
THE JOURNALS

Regional History or Local History? The Contribution of «Midland History» and «Northern History» to the Writing of English Economic History at a Local Level

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The number of historical periodicals in England is legion. Many of these are well established, and as long ago as 1928 the Institute of Historical Research discovered over 300 societies meriting inclusion in its new *Guide to the historical publications of the Societies of England and Wales*. In the *List of Publications on the Economic History of Great Britain and Ireland* for 1970, published in «Economic History Review» (XXV, No. 2, 1972) there appear references to no less than 900 articles for just one year.

The national journals are well known, but the myriad of local history periodicals are not always easy to discover. These range from the duplicated news letter to the scholarly journal and cover a wide variety of different areas from the parish to the country. There is unfortunately no list of all these periodicals available. The library associations «Guide to Current British Journals» (1970, ed. D. Woodworth) contains only a fraction. The historical associations «Guide to Historical Periodicals in the English Language» (1970, J. L. Kirby) includes the best established journal for each county. Nevertheless articles in other local journals appear in the annual list in the «Economic History Review», and this remains the best guide from an economic historians' point of view.¹

¹ For articles published before 1933, E. L. C. MULLINS, *Guide to the Historical Publications of the Societies of England and Wales 1901-1933*, London 1968 is invaluable. After 1933 it is intended that the series «Writings in British History», an annual volume, should continue this guide, but the most recent volume to be published is for 1946-48 ed. D. J. Munroe (Institute of Historical Research 1973). I understand further volumes will be appearing in due course. «Northern History» annually publishes a list of articles dealing with its area, and the next issue of «Midland History» will publish

The range and quality of local journals is naturally highly variable, not only from one to another, but from year to year, and from article to article. This is even more true today than ever, since there has over the past few years been a vast upsurge in interest in local history at the universities which has produced a plethora of theses, graduate and undergraduate whose natural outlet has been these journals. One of the greater stumbling blocks as far as economic history has been concerned is that, until recently, there have been no journals dealing with regions as distinct from counties. Thus articles, on, say, the Wealden Iron industry may appear in the journals of the Surrey, Sussex or Kent Archaeological Societies, trying to deal with only that part of the industry that falls within the respective country boundary.² There has indeed been a recent growth of specialist journals at a national level, the older « Agricultural History Review » having been joined by such productions as « Transport History », « Maritime History », « Textile History » etc. but these only tend to serve to increase what a recent writer has described as the economic historian's besetting sin of 'topic introversion' which ignores the interrelated nature of the economy at any period.³

Since the field is so vast I propose to focus attention on two new journals, « Northern History » (founded in 1966) and « Midland History » (first published in 1971) which begin to fill the gap between local and national history.⁴

Firstly I shall try to do three things. As regional studies and local history are more advanced in France and elsewhere, at least as far as a methodological approach is concerned, I shall try to emphasise the conscious attempt to improve the standard of local history by these two journals and in this context refer to two other periodicals with similar aims, « The Local Historian » and « Local Population Studies » (since demography is the field in which French methods have been most closely imitated). Secondly I shall review the contents of the two regional journals to show the sort of questions which have been raised, the tentative conclusions, and where applicable illustrate how even these show some of the less desirable defects in English

part one of a list of Midland historical societies and their publications, bringing together all the information available on county and other societies and what they have published. I would always be willing to assist scholars from other countries in their enquiries after local journals.

² See for instance G. J. ASHWORTH, *A note on the Decline of the Wealden Iron Industry*, « Surrey Archaeological Collections », LXVII, 1970, where one is very conscious of the strain imposed by the country division and the strain imposed by trying to only give material on Surrey.

³ A. THOMPSON, *The Dynamics of the Industrial Revolution* (London, 1973), p. 6.

⁴ The former is edited from the school of History, the University of Leeds, the latter from the University of Birmingham. I should make it clear that I am only dealing with these journals' contribution to economic history, and that they also cover the other aspects of history within their respective areas.

historiography, and at the same time try to consider the difference, if any, between the content and standard of writing in « Northern History » and « Midland History » and that in some of the best of the country journals in the north, especially the « Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire ».

THE CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO IMPROVE STANDARDS.

Writing in « Daedalus » (Winter 1971) on *English and United States Local History*, and following a longer piece by Pierre Goubert on French local history, Lawrence Stone contrasted the English school with the continental in the following way. 'Whereas the French jumped right into broad regional studies without prior attempts at detailed topographical inquiry the English built up slowly from individual examples, and are only now beginning to synthesize their material... The main English contribution as they move to a higher level of synthesis is likely to be a greater awareness of the economic diversity of subregions and smaller districts'.

The first achievement of the two new journals has been to break down the county barriers already mentioned. « Northern History » aims to 'publish work on the seven northern counties, Cheshire, Cumberland, Durham, Lancashire, Northumberland, Westmoreland, Yorkshire'. Although most of « Midland History's » articles have so far concerned the West Midlands, a few have appeared on the East Midlands, especially Lincolnshire. Scholars do not seem to have leapt at this opportunity to transcend the country boundary. As yet the number of regional articles, whose contents I shall discuss in the next section, remains pitifully small because contributors are just not writing them. In short, the age of synthesis which Stone saw as beginning has yet to dawn.

« Northern History » was launched before continental ideas had penetrated very far in the English academic profession. It has therefore never taken the self-conscious attitude of trying to improve the standard of writing, but has satisfied itself with maintaining a high level of traditional writing. Nevertheless the first issue had a bold opening essay by ASA BRIGGS on *Themes in Northern History* (« N. H. » I, 1966). Briggs posed questions which, had attempts been made to answer them, might have inaugurated a new era of imaginative local history totally economic and social in content. He asked for history that was 'outward looking rather than inward looking... the kind of history that sets out to compare'. He continued with questions of such wide scope as to be either unbelievably audacious, or almost naive, such as 'is the North-South dichotomy in England similar in any way to North-South dichotomies in other countries- the United States, for example or Italy? Did the industrialization of Northern France have anything in

common with the industrialization of Northern England?'. Such questions have never been posed again in this journal, but as we shall see in the next section it has begun to make a contribution to knowledge about the North as a whole.

« Midland History », even if it has not yet had an opportunity to publish many regional articles has taken a vigorous attitude to reviews and, in particular, review articles which 'should include a limited number of subjects that are of general interest for regional historians, either because their methodology is valuable for Midland historians or because their topics are similar to ones that need treatment in a Midland context' (« M. H. » I, 3, 1972). In practise one might doubt whether this valuable series of review articles has entirely followed this rubric. Two of the four which have so far appeared seem of such wide scope that their relevance to regional history is almost lost. E. P. THOMPSON's, *Anthropology and the Discipline of Historical Context* (« M. H. » I, 3, 1972) surely falls into this category, while R. A. CHURCH's, *The Railway Age: A Reinterpretation* (« M. H. » I, 2, 1971) which reviews amongst other things G. R. Hawke's econometric analysis is so macro-economic in approach that it gives little help to anyone trying to assess the regional, as opposed to the national impact of the railways. This is a pity, since it is at the regional level that a lot of serious econometric analysis might well be applied.

An important review article appeared in the first issue, by N. MCKENDRICK on *The Victorian View of Midland History, a Historiographical study the Potteries*. This reviews a number of reprints of nineteenth-century works of which there has recently been a publishing boom. He takes a critical attitude towards the publishers' rush to print and quick profits, which in six volumes has given only 33 pages of introduction to accompany 2,500 of text. 'When they are reprinted with little or no attempt at correction or evaluation, one can fear the perpetuation of error and re-establishment of myths hopefully defunct and untruths recently corrected' and he concludes 'on balance their publication may well represent a net loss to scholarship'. Since local history is a field in which in the past errors have been copied out and handed down with most vigour this is a valuable warning, of equal use to the historian who may be tempted to use such contemporary material without local knowledge. The latest review article, H. B. CLARKE's, *Domesday Slavery* (« M. H. » I, 4, 1972), reviews several books of domesday studies, mainly commenting on changes in estimates of late Anglo Saxon society.

In line with this policy of highlighting areas which deserve treatment, the journal also publishes surveys of county record offices inviting contributors to point out material that deserves notice and research by historians. Similar articles on northern record offices have appeared in « Northern History ».

« Midland History » has also published several well-researched local studies which might well stand as models for work in other areas. J. A. J.

JOHNSTON's, *The probate inventories and wills of a Worcestershire parish 1676-1775* (« M. H. » I, 1, 1971) uses a well-known source, probate inventories and wills, not as an adjunct to other research, but to wring the maximum amount of information from them, relating moveable wealth to social status, the growth of luxury items such as looking glasses, watches and china, analysing crops and livestock, and even considering legatees, hopefully tracing attitudes to kinship, for just one parish. Even more valuable is A. GOODER's, *The population crisis of 1727-30 in Warwickshire* (« M. H. » I, 4, 1972). In this, demographic data is carefully plotted against local prices and against national grain import and export figures to demonstrate the coincidence of grain shortage and high mortality. Gooder carefully recapitulates previous thinking on the well-attested heavy mortality of these years, which has tended to regard it as anything but a subsistence crisis, though interpretations of the disease that caused the 'epidemic' have differed widely. There can be little doubt that this article re-opens the question of subsistence crises in England. In parenthesis it is interesting to note that the research for this article was done by a university extra-mural class, which is becoming increasingly common in local history.

In its own way an attempt to improve the quality of research is also being made by « The Local Historian », formerly the « Amateur Historian » (the name was changed, perhaps significantly, in 1968). This is a national journal published quarterly, many of its articles of a 'guide to sources' nature, which often show a remarkable inventiveness. Recent topics have included the dangers of reminiscence, a warning about oral history, newspapers as a source for agricultural history, the uses of marriage licences, surname heredity, the use of pictures for local history, and dispensary or chemists records. Where synthesis is attempted, as in C. M. LAW's, *Some Notes on the Urban Population of England and Wales in the 18th century* (« Local Historian » X, 1, 1972) the methodology is somewhat confused. Eighteenth-century population figures are rare and this article collects a valuable array of local census material, but the attempts to interpolate population figures from baptismal data and these censuses is not adequately explained. In its way this attempt to explicitly improve the quality of writing can provoke its own backlash. As the original title suggested, « Local Historian » is largely aimed at that large group of amateurs in whose hands local history has by and large been until very recently. The use by professional historians of 'amateur' or 'antiquarian' as a term, if not of abuse, at least of patronising disdain, can only infuriate or disillusion this group without whose support nearly all local journals would collapse financially and historians lose much of their popular audience.

Another journal of national interest concerned with local studies is « Local Population Studies », first published in 1968, and produced in association with the Adult Education department of Nottingham University,

with the presiding geniuses of the Cambridge Group of Population Studies as its mentors. Here, of course, we are dealing with the direct attempt to translate French methods into English. This journal initially described itself as a 'magazine and newsletter' published twice yearly for those engaged in demographic research. It was conceived as a 'problem' journal in which the editors would publish 'any research report, enquiry, problem, discovery or oddity (however small)' and promised to invite 'specialists to comment on anything that calls for a reply'. Much of the journal is taken up with such items, plus a register of research in progress and it is clearly wrong to expect to find finished pieces of research published there. However a number of articles of interest have appeared which must earn this periodical an important place in local studies. For instance, R. E. JONES, *Population and agrarian change in an eighteenth century Shropshire parish* (« L. P. S. » I, 1968) attempts to give an integrated view of population and the economy. Questions of mobility have been raised, either obliquely in such articles as *Occupations, Migration and Literacy in East London 1580-1640* (« L. P. S. » V, 1970) or *Easingwold Marriage Horizons* (« L. P. S. » II, 1969), or directly as in *Population Movement in the seventeenth century* (« L. P. S. » IV, 1970). There have also appeared some extensive, if immature, articles on the important question of seasonal variation, entitled *An Enquiry into Seasonality in Baptisms, Marriages and Burials* (« L. P. S. », IV, V, VI) and later correspondence. The journal remains devoted to pre-industrial history, and as yet has not printed anything that seriously questions the fact that the methods used may leave many problems untouched. (For a discussion of these problems see *Techniques and Methods in Historical Demography (17th-18th century)* in « Journal of European Economic History », I, 2).

ARTICLES PUBLISHED SO FAR.

As already mentioned only a few regional articles have appeared so far, and only three periods have received any real attention, and these reflect very real uncertainties about the state of the economy. In part this uncertainty reflects two analytic problems, the first being that the North (or the Midlands) is too large a region and the differences between West and East too great to be comprehended in a brief article. The second is an uncertainty as to how to deal with deviant sub-regions, where Lawrence Stone expected most competence. Thus in B. W. BECKINGSALE'S *The Characteristics of the Tudor North* (« N. H. » IV, 1969), the author sets out to contradict the view that the salient features of the north were that it was feudal, catholic and 'the

⁵ I shall, of course, only deal with articles of economic or related interest and make no mention of contributions on political history. I shall also exclude articles on Roman or Anglo Saxon subjects.

home of a violent and backward society'. Unfortunately the discovery that the region around Newcastle was economically as advanced as any other coastal area in England, or that parts of the Midlands or South East were thought of as backward by contemporaries hardly constitutes a refutation of the thesis that the north as a whole was backward. The author is right in urging more comparative regional history, but the selection of a few convenient quotations for use in comparison is hardly rigorous enough. He does, however, effectively isolate one sub-region which had given the whole north a bad name. This was area of the Borderers who 'lived outside society in their largely self-contained, self regarding world of feud and foray, generating and to a great extent absorbing their own violence' which was 'a seasonal occupation in the agriculturally quiescent months from October to April' which in other parts was taken up with domestic industries. He also points to the way in which the more advanced Tyne basin tried to limit their influence by forbidding making a Borderer an apprentice in Newcastle.

This same group is considered in J. A. TUCK's *Northumbrian Society in the fourteenth century* (« N. H. » VI, 1971) which displays one of the failings of English article writers (and one I have myself been guilty of), that is giving a title more imposing than the article deserves. In fact this is only a brief account of some of the border families' fortune in this century. The area also receives attention in G. W. S. BARROW's *Anglo-Scottish Border* (« N. H. » I, 1966) which deals with the situation down to 1237, and S. J. WATTS, *Tenant Right in early seventeenth century Northumberland* (« N. H. » VI, 1971) which considers this unusual form of land-holding encouraged by the border situation and its elimination as part of James I's attempt make the border areas a normal part of the kingdom.

Beckingsale's contention that feudalism in all its facets, military, tenurial and otherwise was not strong in the North is supported by M. E. JAMES' contribution *The first Earl of Cumberland (1493-1542) and the Decline of Feudalism* (« N. H. » I, 1966) where we find that the Earl 'seriously damaged his image in his country by unpopular estate policies aiming at maximum economic gain'. If this looks like a classic case of developing capitalism breaking feudal bonds and ties of 'good lordship' (and Beckingsale produces other examples of the same process) James is able to show, as only a local historian can, that there were other factors involved, such as the Earl's personality and the rising prestige of other families.

G. W. S. BARROW's *Northern English Society in the twelfth and thirteenth Century* (« N. H. » IV, 1969) accepts the view that the North consisted of an 'agglomeration of conservative communities, marked by clearly defined local characteristics'. He finds evidence for growth and change, but concludes that 'in terms of the resources which could best be exploited by men of the early middle ages, the North was relatively poor' and that evidence for change is much better substantiated in other parts of the country. Barrow begins

his article with the assertion that the position of the North in the nineteenth century as the leading region in the industrial revolution was as atypical of the North's place in the economy as the brief flowering in the seventh century of the Northumbrian kingdom as the most civilized in England.

Since no surveys of the seventeenth and eighteenth century have, as yet, been published, this transition has yet to be discussed. D. J. ROWE in *The economy of the North-East in the Nineteenth century: a survey with a bibliography* (« N. H. » VI, 1971) suggests that in this area in 1800, beyond the coal fields, there was little sign of economic advance, and that the transition belongs to the nineteenth century itself. Unfortunately, as he is quick to point out «until the groundwork of monographs... has been completed it will not be possible to write an adequate 'industrial revolution in the North East' and until that has been completed it will not be possible for general economic histories of England to pay due attention to the North East». The lament of lack of research runs as a theme through the article, from the coal industry (and it is certainly strange that so little attention should have been paid to such an important coalfield), population growth, iron industry, ship building, glass working and, in a serious way, railways.

Curiously N. McCORD's thinly referenced *Some Aspects of North East England in the Nineteenth Century* published the following year (« N. H. » VII, 1972) takes the view that 'a considerable amount of work has been done in the history of Northumberland and Durham in the nineteenth century'. He retreads the same economic ground as Rowe [using sources beloved of the old style of local historian such as song and anecdotal material (not referenced)], before plunging into a brief social account mainly dealing with brothels and violence. Both authors have done their best to supplement the lack of published material. ROWE's, *The decline of the Tyneside Keelmen in the Nineteenth Century* (« N. H. » IV, 1969) opens with the assertion that it deals with the fortunes of a powerful pre-industrial privileged group challenged by new technology. Most of the article is taken up with an account of the strike of 1819 against the use of spouts (gravity worked shutes which loaded coal straight into small colliers without the use of intermediate barges) and which is dealt with in more detail in McCORD's, *Tyneside Discontents and Peterloo* (« N. H. » II, 1967). Both authors have also published further accounts of industrial combination and unrest in the North East in other journals.

The only really regional article to be published in « Midland History » is J. MONEY's, *Birmingham and the West Midlands 1760-1793 Politics and Regional Identity in the English Provinces in the later Eighteenth century* (« M. H. » I, 1, 1971). Despite the title this is full of interesting ideas for economic historians. These concern the creation of a new economic region as a result of industrial advance centred on Birmingham and 'a balancing tension between the new centre and the older influences of the county towns

and cathedral cities of the region'. He sees the promotion and work on canals, and in particular on the Trent and Mersey canal, stimulated by Josiah Wedgwood, as fostering a new sense of regional consciousness as well as economic unity, and develops the theme of the economic awareness of the industrialists in conflict with traditional politics. It is certainly remarkable to find that the manufacturers at Birmingham knew of Joseph II of Austria's embargo on English imports in 1784 long before the government.

While considering the remaining articles of interest, it is worthwhile considering how these compare with those appearing in country journals in the North of England.⁶ One should stress here that, with the exception of the « Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire » (« T. H. S. L. & C. »),⁷ none of the journals about to be mentioned are likely to have more than one or two articles of interest to economic historians in any year.

Both regional journals have steered clear of articles built round a document or documents which are common in the other journals of which a few selected titles will give a fair impression. *Railway Construction in mid-Nineteenth century North Lancashire - the diary of John Steelfox* (« T. H. S. L. & C. » 122, 1971); *Elizabeth Gaskell and the Cotton Famine in Manchester: some unpublished letters* (« T. H. S. L. & C. » 123, 1972); *James Brindley 1716-72 and his remuneration as a canal engineer* « Transaction of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society » LXXV-VI, 1966-68);⁹ *The 1377 Poll Tax return for the City of York*, « Yorkshire Archaeological Journal »¹⁰, 43, 1971). This is obviously a very sensible division of labour. It also saves them from unfortunate articles like *A Watchmakers Pocket Book 1713-56* (« T. H. S. L. & C. 122, 1971) where the document in question is a set of accounts, but the writer merely goes through picking out interesting anecdotes or generalities, but not answering any of the questions an economic historian might wish to ask, which could in this instance have given details of the profit or otherwise of a skilled outworker over an unusually long period. On the one occasion an article based round

⁶ There seemed no point in repeating the process for journals of the Midland counties. A cursory inspection suggested that those for the North were of equal standard to any in the country, perhaps in one or two cases rather higher.

⁷ This journal has for a number of years had honorary editors from northern universities, first Manchester and now Liverpool.

⁸ This in many ways represents a midway stage between article and the sort of volume produced by a country record society (of which nearly every country has one) which produces scholarly edited version of all sorts of documents from parish registers to local port books.

⁹ This is a long title for a very brief article. This journal, which is a mine of information on industrial history of the North West, has not been published since 1968.

¹⁰ Until recently most articles in this journal have related specifically to archaeology, but several interesting ones have appeared in the last few issues.

a set of documents has been published (P. HEATH's, *North Sea Fishing at Scarborough in the Fifteenth Century* (« N. H. » III, 1968), which contains information extracted from local tithes levied of fishing, all the relevant information is abstracted into tabular form. On the other hand two articles on the west Cumberland coal field published in « Transaction of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Archaeological and Antiquarian Society » (T. C. W. A. & A. S.), *The collieries of J. C. Curwen* (« N. S. » 61, 1971) and *A Colliery Payroll of 1802* (« N. S. » 62, 1972) give a perfectly adequate analysis of profits, working costs and fortunes of this industry.

In other fields where English historians have been most diligent, such as trade or social history, there is little to choose between journals. J. B. BLAKE's, *The Medieval Coal Trade of North East England: some Fourteenth century evidence* (« N. H. » I, 1966) (which consists of an analysis of four customs accounts and an interesting collection of reference to the use of coal for domestic purposes), C. M. FRASER's *The Pattern of Trade in the North East of England 1265-1350* (« N. H. » IV, 1969) (which uses local tolls to attempt to supplement the picture derived from national sources), and W. B. STEPHENS, *The Overseas Trade of Chester in the Early Seventeenth Century* (« T. H. S. L. & C. » 120, 1968) (which only deals with the cloth trade) and D. M. WOODWARD's, *The Overseas Trade of Chester 1600-1650* (« T. H. S. L. & C. » 122, 1970) are all products of a well-established school of trade studies using customs accounts. K. CHARLTON's, *Liverpool and the East India Trade* (« N. H. » VII, 1972) is an interesting account of the attempt to diversify Liverpool's trade once the slave staple was removed, and to wrest the East India trade from the monopoly of the East India Company's (and therefore London's) hands. The same author's *James Cropper and Liverpool's contribution to the Anti-Slavery movement* (« T. H. S. L. & C. » 122, 1972) deals with the port's reaction to this movement which was to rob it of one of the pillars of its prosperity.

Since the North and the Midlands are rival homes of the industrial revolution it is no surprise to find a lot of articles on the post-industrial period. There is in particular a heavy emphasis on organisational history. On one side we have E. TAYLOR's, *The Midland Counties Trades Federation 1886-1914* (« M. H. » I, 3, 1972) which, in addition, deals with the Great Depression 1973-96 suggesting that, whatever national historians might conclude, in the Black Country it was very much a reality and not a myth. On the other side we have P. HORN's, *The Warwickshire Agricultural and General Workers Union 1893-97* (« M. H. » I, 4, 1972) which relates the decline of organised labour in this country, which had been the leading shire in founding the National Agricultural Labourers Union in the 1870s, to the agricultural context of the 1890s. In *An anatomy of Strikes in the Stourbridge Glass Industry 1850-1914* (« M. H. » II, 1, 1973) E. HOPKINS argues that strikes are directly related to the prosperity of the industry concerned.

J. H. PORTER in *David Dale and conciliation in the Northern Manufactured Iron Trade 1869-1914* (« N. H. » V, 1970) follows a similar theme, suggesting that times of rapid expansion are those of the most disputes. Other corners of union history have been inspected in *Wesleyan Methodism and Working class radicalism in the North 1792-1821* (« N. H. » VI, 1971) by P. STIGANT (other related articles on this theme have appeared in the « Proceeding of the Wesleyan Historical Society ») and *The attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards Trade Unionism in the North 1833-42* (« N. H. » V, 1970) by J. H. TREBLE.

On industry itself we have J. R. HARRIS's, *The origins of the St. Helens Glass Industry* (« N. H. » III, 1968) which traces the history of glass making in this part of Lancashire before the erection of the celebrated plate-glass manufactory in 1773 and, on a more central topic, J. R. KILLICK and W. A. THOMAS's, *The Stock Exchanges of the North of England 1836-50* (« N. H. » V, 1970). This article deals with a neglected aspect of raising capital and handling shares in the pre-telegraph age, when a new attitude towards speculation gave rise to short-lived provincial share markets in seven cities in Yorkshire alone, which quietly withered as communications with the capital improved. In « *Midland History* » (I, 2, 1971) S. D. CHAPMAN raised the whole question of *The Cost of Power in the Industrial Revolution in Britain*. Taking the textile industry as a test case and using, amongst other things, insurance valuations from factories all over Britain, he came to the tentative conclusion that, where a suitable site was available, 'water was capable of competing with steam power throughout the long period (1780-1850) of transition from the domestic to the factory system'. An extremely interesting illustration of this had already been provided by D. G. WATTS in an excellent short article *Water Power and the Industrial Revolution* (« T. C. W. A. & A. S. » N. S. 57, 1967) which summarises a survey of water mills on the river Kent in Westmoreland at the end of the eighteenth century, estimates the amount of horse power available and compares it very favourable with the horsepower available to industry in Birmingham down to 1800.

Transport is represented by an addition to Baron F. DUCKHAM's well-known writings on waterways, *The Fitzwilliams and the Navigation of the Yorkshire Derwent* (« N. H. » II, 1967) which deals with the promotion of the canalisation of the river.¹¹ D. KIRBY's, *The Weir Navigation and the City of Durham in the eighteenth century* (« *Archaeologia Aeliana* » 4th series,

¹¹ Most of this article has been incorporated in the same author's *The Inland Waterways of East Yorkshire 1700-1900* 1973 published by the East Yorkshire Local History Society, an enterprising organisation that has abandoned the journal form and published a series of pamphlets on a wide variety of subjects, many of them, like the one mentioned above, of great interest to the economic historian.

50, 1972)¹² tackles a project that was constantly being launched and which would doubtless have brought great prosperity to Durham and Sunderland, but which for a variety of reasons including lack of expertise was never completed. The first part of what promised to be virtually a monograph in periodical form appeared in the last issue of « Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society » LXXVI, 1966) entitled *The Manchester Bolton and Bury Canal Navigation and Railway Company 1790-1845* by V. I. TOMKINSON.

Agricultural articles are conspicuous by their absence, in part perhaps the result of competition between journals, since agricultural historians are so well catered for in the « Agricultural History Review ». « Midland History » has published B. A. HOLDERNESS' *The Agricultural Activities of the Massingberds of South Ormesby Lincolnshire 1638-c. 1750* (« M. H. » I, 3, 1972) which considers a remarkable improving family, perhaps all the more so for the fact that their methods did not spread beyond their own estates so that that part of Lincolnshire remained 'a largely backward and self absorbed agrarian community until the second and third decades of the nineteenth century'. In the same issue appeared *A small landowner in the fifteenth century* by C. DYER which deals with a Warwickshire landowner illustrating 'the varied and even contradictory character of the late medieval economy in a wooded area under some urban influence'. « Yorkshire Archaeological Journal » (42, 1967-70) published two interesting articles, one by D. G. Hey, an analysis of the 1801 crop returns for South Yorkshire, the other an incredibly thorough piece of research by A. HARRIS (a historical geographer) on *The Rabbit Warrens of East Yorkshire in the eighteenth and nineteenth century* which includes a section on markets and marketing.

CONCLUSIONS.

From the foregoing it will be seen that local economic history and regional studies still have a long way to go. General books on the economy are still very reluctant to become involved in regional variation (with a few honourable exceptions), or to recognise Bishop CREIGHTON's dictum (quoted by ASA BRIGGS in the first issue of « Northern History ») that *English history is at bottom a provincial history*. Local history is a well-established and popular field of study, even if it is rarely a discipline, with roots going back two centuries. Economic history in England has only been widely studied at most universities for a short while. Regional analysis as a branch of economics has existed for even less time. English economic historians might well console

¹² This journal, charmingly subtitled 'Miscellaneous Tracts relating to Antiquity' is normally devoted exclusively to archaeology in Northumberland and Durham.

themselves with this and congratulate themselves for having come so far, were it not for the fact that studies in other countries and other disciplines such as historical geography are more advanced and use more sophisticated techniques.¹³ Both « Northern History » and « Midland History », and of course even more so the country journals, remain very gentlemanly in style. Hardly a statistic ripples their surface, and no mathematical process more complicated than simple addition appears.¹⁴

Two more basic attitudes may lie behind this. The first is that the natural course of research is from specialised monograph on one specific topic, such as an industry, to national synthesis (as suggested by Rowe's article mentioned above) rather than tackling the whole economy of a specific area at any given period. The second is an attitude towards synthesis itself expressed recently as 'Syntheses are not quite respectable: they are undergraduate texts, or somewhat entertaining visions: they are not quite serious scholarship'.¹⁵ Beside this one sometimes detects a similar view of articles as inferior to monographs, or only suited to tiny pieces of research. Until these pre-conceptions can be cleared away, the contribution of those regional journals founded so far (and those one hopes will appear in the future) must be blighted.

¹³ To take two examples from recent issues of the « Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers » both J. A. YELLING's, *Probate inventories and the geography of livestock farming: a study of east Worcestershire 1540-1570* (51, 1970) and P. J. PERRY's *Working Class Isolation and Mobility in Rural Dorset 1837-1936: a study of marriage distance* (46, 1970), use statistical techniques to good effect. Yelling's approach to sampling techniques and the presentation of conclusions is far superior to J. A. Johnston's article using the same type of source, although Yelling asks more limited questions. Perry using regression analysis cautiously to attempt to analyse cause of variations between parishes.

¹⁴ In defence of this approach it must be remembered that none of the journals mentioned are exclusively economic, nor produced for a group of numerate economic historians. If numeracy is to penetrate deep into local history, its practitioners will have to be careful to explain what they are doing in layman's terms. Such an attempt at comprehensibility might also ensure the author really understands the method he is using and protect local history from the abuse of inappropriate methods.

¹⁵ A. THOMPSON, *The Dynamics of the Industrial Revolution* (1973), p. ix.

