

War in the Fields and Villages: The County War Agricultural Committees in England, 1939–45

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Abstract State intervention in the United Kingdom's farming industry was necessitated by the problems of the interwar depression and the lead up to World War Two and the emergency wartime food programme. This brought the need for greater bureaucratic machinery which would connect individual farmers and their communities with central government. Crucial from 1939 in this respect was the formation of the County War Agricultural Executive Committees, which became the channels through which English farming was propelled into postwar productivism. Using relatively newly-available documentary material, this article demonstrates the role the committees played in the transmission of national policies down to the local level, their composition and membership. In so doing it also places the economic changes within farming into the vital but under-researched context of their rural social relations during the Second World War.

Despite some attention in the years following the Second World War, the years 1939–45 have only recently been afforded the attention that they deserve within rural history. This has been remiss not only because the period conceptually marks the beginning of the productivist farming regime in England and Wales, but also because for many rural people the years were highly significant in the construction of their own biographies and their own selves.¹ Many academics have, however, concentrated instead on understanding the broader structures of rural life and farming, rather than these few years, which might even be seen as aberrant or distorting a longer-term perspective. There have been exceptions: the work of Michael Winter and his colleagues has included the 1930's and 1940's seeds of the postwar farming regime, and in recent years agricultural historians have worked towards a greater understanding of wartime farming.² But the early British anthropological studies of rural communities largely ignored both the war and the extensive early postwar state legislation, noting them only as harbingers of a creeping modernity, external and urban in origin, and disturbing a theorised community equilibrium.³ There have also been studies treating the war as a convenient chronological dividing line, end point or starting position, and in some accounts, such as those of Newby and his co-workers, we therefore jump from the 1930s to a post-war research interest.⁴ Apart from the recognised significance of the wartime Barlow, Uthwatt and Scott reports in determining postwar rural policies, few have focused on the critical significance of this mid-twentieth-century moment of change.

To help redress this imbalance, this article will also point to the fact that previous studies have tended to separate production from its social context. The former has been the preserve of the agricultural historian, agricultural economist or geographer; the latter that of the sociologist and anthropologist. Discussion of the productivist concept, for example, has been conducted largely through political economy and structuralist approaches and proponents of regulation theory have noted the critical importance of 'extra-economic' institutions and practices.⁵ But the wartime British farming industry was fully embedded within rural society and culture. However there are few in-depth studies which holistically integrate the agricultural transition with its social context for the crucial turning point of the mid twentieth century.⁶

This paper begins with a brief chronology of twentieth-century agricultural change, within which will be placed an analysis of the force behind wartime agricultural expansion, the County War Agricultural Executive Committees (colloquially 'War Ags', herein referred to as CWAECs). The paper sets the CWAECs within the context of their rural societies, noting opposition as well as successes. It then moves to a discussion of rural power structures and ends with an assessment of the success of the CWAECs and their role in the development of postwar productivism. Much of the material in the paper is based upon analyses of relatively newly-available Ministry of Agriculture documentation at the National Archives. The particular role of the committees within Wales has been amply demonstrated recently by Moore-Colyer, and although the Welsh committees will be referred to where appropriate, the emphasis in this paper will therefore be on the English experience.⁷

I

In chronologies of twentieth-century British farming, three broad phases are generally acknowledged: first, the low productivity and generally difficult years of 1900–1939, interrupted briefly from the later years of the First World War through to 1920; secondly, the emergency interventions of the Second World War leading on via the Agriculture Act 1947 to a productivist phase; and finally a post-productivist phase with an inception accorded to the mid-1980s. It is to the beginnings of the second phase that this article is directed, although the attitudes and values of many farmers were indelibly marked by the experiences of the two previous decades.

Recent re-evaluation of the interwar years has emphasised the need for a more nuanced approach which acknowledges advances as well as setbacks between the wars.⁸ But it remains the case that these were years of poor returns for arable producers which, especially after 1925, drove many out of business and yielded much unkempt countryside, with fields 'tumbling down' to grass, hedgerows becoming overgrown, workers laid off, and farm infrastructure ageing or increasingly given over to what might pay, particularly the production of livestock and milk for the expanding urban markets. Significantly however, during the later interwar years emerging Keynesian protectionist and supply side interventionist influences were brought to bear to stabilise British farming. The state now became a primary and active agent within farming, although there were strong divisions of opinion, both between and within the different political parties and with the

National Farmers Union, over the degree of help that should be given and the means whereby it might be achieved. Sugar production had actually been subsidised since 1924, to be followed by a deficiency payments scheme for wheat (1932) and controlled marketing schemes for hops, milk (e.g. the Milk Marketing Board, 1933), pigs and potatoes. The Agriculture Act 1937 subsidised improved farm practice such as the application of lime and basic slag and extended deficiency payments to oats and barley.⁹ But important as these actions were, and although they dented the longstanding *laissez-faire* approach to farming, they ‘merely tinkered with the dire straits of agriculture’, remaining *ad hoc* formulations, unincorporated at that time into any overall strategy.¹⁰

Moreover, such measures were only partially successful. By the late 1930s more than seventy per cent of Britain’s wheat was still being imported, and many lowland farmers looked instead to sell land for the spreading suburbs. By 1939, despite grants, remissions and subsidies covering most farm produce, ninety per cent of cows were still hand-milked; only about twenty-five per cent of farms had a tractor compared with an average of about two working horses per farm, and there were only about one hundred combine harvesters in the whole country. But one caveat is important: there were certainly farmers who innovated and, to some extent, prospered in the inter-war years, and there were many whose farming was already highly productive and professional by 1939.¹¹ The latter were, however, in a minority.

Thus by 1939 agriculture had been depressed for more than two generations. But building on these pre-war debates and actions, the war itself was pivotal in ushering in the second phase of twentieth-century farming, which ultimately has come to be referred to as productivism, ‘a commitment to an intensive, industrially driven and expansionist agriculture with state support based primarily on output and increased productivity’.¹² The countryside shared with the nation both the emergency of war and the ‘victorious poverty’ of its aftermath. The much-lauded 1947 Agriculture Act, the starting point for the post-war farming era of guaranteed prices and support mechanisms, was built on the issues faced in the ten years previously. Now ‘dog and stick’ farming was replaced suddenly but conclusively over much of the countryside by a wartime emphasis on ploughing up grassland and scrub for human food supplies, a process whose effects, and the reactions to it, have lasted into the twenty-first century. Writers such as Hall, Orwin and Stapledon looked to a modern farming and countryside, not one gripped by nostalgia and traditionalism.¹³ The discourse between these ‘progressives’ and the views which might be summarised as a coalition of ‘organicist’, right-wing extremist organo-fascists and traditionalists (to oversimplify the positions grossly) had been ongoing throughout much of the 1930s, but the advent of war was now decisive in favouring progressive farming.¹⁴

Now ‘technological triumphalism’ held sway, albeit with an uneven take-up of associated Fordist principles. Here was a ‘clientalist’ policy structure linking individuals of unequal power in relationships of exchange, within an ‘agro-industrial complex’ binding state political and farming institutions (specifically the Ministry and NFU) tightly together in corporatist ways not achieved by other staple industries. It clearly served wartime government interests to incorporate the NFU, whose compliance was rewarded with the favourable settlement in 1947.¹⁵ In its turn, of course, this phase too has come under

pressure, as the rationale and morality of over-production came under closer scrutiny. We are now, it is claimed, in a third phase, an era of post-productivism, in many ways the mirror image of the previous productivist period, a transition outlined by Wilson.¹⁶

II

The mid-twentieth century revolution in agricultural attitudes and practices included the surprisingly general acceptance of state aid and the *quid pro quo* of increased surveillance in the hitherto fiercely independent agricultural industry. Expansion and intensification were now to be achieved largely through increased mechanisation, scientific management principles and the widespread use of biochemicals. Certainly, prior to the beginning of the Second World War, little such overall interaction between Whitehall and the farmer existed and much innovation and advice still came endogenously from within the local farming community rather than exogenously through the fledgling county agricultural committees, established in 1919 and comprising elected councillors with land-based experience (and often NFU officials) together with some government appointees. A wartime social survey of 1944 found that only seventeen per cent of the farmers questioned had consulted their county council agricultural organiser in the years before 1939. Neither was there any clear channel for the work undertaken by the research institutes to be fed through to the farming community.¹⁷

Now, at a time of deepening international crisis in the later 1930s, a more comprehensive strategy was enacted. And to promote it, the Ministry of Agriculture looked to incorporate a wide range of skills and knowledge: under no circumstances was this to be 'farming from Whitehall', but instead was to be as devolved and urgent an operation as possible. However, it is indicative of the waning regard for the county council committees by the late 1930s that the government effectively by-passed them in creating the directly appointed CWAECs. If 'all power must have its accomplices – and its police', then in this instance the accomplices and the police were the CWAECs.¹⁸

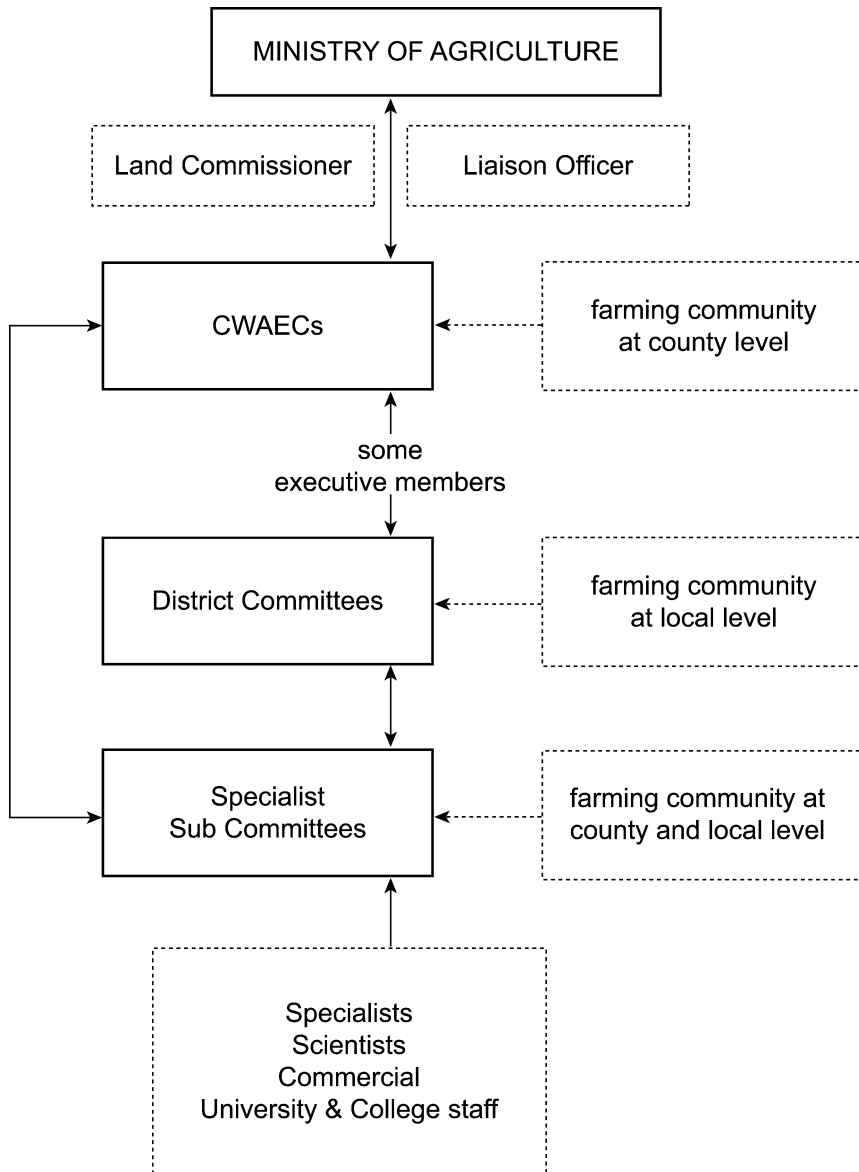
Generally regarded by contemporary and later commentators as a success in increasing home food production during the First World War, albeit belatedly, their re-imposition in the 1930s was strongly advocated.¹⁹ But this time structures and actors were in place early. As early as 1936 a chairman, executive officer and secretary for each proposed county committee had been selected by Lord Lieutenants. These three members were placed on standby in the autumn of 1938 at the time of Chamberlain's Munich Agreement, and in April 1939 the chairmen designate and executive officers met in Whitehall to discuss initial arrangements. At the same time the Agriculture Development Act 1939 was passed to stimulate improvements to grassland and increase arable production by offering two pounds per acre for the ploughing-up of grassland which had been down for at least seven years. The committees held initial meetings immediately on the outbreak of war under Regulation 49 of the Defence Regulations, although some had already met unofficially, and even already undertaken farm inspections.²⁰ The first meeting of the Hampshire committee, for example, had been on 30th June in Winchester, with a second at the end of August, and by the beginning of November over two hundred plough-up orders a week were being issued.²¹

Despite the declining power of rural elites and the democratisation of rural politics in the twentieth century, the CWAECs were composed of local groups of influential landowners, farmers and land-related personnel, appointed to impart a sense of urgency and good agricultural practice. Owing loyalty solely to the Ministry of Agriculture, they were charged with the responsibility of taking 'all necessary measures to secure that the land in their area was cultivated to the best advantage'. Sweeping powers under the Defence Regulations meant that they were henceforth imbricated in networks of control and surveillance, including powers allowing the requisition of part or whole properties; the ability to enter and inspect land; control land use, and punish those failing to abide by their instructions.²² However, the East Sussex WAEC prided itself by December 1940 on the fact that 'Although we have wide and almost unlimited powers we have always sought the co-operation of the farmers and this co-operation has been given in a most willing spirit'.²³ Many of those involved at the time certainly echoed these positive sentiments. Nigel Harvey, one-time buildings officer on the Oxfordshire CWAEC, thought the Oxfordshire committee a 'pervasive influence', working very discreetly in closed sessions. Members had to declare their interests (which everybody knew anyway), and he heard of no complaints or nepotism. Nevertheless, everything was improvised, rushed, and busy. Similarly, 'speed was a sort of byword that applied to nearly everything with which the committee was concerned.'²⁴

The sixty-two CWAECs of England (forty-nine) and Wales (thirteen), each with between eight and twelve members at any one time, involved an overall total of 829 personnel during the war years.²⁵ Separate committees operated for the three Yorkshire Ridings, the three parts of Lincolnshire (Holland, Kesteven and Lindsey), the Isle of Wight, and the Isles of Scilly. There was a committee for Middlesex, but not for London. The establishment of these devolved committees with their 'crusading enthusiasm' was later praised officially as a triumph of organisation, devotion, and harmonious cooperation. Indeed, it was seen as one of the war's major administrative successes and perhaps the war's most successful example of decentralisation and democratic use of control.²⁶ Although the independence of the Minister's selection of members was emphasised, it is nevertheless certain that there would have been a fairly limited pool of people with the time, experience and ability suitable for membership of the new committees. However, their unelected nature was later to be the cause of considerable adverse criticism. The tormented Laurie Lee, sitting in CWAEC meetings and writing *Land at War* for the Ministry of Information 'in a poverty-stricken vocabulary of about 100 words' portrayed them as 'no talk shop but a hard-bitten band of fighters who had a very real and critical battle on hand'.²⁷

Rushed as they undoubtedly were, the Executive Committees and sub-committees were required to preserve their deliberations and conclusions in extensive collections of lists and minute books. Each committee had a secretary with responsibility to produce the minutes, and these were preserved as the property of the Ministry of Agriculture, and are now available at the National Archives, having previously been subject to closure because of the personal nature of some of the material as it affected individuals. Much of the following analysis draws upon this material.²⁸

The many tasks were carried out on the ground through a variety of devolved sub-committees (see figure 1). Of these, the district committees were at the forefront in



The Web of Control and Surveillance

Figure 1. CWAECs and their sub-committees: the web of control and surveillance. *Source:* Author.

linking Whitehall and the individual farmer. Primarily organised around the pre-existing rural districts, they comprised from four to seven people with a good knowledge of local farming, able and willing to offer voluntary work, and believed to carry the confidence of the farming community. They ‘not only had a thorough knowledge of the science

Table 1
Personnel involvement in the CWAECs 1939–45

Personnel on Executive Committees 1939–45	829
Personnel on District Committees 1939–42	3,412
Personnel on District Committees 1943–45	5,210
Personnel on Sub Committees 1939–42	2,818
Personnel on Sub Committees 1943–45	6,218

Source: TNA: MAF 39, 70.

and practice of farming, but also understood the psychology of the farmers'.²⁹ These committees effectively translated and brought the power of the CWAECs into close geographical proximity. Their members were not echoing distant warnings of food scarcity but were real neighbours who could bang on doors, speak over the hedge or in the pub, and whose own performance could be judged in turn. Theirs also was the task of monitoring every farmer in their district, in part by the carrying out of surveys such as the National Farm Survey for England and Wales 1941–43.³⁰ There were 453 of these committees operating in the first half of the war, increasing to 478 in the later war years. The average was seven or eight per county, and the number of people serving on them rose from about 3,400 in the early war years to over 5,200 later, an average of fifty-five people in the early years and ninety-one later (see table 1).

Each county also had a range of specialist sub-committees undertaking such functions as the allocation of county plough-up quotas, which were set at approximately half the area lost to the plough since 1918, and the payment of the ploughing subsidy. A plethora of tasks included: the distribution of tractors and other equipment; liaison with the armed services, Women's Land Army (WLA) and Timber Corps and other temporary sources of labour supply; the encouragement of land drainage, pest and disease control; the provision of cottages and, where appropriate, horticultural advice. The precise numbers of such committees varied from county to county, and from one year to another throughout the war. Altogether between 1939 and 1945 there were 771 specialist sub-committees recorded in the Ministry of Agriculture's archive.³¹ However, this is almost certainly an underestimate since not all the war years' activities are preserved and committees were fluid, some being of fleeting appearance and some developing into a similarly-named one. Many counties began with all-encompassing sub-committees dealing with a variety of tasks, only to sub-divide them later into more specialised functions. Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Flintshire each had just one committee dealing with cultivation, machinery, drainage, insects and pests, a formidable workload. The range and quantity of work was vast, and increased as the war progressed. As a result the number of committee personnel more than doubled during the war years (table 1). In June 1940 they were strengthened by the secondment of technical staff from universities, agricultural colleges and institutes. One account, fictionalised as that for 'Deepshire' but clearly based on a very real experience, noted graphically that "the War Ag" had started in one room in the spacious municipal buildings but with the inevitability of a foetus had grown with such speed that within a few months it had to be expelled from the parent body to live its own life outside'. Various buildings in the town were commandeered

instead.³² Space had to be allocated not only for meetings of the various committees but also for the large substructure of officials carrying out the multitude of bureaucratic tasks. Departmental heads and assistants administered the various tasks required within each county. Each district had its district officer and sometimes an assistant, helped by clerical and typing staff. A general office dealing with servicing the various specialist sub-committees also contained supervisors, assistant supervisors, telephonists, filing clerks, cleaners, firewatchers and 'office boys'. By 1943 the Cumberland WAEC employed no fewer than sixty-one officers, including a farm supervisor and machinery instructor, supported by 114 clerks and typists and four mechanics, a part-time labour organiser and a poultry instructress.³³

While the functions of such sub-committees partly resulted from tasks assigned by Ministry officials to be covered in every county, they also reflected the particularities of a county's farm economy. Thus Cheshire's important dairy interests necessitated complex arrangements for livestock, with separate Friesian, Ayrshire and Shorthorn advisory panels as well as separate breed panels for each district. And similarly complicated structures oversaw Cornwall's horticulture industry. In the uplands Northumberland had to look after farms within the Redesdale artillery range; Lancashire had a specialist marginal land committee; Cumberland a commons improvement committee when consideration was being given to taking over a large area of common land (this was not supported by the Ministry and the committee lapsed); and Durham a stints committee to control the amount of grazing on common land. Elsewhere one could find Hampshire's New Forest pastoral development committee, Lindsey's water supplies committee, Norfolk's Feltwell Fen drainage committee, and even Wiltshire's meat pie sub-committee (a reflection of the important pork pie and bacon factories of Bowyers and Harris).³⁴

III

The sweeping changes wrought by the committees were never likely to pass unchallenged, since such a rapid transition implies both winners and losers. The enforced change from pre-war pastoral reliance to a wartime siege economy often engendered a mixture of grudging acceptance, distrust, uncertainty and social disharmony, rather than an unalloyed spirit of cooperation, although the latter was the feature most commonly represented in official pronouncements. Unlike many parts of mainland Europe, Britain was able to feed itself throughout the war, albeit with dietary changes by consumers and hard work by the Ministry of Food in rationing (from January 1940) and distributing supplies. Since food remained continuously available, it would appear that the committees did their job thoroughly at the national policy level. But for civil servants and ministers to agree on the correct national policies for war-time farming was one thing: it was quite another to convince all farmers, especially older ones, that the subsequent requirements, as they impinged upon their particular farms, were correct.

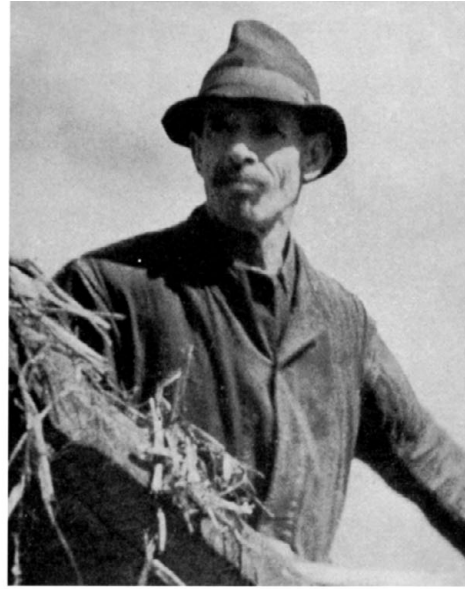
In face-to-face regulatory, survey and advisory work human relations might become difficult since, however representative they were of their localities, the committees were mandated to act as the local arm of Whitehall, especially in their surveillance capacity. Recalcitrant farmers might actively contest imposed farming procedures, as outcomes

of sometimes fundamentally different knowledges. Traditional farming practices, or at least two decades of ‘dog and stick farming’ might now clash with an enforced modernity as soil analyses, chemical fertilisers, disease-resistant strains, drainage, re-seeding, mechanisation and subsidies threatened not only to bring a new vocabulary but a new lifestyle to many. However, some of those with smaller farms, in particular, had neither the flexibility nor resources to implement the required instructions at all times. Farmers specializing in milk, pigs or poultry and relying on relatively cheap imported feeding-stuffs were ill-equipped with tools or knowledge for tillage operations.³⁵ But the war presented an opportunity for those ‘progressives’ who had, for a generation, been proselytising the need to modernise British farming. Their enthusiasm might be catching, but also alienating. And as D.R. Denman later wrote: ‘The near absolute power which this wartime authoritarianism put into tiny hands (including my own) was alarming. Its misuse was a formidable forge which has moulded my political outlook for life . . . against state domination over the affairs of free citizens’.³⁶

The farmers of ‘authentic England’ were applauded as a key element in British wartime propaganda, emphasising rural England’s deep continuities, simplicity and overtones of spiritual renewal – emblems of ‘Englishness’ which were transmitted particularly to the USA (see figure 2). But the same dogged, defiant folk, lauded as type characters, might also threaten to delay essential change. Here was a curious representational problem for the Ministry of Information – how to portray the country dweller as rooted and unchanging, yet at the same time eager to adapt their ways of farming virtually overnight in patriotic mode. Furthermore, years of low-input or neglect over much of the country left many with scarce capital. A new generation had grown up since the last plough-up of 1917–18 knowing little about the arable farming techniques involved. Adjustments on the scale and with the speed demanded were difficult, and a whole participation spectrum ranged from those who were resistant to new ideas through to those who actively sought information from the CWAECs, county agricultural advisers or provincial agricultural colleges, and who subsequently incorporated the ideas into their own practice. Tapping differentially into such networks of knowledge therefore brought social and spatial inequalities of conformity with CWAEC directives. But surveillance was also complemented by mediation and help, which was undoubtedly offered to many who found the rapid transition difficult: the Earl of Portsmouth was proud of the protection he was able to provide for many New Forest smallholders at this time.³⁷ And typical of ways in which some reconciliation was effected between pre-war and wartime attitudes was reported in the National Farm Survey report on Mr Knight’s farm in Plumpton, East Sussex:

Dairy farm. There was no arable before the war and about 20 acres was ploughed. This was taken over by the ESWAEC at the end of last year as it was in a bad state. After some work had been done on the land approx. 4 acres were handed back to the farmer to grow roots for his cattle. Now some good cabbage and mangels have been grown by the farmer. The grassland has been insufficiently fertilised and hedges and ditches were bad. Farmer is now tackling hedges and ditches and now realizes the importance of improving grassland.³⁸

The district committees took on the responsibility for the surveys which were deemed a necessary part of the transformation process. In 1940 surveys were undertaken which



“ . . . with their love of the soil, their eye for animals, their capacity for hard work . . . ”

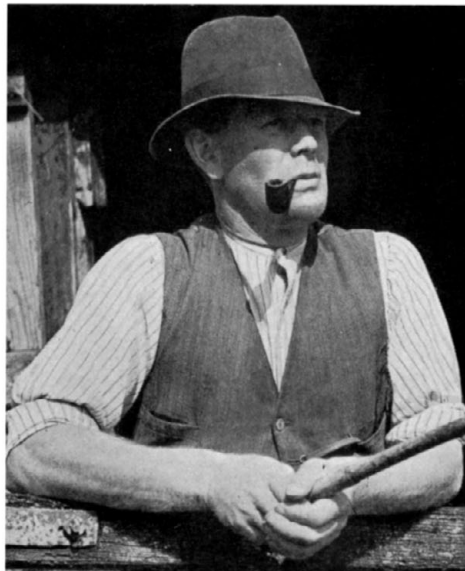


Figure 2. Farmers as propaganda ‘. . . with their love of the soil, their eye for animals, their capacity for hard work . . .’.

Source: Ministry of Information, *Land at War* (London 1945), 9.

categorised farms according to their condition, and in 1941–43 the more detailed National Farm Survey classified the farmers themselves, discriminating between A, B and C farmers, a practice which might leave the C farmers vulnerable. Many were suspicious of the grading, often bestowed by neighbours. Feuds might result and be promulgated

through the generations, but more swingeing still was the power to dispossess in part or whole the five per cent who were classed as C farmers. In all, during the war years about 2700 farmers were dispossessed completely and forced to leave their farms and farmhouses, severing the interdependence between farm and family and endangering intergenerational succession, while there were many more whose land was partially requisitioned. Each case of dispossession involving eviction from the farmhouse was authorised by the Minister himself, following a lengthy procedure involving inspections and consideration at several committees, but a Farmers' Rights Association and other more local groups were formed to highlight the more obvious abuses that could arise.³⁹ Many older farmers gave up part or whole of their farms voluntarily, recognizing that they could not comply with CWAEC demands, but one farmer, George Walden of Itchen Stoke, Hampshire was actually shot dead by local police after a siege whilst refusing to leave his farmhouse, an event turned into a novel by A.G. Street.⁴⁰ Two older Essex men, dispossessed and 'feeling broken and disgraced' committed suicide.⁴¹ Another man in Northumberland shot himself after being dispossessed, and an East Yorkshireman found his Goole farm let to the brother of a CWAEC member.⁴² Echoing Foucault, we might note that the committees were using a carefully orchestrated network of local agents and volunteers to report on their near-neighbours in a way which echoed other aspects of war time watchfulness, or inquisitiveness.⁴³

Many committee members were over-zealous, as was apparently the case in Essex by 1941 where enthusiastic district committees were at odds with the more moderate executive committee for failure to back them over cases of dispossession.⁴⁴ But on the other hand district committee members sometimes did not carry sufficient weight locally, or were even seen as 'essentially fascist'. John Blishen recorded his farmworker's damning put-down: 'Bert took a simple view of War Ag officials. They were all failed farmers or opportunists with dubiously relevant backgrounds who had wormed their way into indefensible jobs'.⁴⁵ One MP, John Loverseed, stated emphatically that in his view:

Many who are serving on these war agricultural executive committees are men who have failed to make a success of farming themselves. Far from being practical farmers, they are, indeed, broken-down farmers. There are men serving as chairmen who are perhaps engineers or bankers, or who follow some other occupation quite remote from farming.⁴⁶

Even the official history of the Ministry of Agriculture noted that these operations 'threw the door wide open to jobbery, favouritism [and] nepotism'.⁴⁷ There was no route of appeal for farmers during the war other than by presenting themselves in person, or by letter, to the CWAEC itself; and the NFU was seen to be behind the oppressive programme, as indeed it largely was, in order to secure government promises for guaranteed prices and stability after the war. In fact the relations between the county NFU personnel and the CWAECs were frequently decisive in the maintenance of good working relations with the farmers.⁴⁸ And other critics pointed out that although the committees might be relatively cheap because members were volunteers, the overall cost was still high: the five-year expenditure from 1940–41 to 1944–5 exceeded receipts by £27 million.⁴⁹ But everything was mortgaged to the pressing requirement to secure food supplies, and the committees were not required to issue profit and loss accounts. Nor

would the Minister publish 'naked figures' for individual counties owing to the 'infinite variety of circumstances' and the fact that the CWAECs were instructed to 'go all out, to use whatever methods they could at whatever the expense'.⁵⁰

IV

These structures of surveillance and control were enacted by people who were also embedded within their own rural social networks. Joining such committees probably brought about changes in self-perception and self-worth and the non-material contexts of norms, institutional frameworks and cultural values, are highly significant in reaching a greater understanding of the local reception accorded to the committees. It is also important to remember that the CWAECs were concerned above all else with food production. They were not directly concerned with the social relations of production, except insofar as labour supplies and workers' housing had to be addressed. A statement of Conservative 'principles and Aims' issued in 1924 was concerned to balance manufacturing development with what Baldwin referred to as the 'stability, solid morality, and wisdom of the countryside' but the policies put forward in the 1930s were those of rationalisation, protection and subsidies which aimed at economic modernisation of farming rather than the fostering of a vigorous rural society.⁵¹ Any appeal to a rural idyll was a façade when the requirement was for swift increases in productivity. It is all the more important then, that the social impact of the CWAECs' work is also examined.

When considering rural Britain in the late 1930s and early 1940s, it is, as ever, difficult to generalise, but we are dealing nevertheless with 'face to face' communities, where committee members' personal characteristics would be known by neighbours, and their detailed individual and family histories would correspondingly influence local judgments and attitudes. Farming, being a relatively visible activity, was continually audited by neighbours, and local normative controls over what constituted 'good' farming were built generation upon generation. The importance of neighbouring farmers at this time is difficult to evaluate, given the tendency to over-interpret such community values in earlier literature, but 'neighbourliness', kinship and helping out were accepted elements of cultural practice and remained important in many places.⁵² Some themes from Weber's concept of traditional authority and legitimacy are appropriate here: loyalty was to a person rather than to the office, length of office holding within the community was valued, as were interpersonal skills and charisma.⁵³

It was therefore doubly important that the right people were appointed to these local positions of responsibility. The status of CWAEC members mattered, since it was based on traditional knowledge of their families and farming skills and such knowledge could vary in minute details to give just sufficient social precedence to one farmer over another to ensure willing compliance. In addition, because of the relatively small number of people with the necessary qualities for local leadership, many of the larger farmers held several offices, offering diverse bases and resources for the exercise of power. They might be chairs of local clubs, village hall trustees, school managers, parish councillors, church wardens, members of Conservative Association committees and so on. Upon their appointment to a CWAEC, they would find it difficult to stand outside such networks with their ongoing

connections and social or moral obligations, despite the additional constraints and duties that their new role entailed.

Furthermore, within this social context it should also be remembered that norms of upper class philanthropy remained resilient over much of the countryside and that deference was both given and expected, particularly in those parishes dominated by estate owners. Those wielding power on the CWAECs may have deterred farmers from complaining overtly because they may also have dominated local housing, land and job markets, or be magistrates, or otherwise dispense welfare and patronage. Farmers still operated in many parts of England within a complex web of paternalism where hegemonic power relations remained strong. Deep-rooted community feelings were usually sufficient to reinforce solidarity across and between the different levels of the social hierarchy. In East Anglia, for example, the large farmers studied in the 1970s were generally regarded as being ‘at the pinnacle of the local status system’, and a majority of the farmers questioned believed that some colleagues still behaved like squires, or that there was a generalised social expectation and moral pressure to lead the community or contribute in some way, associated with landownership and occupancy of the big house. And here too, the larger farmers tended to mix mostly with each other in self-reinforcing groups. Even in the idiosyncratic Labour-held constituency of South-West Norfolk (Labour 1945–51 and again in 1955–59) the local elite took up key roles and few district or parish council elections were contested before the war. In pre-war Surrey the same was true of the vast majority of seats on the county council.⁵⁴

E.J. Rudsdale was appointed secretary to the Lexden and Winstree District Committee in Essex in January 1941. His journal entry for the day of his first committee meeting, on 6th January, runs:

Met Captain Folkard [the District Officer] at half past 9, and went out to Birch Hall. We met in the main hall before a roaring log fire, the mantel above which was carved with the Borough Arms, and sat on uncomfortable chairs having the Round crest of *lion couchant* in high relief on their backs. Capt. Round [later made a Colonel of the Home Guard] came in, looking every inch the country squire, and was very nice to me. I sat at the table with Capt Folkard, and took notice of how the meeting was run.⁵⁵

Work with the CWAECs would clearly have reinforced these social networks and distinctions, built on neighbouring and kinship relations, and indeed would have infused them with an aura of patriotic duty. So who were these committee members?

Some idea of the power structures within the executive committees can be gained by listing some obvious and accessible ‘prestige indicators’.⁵⁶ These were the numbers of titled members, peers, JPs, military ranking officers or aldermen, as well as those awarded civil or military honours. Members of the peerage included, for example, Lord Cornwallis, chair of the Kent WAEC until May 1946, and his successor as chairman, Baron Northbourne. William Cecil, 5th Marquess of Exeter, chaired the Soke of Peterborough WAEC until June 1942, and the Duke of Beaufort from Badminton sat on the Gloucestershire WAEC. Among many titled women who fulfilled the role as WLA representative, the Duchess of Devonshire sat on the Derbyshire WAEC.⁵⁷ Those with

Table 2
 'Prestige indicators' on the CWAECs 1939–45

Indicator	Number	Significant county totals
Peers (and spouses)	31	Kent 4
Baronet/Knight (and spouses)	32	Durham, Hereford, North Riding Yorks 3
County councillors	8	
JPs	103	Bedfordshire 6
Alderman	8	
Lord Lieut, deputy LL	23	Hereford, IOW, Oxfordshire 3
Civil Honours* (OBE, CBE)	73	Staffordshire 5
Military (rank of capt or above)	61	Somerset, Warwicks, West Riding Yorks 4
Military orders and decorations	31	Kent, E. Sussex 3
Professional/technical qualification	90	Lancs, Worcs, Oxfordshire 4

Source: TNA: MAF 39, 70.

NB. Individuals may have multiple designations e.g. a man of military rank with an OBE and serving as a JP.
 *Many civil honours would have been awarded for wartime activities.

professional or technical qualifications were primarily the executive officers, normally with an agricultural qualification (table 2).

The chairmen of the Executive Committees were all male, and their occupations can broadly be ascertained. Landowners made up 48.6 per cent; those with no listed occupation another 25.7 per cent; farmers (including one retired) 14.9 per cent; land agents 6.8 per cent; and those with commercial/professional interests 4.1 per cent. Echoes of older upper-class elitism could indeed be heard.⁵⁸ In Berkshire, A.T. Loyd, owner of the Lockinge estate, chair of the Berkshire WAEC until his death in November 1944, had also been Lord Lieutenant, chair of the county council, High Sheriff in 1927, an ecclesiastical commissioner, and Conservative MP for Abingdon 1921–3.⁵⁹ He was succeeded as chair by long-term member of the county gentry H.A. Benyon, but not before the names of Sir William Mount and Lord Faringdon were discussed, illustrating the echelons of society normally sought for the post. Sir William was serving in the army and was not released, and Lord Faringdon's appointment could not be countenanced 'not because of his politics' but because of his earlier refusal to comply with a plough-up order for which he was convicted and fined. This presented 'a serious bar'.⁶⁰ Viscount Addison, Minister of Agriculture under Ramsay McDonald, chaired the Buckinghamshire WAEC, but resigned in 1945 to become Secretary to the Dominions and Leader of the House of Lords in the Attlee administration, at the age of 76.⁶¹ Dominance within small communities could still be allied with duty: the enthusiastic plant collector Major Arthur Dorrien-Smith from Tresco Abbey, chaired the small Scillies Executive Committee.⁶² Here then were those with privileged access to material resources and both economic and cultural capital, members perhaps of ancient families with notions of the duties and responsibilities required of 'country gentlemen', and the communication skills and charisma required to influence others. When it came to government appointments, as opposed to elections, many old county families re-emerged. Indeed, Cannadine has seen the war as offering 'the last reassertion of upper class leadership'.⁶³ Many chairmen were recognised as

leading agriculturalists who would thereby command respect. H.R. Overman, chair of the Northamptonshire WAEC, was from a family of significant farming innovators in Norfolk and could trace antecedents on the Holkham estates back to the late eighteenth century. By 1952 he was chair of the Farmers' Club of London.⁶⁴

These positions of authority might, of course, carry power which remained potential rather than being enacted. Some chairmen had little personal involvement in sub-committee activities, for example, or were *ex-officio* and did not attend regularly, whereas others were deeply involved in highly time-consuming meetings on top of the weekly or fortnightly executive meeting. A. D. Potter, chair of the Rutland WAEC, was on no fewer than ten such committees in his admittedly small county, whilst W.M. Marriott (Montgomeryshire) and Sir L. Foster Stedman (Monmouthshire) both served on eight.

The main listed occupations of the other Executive Committee members can also be ascertained (table 3). Just under one-third were described as practising farmers – a smaller proportion than the impression given in some contemporary sources, anxious to emphasise the neighbourly spirit of farmer helping fellow farmer.⁶⁵ But the second highest number was of landowners, many of whom would, of course, have been farmers as well, so the farming community was certainly solidly represented. Those members representing the WLA and farm labour were rarely recorded as having occupations, unless the latter were listed as union officials, but many patrician women were indeed able to devote themselves more or less wholly to the war effort.

Further information can be gained on the English farmers on the CWAECs (table 3). Unfortunately the Welsh documents do not list occupations. Of the third of the membership who were 'farmers', well over half were described as landowner-farmers or large farmers or were otherwise prominent, for example in the NFU. The fact that only 4.5 per cent were described as tenant farmers and just four per cent as small farmers underlines the potential for exclusion and tension within the localities. Clearly it was the larger and more prosperous farmers who were selected for the committees, since they were seen as the more progressive members of their communities, perhaps as those most able to spare the amount of time this work and the associated visits would require, and probably those most networked socially and practically amongst themselves at the county level. Thus A.J. Hosier (1877–1963), a successful farmer who was nationally-known for his innovative mobile milking bail, served on the Wiltshire machinery sub-committee, despite his well-known aversion to officialdom and committees. He was critical of their "favouritism" and "kid-glove" handling of unpleasant matters', and was, as he claimed 'an out-an-out individualist'.⁶⁶

As might be expected within rural communities, there were many instances of the same family name recurring on the committees. Williams found that in Ashworthy (Devon) at mid-century about thirty men and women filled all the parish roles and sons took over from their fathers.⁶⁷ In this respect the presence of family ties, particularly between husband and wife, on the CWAECs and their sub-committees, was certainly nothing new where such bonds played a full role in rural power formations. Sir R.G.C. Cottrell and Lady Cottrell both sat on the Herefordshire Executive. The Stockton, Hartlepool and Sedgely District Committee for Durham had messrs T., A. and W.H. Swinbank, all from different addresses. In Shropshire the Ludlow District Committee included three

Table 3
The occupations of English CWAEC members 1939–1945

Occupation	%			
	Total	Total		
Farmers	245	32.4	<i>Further description of farmers</i>	<i>total % farmers</i>
			Landowner-farmers	49 24.5
			Large farmers (500 acres+)	40 20.0
			Prominent NFU	22 11.0
			Horticulture, fruit and market gardening	21 10.5
			Dairy farmers	13 6.5
			Owner-occupiers	12 6.0
			Retired farmers	11 5.5
			Tenants	9 4.5
			Small farmers (<100 acres)	8 4.0
			Medium farmers (100–500 acres)	5 2.5
			Arable & dairy mixed	3 1.5
			Livestock	3 1.5
			Arable	2 1.0
			Pigs	1 0.5
			Sheep	1 0.5
			Total with descriptions	200 100.0
			No further farmer description	45
Landowners	116	15.3		
Land agent	44	5.8		
No occupation given	95	12.6		
WLA rep (woman member)	68	9.0		
Labour rep	70	9.3		
Market gardener	14	1.9		
Retired land-connected officer	5	0.7		
Executive Officers	82	10.8	<i>Further description of EOs</i>	<i>total % EOs</i>
			County agricultural organiser	19 42.2
			Land agent	9 20.0
			Local authority official	8 17.8
			Academic	7 15.6
			Other	2 4.4
			Total with descriptions	45 100.0
			No further occupation given	37
Other members	17	2.2		
Total	756	100.0		

Source: TNA: MAF 39.

members of the Kilvert clan. The huge Bellingham District Committee area of over 246,000 acres in Northumberland was steered by six different Robsons at various times during the war, and there were five members with the surname Peacock on specialist sub-committees and district committees in the Yorkshire North Riding.⁶⁸ There was one instance of a family succession to the chair of a CWAEC, with Gilbert Kemsley succeeding his cousin, W. Hugh Kemsley, in Essex, after illness forced the latter to resign in 1942.⁶⁹

Table 4
The social composition of women members of CWAECs 1939–1945

Total women on executive committees	92
Married	66
Single	14
Widowed	4
Marital status unknown	8
Peeress	19
Wife of baronet or knight	21
JP	10
Civil honours (OBE, CBE etc)	13
Address ‘castle’	5
Mansion	8
‘Hall’	13
‘House’	13
‘Manor’	2
Other prestigious indication by address	17
Professional/technical qualification given	2
WLA role	85
Related to another EC member	12

Source: TNA: MAF 39, 70.

NB. Other than for the addresses and marital status, individuals may have multiple designations e.g. peeress who was a JP, an OBE, fulfilled a WLA role, and was married to the executive committee chairman.

The committees were transparently male, somewhat contrasting with the huge publicity given to the work of the WLA during the war. There were just ninety-two women serving on the English and Welsh CWAECs during the war, constituting 11.1 per cent of the overall membership, of whom eighty-five were serving as WLA representatives. Only two were credited with professional or technical qualifications (table 4). One was the Honourable Mrs Ralph Assheton, land agent on her family’s estate at Downham Hall, Clithero, serving on the Lancashire Executive Committee and specifically named as the only woman member of the Land Agents Society.⁷⁰ Otherwise female participation was restricted to sub-committees and district committees, or to the roles of secretary or officials dealing with such matters as horticulture, poultry, dairying or accommodation. In what was probably a unique case, Miss S. Scott served as both the honorary secretary and District Executive Officer for the West District Committee (Barnack) in the Soke of Peterborough. The Lancashire Executive Officer, J.J. Green, drafted his daughter, Miss M.B. Green, as secretary to the executive committee.⁷¹ The social backgrounds of the executive committee women were predominantly genteel: of the ninety-two, there were forty titled women, and fifty-eight altogether were almost certainly from wealthy homes as broadly indicated by their addresses (see table 4). Twelve of the ninety-two were in some way related to another member of the committee, sometimes being the wife of the chairman. In Wiltshire Mrs A. Hurd of Rainscombe farm, Marlborough (wife of the Conservative MP for Newbury from 1945 and mother of Conservative foreign secretary Douglas Hurd) served on the Marlborough District Committee.⁷² But the formidable

Miss Sylvia Brocklebank OBE (1882–1962) on the Rutland WAEC needed no such entrée. A well-known horsewoman, champion with her tandem pair at the Dublin and Royal Shows, she worked from her home at Wing Grange to establish a noted herd of beef shorthorns – the ‘Wing Herd’. Similarly Lady Mary Langman (Somerset WAEC) was a champion of alternative farming and a postwar founder member with Lady Eve Balfour of the Soil Association.⁷³

Finally, there were members seconded from outside farming, part of the wider community of interests within the agricultural policy-making sector, which was to become such a pronounced feature of postwar productivism. These included ICI employees on many committees, nominees from the Bury St Edmunds Sugar Beet factory on some West Suffolk committees, and many commercial representatives, especially feed and seed merchants.⁷⁴ Full use was also made of academic expertise: Sir John Clapham served on the Cambridgeshire Cottages Panel before his death in 1946; and Oxfordshire could call upon the director of the Agricultural Economics Research Institute, C.S. Orwin, together with Professor J.A. Scott Watson, Professor of Rural Economy, and K.A.H. Murray, fellow and in 1944 Rector of Lincoln College and the author of the official history of wartime farming.⁷⁵ The Northumberland Redesdale artillery range farms committee incorporated three army officers, and there were many ex-army officers, veterans of the First World War, also serving.⁷⁶ Politicians were involved: E.G. Gooch, later a Labour MP, was on the Norfolk WAEC throughout the war; J.R. Christie, MP from Framlingham Pigot, served on the Norfolk Technical Development Committee; and Wilfred Roberts MP, son of the chairman of the WAEC, served on the Cumberland Machinery Committee.⁷⁷ Some members had political aspirations which remained unfulfilled in the 1945 election: J.E. Wilson was an unsuccessful Liberal candidate on the Yorkshire East Riding WAEC, who resigned to fight the election, and was reinstated when unsuccessful.⁷⁸

Clearly the committees were both gender and class biased. To the extent that they were drawn from a pre-war rural society which was still comparatively deferential and paternalistic, this is not surprising. Although much has been made of the social melting pot, a social leveling through the mass participation caused by the exigencies of total war, this may have been an urban rather than a rural feature, since the committees were certainly not avenues by which aspiring members might enter county power structures.⁷⁹ One supposedly fictional account, but clearly based on real experience, related how the ‘War Ag’ Labour Officer with the ‘Wilton North Labour Pool, Deepshire’ evidently relished being in charge of men of much higher social standing than himself.⁸⁰ The Essex landowner and far-right commentator J. Wentworth Day lamented the ‘pretentious ignorance on the part of officials’, while in Wales Hugh James, a pioneer of agricultural cooperation, made similar criticisms in wishing for greater involvement from those of higher standing.⁸¹ Despite opportunistic and short-lived attempts to subvert rural hierarchies, there was no rural melting pot, but rather there were many situations demonstrating a consolidation of positions and attitudes and a shared, reinforced image of a hierarchical ‘English’ community. Indeed, such hierarchies would not be challenged fundamentally until the arrival of substantial numbers of middle class ex-urban families during the post-war counterurbanisation decades.

People of substance were therefore very much to the fore across most of England and Wales. Political allegiances can only be surmised since committee members were not chosen to represent special interests, except for the appointing of one member specifically to represent the farmworkers, either drawn from the National Union of Agricultural Workers (NUAW) or the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), and another to represent the WLA. There were no formal requirements for political affiliation, although the unminuted 'small behaviours' of demeanour, tone, signs and body language would probably have followed informal political grouping or contingent networks of interests within (or against) the hegemony of 'agrarian Conservatism'.⁸² The documentation for Monmouth Executive Committee exceptionally did give the political affiliation of the Executive Committee as at June 1940. Five of the seven members were Conservatives, one Labour and one was non-political, a structure which was probably not at all unusual.⁸³

V

The committees spearheading the transformation of agriculture therefore, perhaps not surprisingly, comprised the most articulate, powerful and wealthy members of their farming communities, who moved between local and county (and sometimes national) scales. Mobilising traditional authority, drawing on the sweeping powers of the Defence Regulations where necessary, and incorporating community leaders through this new arm of state control, the committees were regulatory and coercive; and with their threats of sanctions, their control over production was virtually total. Restrictive and normative, they also manipulated rewards. Utilitarian, they controlled the mobilisation of material resources, and the allocating of benefits and services. The individual instances encountered within their particular communities would determine to some extent the way in which power was exercised: here dominating, there exhorting with moral persuasion, elsewhere manipulating. As A.G. Street had it, the question was whether to 'coax, cajole, or curse'.⁸⁴ Patrician authority could be linked to the requirements of the state in many ways. One was by example, and Captain Charles Fitzroy, tenth Duke of Grafton, vice-chairman of the West Suffolk CWAEC, therefore turned over the bulk of Euston Park near Thetford, which before the war had been covered in tough heath grasses and bracken, to his own CWAEC in order to produce arable crops by 1943 and this continued successfully for the rest of the war.⁸⁵

Care was certainly required in these appointments. Committee members who defaulted themselves paid the penalty: one farmer from Husbands Bosworth (Leicestershire) resigned from Lutterworth District Committee because he himself was indicted for 'bad farming', and so presumably would not have been in any position to enforce WAEC directions within the farming community.⁸⁶ The vice-chairman of Cumberland WAEC was immediately removed from his position following an adverse report on his farming from a local district committee in Solway, and at the angry insistence of the Minister, Robert Hudson, who had been staying nearby.⁸⁷

Not all appointees were well received within the committees. Knowledge of Welsh was clearly important as a cultural marker among Welsh rural communities, and when

the Welsh Office proposed to appoint Lady Kathleen Stanley to the Anglesey WAEC a unanimous 'strong exception' was expressed at their first meeting on 31st August 1939, namely that she had already undertaken 'very responsible duties in connection with other war services' and that the meetings would be conducted in Welsh but that 'her ladyship is not conversant with the Welsh language'. The same objection was raised again at their next meeting on 7th September, but nevertheless, Lady Stanley was appointed and remained on the executive throughout the war.⁸⁸ The Montgomery district committee of Llanfair Caereinion had a non-Welsh speaking District Officer, T.R. Wilson, appointed in September 1939 on one month's notice by either side, and a memo notes that because of his poor knowledge of Welsh the committee were to 'ask for a substitute if he is unable to carry out his duties satisfactorily'. It would appear that he too coped with the situation, since he was still in post by 1944.⁸⁹

In rural Wales class distinctions were weaker, most farming families having similar cultural and educational backgrounds, but esteem was instead gained from perceptions of all-round farming competence and longevity of family connections. Rees noted that in 1950 in the secluded, traditional and Welsh-speaking Llanfihangel-yng-Ngwynfa (Montgomeryshire) farmers made good use of the CWAEC tractors whilst being forced to keep accounts by the committee. But farmers here accumulated reserves since farming 'paid' in wartime, and many tenants were enabled to buy their holdings after the war. Indeed, the pre-war non-economic determinants of status were seen to be changing because of these profits. But the onset of agricultural modernity in such areas might be delayed, by the resilience of traditional cultures. Despite the war, for example, no farmer in the parish would carry hay on a Sunday for fear of losing face.⁹⁰ However, fundamental social and cultural changes, of which agricultural change was a precursor, were on their way. The strong family and chapel-based society stood accused of nepotism by urban dwellers but loyalty to kinsmen and known background remained important. So councillors appointed one another's friends and relatives, rooted in rural reciprocity, and it would be difficult to imagine that such procedures left the CWAECs untouched.

VI

It is well known that by 1945 public attitudes reflected weariness and poverty, but also hope for a different kind of future which the Labour Party addressed successfully. While this paper does not analyse the postwar agricultural situation directly, it is nevertheless relevant to consider the place of the CWAECs in the early postwar years.

With the cessation of hostilities, many CWAEC members resumed their peacetime occupations full-time but some members who were thought not to have pulled their weight were examined more closely, and some CWAECs underwent a large turnover of personnel. The Bedfordshire WAEC lost three members who were deemed 'not much use so quickly dropped on reorganization'.⁹¹ But contemporary opinion was divided over whether the committees should continue at all post-war. Most advocates saw a modified form of county committee as crucial to post-war agricultural policy. Authorities such as A. J. Hosier and Sir A. Daniel Hall agreed on this point but actually went further

in linking an evolving county committee structure to some form of land nationalisation, even though the Labour Party had now retreated from such a position.⁹² Others, however, such as the progressive farmer, Frank Sykes, claimed in 1944 that because the committees were essentially creatures of the war they would not survive peace. Certainly the post-war committees were not always popular. Several were roundly criticised for their bullying and favouritism, but according to A. G. Street 'after the war the British farmers, by their meek acceptance of the Agriculture Act [1947], betrayed Britain's country life for material security', and by sitting on the 'fascist' committees the 'yeomen of Britain' had become 'the yes-men of Britain'.⁹³

The period from 1939 through to the 1947 Agriculture Act marks the beginning of an agricultural revolution, at whose heart were the war-time and post-war committees.⁹⁴ Described as 'the birch in the cupboard', they were vital in the implementation of agricultural expansion.⁹⁵ They effectively coerced much of British agriculture into a sustained increase in output after 1947, allied to a greater adoption of science and technology, with the manipulation of subsidies and price incentives, and higher incomes. And in promoting the creation of new rural spaces and landscapes out of the pre-war depressed fields, they were a key force behind the swift transition from interwar depression to postwar productivist farming in Britain. Their efforts reinforced local differences in the immediate post-war countryside. Marshes, fens and bogs had been drained wherever feasible.⁹⁶ Gyrotillers and track-laying tractors from the USA had been deployed to cultivate lower mountain slopes beyond former margins. Woodlands were cut back; commons, urban and peri-urban spaces ploughed; scrub cleared and farmland drained. Intensification, concentration and specialisation were pushed forward, although intensification in itself was by no means straightforward, witness the failure to maintain arable yields in the later stages of the war. In reality too, concentration and specialisation had to await the calmer waters of the 1960s, when the committees no longer functioned.

Economic, political and moral power had swung in favour of the farmers, and a fundamental re-examination of the role of the countryside was conducted during this period, based on the experience of the 1930s and 1940s. Certainly the political power of the landed classes was now far less secure. Whereas Asquith's 1908 cabinet had ten landowners out of the total of twenty men, and Churchill's had six out of sixteen, Atlee's 1945 Labour cabinet had just one out of twenty-two.⁹⁷ Throughout the twentieth century, although resilient, landed interests had been battered, and now the maintenance of their political power had to rest in large measure on the efforts made in 1939 to 1945. As early as 1941 it was recognised that increased farm production needed long-term stability and some guarantees for the postwar future, and a wide consensus to this effect had been reached by the end of the war. And indeed for the next forty years farmers would enjoy rural hegemony and protected incomes. An agricultural policy community had emerged with a shared sense of economic purpose, priorities, ways of proceeding, and a sense of belonging.⁹⁸

However, post-war productivist farming could never have been a uniform regime. Adding to the essentially heterogenous nature of agriculture had come the strong control by the sixty-two CWAECs with their varied enthusiasms, social and economic

power, responding to the requirements of differing ecologies, and with the interaction of their local knowledges with the wider national emergency procedures. The interventionist onset of productivism was a national strategy to be implemented but also interpreted by local agency, with all the flexibility and responsiveness to locality that agricultural development required, and also responding to the political, socio-cultural and local economic relations and problems that might be found. Thus there was also mediation between the local committees and Whitehall. From Monmouth, for example, came issues about political balance on the CWAEC; from Berkshire and Buckinghamshire came advice about replacement CWAEC chairmen; from Somerset questions about the functioning of its sub-committees. In this sense we might indeed relax the one-way Foucauldian model of surveillance to allow a measure, not only of self-determination but even of influence over state policy. This two-way interaction was all the more possible given a powerful local chairman. When the Labour politician, and neighbour of Clement Attlee at Chequers, Viscount Addison, stepped down from his chair at the Buckinghamshire CWAEC in 1945 he wrote to plead the case for his deputy chairman to take over, his letter beginning 'Dear Tom' and signed 'Sincerely yours, Christopher'.⁹⁹

The CWAECs remained until they were transformed into County Agricultural Executive Committees (CAECs) under Part V of the Agriculture Act 1947. Their remit was to uphold agricultural standards, administer grants, subsidies and regulations, and to provide technical advice. Some of their sweeping powers, notably eviction, were later discontinued in the Agriculture Act 1958 as food shortages became less problematic. The CAECs were finally dismantled in 1972, and their residual advisory functions were taken over by the National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAAS), later the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service (ADAS).¹⁰⁰

The origins of postwar productivism can, on the one hand, be seen as multiple: the influence of guaranteed and subsidised price signals stemming from pre-war concerns; a corporatist relationship between the Ministry of Agriculture and the NFU as evidenced by the *Annual Review and Determination of Guarantees*, enshrined from 1947; the emergence of a planned economy, including the concept of a 'national farm'; and the increased concern for 'welfarism'.¹⁰¹ The role of the CWAECs in this array should perhaps be seen as one of enabling such 'top-down' emphases to gain credence among the farming community, to offer the hope in their managerial 'hands-on' approaches that wartime stringency would be followed by a closer concern for farming. And perhaps above all, to open a channel for communication between the local and national levels of ideas, methods and fears, a channel that had been effectively lacking in the interwar period. The committees were 'self-regulatory rather than self determining' since they were direct arms of central government.¹⁰² But the reality of on-the-ground social interaction really mattered; if the CWAECs had not been able to bully, persuade and encourage thousands of small producers, and facilitate essential land, labour and capital, then food supplies would almost certainly have dwindled, and morale would undoubtedly have suffered, along with the nation's health, as rationing and food control bit ever deeper. Without this, the public, and political, spirit of thanksgiving to agriculture, so important after the war, might not have been maintained beyond 1945.

Notes

1. Among highly authoritative published studies of wartime farming one should note the early work of E. Whetham, *British Farming, 1939–49* (London, 1952); K.A.H. Murray, *Agriculture* (History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series, 1955); and P. Self and H. J. Storing, *The State and the Farmer* (London, 1962).
2. See S. Ward, *War in the Countryside 1939–45* (London, 1988); M. Winter, *Rural Politics: Policies for Agriculture, Forestry and the Environment* (London, 1996); J. Martin, *The Development of Modern Agriculture, British Farming since 1931* (Manchester, 2000); A.F. Wilt, *Food for War: Agriculture and Rearmament in Britain before the Second World War* (Oxford, 2001); and more recently by B. Short, C. Watkins and J. Martin, eds, *The Front Line of Freedom: British Farming in the Second World War* (Exeter, 2007).
3. For a critique of mid-twentieth century anthropological studies of British rural communities see S. Wright, 'Image and Analysis: New Directions in Community Studies' in B. Short, ed., *The English Rural Community: Image and Analysis* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 195–217.
4. H. Newby, *Green and Pleasant Land? Social Change in Rural England* (London, 1980); H. Newby, C. Bell, D. Rose and P. Saunders, *Property, Paternalism and Power* (London, 1978); M. Woods, 'Discourses of Power and Rurality: Local Politics in Somerset in the 20th century', *Political Geography* 16 (1997), 453–78.
5. M. Goodwin, 'Regulating Rurality? Rural Studies and the Regulation Approach' in P. Cloke, T. Marsden and P.H. Mooney, eds, *Handbook of Rural Studies* (London, 2006), pp. 304–16.
6. For one attempt to bring together the economics and sociology of agrarian communities in more general terms see H. Newby, 'Rural Sociology and its Relevance to the Agricultural Economist, a Review', *Journal of Agricultural Economics* 33 (1982), 125–65. And see also A. Howkins, *The Death of Rural England: A Social History of the Countryside since 1900* (London, 2003).
7. R. J. Moore-Colyer, 'The County War Agricultural Executive Committees: The Welsh Experience, 1939–1945', *The Welsh History Review* 22 (2005), 558–87.
8. E.H. Whetham, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales VIII 1914–1939* (Cambridge, 1978). For the more recent views on the interwar period see P. Brassley, J. Burchardt and L. Thompson, eds, *The English Countryside between the Wars: Regeneration or Decline?* (Woodbridge, 2006).
9. TNA: MAF 53/108 Agriculture Bill 1937. Notes by the Minister of Agriculture; H.T. Williams, *Principles for British Agricultural Policy* (London, 1960), pp. 11–39.
10. R. G. Stapledon, *The Way of the Land* (London, 1943), p. 252.
11. P. Brassley, 'The Professionalisation of English Agriculture?' *Rural History* 16 (2005), 235–51; J. Martin, 'The Structural Transformation of British Agriculture: The Resurgence of Progressive High Input Arable Farming' in Short et al., *Front Line of Freedom*, pp. 16–35.
12. P. Lowe, J. Murdoch, T. Marsden, R. Munton and A. Flynn, 'Regulating the New Rural Spaces: The Uneven Development of Land', *Journal of Rural Studies* 9 (1993), pp. 205–22.
13. C. S. Orwin, *Problems of the Countryside* (Cambridge, 1945) and *Speed the Plough* (London, 1942).
14. P. Conford, *The Origins of the Organic Movement* (Edinburgh, 2001) and 'The Organic Challenge' in Short et al., *Front Line of Freedom*, pp. 67–76. See also G. Holt and M. Reed, eds, *Sociological Perspectives of Organic Agriculture: From Pioneer to Policy* (Wallingford, 2006).
15. B. A. Holderness, 'Apropos the Third Agricultural Revolution: How Productive was British Agriculture in the Long Boom, 1954–1973?' in P. Mathias and J. A. Davis, eds, *The Nature of Industrialisation 4: Agriculture and Industrialisation: from the Eighteenth Century to the Present Day* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 68–85; J. Murdoch, P. Lowe, N. Ward and T. Marsden, *The Differentiated Countryside* (London, 2003); M.J. Smith, *The Politics of Agricultural Support in Britain* (Aldershot, 1990), pp. 57–116.

16. A. G. Wilson, 'From Productivism to Post-Productivism . . . and Back Again? Exploring the (Un)changed Natural and Mental Landscapes of European Agriculture' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26 (2001), 77–102.
17. G. Cox, P. Lowe and M. Winter, 'From State Direction to Self Regulation: The Historical Development of Corporatism in British Agriculture', *Policy and Politics* 14 (1986), 475–90; C. J. Holmes, 'Science and the Farmer: The Development of the Agricultural Advisory Service in England and Wales, 1900–1939' *Agricultural History Review* 36 (1988), 77–86.
18. H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, 1981), p. 33.
19. Only the last two harvests of the First World War were gathered under the auspices of the committees. For their success see P.E. Dewey, *British Agriculture in the First World War* (London, 1989); and J. Sheail, 'The Role of the War Agricultural and Executive Committees in the Food Production Campaign of 1915–1918 in England and Wales' *Agricultural Administration* 1 (1974), 141–54. A local case study is provided by J. Chapman and S. Seeliger, 'The Influence of the Agricultural Executive Committees in the First World War: Some Evidence from West Sussex', *Southern History* 13 (1991), 105–22.
20. The committees in Northern Ireland and Scotland were answerable to the respective Secretaries of State.
21. TNA: MAF 80/894.
22. For a full listing of the relevant regulations and the powers of the CWAECs see D.R. Denman, 'The Practical Application of Wartime Agricultural Policy: With Special Reference to Highland Regions' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 2 vols, 1945).
23. *Sussex Express and County Herald*, 6th December 1940, p. 3.
24. Personal communication from the late Nigel Harvey (1995); C. M. Baldwin, *Digging for Victory* (undated typescript, Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading D73/22).
25. One earlier estimate by Hurd calculated the total membership at 582 by 1945 (A. Hurd, *A Farmer in Whitehall* (London, 1951), pp. 108–23). However, this does not take account of the shifts in the committees during the course of the six years of war, with some counties demonstrating greater committee stability than others, such that the composition of the committees could be quite different in 1945 from the original membership in 1939. This revised calculation and much of the following text is based on the documents now available at the National Archives at TNA: MAF 39.
26. Murray, *Agriculture*, pp. 338–9.
27. Ministry of Information, *Land at War* (London, 1945); V. Grove, *Laurie Lee: the Well-loved Stranger* (London, 1999), pp. 187–8.
28. The documents are at TNA: MAF 39 Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries: Establishment and Finance: Correspondence and Papers. MAF 39/228–324 has the membership (referred to as the 'Constitutions') of the CWAECs and sub-committees 1939–46. MAF 70 Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries: Welsh Department: Correspondence and Papers, has the Welsh CWAECs at 70/176–186. The minutes of their meetings, and of their successor CAECs, between 1939 and 1971, are contained in 5,046 Ministry of Food files at MAF 80, subject to a fifty-year closure. Postwar CAEC administrative material is also contained in MAF 227.
29. A. W. Menzies Kitchen, 'Local Administration of Agricultural Policy' in D.N. Chester, ed., *Lessons of the British War Economy* (Cambridge, 1951), p. 249.
30. B. Short, C. Watkins, W. Foot and P. Kinsman, *The National Farm Survey 1941–43, State Surveillance and the Countryside in England and Wales in the Second World War* (Wallingford, 2000). Scotland mounted a similar, sample-based survey, since the Scottish Advisory Council felt that it would be 'an unjustifiable waste of time and labour' given Scotland's remoter regions. For an abridged report see TNA: MAF 38/217.
31. The composition and numbers of sub committees for each county are recorded at varying dates, depending in part on the vagaries of documentary survival during and after the war. In general the composition of committees can be ascertained for the early stages of the war,

- and again in the months following the end of the war. In between these dates, some counties, such as Somerset, have a more reliable and complete record than others. The documents at TNA, MAF 39 and for Wales MAF 70, do not include Anglesey and Glamorgan where no such documents are extant in the National Archive collection. For these counties some idea of the composition of committees must be gained by perusing the minutes of their meetings (TNA, MAF 80/3638–44 (Anglesey); 80/3855–61 (Glamorgan)).
32. Baldwin, *Digging for Victory*, p. 2. For a similar case of expansion for the Berkshire WAEC in Reading, see TNA: MAF 169/68.
 33. Denman, 'The Practical Application of Wartime Agricultural Policy', 511–34. Menzies Kitchen gives a national figure of thirty thousand employed by the CWAECs by 1943, with Essex alone employing two thousand workers (Menzies Kitchen, 'Local Administration of Agricultural Policy', 243). His figure includes farmworkers on land taken over by the CWAECs.
 34. TNA: MAF 39/237 (Cheshire); 39/239 (Cornwall); 39/286 (Northumberland); 39/270 (Lancashire); 39/241 (Cumberland); 39/249 (Durham); 39/255 (Hampshire); 39/276 (Lindsey); 39/282 (Norfolk); 39/316 (Wiltshire).
 35. Emily Baker, writing for Mass-Observation in early 1940, noted how difficult small pig and poultry producers found the procurement of feed in the Sussex Weald (A. Howkins, 'A Country at War: Mass-Observation and Rural England, 1939–45' *Rural History* 9 (1998), 85).
 36. D.R. Denman, *A Half and Half Affair: Chronicles of a Hybrid Don* (London, 1993), pp. 73–9. I am grateful to John Sheail for bringing this reference to my attention. Denman worked as assistant to the Executive Officer for the Cumberland WAEC, resigning the morning after Atlee's victory in 1945 because of the Labour promise to continue the wartime 'dirigiste' structures after the war. Anxieties about potentially libelous comments on farmers made by CWAEC members also illustrate the gulfs that might occur with this power (TNA: MAF 38/471).
 37. Earl of Portsmouth, *A Knot of Roots* (London, 1965), pp. 198–9.
 38. TNA: MAF 32/1012/109. Mr Knight was classified as a 'B' farmer.
 39. The quest for more archival information on the Farmers' Rights Association and other localised protest groups is set out in J. Martin, 'British Agricultural Archives in the Second World War: Lying Fallow', *Archives* 25: 103 (2000), 123–33.
 40. A. G. Street, *Shameful Harvest* (London 1952). The inquest is reported in the *Hampshire Chronicle* 3rd August 1940. The verdict was justifiable homicide.
 41. R. N. Sadler, *Sunshine and Showers: One Hundred Years in the Life of an Essex Farming Family* (Chelmsford, 1988), p. 70.
 42. Farmers' Rights Association, *The New Morality* (Church Stretton, 1948), no pagination.
 43. B. Short, 'The Dispossession of Farmers in England and Wales during and after the Second World War' in B. Short et al., *The Front Line of Freedom*, pp. 158–78. Foucault's 'panoptism' with the interests of the state resting on 'small-scale, regional, dispersed Panoptisms' which maximised its effectiveness, comes to mind here. Within a tradition of public service, the use of inventories, dossiers, systems of classification, reports and maps that might inform 'the tactics and strategy of power' offers a tantalising theoretical insight into the CWAECs' mediating position between state and locality. (M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977* (Hemel Hempstead, 1980), pp. 63–77). Here was the 'complete hierarchy that assured the capillary functioning of power' (M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London, 1991), p. 198).
 44. Sadler, *Sunshine and Showers*, pp. 68–9; P. Wormell, *Essex Farming 1900–2000* (Colchester, 1999), pp. 65–95.
 45. F. Sykes, *This Farming Business* (London, 1944); J. Blishen, *A Cack-Handed War* (London, 1983).

46. PD (Commons) 407 6th February 1945, 2031. Loverseed was returned at a by-election for Eddisbury as a member of the Common Wealth party in 1943.
47. J. Winnifreth, *The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food* (New Whitehall Series) (London, 1962), p. 27.
48. Moore-Colyer, 'The County War Agricultural Executive Committees: The Welsh Experience', 571; Smith, *The Politics of Agricultural Support*, pp. 79–86.
49. Murray, *Agriculture*, pp. 337–8.
50. PD (Commons) 400, 16th May 1944, 543–8.
51. A.F. Cooper, *British Agricultural Policy, 1912–36: A Study in Conservative Politics* (Manchester, 1989), pp. 1–4. He cites Roy Jenkins as claiming in an article 'Premier of Paradox', *The Observer* 4th July 1976, that 'the destruction of rural life probably proceeded more rapidly during [Baldwin's] premiership than during any other span of fifteen years'.
52. G. Day and M. Fitton, 'Religion and Social Status in Rural Wales: "bucheidd" and its Lessons for Concepts of Social Stratification in Community Studies', *Sociological Review* 23 (1975), 867–92; Wright, 'Image and Analysis'.
53. F. Parkin, *Max Weber* (London, 2002), pp. 71–89; C. Brennan, *Max Weber on Power and Social Stratification: An Interpretation and Critique* (Aldershot, 1997), pp. 71–103.
54. D. Rose, P. Saunders, H. Newby and C. Bell, 'Ideologies of Property' *Sociological Review* 24 (1976), 699–730; R.W. Johnson, 'The Nationalization of English Rural Politics: Norfolk South West, 1945–1970' *Parliamentary Affairs* 26 (1972), 8–55; R. Ottewill, 'County Council Elections in Surrey: The First Sixty Years 1889 to 1949', *Southern History* 27 (2005), 76–108.
55. E.J. Rudsdale, 'Colchester Journal', Essex Record Office D/DU 888/Box 3:1941, p. 11.
56. In the analysis following, the data on the chairmen of WAECs 1939–46 was derived from a separate document for each county from TNA: MAF 39 for England and MAF 70 for Wales. Data on the membership of sub committees was also derived from the same MAF record class.
57. TNA: MAF 39/267; 39/295; 39/303; 39/252; 39/242.
58. For an example of the voluminous correspondence expected of the chairmen of executive committees see the letters of Richard Stratton 1939–45, chair of the Wiltshire Executive Committee (Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office 2865/1).
59. TNA: MAF 39/230; *The Times*, 10th November 1944.
60. Gavin Henderson, second Baron Faringdon (1902–1977) who lived at Buscot Park (now in Oxfordshire), was a Labour peer and Fabian. He was dismissed by Hugh Dalton as 'a pansy pacifist of whose private tendencies it might be slander to speak freely' (Gaynor Johnson, 'Henderson, (Alexander) Gavin, second Baron Faringdon (1902–1977)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (ODNB), 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31218, accessed 19th September 2006], citing B. Pimlott, ed., *The Second World War Diary of Hugh Dalton, 1940–1945* (1986), p. 509.
61. TNA: MAF 39/232; Kenneth O. Morgan, 'Addison, Christopher, first Viscount Addison (1869–1951)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30342, accessed 28th September 2006]. Lord Addison's support for land nationalisation was well known, and was set out in his *A Policy for British Agriculture* (London, 1939), with the preface written from his farm at Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire (pp. 5–6).
62. TNA: MAF 39/266.
63. D. Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven, 1990), p. 617.
64. Susanna Wade Martins, 'Overman Family (per. c.1800–1933)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004; [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50161, accessed 27th September 2006].
65. See, for example, Ministry of Information, *Land at War*, p. 11.

66. David Taylor, 'Hosier, Arthur Julius (1877–1963)', *ODNB*, 2004; [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34006>, accessed 23rd November 2005]. A.J. Hosier, in B. Vesey-Fitzgerald (ed), *Programme for Agriculture* (London, 1941), p. 113 and *infra*.
67. W.M. Williams, *A West Country Village, Ashworthy* (London, 1963), pp. 201–3.
68. TNA: MAF 39/256; 39/249; 39/294; 39/286; 39/322.
69. TNA: MAF 39/292; 70/184; 70/183; 39/250. And see Wormell, *Essex Farming 1900–2000*, p. 82.
70. TNA: MAF 39/269. Daughter of the sixth Baron Hotham, she was married to Ralph Assheton of Downham Hall, MP for Rushcliffe (Nottinghamshire) and a wartime member of Churchill's government from 1942 as parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Supply and, from December, as financial secretary to the Treasury (Julian Amery, 'Assheton, Ralph, first Baron Clitheroe (1901–1984)', revised *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004; online edition, October 2005 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30772>, accessed 28th September 2006].
71. TNA: MAF 39/296; 39/269–70.
72. TNA: MAF 39/297; Hurd, *Farmer in Whitehall*, p. 85. Mrs Hurd was also a member of the separate Wiltshire WLA committee.
73. For Miss Brocklebank see *Burkes Peerage and Baronetage* 107th edition (2003), vol. 1, p. 514. Also A. Sylvia Brocklebank, *The Road and the Ring: Being the Memories of her Coaching Days* (with additional notes by T. Ryder (Macclesfield, 1975). For Lady Langman see TNA: MAF 39/316.
74. TNA: MAF 39/304 (E.J. Cousins from the Bury sugar beet factory sat on the West Suffolk Labour sub-committee. A nominee from the Suffolk branch of the National Association of Corn and Agricultural Merchants attended the West Suffolk Feeding Stuffs Committee).
75. TNA: MAF 39/235. Sir John Clapham retired from Cambridge University in 1943, but chaired the Cambridgeshire Employment Committee and Refugee Committee, and was a member of the Conscientious Objectors Panel. For Watson, Murray and Orwin see TNA: MAF 39/289–90.
76. TNA: MAF 39/286.
77. TNA: MAF 39/281–2; 39/241. Roberts was Liberal MP for Cumberland North.
78. TNA: MAF 39/319–20.
79. Thus George Orwell in 1941 could write, amidst his call for the nationalisation of land: 'Patriotism is usually stronger than class hatred'. He then continued 'England is the most class-ridden country under the sun. It is a land of snobbery and privilege largely ruled by the old and the silly. But in any calculation one has to take into account its emotional unity, the tendency of nearly all its inhabitants to feel alike and act alike and act together in moments of extreme crisis' (G. Orwell, *The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius* (London, 1941), pp. 22, 27). But for the ongoing class divisions in rural Britain see Howkins, 'A Country at War', p. 92. and for doubts on social solidarity in either town or country see S. Fielding, P. Thompson and N. Tiratsoo, "*England Arise!*": *The Labour Party and Popular Politics in 1940s Britain* (Manchester, 1995), pp. 21–6; and S. Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Britain 1939–1945* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 151–96.
80. Baldwin, *Digging for Victory*, p. 12.
81. J. Wentworth Day, *Farming Adventure: A Thousand Miles through England on a Horse*, (London, 1943), p. 6; Moore-Colyer, 'The County War Agricultural Executive Committees: The Welsh Experience', 578.
82. E. Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behaviour* (London, 1967), p. 1.
83. TNA: MAF 70/183. A hint of the political undercurrent is contained in a letter of 4th June 1940 which was sent to Grant McKenzie at Labour Party Offices, Smith Square, SW 1 on 'the Monmouth problem' of whether there should be a second Labour member on the Executive Committee at the expense of one of the Conservative members. But 'unless we

- can find some person or persons who are slackers and not doing their duty, it will be difficult to insist upon changes’.
84. A.G. Street, *Wessex Wins* (London, 1941), p. 335.
 85. Duke of Grafton, ‘Experiences in Land Reclamation: Euston, Thetford’, *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England* 104 (1943), 85–7. Ibid., ‘Land Reclamation on the Euston Estate’, *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society England* 108 (1947), 127–9.
 86. TNA: MAF 39/272.
 87. Denman, *A Half and Half Affair*, p. 74. From the Cumberland WAEC documents this would appear to have taken place in August 1942 (TNA: MAF 39/240-41).
 88. TNA: MAF 80/3638. Lady Kathleen Stanley (née Thynne, 1891–1977) lived at Plas Llanfawr, Holyhead.
 89. TNA: MAF 70/184.
 90. A.D. Rees, *Life in a Welsh Countryside* (Cardiff; 1968 (1st pub 1950)), pp. 23–30, 144; P.J. Madgwick with N. Griffiths and V. Walker, *The Politics of Rural Wales: A Study of Cardiganshire* (London, 1973), pp. 41–44.
 91. In addition, one other member of the Bedfordshire milk panel resigned in early 1945 ‘because he dislikes C’tee’s insistence on returns of petrol used and mileage run’ (TNA: MAF 39/229). The amount of turnover in 1945–6 also renders the lists of memberships published by Hurd (*A Farmer in Whitehall*) rather less useful for a fuller understanding of the composition of the wartime CWAECs.
 92. Sir A. Daniel Hall, *Reconstruction and the Land* (London, 1941); Hosier in Vesey-Fitzgerald, *Programme for Agriculture*, p. 120; M. Tichelar, ‘The Labour Party, Agricultural Policy and the Retreat from Rural Land Nationalisation during the Second World War’, *Agricultural History Review* 51 (2003), 209–25; and see K. Manton, ‘The Labour Party and the Land Question, 1919–51’, *Historical Research* 79 (2006), 247–69.
 93. F. Sykes, *This Farming Business* (London, 1944), pp. 119–20; A.G. Street, *Feather-bedding* (London, 1954), p. 37.
 94. B. Short, C. Watkins and J. Martin, ‘The Front Line of Freedom: State-Led Agricultural Revolution in Britain, 1939–45’, in Short et al., *Front Line of Freedom*, pp. 1–15.
 95. P. Self and H. J. Storing, *The State and the Farmer* (London, 1962), p. 111; Smith, *The Politics of Agricultural Support*, pp. 98–101.
 96. B. Short, ‘Agency and Environment in the Transition to a Productivist Farming Regime in England and Wales 1939–1950’ in H. Clout, ed., *Contemporary Rural Geographies: Land, Property and Resources in Britain: Essays in Honour of Richard Munton* (London, 2007), pp. 21–42.
 97. K. Cahill, *Who Owns Britain?* (Edinburgh, 2002), p. 25.
 98. Winter, *Rural Politics*, pp. 102–4.
 99. TNA: MAF 39/232. Letter dated 4th August 1945 to the new Labour Minister, Tom Williams.
 100. For the formation and work of the postwar CAECs see Cox, Lowe and Winter, ‘From State Regulation to Self Regulation’, 475–90; Sir W. Gavin, ‘County Agricultural Committees’, *Agriculture* 54 (1948), 481–5.
 101. J. Murdoch and N. Ward, ‘Governmentality and Territoriality: The Statistical Manufacture of Britain’s “national farm”’, *Political Geography* 16 (1997), 307–24; G. Cox, P. Lowe and M. Winter, ‘Changing Directions in Agricultural Policy: Corporatist Arrangements in Production and Conservation Policies’, *Sociologia Ruralis* 25 (1985), 130–53. This article also gives consideration to the role of the postwar committees.
 102. M. Winter, ‘County Agricultural Committees: A Good Idea for Conservation?’, *Journal of Rural Studies* 1 (1985), 205–209.