

# A COMPANION TO BRITAIN IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

*Edited by*

S. H. Rigby



THE  
HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION

THE VOICE FOR HISTORY



**Blackwell**  
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# Introduction

*S. H. RIGBY*

The number of scholars currently studying Britain in the later middle ages is relatively small when compared with that for more recent historical periods. Even so, as a glance at the books and articles listed in bibliographical guides such as the Historical Association's *Annual Bulletin of Historical Literature* will reveal, it is now virtually impossible for any one individual to keep up with the flood of work that is currently being published on the economic, social, political, religious and cultural history of Britain in the later middle ages. The aim of this *Companion* is to help the general and student reader to begin making sense of this mass of literature, to introduce them to the major themes and developments in British history in the period from *c.*1100 to *c.*1500, and to familiarize them with some of the most influential approaches and perspectives with which historians have attempted to make sense of this period. The 'later middle ages' is defined here as the period from *c.*1100 to *c.*1500, in distinction to the 'early' medieval period covered by the previous volume in this series, rather than in terms of the more familiar distinctions between the early (*c.*400–1000), high (*c.*1000–1300) and late (*c.*1300–1500) medieval periods. Whilst the division of history into separate periods is inevitable, it is also artificial and misleading. There is, after all, no reason why the history of, say, population or the economy should have the same rhythm of development as that of religion or of the visual arts. Nevertheless, the period covered in this volume can be seen as a relatively coherent one, being given a unity by the arrival of an aggressively expansionist Norman-French political culture at its beginning and marked at its terminus by the Reformation and by a renewed growth of population after the century and a half's downturn which followed the arrival of plague in Britain in 1348.

Perhaps the biggest single decision which had to be taken in choosing the chapters and contributors for this volume was whether its themes should be discussed in relation to the British Isles as a whole or whether England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales should be treated in separate chapters. Certainly, one of the main changes in the historiography of the last generation has been the rise of a 'British history' perspective emphasizing the interaction of all four countries and the need for historians to adopt a comparative approach to their development. The benefits of this per-

spective are outlined below by Seán Duffy. Nevertheless, as Seán himself emphasizes, in the period covered by this volume Scotland was a separate nation whilst much of Ireland and (at least in the period before Edward I) of Wales were not under English control. There is arguably no more reason why these countries should be regarded as sharing a single history than should, say, England and France, important though the interactions of the two were and instructive though comparisons and contrasts between them might be. Thus, the decision to devote separate chapters to England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland in this volume certainly did not result from any anglo-centric viewpoint as opposed to a more inclusive 'British' perspective. On the contrary, it arose from a desire to do justice to the history of each of Britain's component parts. Indeed, in relation to their populations, the sources available and the numbers of scholars and students studying them, one could contend that Ireland, Scotland and Wales are over-represented in terms of the space devoted to them in this volume. However, I make no apology for this given the renewed attention which the histories of Ireland, Scotland and Wales have received in recent years.

All of the contributors to this *Companion* have had a free hand in writing their own chapters. As editor, I have asked only that they provide their readers with some guidance about earlier work on their subject so as to locate current concerns and debates within a broader historiographical context. History is, of course, a mansion with many rooms and so, inevitably, individual contributors have adopted very different approaches to their subject matter. Some have provided overviews of their field whilst others have supplied us with the results of their own original archival research. Some have opted for chronological narratives whilst others have adopted a more thematic approach. Together, their work reveals the rich diversity of ways in which historians from what are, in intellectual terms, a wide range of different 'generations' have made sense of Britain in the later middle ages and looks forward to new questions and research in the field. A unified bibliography incorporating secondary sources mentioned in the text is provided at the end of this volume. Within each chapter, references in notes are given in full unless they appear in the bibliography or further reading list at the end of the chapter, in which case they are given in shortened form.

In editing this volume, I have benefited from the assistance and advice of many friends and colleagues. The editorial staff at Blackwell, including Brigitte Lee, the copy editor, have been particularly helpful and encouraging, whilst the comments of the anonymous readers on the original proposal for this volume helped to clarify its themes and structure. I would like to thank all of the contributors for their patience in dealing with my comments and queries and, in particular, Donald Watt, who for some reason always seemed to end up as the chief victim of my editorial incompetence. The publisher is extremely grateful to the Atlas Trustees of the Scottish Medievalists Conference for permission to use maps composed by A. A. M. Duncan, A. Grant, I. A. Morrison, K. J. Stringer and D. E. R. Watt that were originally published in the indispensable *Atlas of Scottish History to 1707* (Scottish Medievalists Conference, 1996), edited by H. L. MacQueen and P. G. B. McNeill. Particular thanks are due to Jane Whittle, who stepped in to provide most of chapter 4 (on rural social conflict) when, rather late in the day, another contributor had to drop out. Apologies are owed to readers for inflicting them with my own views on urban social conflict in this chapter. Their inclusion was the result of the same emergency rather than of any desire on my part to appear in two chapters of this volume. Matthew Groom is also deserving of

special thanks for stepping in to provide chapter 19 when, at the very last moment, the original contributor had to withdraw from the volume. In writing my own chapter on literature and society I benefited immensely from the expert advice of Gail Ashton, Alcuin Blamires, Bruce Campbell, Richard Davies and Carole Weinberg. Above all, I would like to thank Rosalind Brown-Grant not only for her comments on that chapter but for her continuing support throughout this project.

PART I

**Economy and Society in Town  
and Country**



## CHAPTER ONE

# England: Land and People

*BRUCE M. S. CAMPBELL*

Culturally, socially, politically and, above all, economically, medieval England was rooted in the land. In 1086 probably three-quarters or more of all income came directly from the land and four centuries later, at the close of the middle ages, the equivalent proportion undoubtedly remained well over 60 per cent. Nevertheless, land was more than a simple factor of production; title to land conferred status, power, wealth and obligations. Feudal lords, whether lay or ecclesiastical, were land lords in a very real sense and they valued their estates for the standing and influence these bestowed and for the recreational amenity they provided as well as for the incomes that they generated. Yet for no one, bar the monarch, was proprietorship absolute. Under the system of land tenure introduced by William the Conqueror, all land was ultimately held from the king in return for homage, service and payment. Tenants who held in chief from the crown in turn subinfeudated land on similar terms to lesser lords, who might further subinfeudate their estates to others. The complex hierarchy of proprietorship thereby created was mapped onto the land via the manorial system. Manors comprised land, tenants and jurisdictional rights in an almost infinite variety of forms and combinations. Many of the tenantry, who actually occupied and worked the land and paid rent to do so, were servile as well as subordinate. Status and tenure were inextricably interlinked. Labour, like land, therefore, was not yet freely owned as a factor of production. For the medieval peasantry, whether free or unfree, the significance of land lay primarily in the livelihood to be derived from it and the security against want that it provided in an age without institutionalized welfare. Relatively few were wholly landless and within the countryside those who were generally ranked amongst the most vulnerable in society.

Agriculture was the very foundation of the national economy and throughout the medieval centuries, and long after, performed a trilogy of key functions. First, and most obviously, agriculture fed the population, both urban and rural, non-agricultural and agricultural. Second, it reproduced and sustained the animate sources of draught power – the horses and oxen – employed throughout the economy. Third, it supplied the manufacturing sector with organic raw materials: timber, wood and charcoal; textile fibres from both plants and animals; dye plants and other industrial

crops; furs, pelts, skins and hides; fat and tallow; wax; grain (for brewing) and straw for thatching and a host of other humble purposes. For agriculture to fulfil this trilogy of functions required most of the land, the bulk of the labour force, much of the capital and a great deal of the management talent available within the national economy. How efficiently these were exploited depended upon many factors, institutional as well as environmental, cultural as well as economic, and exogenous as well as endogenous.

No closed economy could develop beyond the limits imposed by the output and productivity of its agricultural sector. Yet for small countries like England agricultural development was itself contingent upon the wider market opportunities bestowed by the economy becoming more open. Of course, England had never been a completely closed economy and it became less so as the middle ages advanced and a greater international division of labour became established through the growth of trade and commerce. Until late in the fourteenth century England's principal comparative advantage lay in the export of unprocessed primary products – wool above all, plus hides, grain, firewood, tin, lead and coal. These were exchanged for other primary products (timber, wax, hides and fish), certain industrial raw materials, such luxuries as wine and furs, and manufactured goods. This pattern of trade, with its pronounced agricultural bias, reflects the relatively undeveloped state of the European economy at that time. The core of that economy remained located in the Mediterranean whence it was linked by overland trade routes east to Asia and north to Flanders and thence England. England, especially outside of the extreme south-east, thus occupied a relatively peripheral location within the wider European economy and consequently was less urbanized and supported a smaller manufacturing sector than more advantageously located economies such as Flanders and Italy.

By the close of the middle ages, in contrast, England was adding value to its agricultural exports by processing much of its wool into cloth, inanimate power was being harnessed more fully to industrial processes, and a growing share of the profits of trade were accruing to denizen merchants. Advances in geographical and scientific knowledge were also transforming the country's location, as the Atlantic was opened up as a commercial alternative to the Mediterranean and a direct maritime link was at last established with the East. From these developments much would subsequently stem. Expanding international trade and commerce coupled with fuller utilization of inanimate power sources and greater usage of imported and inorganic raw materials would release England from too exclusive and narrow a self-sufficiency. Ultimately this would lead to industrial revolution. Nevertheless, in the more geographically circumscribed and economically and technologically less sophisticated world of the middle ages, the growth of non-agricultural populations and activities remained contingent upon the sustained expansion and diversification of national agricultural output. Never again would the country be so wholly dependent for food, raw materials, fuel, draught power and exports upon its own agricultural sector. Verdicts upon the overall performance of the medieval economy therefore tend to hinge upon how adequately that sector stood up to the considerable demands placed upon it. Hitherto, those verdicts have been predominantly negative.

For M. M. Postan, and those who have subscribed to his 'population-resources' account of economic developments, long-term demographic and economic expansion were not indefinitely sustainable on an agrarian base without higher rates of



investment and more developed forms of technology than those attainable under feudal socio-property relations. According to this view the acute land-hunger, depressed living standards and heavy famine mortality of the early fourteenth century were the price paid for a century or more of headlong population growth. Moreover, the crisis was rendered all the more profound by a failure of agricultural productivity, both of land and labour. For the alternative Marxist school of thought, articulated most forcibly by Robert Brenner, the failure of agricultural productivity was more fundamental than the growth of population and was an inevitable consequence of the exploitative nature of feudal socio-property relations, which deterred both investment and innovation. For both Postan and Brenner nemesis was the price paid for expansion; they differ primarily in their diagnoses of the root cause.

More recently, however, there has been a fuller appreciation of the international dimensions of the early fourteenth-century crisis and with it a shift towards explanations that are less narrowly agrarian. Nor were feudal socio-property relations exclusively malign. Lords were rarely as rapacious and serfs as oppressed and exploited as has often been represented. Rather, it was the territorial and dynastic ambitions of militaristic kings and nobles that proved most damaging by fuelling the explosion of warfare that characterized the fourteenth century. War, by increasing risks and driving up costs, helped induce the trade-based economic recession that is now recognized as an important component of the period. Taxation and purveyance depleted capital resources and siphoned off potential investment capital. Commodity markets and capital markets were both disrupted. As market demand contracted so employment opportunities withered and population was forced back upon the land. Given this deteriorating economic situation it is easy to see why historians have relegated the climatic and biological catastrophes of famine, murrain and plague to essentially secondary roles. Yet this fails to do justice to the magnitude and uniqueness of this sequence of environmental events. By any standard these were major exogenous shocks which through their impact transformed the status quo and thereby altered the course of development. Indeed, a mounting body of archaeological evidence suggests that the climatic and biological disasters of the period were themselves interconnected in ways that have yet to be unravelled. The exogenous dimensions of the crisis are thus ripe for reassessment. This rethinking of the period is likely to continue as more evidence is assembled and developments in England are interpreted within a broader geographical framework and wider historical context.

### Challenges and Dilemmas

All agrarian-based economies, such as that of pre-industrial England, had to contend with five long-enduring dilemmas, each of which was capable of thwarting progress and precipitating crisis. The first of these dilemmas was a 'tenurial dilemma' of how most effectively to occupy the land and on what terms. It was landlords who by controlling tenure regulated access to land. The terms upon which land was granted to those who worked it determined the number, size and layout of the units of production and, accordingly, the nature of the labour process (servile, hired, familial). Tenure likewise determined the 'rent' paid for the land and the form that this took, typically labour, kind or cash. Efficient forms of tenure were those which delivered the best returns to land and the labour and capital invested in it. Tenure, however,

was institutionally determined and characteristically slower to reform than economic circumstances were to change. Not unusually, it was tenurial inertia that frustrated fuller and more efficient use of the land.

Medieval tenures were rooted in local custom and manorial jurisdictions and could vary with dramatic effect from manor to manor, with far-reaching demographic and economic consequences. Some manors boasted substantial demesnes which might be managed on behalf of the lord or leased to tenants, others lacked them; on some manors the bulk of tenants held by customary tenures of one sort or another, on others free tenure prevailed; some tenants were burdened with rent and owed heavy labour services to their lords, many others owed fixed money rents that no longer reflected the full economic value of the land; on some manors lords insisted on the immutability of holdings and opposed any attempts to subdivide or engross, on others a lively peasant land market prevailed and holdings were constantly changing in number, size and composition. By 1300, on the evidence of the *inquisitiones post mortem*, more tenants held by free than by unfree tenure, more paid a sub-economic than a full rack rent, and there were many more small holdings than large. These traits were more pronounced on small manors than large, on lesser estates rather than greater, and on estates in lay hands rather than those in episcopal and Benedictine ownership. Such diverse tenurial arrangements were the source of much economic inefficiency but were neither quick nor easy to change. They were also the stuff of much agrarian discontent, which occasionally flared up in direct conflict between tenants and landlords. Tenurial reform was a major challenge, especially at times of acute population pressure. Legal impediments could retard progress and there were often political and humanitarian obstacles to be overcome. Change was generally most easily implemented when land was in relative abundance, as was the case throughout the fifteenth century.

Second, there was an 'ecological dilemma' of how to maintain and raise output without jeopardizing the productivity of the soil by overcropping and overgrazing. Medieval agriculture was organic and although there was much sound experience and lore on how best to work the land there was no scientific knowledge *per se*. Medieval agricultural treatises stressed best-practice financial and management arrangements and only at the very close of the middle ages was there a renewal of scientific interest in plants and animals, stimulated by the writings of Columella, Pier de' Crescenzi and Palladius. Then, as now, the key to sustaining output lay in maintaining the nutrient balance within the soil, especially the three essential nutrients of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. Scarcity in any one of these would inhibit plant growth. The nutrients removed in harvested crops consequently needed constant replenishment. The techniques available to medieval husbandmen in order to achieve this included crop rotation, sowing nitrifying courses of legumes (peas, beans and vetches), fallowing, alternating land between arable and grass (ley husbandry), dunging, manuring and marling. All required effort and organization, which were most likely to be applied wherever land was scarce and labour abundant.

Paradoxically, it was cheap land and dear labour that were most likely to lead to a 'slash and burn' approach to the soil. The same circumstances could also result in the kind of 'tragedy of the commons' that arose from poorly policed common property rights, whereby individuals pursued self-interest to the detriment of the common good. The hypothesis that arable soils tended to become exhausted has appealed to

a number of medieval historians, although there is as yet little unequivocal evidence to support the hypothesis. There are certainly several well-documented cases of falling yields, but whether this was because of depleted soil fertility, less favourable weather, increased plant disease (especially rust infestation), reduced labour and capital inputs or a change in husbandry methods has proved hard to establish. Moreover, non-economic factors – especially war and the heavy taxation and purveyancing that went with it – could destabilize agro-systems by draining them of the capital inputs – manpower, seed, draught animals – required for their maintenance. There are also several clear examples of very intensive and demanding systems of cropping that successfully delivered a sustained high level of yield. Rather, if the land suffered it is more likely to have been the pasture than the arable. There was a natural temptation to overstock – to the detriment of animals as well as pastures – and systems of sheep-corn husbandry widely used to maintain arable fertility effectively did so by systematically robbing pastures of their nutrients. Much grassland may thereby have degenerated into heath, which in lowland England is rarely a natural climax vegetation. Maintaining the ecological status quo therefore tended to be selective and required both vigilance and skill.

Productivity also lay at the root of the third dilemma, namely the ‘Ricardian dilemma’ of how to raise output without incurring diminishing returns to land and labour. The diminishing returns to land came from bringing inferior land into production as the population rose. The diminishing returns to labour arose once the incremental application of labour to land began to drive down first the marginal then the average productivity of labour. Such diminishing returns, once initiated, proved difficult to reverse. Excess population became entrapped on the land, depressing rural incomes and thereby investment, and frustrating further growth of the non-agricultural sector to the detriment of the economy at large. This scenario could only be postponed or avoided by maximizing the productivity gains that accrued from the division of labour (itself a function of the size of the market), adopting more efficient forms of labour process which raised output per worker in agriculture (e.g. replacing servile labour with hired labour and family farms with capitalist farms), and by investing in labour-saving technologies. A necessary corollary was the occupational and geographical migration of labour out of agriculture and off the land, to which there could be considerable resistance by those most directly affected. Maintaining or changing the economic status quo incurred high social costs; the only difference was the nature of the costs.

Closely related to this Ricardian dilemma was a fourth dilemma – the ‘Malthusian dilemma’ – of how to prevent the growth of population from outpacing the growth of agricultural output. Pre-industrial populations were capable of growing at up to 1.5 per cent per annum, but agricultural output and national income rarely sustained growth rates in excess of 0.5 per cent. Large-scale emigration was one solution to this dilemma, but it was contingent upon the availability of suitable destinations and the means of reaching them. The middle ages were not without such opportunities and in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries south Wales, the lordship of Ireland, the royal burghs of Scotland, and north Wales successively attracted significant numbers of English settlers. This exodus from England is likely to have been disproportionately male and, to judge from its impact upon the Celtic lands of the west, probably numbered some tens of thousands of migrants. As with later episodes of mass

emigration, female marriage rates may have fallen in England for want of sufficient male partners. Any reduction in marriage and the formation of new households will have helped curb fertility and thereby slow or even halt the continued growth of population. In the early modern period fertility rates would vary quite significantly with economic opportunities in a process of homeostatic adjustment but, for want of hard evidence, whether such preventive measures formed part of the medieval demographic regime can only be conjectured.

Mortality rates, in contrast, plainly varied a good deal and were certainly capable of acting as a positive check on population growth. Background mortality, for instance, was likely to rise whenever a general deterioration in living standards resulted in reduced standards of nutrition and hygiene. It could also rise and fall independently of living standards according to the incidence and morbidity of disease. Thus the thirteenth century seems to have been a relatively healthy period for all its falling living standards, whereas the fifteenth century was comparatively unhealthy notwithstanding greatly improved living standards. Migration could also redistribute population from low- to high-mortality locations, such as malaria-infected marshland and congested and insanitary towns, both of which recruited significant numbers of in-migrants during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Most dramatic of all, harvest failure could trigger a major subsistence crisis, resulting in a surge of deaths from starvation and famine fevers. The Great European Famine of 1315–22 rates as the most severe such crisis in recorded English history and although some communities subsequently made good their demographic losses it is unlikely that the medieval population as a whole ever recovered to its pre-famine maximum. For Postan, the Great Famine rather than the Black Death was the key watershed demographic event.

Any failure of subsistence highlighted the fifth dilemma – an ‘entitlements dilemma’ – of who shared in the fruits of production and on what terms. There were, of course, several different ways of securing the means of subsistence, notably through direct production, gift exchange and market purchase. Individuals were, however, far from equally endowed in their access to these means and any deficiency was bound to be highlighted at times of acute scarcity. Typically, the bulk of famine victims comprise those with the weakest economic entitlement to obtain food and those who, by dint of the crisis, have forfeited whatever entitlement they once had. Such victimization could only be prevented or mitigated by the adoption of welfare measures designed either to protect the entitlement of the most vulnerable or compensate for that loss of entitlement for as long as the crisis lasted. Historically, that has meant evolving appropriate institutions and strategies and distinguishing between those deserving and undeserving of assistance. In the middle ages there was as yet no concept that these were the responsibilities of government. Rather, trust was placed in family support, Christian charity and guild organizations, inadequate though these invariably proved when times were hard. Not until the close of the period, at a time when the entitlements dilemma was at its least acute, were the foundations laid for the emergence of a more community-based system of welfare support administered through the parish.

The acuteness of these dilemmas and the measures adopted to cope with them varied across space and over time. Over the course of the middle ages the waxing and then waning of population, development of commodity and factor markets (in

land, labour and capital), expansion and contraction of towns and cities, growth of proto-industrialization and progressive redefinition of socio-property rights and associated transformation of labour processes all made a material difference to the severity of the challenge to be met and the precise nature of the response. Liberation from these dilemmas was beyond the capacity of pre-industrial societies; only the transformation of the entire socio-economic system through an 'industrial revolution' could achieve that. Rather, it was a case of developing strategies for coping and preventing the 'worst-case' scenarios from happening. The measure of success is not, therefore, whether these dilemmas were resolved but how effectively they were contained given the levels of knowledge and technology prevailing at the time. Because all five of these dilemmas were closely interconnected, that required progress across a broad front. The 'solutions' did not lie within agriculture alone. Moreover, the scale of the challenge could be greatly magnified by environmental instability, both physical and biological.

The exogenous risks of harvest failure and disease – both of animals and humans – were not constant over time and need to be separated from the endogenous risks inherent to the socio-economic system as a whole. Environmental shocks were autonomous, although the socio-economic context within which they occurred shaped both their impact and the response. Thus, dendrochronology identifies two major episodes of severe climatic abnormality as having taken place during the middle ages. The first – from 1163 to 1189 – occurred at the threshold of a century or more of demographic and economic expansion, whereas the second – from 1315 to 1353 – marks the onset of a century and a half of contraction and stagnation. Plainly, the context within which these shocks occurred was all-important in determining whether subsequent demographic and economic developments were positive or negative. That they should have happened is not necessarily an indictment of the socio-economic system they affected, for few such systems could have withstood them. Whatever their effects, the environmental disasters that wrought such havoc in the fourteenth century cannot in themselves be explained by the theories of Malthus, Marx or Ricardo. To all intents and purposes they were accidents. Disentangling non-economic causes from economic effects is in fact a dilemma for historians of this period, all the more so because environmental factors clearly exercised a profound influence.

### **Sources of Agricultural Change and Patterns of Response**

Any change in the size and structure of a population directly affected both the demand for agricultural produce and the supply of agricultural labour. Between 1086, when England was a relatively underpopulated country with probably just over 2 million inhabitants, and 1300 the population at least doubled to probably some 4.5 to 5 million inhabitants. By 1377, however, the combination of famine (in 1315–22, 1330–1 and 1346–7), war (with Scotland, France and the Gaelic Irish) and plague (in 1348–9, 1361–2, 1369 and 1375) had reduced the population by 40–60 per cent to 2.5 to 2.75 million inhabitants. Thereafter, numbers seem to have drifted downwards to a mid-fifteenth-century minimum of less than 2 million and there was no sustained revival of demographic vigour until the second quarter of the sixteenth century when the population may still have been little greater than in 1086. What

drove this prolonged expansion and then dramatic contraction of the English population over the period 1086–1540 is as yet imperfectly understood, but it is plain that it had profound repercussions for the agricultural sector. Nor were these always as simple and direct as has sometimes been supposed.

Agricultural producers responded to the rise and fall of population much as they would do to subsequent demographic cycles. First, and most conspicuously, land was either brought into or withdrawn from agricultural use. The process, which has been extensively documented, was geographically highly selective and tended to be most conspicuous at the environmental, locational and political margins. In the most extreme cases it was accompanied by wholesale settlement colonization or abandonment. Although landlords acted both as colonizers and depopulators, it was individual peasant farmers who were most active in bringing land into or taking it out of cultivation. The new religious orders of the age, especially the Cistercians, also made an active contribution to the reclamation process through a combination of superior organization and the labour of lay brothers. Examples of agricultural expansion include widespread fenland and marshland drainage; the piecemeal reclamation of upland areas; and the recolonization of Yorkshire and other wasted areas in the north. Examples of subsequent agricultural retreat include the abandonment of much reclaimed coastal marshland, especially in Kent and Sussex; the desertion of farms, hamlets and villages in many environmentally and economically marginal locations – the edge of Dartmoor, the sandy and infertile Breckland of East Anglia, the stiff, cold clay soils of the midlands – and the withdrawal of settlement from the contested lands of the Scottish border. Yet, contraction did not exactly mirror expansion. The net effect of first advance and then retreat, over the period 1086–1540, was to bring about a profound transformation in the local and regional distribution of population due to differential rates of natural increase and decrease and significant inter-regional migration. The country's population map was substantially redrawn and in the process the balance of land-use was profoundly altered.

More important than changes in the agricultural area were changes in the use to which land was put, for there was never much land which yielded no agricultural output whatsoever. Even the most unimproved wastes generally supported some livestock. Thus, during the era of population growth land-use in general became more intensive. Arable, the most intensive land-use of all, expanded at the expense of pasture and wood. By 1300 in excess of 10 million acres may have been under the plough. But even at the height of the medieval ploughing-up campaign there was at least as much grassland as there was arable, for much reclamation of marshland, low-lying valley bottoms and upland was for pasture rather than tillage. The area of meadow, so essential for the production of hay, was thereby greatly enlarged, particularly in Yorkshire, which after Lincolnshire became England's most meadow-rich county. Around England's upland margins many a pasture farm was also brought into being. The Pennine Dales, for example, became threaded with seigniorial and monastic vaccaries. Where lordship was weak there was often much squatting on and reclamation of former common pasture and 'waste', as in the Arden area of Warwickshire and many parts of the north of England. Although the advance of the plough may have left many individual holdings and localities deficient in pasture, land-use within the country as a whole remained more pastoral than arable. This found expression in the development of different agrarian economies and the inter-regional exchange