

6.1 Anglo-Saxon rural landscapes

Room 103

Convener: Dr Susan Oosthuizen

Chair: Dr Chris Lewis

Chris Lewis worked for the Victoria County History from 1982 to 2009, initially on Cambridgeshire, later on Cheshire, and finally on Sussex. He has been interested in how rural places and landscapes in different parts of England have differed from or resembled one other over the long run from Anglo-Saxon times to the present day.

6.11 Rosamond Faith – Livestock in landscapes: pre-Conquest England and modern conservation practice

My paper challenges the idea of ‘The Tragedy of the Commons’ from the point of view of the medieval history of rural Europe. Examples are given from Provence and Devon of how commons were regulated during the middle ages and how they were undermined by endogenous developments in the medieval economy. The experience of the Grazing Animals Projects run by English Nature provide invaluable evidence of how animal behaviour itself regulates the exploitation of common resources.

Rosamond Faith has a BA in Modern History, University of Oxford 1956 and took a PhD in the Department of English Local History, University of Leicester 1962. She is a FSA. Her publications include *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship* (1997) and many articles on the English peasantry. Forthcoming: with Debby Banham, *Anglo-Saxon Farms and Farming*. Rosamond is currently a part-time tutor, Department of Continuing Education, University of Oxford and Visiting Fellow, Kellogg College, Oxford.

6.12 Debby Banham – Anglo-Saxon farmers and the supernatural

A number of charms, recipes and prayers survive from before the Norman Conquest which are concerned with farming. The best known is the ‘field remedy’, designed to protect growing crops from sorcery, but others deal with veterinary matters, cattle rustling and crops in store. Together they provide an insight into a world-view in which various supernatural entities or forces play a large part in ensuring the success of agrarian undertakings. To date, most scholarship on these ‘minor’ texts has been concerned with their relationship to orthodox Christianity, or analysis of their language. This paper will examine them rather in the context of Anglo-Saxon farming. It will show how they relate to what we know of the way crops and livestock were raised, the technology in use, and the annual cycle of farming work, as well as the thinking of the people who worked on the land in Anglo-Saxon England, and explore how the texts can help us understand these matters better.

Debby Banham is a medieval historian based at Cambridge, where she is jointly attached to the Departments of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic and History and Philosophy of Science. She wrote her PhD thesis on Anglo-Saxon diet, since when her research interests have expanded to encompass both medicine and farming in the same period. Recent publications include *Food and Drink in Anglo-Saxon England* (2004), ‘A millennium in medicine? New medical texts and ideas in England in the eleventh century’, in Simon Keynes and Alfred P. Smyth (eds), *Anglo-Saxons: Studies presented to Cyril Roy Hart* (2006), and ‘The Old English Nine Herbs Charm’, in Miri Rubin (ed.), *Medieval Christianity in Practice* (2009). She is currently working on a book with Dr Rosamond Faith, to be entitled *Anglo-Saxon Farms and Farming* (forthcoming).

6.13 Susan Oosthuizen – Agricultural tradition and innovation, and the origins of Anglo-Saxon identity

It is generally agreed that the origins of Anglo-Saxon identity lie in the folk groups of the fifth and sixth centuries AD which preceded the emergence of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in the seventh and eighth centuries. The defining characteristic of these folk groups is believed to have been the rights

of their members to the economic exploitation of a specific territory, and especially of pasture. Although there is uncertainty about whether such traditions originated in the post-Roman period, there is some evidence for the persistence of prehistoric forms in the layout and utilisation of both fields and pastures throughout the Roman and Anglo-Saxon centuries: from field systems with rectilinear and curvilinear plans, strips, and some degree of openness, to large commons whose identifying features are indistinguishable from those of the middle ages. At the same time, recent research has identified the substantial degree of agricultural innovation in the period of the ‘long’ eighth century, between about 670 and 830 AD, in the introduction of new crops and technologies, approaches to fertility and, perhaps, new field layouts. This paper attempts a synthetic view of innovation and tradition in the emergence of an ‘Anglo-Saxon’ identity through the case study of the agricultural landscape.

Susan Oosthuizen has been University Senior Lecturer with responsibility for Landscape and Field Archaeology at the University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education since 2006 (appointed Staff Tutor in 1997), and a Fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge, since 2003. She is a graduate in Archaeology and History (Combined Honours) of the University of Southampton, took her MA in Area Studies (Africa) at SOAS in the University of London, and her PhD in Cambridge (Trinity Hall and the Department of Geography). She is an Affiliated Scholar of the Department of Archaeology and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, as well as Vice-Chair of the Universities Association for Lifelong Learning. She is Vice-President of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society (President 2006-2008).

Her forthcoming publications include ‘Anglo-Saxon field systems’, in D. Hinton and H. Hamerow, (eds.), *OUP Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology*; ‘Medieval rural settlement and commerce in the medieval peat fen, c.900–1300’, in P. Stamper and N. Christie (eds.) *Rural Medieval Britain and Ireland, AD 800-1600: Settlements, Landscapes and Regions*; and ‘Medieval settlement nucleation and common fields: a reconsideration of common origins’, in N. Higham, (ed.) *Anglo-Saxon Landscapes*. Past papers have appeared in (among others) *Agricultural History Review*, *Medieval Archaeology*, *Antiquaries Journal* and *Landscape History*.