and archaeology as documentary research, archaeological excavation, architectural studies, and topography, to mention only some. My criticisms are few. One or two photographs would perhaps have benefited from being in colour, which would have added contrast and brought out features in the landscape which are indistinct in black and white. However, this is no criticism of the authors, as doubtless it has less to do with them than with publication costs which can be prohibitive.

I think it is an over-simplification to say there are two types of ridge and furrow, namely the medieval type at 3–5m. wide, and the post-medieval type at under 3m. wide (p. 26). While I cannot speak for the Tameside area, there are in Cheshire varieties of ridge and furrow which are intermediate between the wide, curving, medieval open-field type and the narrow, very straight variety ploughed between hedgerows up to about the First World War. In addition, in the west of Cheshire at least, ridge and furrow does not always indicate past cereal production. Basically ploughed for the drainage

of the heavy clay soils, it has clearly been ploughed, and even intensified in some places, to improve the quality of pasture for grazing animals.

These criticisms do not detract materially from the quality of the work. For the general reader, it is a most interesting narrative of the development of Tameside. For the aspiring student, particularly of archaeology in its wider sense, it demonstrates very clearly how the study of landscape history should be approached. I would commend it to all students, indeed I would suggest that it should be added to the reading lists for several of our college and university courses.

Chester

Rhys Williams

J. R. Dickinson, *The lordship of Man under the Stanleys: government and economy in the Isle of Man, 1580-1704*. Manchester: Chetham Society, Third Series, XLI, 1996. Also published Douglas, Isle of Man: Centre for Manx Studies, 1997. 396 pp. £24.95. ISBN 1 859360 37 8 and 1 859360 52 1.

It is unusual that a subject potentially so extensive and significant as the Isle of Man in the early modern period has awaited proper academic study in the twentieth century for so long. In some ways this is explicable: the alleged shortage of evidence, or at least easily accessible evidence, and the centralist perspectives of much of this century's historiography, have been off-putting. Roger Dickinson has therefore shown remarkable persistence and clarity of vision to produce this monograph on Manx government and economy.

Dickinson provides an account of the system of government and administration under the Stanleys, describing the emergence of the deemsters and the keys as the guardians of Manx law and representatives of its community, on the one hand, and the lord's officers, such as his lieutenant, receiver, and water bailiff on the other. The majority of the work, however, deals with the Manx economy. Dickinson uses the administrative records of the island's customs system to demonstrate that the Manx economy was largely devoted to agriculture and herring fishing. These provided the majority of exports; manufacture was almost exclusively for domestic consumption, with imports required to supplement it.

While the material on Manx government is undoubtedly the best available to date, surpassing in its sensitivity to the potential for change and the invention of custom in the roles of the Manx office holders the works of A. W. Moore and others, it is in this treatment of the Manx economy that this work is ground-breaking. While increasing attention has been paid in recent years to the 'British' perspective this has tended to be restricted to the political and, to an extent, social connections between the component elements of these islands. Dickinson's account therefore provides detailed evidence to support a view of the Manx economy as, effectively, colonial. In many ways, therefore, this study suggests a relationship between Man and England that accords with the model advanced more than twenty years ago by Michael Hechter in his book *Internal colonialism*.

If there is a limitation to the account here it is dictated by the source material. Dickinson's emphasis is on connections between England and

Man. The links between Man and Scotland and Man and Ireland receive less treatment as there is little surviving evidence of customs administration there. The material does, however, force us to ask questions. There are remarkable discrepancies in the amounts of leather exported from Man and imported to England from the island. The likely conclusion is suggested by evidence provided by Dickinson that Scottish merchants were active in Man. The island occupied a key position in the Irish Sea at a crucial nexus for trading, social, and political connections between Ireland, Scotland, England, and Wales. One of the fascinating continuities in Manx history was that it remained more Scottish than English, whatever its ultimate political alignment. Roger Dickinson has, therefore, opened up a remarkably productive vein in the history of these islands.

University of Huddersfield

T. J. Thornton

Mona Duggan, *Ormskirk: the making of a modern town*. Stroud: Sutton, 1998. 236 pp. + 53 illus. £12.99 pbk. ISBN 0 7509 1868 3.

This is an interesting, readable, and appropriately illustrated book about Ormskirk during the years 1660–1800. Ormskirk was not a remarkable place, growing in size from not much more than 1,000 people to about 2,500, just one among many small English market towns which failed to take off in the industrial age. In many ways its story was typical, and the author is careful to locate her study within the debate about the vitality of urban life in the period and to test and where necessary to challenge the generalizations which historians have made on the basis of other and often larger places. Throughout the book there is an authoritative mixture of national scene-setting and local detail, both of what was commonplace and with an eye for what made Ormskirk distinctive. Much of the evidence comes from the rich archive of the Stanley family, earls of Derby and lords of the manor of Ormskirk.

The town's economy fits well into known national patterns of growth in both wholesale trades and specialization in retail shops, though the evidence here is not good enough to allow for close dating or meaningful quantification. Ormskirk's local specialities were marketing hemp and flax, selling potatoes and fish, making linens, fustians, and (from the early eighteenth century) silk, producing soap and rope, and an interesting but failed sugar-boiling enterprise, showing that the town was influenced marginally by the growing Atlantic economy as well as more obviously by farming in its hinterland, the rich mosslands of south-west Lancashire. After 1750 the rise of nearby Wigan and especially Liverpool began to squeeze Ormskirk, drawing away entrepreneurs and professional men such as lawyers.

Ormskirk's religious situation was distinctive, since it had large numbers of both Roman Catholics and—at least in the earlier part of the period—Presbyterians, but without falling prey to the excesses of partisan politics that bedevilled some larger corporate towns. The Stanleys were always a significant influence in religious matters, as in other aspects of the town's life. The early spa just outside the town at Lathom, for example, flourished

and began to attain a wide reputation while the Stanleys promoted it, then fell into obscurity when they lost interest. The races also benefited from Stanley patronage, but were also perhaps for a time a focus for Lancashire's Catholic and Jacobite gentry.

The book is divided into conventional thematic chapters—economic change, trades and occupations, townscape, Anglican church, dissenters and Roman Catholics, education, cultural life, and leisure—but it is far more than a pious local compilation. While delighting Ormskirkians with its richness of local detail, it will also provide much food for historians of other towns to chew on. Few of the Ormskirks of early modern England have yet found a local historian as capable as this one.

University of Liverpool

C. P. Lewis

Emmeline Garnett, *John Marsden's will: the Hornby Castle dispute, 1780–1840*. London: Hambledon Press, 1998. 224 pp. + 16 illus. £25 hbk. ISBN 1 852851 58 9.

There is nothing as powerful as death (or perhaps the thought of inheriting large sums of money after a death) to bring out the worst and the best in people. Equally, there has perhaps been no period like Victorian England in which wills have been so hotly disputed and in which the competence of testators, the interests of families, and concerns about undue influence have been so carefully dissected both in the ecclesiastical courts and in the national press.

As Emmeline Garnett ably demonstrates in *John Marsden's will*, Dickens' satirical caricatures of early Victorian lawyers and descendants hovering (and indeed arguing) around the deathbed waiting to reap suitable financial benefits were solidly rooted in contemporary reality. Garnett's story revolves around the life and death of John Marsden, who died in 1826. Marsden had inherited large amounts of money and real estate (such as Wennington Hall in the Lune valley region of Lancashire) when his brother Henry had died forty-six years earlier. Apparently suffering from some form of mental impairment (referred to often by witnesses as 'imbecility'), Marsden relinquished the management of the estates in Lancashire and elsewhere to his brother's servant George Wright, who also happened to be the lover of Marsden's aunt. Over the course of several years, Wright's grip on the estate tightened: he apparently manipulated Marsden's contacts, opinions, and transactions; he increasingly dictated how and when money was spent; and, in the 1790s, he organized the sale or rent of much of Marsden's estate in order to purchase the prestigious Hornby Castle.

Disliked by many in the neighbourhood, Wright's popularity diminished further when he appeared as the major beneficiary under the terms of Marsden's will. Wright's claim on the estate was immediately challenged by one of the few surviving relatives of Marsden's close family, Admiral Sandford Tatham, who argued not only that he was the rightful heir at law but also that Wright had exerted undue influence on the vulnerable John Marsden in order to secure the will and codicil in his favour.

Drawing on an enviably rich array of primary material, such as the witnesses' depositions and letters that the author discovered in eight large tin boxes in Hornby Castle itself, Garnett neatly narrates the family and local background to the dispute. In addition, she clearly traces the course and outcome of the various court cases that occupied judges and juries (and indeed the press) between 1830 and 1836. Although Garnett perhaps pays insufficient attention to the precarious nature of mid-nineteenth-century medical understandings of imbecility or to the political impact of contemporary legal preoccupations with undue influence and testamentary capacity, this is a compelling and fluent account that carefully explores a prominent contested will case within the context of both local and national concerns. In doing so, Garnett's work strikingly demonstrates not only the importance of grounding research in a comprehensive archive but also illustrates how local history can inform the research of social historians more generally.

It would perhaps be inappropriate to disclose precisely the eventual outcome of the various family arguments, legal manoeuvres, and trials. Suffice it to say that, according to Garnett, the result not only gratified local anxieties but also appears to have satisfied the author's sense of justice. While Garnett's evident partiality in the cause bestows a vigorous and intense momentum on the narrative (which is to be welcomed), it also leaves a number of unanswered questions, particularly about the validity of parochial affiliations and, more urgently, about the appropriate care of people labelled as 'imbeciles' in this period. Although Wright undoubtedly manipulated the socially inept Marsden, it is striking that none of the other protagonists contributed to Marsden's care.

Although a deeper, more balanced, analysis of such issues would have been useful, John Marsden's will is a fine reconstruction of a compelling episode in the history of Lancashire.

University of Exeter

Mark Jackson

Philip J. Hudson, *Coal mining in Lunesdale: an introductory study into the history of coal mining in the valley of the river Lune and its tributaries in north-west England*. Settle: Hudson History, 1998. 304 pp. £15.00 pbk. ISBN 0 953364 30 5.

This volume, published by the house in which the author is a partner, is manifestly a 'labour of love' and exhibits many of the qualities and a few of the limitations that characterize such works. The author disarms much criticism in his introduction by stating his intention, 'in the absence of any standard academic work on this topic . . . to include as much of my findings and interpretation as possible for the mining enthusiast and industrial archaeologists, whilst at the same time hoping to provide an account that is informative and interesting for the general reader'.

The present reviewer might possibly qualify as a mining enthusiast though not as an industrial archaeologist and probably as something rather different from a general reader: an economic historian with a socio-cultural inclination. Mr Hudson—although self-evidently both a mining enthusiast and an industrial archaeologist—starts from the standpoint of a historian of

landscape and this is mostly very much 'history on, or perhaps, under, the ground'. But that is not to deny the value to other kinds of historians of the painstaking identification of sites that he has undertaken. For these sites are often the only evidence of the sort of small-scale economic activity the significance of whose role at a particular time and at local level is all too easily overlooked by historians in search of a broader thesis. In most of the area covered by the study the coal extracted was used primarily for lime burning, either as mined, or converted into cinders, the rudimentary form of coke. It was not of a quality worth transporting any distance to supply a wider market, either domestic or industrial. As the writer himself concludes (p. 281), 'the mining sites recorded above were never very extensive or productive, and never employed many hands or played a very important role in the local economy. Many of the mines were often isolated, difficult to access and work, the coal seams were very thin and the coal got was usually very unsuitable for general use.' Nevertheless, they were part of the functioning of the local economy in the decades that preceded canal and rail access and Mr Hudson has alerted us to this fact.

Apart from this central core of site identification across the region, the book is clearly based on several overlapping but different areas of research, some of them probably spin-offs from Mr Hudson's 1994 M.A. thesis on the landscape and economic development of Quernmore forest, part of the region covered by the book. For this reviewer the most fascinating material is that derived from a copy of the unpublished diaries of George Smith, the mining agent for the extensive Hornby estate in the 1820s and 1830s. This material, supplemented as it is by references to the Hornby estate papers (which appear to be unaccountably difficult of access), would have been worth a study in its own right. Unfortunately the layout of the present volume limits the use to which it can be put. The identification of the families involved in Lunesdale mining—a subject introduced almost apologetically in the final chapter of the book—is also one which would benefit from a more systematic treatment within the social, cultural, and economic context of the communities in which these people lived and worked.

It is one of the problems of aspiring to appeal to a very diverse readership that you risk appealing to none of them in particular. That is hardly the case here. Clearly Mr Hudson is a well established and well respected figure in the region about which he writes. For those who know him it will be a pleasure to see the fruits of his labours in print. For those who live in the area or visit it, the book will add another layer of meaning to the contours of the landscape. For bearers of the family names examined in chapter eleven there will be a new light thrown on their antecedents, and for those interested in coal-owning and comparative mining history there are those tantalizing diary references.

It is completely understandable and laudable that Mr Hudson should have wanted to publish this painstakingly collected material. He is his own best critic and it would be nice to think that there will be other researchers ready to fulfil his expressed hope that his 'account will encourage others to take the work forward', even if that means following up aspects only touched upon in the present book.

John Walker and Michael Nevell, *The folklore of Tameside: myths and legends*. Stalybridge: Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, 1998. vi + 81 pp. £6.99 pbk (+ £1.35 p. & p. from Tameside Local Studies Library, Stalybridge). ISBN 1 871324 21 1.

This short book is ancillary to the main 'History and archaeology of Tameside' volumes which began publication in 1991, although it has been produced, like them, by the Greater Manchester Archaeology Unit, in association with Tameside M.B.C. It sets out to give a sample of tales and legends from the area with appropriate historical and archaeological background, in the belief that the stories have value irrespective of their literal truth. Unfortunately not every story is reproduced accurately. The entire thrust of the story on p. 27 under the title 'The lord of Dukinfield's heriot' is lost because 'unacquainted' is rendered as 'acquainted'.

The central section describes local traditions and looks at such annual activities as rush-bearing, pace-egging, and the wakes, but the treatment of each topic is too perfunctory to be of value and some traditions—May Day, for example—are ignored completely. There is no indication that the 1869 Gee Cross well-dressing (p. 53) was a revival, one of several local short-lived attempts to *invent* a tradition which properly belongs to the White Peak of Derbyshire, nor is the date of the last Tameside well-dressing correct. Since most of the customs described were not confined to the Tameside cotton towns, some contextualization would have been welcome. Robert Poole's work on Lancashire wakes is not cited, nor is the recent comprehensive study of the Ashton-under-Lyne 'Black Knight' tradition (*The knight rides out*, by P. M. and D. L. Williams).

The entire work is marked by extreme carelessness. Two illustrations are without captions or explanations, numerous references are without page numbers, the cover pictures are not attributed, the book is spattered with misspellings, strange punctuation, wrong dates, and wrong names—and there is no index. What might have been a stimulating treatment has turned out to be disappointingly slight.

Mottram

E. A. Rose

Harry Foster, *Don e want ony srimps? The story of the fishermen of Southport and North Meols*. Birkdale and Ainsdale Historical Research Society, 1998. 156 pp. + 140 illus. £13.95. ISBN 0 951090 53 4.

L. J. Lloyd, *Southport and North Meols fishermen and boat builders*. Liverpool: National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 1998. 70 pp. + copious illus. £6.95. ISBN 0 953040 83 6.

As an historian of inshore shellfisheries around the coast of England it was a pleasure to find two books dealing with 'the fishing' recently pop through my letterbox. Both are affordable books, copiously illustrated.

Harry Foster's book is the seventh in the Birkdale and Ainsdale Historical Research Society's series of publications, succeeding in its aim of finding new material about the district and presenting it in an enjoyable

manner to readers. As the author states 'this book attempts to tell the story of the evolution and decline of the fishing industry in North Meols'. It ties together prior publications by Cedric Greenwood from the *Southport Visiter* (early 1970s), A. Hosker (1953), Sylvia Harrop (1982), A. P. Wailey (1975), and Leonard Lloyd (1996), expanding them with previously unpublished oral evidence and photographs. Divided into three parts and set out in six chapters following an introductory chapter, it deals in great detail with general fishing, shrimping, shellfish gathering, fishermen, and Southport fishing communities, the northern fishing communities of Marshside, Little Ireland, and Banks, before finishing with some general conclusions.

Chapter 2 covers various forms of local fishing, i.e. beach, fixed nets and lines, and inshore and deep seabed fishing. Chapters 3 and 4 delve closely into shellfisheries and shrimping. Chapters 5 and 6 contain the major original contribution of the book in relation to the fishermen themselves, and their communities. Census returns have played a large part in Harry Foster's plotting of the movements of the fishermen from the town centre to the cheaper marginal areas of the town. We find the fishing communities of Hawes Side, Little London, and Ecclesfield developing in chapter 5 and the two largest communities, Marshside and Banks, are addressed in chapter 6. The book is well researched, well written, and well presented with an impressive source list.

Leonard Lloyd describes his work as 'bare bones treatment', but it is based on personal recollections and memories which, together with local history writings, has 'come as stitches to a garment, holding it together and moulding its form'. Divided into three parts, 'The fishermen's story', 'The boat builders', and 'Fishing practices', the book deals with the Lancashire nobby (a small fishing boat) and its use in Southport and North Meols in fine detail.

In both books the story of the fishermen is in line with that of many small fishing villages and towns around the English coast, with 'the fishing' falling into two parts: inshore fishing and shellfisheries; and offshore mixed and seasonal catching. The heydays of the 1890s and decline before the First World War due to a mixture of shifting channels, siltation, and sewage pollution are both covered. The social history and decline of Southport's fisheries is extremely detailed in Foster's work, whilst Lloyd's work has a bias toward the 'hardware' of boats, equipment, and their producers. Both books rate highly among other local history works in filling gaps in the knowledge which 'bear(s) witness to our heritage as a fishing nation'.

University College of St Martin, Lancaster

Gill Parsons

150 years in struggle: the Liverpool labour movement, 1848-1998, ed. Jim Dye. Liverpool: Liverpool Trades Union Council, 1998. 78 pp. £3.50 pbk. No ISBN.

This booklet commemorates the 150th anniversary of what is now called the Liverpool Trades Union Council. The centenary was previously marked by William Hamling whose *Short history of the Liverpool Trades Council* (1948) is reissued and constitutes the principal part (pp. 7-53) of this publication.

Hamling was modest about the shortcomings of his account, which had been compiled from the Council's minutes and local newspaper reports, supplemented by extracts from other histories of the trades unions and labour and socialist movements. Yet Hamling's chronicle supplied a want. As every student of local history is painfully aware, it can take much time and labour to piece together even a simple sequence of events; accordingly, Hamling's pioneering effort proved precious to many historians, including the present reviewer. Of course, Hamling's selectivity and spin were determinedly partisan, like any in-house company history. We should not expect the commissioned chronicler of a frozen pea firm to denounce its product or to conclude with a ringing endorsement of the superior properties of canned or mushy peas. Centenaries, too, tend to provoke artless philosophizing, about giant strides made over the years, about tragically lost opportunities, about tasks still to be done, and about heroes and villains. In the last category, traitors tend to feature particularly strongly in labour annals. Hamling was not immune from this homiletic virus. A telling passage concerns the activities of the nascent Liverpool branches of the I.L.P., S.D.F., and Fabians, involving such star 'characters' as John Edwards, Bob Manson, and Sam Reeves:

The Socialist movement flourished in Liverpool between 1894 and 1900 with more vigour and enthusiasm than seems possible even today . . . Many people believe we have lost this enthusiasm, and lost our vitality . . . The reasons for this vigour are not far to seek. To-day when there is a Labour Government and mass support for Socialism we are apt to enjoy the luxuries of complacency, or the right to air trifling differences or ride hobby-horses. A persecuted minority will always cling together if only to cheer each other up (pp. 38-9).

It is salutary to consider this now, another fifty years on, during the Blair government, the only Labour administration since Attlee's first to enjoy a substantial majority. The prevailing mood here, once the nostalgia is abstracted and the ritual award of honours and brickbats is discounted, is one of undiluted bitterness. The current president of Liverpool T.U.C., Jim Dye, contributes a six-page foreword-cum-rant against the betrayals of the working-class cause, inveighing not just against what he styles 'the open[ly] bourgeois parties' but also against those 'right-wing' elements in the Labour movement who in the past severed links with the Communists, emasculated the trade unions and, in 1969, initiated the process of separation of the Liverpool Trades Council and Labour Party. Unreconstructed Marxism of the 1848 Communist Manifesto vintage is Dye's message:

Our future growth is directly tied up with the development of the class struggle . . . For too long we have put up with the crumbs dropped from the top table, is it too much to ask for the whole cake? (pp. 5-6).

Antiphonal responses to the Dye *Weltanschauung*, of sustaining the struggle of 'working class internationalism' against 'the globalised capitalist system', come from a chorus line featuring Pam Thorbinson, who contributes a page

full of pride in her association with Liverpool T.U.C. since 1967, and John D. Hamilton, who was leader of Liverpool city council 1983-7 during the rate-capping dispute, after which he was one of forty-seven Labour councillors surcharged and disqualified from office. Hamilton held the post of treasurer of the Liverpool Trades Council and Labour Party for twenty-one years from 1948, as his father had done from 1927, but no doubt the gulag would beckon for a reviewer who incautiously speculated whether a sclerosis might pass down the dynastic line of Labour's factions just like an inverted aristocracy. Hamilton's contribution here is five pages of anecdotage. A longer piece (13 pp.) is supplied by Sam Davies of John Moores University and also a committee member, North West Labour History Group. Davies endeavours to carry the Hamling history forward from 1948 to 1998. It is a difficult remit, and it cannot be said that the balance between simple chronicle and structural analysis is well managed, but the grim economic circumstances of Merseyside stand out, as does Davies's reflection that 'The very notion of a coherent, unified labour movement is . . . much harder to identify now' (p. 55). Readers must judge for themselves whether this publication does anything to advertise the region or to attract inward investment.

Merton College, Oxford

Philip Waller