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*

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by R. A. DONKIN

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by DOROTHY SYLVESTER

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Labour Relations in Scottish Agriculture before 1870
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Cistercian Sheep-Farming and Wool-Sales in the Thirteenth Century

By R. A. DONKIN

THE list of wool-producing monasteries drawn up by Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, a member of the merchant house of Bardi, contains a larger proportion of Cistercian houses (about 85 per cent) than of any other order.¹ Prices per sack are quoted for almost every house, but these must be used with care. They are not directly comparable with those fixed on a county basis for the wool grant of 1337.² The Pegolotti figures are the earlier, probably by at least forty years;³ they include the cost of carriage from England to Flanders and the profit due to the merchant; and they are usually given for three grades, of which the 'middle' wool probably represents the average county product. Nevertheless, if we subtract four marks from the prices of 'best' wool and two from those of 'middle' wool—amounts suggested by a study of prices actually obtained on various occasions by Cistercian houses—there is still every indication that the monks were getting more for their wool than most other producers. How much more would of course depend upon the proportion which 'best' wool bore to the total, and this we have no means of knowing. There is, however, some evidence to support the view that the Cistercians occasionally marketed an intrinsically better product and very often prepared their clip more carefully.

Here we are directly concerned only with the management of sheep and the preparation of wool, but it should also be taken into account that the monasteries supplied wool in bulk, thus, no doubt, saving the buyer miles of tedious travel; that they were in a position to make long-term contracts; and

¹ Printed in W. Cunningham, *The Growth of English Industry and Commerce* (5th ed.), Cambridge, 1922, I, App. D. A similar but inferior list is printed in G. Espinas, *La Vie urbaine de Douai au moyen âge*, Paris, 1913, III, pp. 232-4.

² *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1334-8, pp. 480-3.

³ This emerges if one considers the Cistercian houses included in the list. The critical entries appear to be: (a) Vale Royal (*Vareale In gualesi*), Cheshire, a community established—from an earlier site, Darnhall—in 1281; no house founded after Vale Royal, the last item in the list, is included. (b) Stanlaw (*Stalleo in Zestri*) is listed although the monks were moved to Whalley, Lancashire, in 1296 (there is, of course, the possibility that the earlier name continued to be used through force of habit after the change of site). Espinas suggests a date about the middle of the thirteenth century for the document he publishes, but it is doubtful whether this view takes into account the inclusion of Darnhall (*Dorenhalline*).

that they were prepared, if necessary, to carry their wool-sacks to some convenient rendezvous, possessing as they did numerous toll exemptions, suitable carts and waggons, and unsalaried lay brothers.¹

The improvements in sheep-breeding during the eighteenth century probably effaced any remaining traces of improvements made five hundred years previously. In any case, these traces were doubtless slight: three centuries had elapsed since the Dissolution, and nearly six since the height of the monastic interest in wool. Certain writers appear convinced, however, that early improvements did indeed take place. "Kirkstead (Lincs.) . . . cultivated the originals of the Lincoln breed," we are told,² and ". . . to the Cistercians this country is indebted for its finer wool."³ Fletcher, in his study of the Cistercians in Yorkshire, supposes that "the Order, because of its intercourse with foreign countries, brought about great and important improvements in the breeding of sheep."⁴ But little or no documentary evidence is produced in support of these assertions; and as far as better stock was concerned there was no need for growers in the poorer districts to look beyond England.

To illustrate, first, the reputation of the Cistercians as flockmasters, we may cite a letter written to the bishop of Chichester (1222-38) by his steward, Simon de Senliz. "Moreover, my lord, please to think about procuring sheep at the abbey of Vaudey [Cistercian, Lincs.] or elsewhere." Later Simon wrote: "I retain in Sussex the *frater* of Vaudey . . . as I have proposed to keep sheep in our lands, in your manors, and therefore I keep back the *frater* in order that the sheep may be more advisedly and usefully provided for through him." On yet another occasion he reported: "Know, moreover, my Lord, that on the Saturday next after the Exaltation of the Holy Cross [September 14th] there came to me a certain monk from *Bordele* [Bordesley, Worcestershire] telling me that forty lambs and two sheep had been sent to you from the abbot of *Bordele* and were at a certain grange of the house of Waverley [also Cistercian, Surrey]; in consequence of which I asked the said monk to lend you his shepherd until I could procure another suitable."⁵ Both Vaudey and Bordesley marketed wool of high quality according to Pegolotti, above the average of the order, but a clip of superior grade was the rule

¹ R. A. Donkin, 'The Disposal of Cistercian Wool in England and Wales during the 12th and 13th centuries', *Cîteaux in de Nederlanden*, VIII (ii), 1957, pp. 115-20.

² H. E. Wroot, 'Yorkshire Abbeys and the Wool Trade', Thoresby Soc. Pub., XXXIII, 1930, p. 11.

³ J. S. Brewer, *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, Rolls Series 21, IV, p. xxiii.

⁴ J. S. Fletcher, *The Cistercians in Yorkshire*, London, 1919, p. 152.

⁵ H. W. Blaaw, 'Letters of Ralph de Nevill, Bishop of Chichester', *Sussex Arch. Coll.*, III, 1850, pp. 52, 54, 70. The letters are undated.

rather than the exception in Lincolnshire and Worcestershire.¹ The native wool of Sussex was generally of a much lower standard.² Now if the Cistercians had graded up their flocks as a whole by the mid-thirteenth century, it would surely have been unnecessary for men such as Simon de Senliz to look to houses as much as 150 miles away. Yet it may be that for some reason their flocks had acquired an exceptional reputation, or were thought particularly suitable: sheep from Vaudey, accustomed to the Fens, would presumably have prospered on the Plain of Selsey around Chichester and behind the Solent. Kingswood (Wilts., now Glos.), at the foot of the Cotswold scarp, was also an important wool house, having apparently an annual surplus of some twenty-five sacks of high quality. It was selling sheep in 1241, 1262 ('old sheep' to the abbot of Malmesbury and others), 1289 (24 sheep), and 1314 (43 sheep). On the other hand the house bought some Lincolnshire (Lindsey) rams in 1241—clearly most valuable evidence—and 20 sheep and 31 ewes in 1288.³ The New Year's gifts to Vale Royal (Cheshire) in 1330 included some sheep, among them twelve from the abbot of Dieulacres (Cistercian, Staffs.) and twelve from the abbot of Basingwerk (Cistercian, Flint).⁴

An agreement drawn up in 1291 between Pipewell (Northants.) and certain merchants of Cahors contained clauses covering the care and management of the flocks. "It is . . . ordained that 900 of the common two-tooth sheep (*bidentibus*) of the abbey shall be separated, half of which shall be ewes and the other half males, by the view of the merchants before Mid-Lent next, which sheep the monks shall hold of the merchants and they shall be signed with the mark of both parties, and then shall remain in divers places with the two-tooth sheep of the monks in as good pasture and custody of the abbey as the monks' own two-tooth sheep."⁵ The following evidence belongs to the fifteenth century, but there is every reason to suppose that the activities described were usual in earlier times too. In 1457-8 the expenses of the sheep-master at Fountains included "*Pro uno cado bituminis: viis. id.*" The

¹ In 1337 10 marks and 9.5 marks per sack. Hereford and Shropshire were the only other counties to exceed 9.5 marks. In another list (*Rotuli Parliamentorum*, II, p. 138), dated 1343, the wool of S.E. Lincolnshire—*Holand et le marrois*—an area including Vaudey, was priced at 11 marks while the rest of the county obtained 14 marks. Similarly the marsh wools (*le marrois*) of Kent, Essex, Sussex, and Middlesex were ranked in 1343 below those grown elsewhere.

² Quoted at 6 marks in 1337.

³ V. R. Perkins, 'Documents relating to the Cistercian Abbey of Kingswood', *Bristol and Glos. Arch. Soc.*, XXII, 1899, pp. 179-256.

⁴ J. Brownbill (ed.), 'The Ledger Book of Vale Royal Abbey', *Lancs. Chesh. Rec. Soc.*, LXVIII, 1914, pp. 179-80.

⁵ *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1288-96, p. 193.

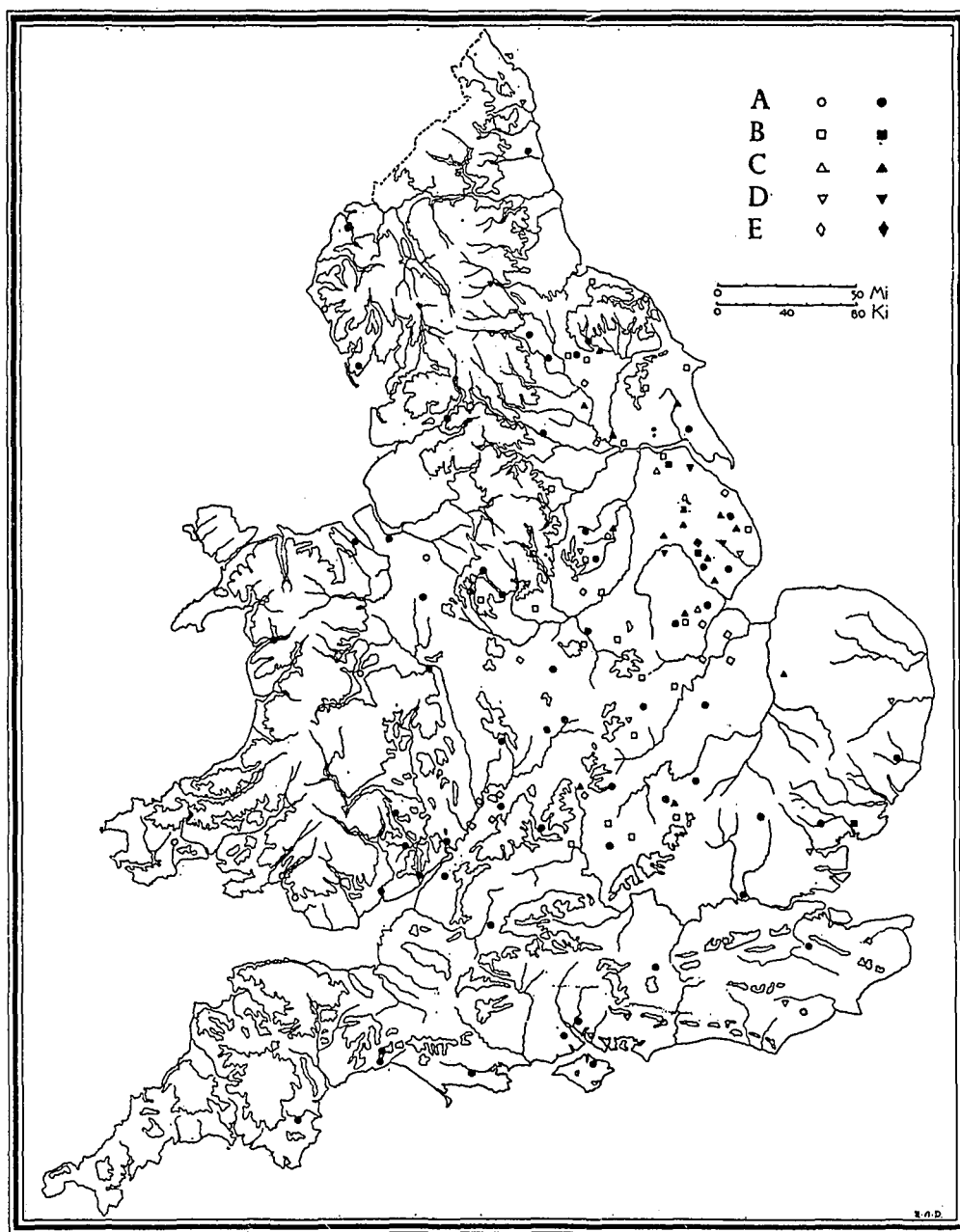


FIG. I

Religious houses listed by Pegolotti: A=Cistercian, B=Augustinian, C=Gilbertine, D=Premontstratensian, E=Benedictine. In each case the solid symbols represent houses marketing wool in the usual three grades and with quotations for at least two. The 500-ft contour is shown.

accounts for the preceding and succeeding years mention the washing and clipping of sheep (*lociones et tonciones*). Much tar was bought, usually by the barrel (*cadus*).¹ Mixed with grease it formed the sheep salve then in general use. Cistercian records sometimes mention disease among animals ('murrain', 'scab', 'rot'); yet we may assume that the monks, being able to isolate flocks on different estates, were more likely to escape disaster than smaller men.² Had woolmen this in mind too when they set out to buy and place orders?

The last of the monks' responsibilities was usually that of preparing, grading, and packing the wool. Buyers not only knew in most cases exactly what they were purchasing but could expect well cleansed fleeces. The monks more than most others had the wherewithal to do this, and no doubt expected appropriate recompense. In 1291 arbitrators decided that Pipewell should vouch that their wool left "the sheepfold well washed, dry, and cleaned."³ Darnhall, when selling twelve sacks of good wool to John Wermond of Cambrai, agreed that it should be washed before delivery.⁴ While washing, it seems, was normally the responsibility of the abbey alone, the merchant or his agent sometimes played a part in the further stages of preparation. Fountains in 1276 was under contract to supply to certain Florentine merchants "*sexaginta duos saccos lanae . . . sine clack*' (sheep's mark) *et lok*' (short clippings), *god et card* (clotted and coarse wool), *nigra, grissa* (black and grisled wool), *et sine pelliciis* (pelt wool)."⁵ Further, the house was obliged to "prepare" (what this means precisely is not always clear) and weigh it. A few years later the same community received a grant "for the use of the lay brother for wool working (*ad opus officii conversi de lanaria*) of an acre of land in Dishforth."⁶ The wool-shed (*lanaria*) is where we should expect the preparing and weighing of wool to be centred. In 1280 Rievaulx owed 3.5 sacks of 'good' wool to Hugelino de Vithio and Lothario Bonaguide of Florence, and this had to be prepared and weighed (*prae-paratae et ponderatae*) before it was dispatched.⁷ The following from the

¹ J. T. Fowler (ed.), *Memorials of Fountains*, III, Surtees Soc., CXXX, 1918, pp. 10, 44, 88, 112.

² F. M. Page, 'Bidentes Hoylandie', *Econ. Hist.* (Suppl.), I, 1926-9, p. 609, tabulates sheep losses through murrain on the various manors belonging to Crowland. There was great variation between different parts of the same county.

³ *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1288-96, p. 193.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1272-9, p. 254.

⁵ *Mem. Fountains*, I, p. 177; *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1272-9, p. 387. For a like example *vide Cal. Close Rolls*, 1288-96, p. 194: wool had to be delivered from Pipewell "without cot, gard, black, gray, clacc, and without villain fleece."

⁶ W. T. Lancaster (ed.), *The Chartulary of Fountains*, Leeds, 1918, I, p. 255.

⁷ J. C. Atkinson (ed.), *Rievallense Cartularium*, Surtees Soc., LXXXIII, 1887, p. 409. In

Pipewell contract of 1291 suggests that the buyer sometimes nominated the 'dresser': "It is ordained that the merchants' preparer shall be at the costs and expenses of the abbey . . . and he shall prepare the wool well and faithfully without hindrance from the monks and that the merchants shall have free entry and issue to the preparer while he is occupied. After the preparation of the wool . . . neither party shall have power to reject or refuse any part of the wool against his deed, or challenge his proceedings in any way." The earlier Darnhall agreement stipulated that the wool should be (a) "as good as the better crop of Dore" and (b) 'dressed' in Hereford by an employee of the merchants. Dore (Cistercian, Herefordshire), within an area renowned for its fine wool,¹ marketed a clip of exceptionally high quality. Cheshire wool, while good, was not generally comparable. For it to have been possible for Darnhall to supply wool equal to that of Dore suggests that the best wool of these houses did not differ as much as the standard county products.² Finally, to turn again to the Pipewell provisions, the wool sometimes had to be "faithfully packed (*impaccatas*) . . . according to the ancient and due custom of the abbey . . . in the sarplers of the monks, at the expense of the monks."³

First-class wool always, it seems, commanded a substantially higher price than the standard clip. This at least is clear from Pegolotti. In 1429 the finest selected wool was sometimes twice the value of the unsorted fleece, and in 1454 three times.⁴ Fifty-six of the sixty-five English and Welsh Cistercian houses (86 per cent) and all seven of the Scottish houses in the wool list are shown as supplying wool in at least two of the usual three grades (Fig. I).⁵ Three-quarters of the Gilbertine houses apparently did so too, but in all there were only twenty. The proportion was small in the case of the remaining orders—never above 23 per cent. Even among the Cistercians it is unlikely that any house invariably supplied separated wool. In 1292 Kirkstall

Fountains' expenses under 1457-8 there is: "Joh'i Burton . . . pro preparacione lanae . . . iis. xid."—*Mem. Fountains*, III, p. 51.

¹ Quoted at 12 marks in 1337.

² Pegolotti does not supply figures for Vale Royal (formerly Darnhall), but the top grade from Combermere and Stanlaw, both in Cheshire, is listed as worth 21 marks and 18 marks respectively: Dore's stood at 28 marks.

³ Kingswood bought 'canvas' and 'cloth for sacks' in 1240.—'Documents of Kingswood', pp. 193-9. Meaux agreed in 1287 to deliver eleven sacks of wool at Hull prepared in round bales.—R. J. Whitwell, 'English Monasteries and the Wool Trade in the Thirteenth Century', *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, II, 1904, p. 33, n. i. Fountains bought canvas for sarplers 1457-8: "*In canvase pro lanaria . . . ii s. vi d.*"—*Mem. Fountains*, III, p. 49.

⁴ *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, IV, p. 360; V, p. 277.

⁵ *la buona, lla moiano, locchi*: in addition, the price for *la buona* is quoted for Hulton (Staffordshire) and Margam (Glamorgan).

agreed to supply certain merchants of the Society of Betti of Lucca with all the wool of the house for the following decade. Only after three years was the wool to be graded (*bona, mediana, locca*): at first it was to be delivered unsorted at an almost strictly average price.¹ While the Cistercian distribution in Fig. I is notably widespread, altogether there appears to have been a concentration of more specialized producers in East-Central England, in particular around Boston, the focus of the export trade with Flanders.

Evidence of a superior Cistercian product, justifying a higher price, increases as we pass from a consideration of enlightened breeding through the care and management of sheep and the cleansing and sorting of wool to its grading and bulk delivery. There may be some doubt whether the monks were, to any significant extent, forerunners of the eighteenth-century flockmasters, but there can be none that they were pre-eminent in the preparation of wool for sale.

¹ W. T. Lancaster (ed.), *The Coucher Book of Kirkstall Abbey*, Thoresby Soc. Pub., VIII, 1896, pp. 226-7. H. E. Wroot in 'The Pennines in History', *Naturalist*, March 1930, p. 109: "They [the Benedictine monks and Augustinian canons] sold their wool in the entire fleece and sale by the unbroken fleece would seem to have been the custom of the secular market." For further examples of separation into three grades *vide* 'Documents of Kingswood', p. 200; *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1288-96, p. 193, Pipewell; H. Hall (ed.), *Select Cases Concerning the Law Merchant*, Selden Soc., XLVI, 1930, pp. 63-4.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

R. H. Donkin, B.A., Ph.D. (Durham), held a research fellowship in the University of California (Berkeley), U.S.A., in 1955-6, and is now an Assistant in the department of geography at the University of Edinburgh.

George Houston, M.A. (Edinburgh), B.Litt. (Oxford), is lecturer in agricultural economics at the University of Glasgow. He contributed a chapter to *The Scottish Economy* (ed. A. K. Cairncross), and has published a

number of articles. He is editing the Dumfriesshire volume of the *Third Statistical Account of Scotland*.

Dorothy Sylvester, M.A., is senior lecturer in geography at the University of Manchester. She is the author of *Map and Landscape* and numerous papers on rural settlement. At present she is writing a book on the rural landscape of the Welsh borderland and editing a historical atlas of Cheshire.

The Common Fields of the Coastlands of Gwent

By DOROTHY SYLVESTER

THE development of agriculture in the coastlands of Gwent, between the mouths of the Usk and the Wye, is of interest on account of its striking response to two controls—those of geography and history. On the one hand are the distinctive and limiting factors of a physical environment which consists of a belt of reclaimed coastal fen flanked on one side by the saltings of the Severn estuary and on the other by the rolling country of the old shoreland known locally as ‘the upland’ or the ‘dry ground’. Against the constant control of this geographical background, the course of history has played a varied rôle, but as the many scenes have been enacted and the series of invading peoples have entered this corner of what is now Monmouthshire, two constant factors have been operative: its location on the routeway into south Wales, and the proximity to a boundary of major significance.

The physical controls have ensured the continued operation of certain inescapable factors such as the unsuitability of the Levels or coastal fen for the plough, and the interdependence of the Levels and the uplands. But historical developments have resulted in the westward extension of English-type open fields in this and other parts of the Welsh area, where for centuries they lay side by side with the traditional patterns of Welsh agronomy.¹

THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The Caldicot Levels form the flat skirtland of the old Welsh kingdom of Gwent—naturally marshy coastal fen bounded on the landward side by a shallow step which divides these ‘moors’ from the uplands or dry ground. The present land surface of the Levels represents a stage in the oscillatory movements which succeeded the major uplifts of the Tertiary, traceable *inter alia* by a succession of submerged forests and peat beds. After a long period of emergence from Neolithic times to the early Iron Age, a period of marine transgression in Romano-British times is believed to have brought the land

¹ See, *inter alia*, Margaret Davies, ‘The Open Fields of Laugharne’, *Geography*, XL, 3, 1955; and ‘Rhosili Open Field and related S. Wales field patterns’, *Agricultural History Review*, IV, 1956, pp. 80–96; and Dorothy Sylvester, ‘Settlement Patterns in Rural Flintshire’, *Trans. Flintshire Hist. Soc.*, 1954–5; and ‘The Rural Landscape of Eastern Montgomeryshire’, *Montgomeryshire Collections*, LIV, 1, 1955.

to approximately its present stage.¹ A natural fen, its soils consist of a mixture of marine, estuarine, and riverine alluvia inter-bedded with peats. The predominant soils are heavy blue clays, acid without drainage and tending to be

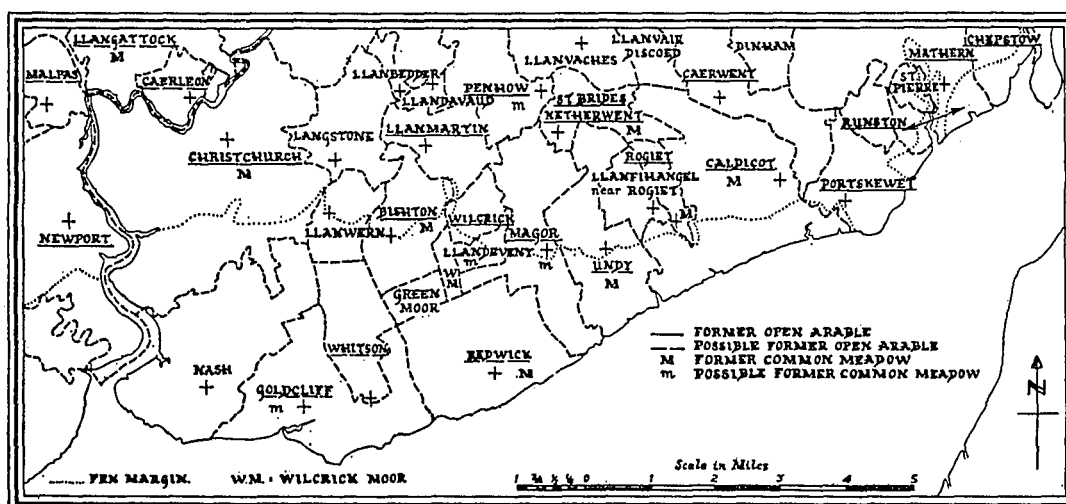


FIG. I. The Coastlands of Gwent: Townships and Parishes (1833).

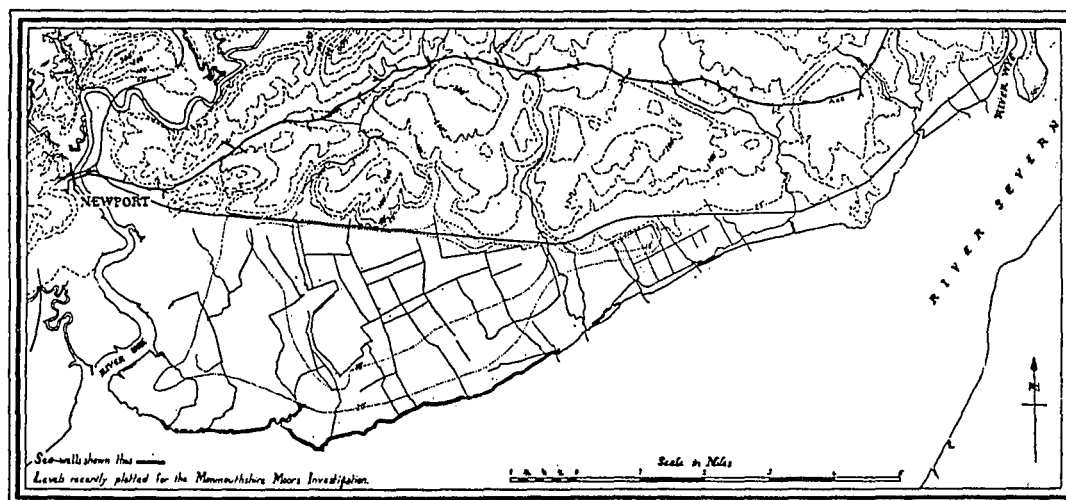


FIG. II. The Coastlands of Gwent: Relief and Drainage.

sour and moderately deficient in lime. In detail they are more varied, and Avery estimates that, in the Wentloog and Caldicot Levels as a whole, silty

¹ H. Godwin, 'A Boreal Transgression in Swansea Bay', *New Phytologist*, xxxix, 1940; and 'Coastal Peat Beds of the British Isles', *Journ. of Geology*, 1943.

loams and clays on alluvium over peat are found on 900 acres, and mixed bottom-land soils on stream alluvium on 300 acres.¹ The last group is characteristic of the back swamps of the Caldicot Levels, an area of depression lying near to the upland edge and generally less than 16 feet above O.D., as contrasted with the average altitude of the rest of the Levels of 20–25 feet. To the south, a broad belt of relatively elevated fen offers some defence against tidal inundations.

As in all coastal fens, water control is of supreme importance. The great range of the Bristol Channel tides increases up-estuary. Rises of 23 and 24 feet at the H.W. level of spring tides are quite common near the mouth of the Wye, and of 21 feet off Nash and Goldcliff, east of the Usk. To prevent the inundation of the entire area at high springs, thirty to forty miles of sea-wall, of varying age and structure, protects the Monmouthshire coastline. Above the wall the land tends to become consolidated where drainage is adequate, but below it the tendency is for land to be lost to the sea, and for the tidal saltings to diminish. That this problem has occupied the inhabitants for centuries is evidenced by a note of 1590–1 in the proceedings of the Court of Augmentations which says: "Note that the manor of Rompney [Rumney in the Wentloog Levels] lies adjoining upon the sea. There is a wall between the sea and the lordship for the defence of the same, which wall being about two years past in great decay, was by commission new made and placed more in to the land than before it was, by reason whereof there was cut out and left betwixt the sea and the wall, 28 acres most part meadow and pasture of parcel of the said demesnes of the manor besides divers other lands of the customary tenants there. . ."² Similarly, a new sea-wall was built in 1900 near Collister Pill some 400 feet behind the old one as a result of which much of the former saltings was lost.

On the other hand, land can be gained from the saltings, and from time to time artificial planting should be undertaken to hasten this process. During the present century *Spartina Townsendii* or spartina grass has appeared, and the colonization of the saltings, which average 250 feet in width, could be further hastened by human agency, and so avert the maximum effect of marine erosion. It is a fair assumption that the Levels themselves were consolidated in part in this way. The salt flats, known also as the Welsh Grounds, long served as rough pasture, but now their only importance in the economy of the coastlands lies in the channels which drain land water to the sea and

¹ B. W. Avery, Appendix on Soils in the *Monmouthshire Moors Draft Report*, published by the Welsh Agricultural Land Sub-Commission, Aberystwyth, 1954.

² E. A. Lewis and J. Conway Davies, *Records of the Court of Augmentations relating to Wales and Monmouth*, Cardiff, 1954, pp. 455–6, –/12 (1590–1).

which must be kept clear of spartina to avoid flooding back up the reens.

The control of land drainage offers a more constant problem. Drainage in the moors is now almost entirely artificial and works on the following plan:

rain water and ground water → grips → ditches → reens → pills → estuary.

Grips and ditches drain the fields and the occupier is responsible for cleaning and maintaining them. They lead into the reens which are the main artificial drainage lines of the Levels, discharging their water direct to the estuary through the sea-wall, or into the pills. The pills are embanked water-courses which carry the upland streams across the moors to the sea and, with one exception, also receive water from the reens. Many of the pills flow in courses embanked 10-16 feet above the general ground level. At the seaward outlet of the reens and pills are 'penstocks' or sluices which are closed by a rising tide and opened by a rise in the outflow of fresh water, and on the reens themselves the level is similarly maintained by boards slipped into stone piers to act as sluices, and so keeping the water level high above or below the board as required.

The annual average rainfall of the Levels is 35-40 inches *per annum*. But in a year such as 1954 the contrasted effects of excessive and of deficient rainfall were both demonstrated. In May, when the Levels reached the forty-ninth successive rainless day, the clay pastures were baked hard and dry, and the hay crop lay negligible and late on the parched, cracked meadows. Yet in September, after weeks of rain, cattle sank 6-12 inches into the sodden grasslands at every step, the reens were full to ground level, and the pills swelled rapidly and dangerously after every fresh rainstorm.

In their natural state, the moors are rough pasture. Drained, they make excellent meadow land. Ploughing is all but impossible over the greater part of the Levels and could never be remunerative, as is recognized in farm leases: for example, in an 1831 lease of Pillhouse Farm, Goldcliff, it was stated that the tenant "was not to plough more than five acres in one piece and not in parcels."¹ Now, farmers relate with relish the story of ill-fated attempts to enforce the ploughing-up policy in the last war. Hence, this fen country is agriculturally interdependent with the so-called uplands which lie to the north. Above the distinct step which is in part at least an old shore line, the land rises behind the Caldicot Levels to low, rolling hills and then more sharply to the forested ridge of Wentwood, extending like a lovely backcloth from the Usk to the less dramatic heights through which the Wye

¹ Newport Borough Collection (Monmouth Co. Record Office), M 432,4512. These and other records in this office were consulted and are here quoted by permission of the Monmouthshire Record Committee.

gorge is incised. The lower ground of the uplands is a region of normal soils and drainage, and although its relief is hardly ideal for arable farming, it has of necessity in the past been the crop-raising area, and its farming has been complementary to that of the Levels. The upland soils are everywhere loams of varying quality. The best lie over sandstones between Sudbrook and Blackrock and near Willcrick and Portskewett, or develop on drifts where they vary in quality according to drainage and depth. Large stretches, however, of the uplands have deep soils, easily worked and suitable for a wide range of crops. The complementary character of the two belts, and the rigid limitations to which farming must submit in the moors, lie behind the whole history of agriculture in this part of southern Gwent.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE LEVELS

The first attempt to drain and use the Levels is attributed to the Romans. Stones found three miles west of a Roman site at Redwick, and the site itself, support the late Dr Nash-Williams's suggestion that the Second Augustan Legion stationed at Caerleon attempted an occupation of some part of the moors,¹ and in addition there was the lesser settlement of Caerwent near the edge of the Caldicot Levels. If, as seems probable, the considerable Romano-British population of Caerleon left the town after the fall of Rome, the occupation and drainage of the moors may have been hastened.² We also know that prior to the fifth century, migrants from the Glastonbury cultural area constructed Iron Age B camps at Sudbrook and Llanmelin,³ and that Celtic saints founded churches here in the sixth and seventh centuries. Further, the kingdom of Gwent established itself in the country between the lower Wye and the lower Usk and continued in existence until the coming of the Normans.

The extent of Anglo-Saxon penetration into Gwent is part of the darkest and least known phase of Gwentian history. It is believed that there were constant raids both by Welsh and English from the seventh century into each other's territory, but eventually Gwent became subject to Anglo-Saxon overlordship. Mercia built Offa's Dyke, however, on the east bank of the Wye, and this and other considerations make the degree and effectiveness of Anglo-Saxon influence highly conjectural.

¹ V. E. Nash-Williams, 'Note on a new Roman Site at Redwick, near Magor, Mon.', *Bulletin of Celtic Studies*, xiv, 1951, pp. 254-5.

² In conversation with the writer in April 1955, Dr Nash-Williams said that he estimated the peak population at Caerleon during the Roman period to have been *circa* 18,000.

³ V. E. Nash-Williams, 'Fortified Hill Settlement at Llanmelin', *Bull. Celtic Studies*, vi, 1932, p. 288; and 'An Early Iron Age Coastal Camp at Sudbrook, Portskewett, Mon.', *Arch. Camb.*, xc, 1935, pp. 159-61.

The Normans are believed to have built the castle of Strigoil or Chepstow in or about 1067, and from that base their invasion pressed along the coastal route into south Wales like a rapier thrust. Gwent and Gwynllwg were occupied during the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, and by the thirteenth most of the old Welsh commotes had been absorbed into Anglo-Norman lordships. Of these, Strigoil, which occupied a large part of Gwent Iscoed (=Gwent below Wentwood), was strongly Normanized. Caerleon lordship to the west and north-west was less extensively affected, notably in the commote of Lebenydd which covered the western end of the Levels. But in all the Marcher lordships in Wales, Anglo-Norman manors, with their Englishries and Welshries, were for centuries to lie cheek by jowl with Welsh tribal lands.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries Welsh rural society was still largely based on agnatic groups; community rights rather than individual ownership; the division into princely families, free tribesmen, and bondsmen; the payment of tribal dues and renders; and its own codes of law, of which the Gwentian was in force over much of south Wales. The economy was rooted in pastoralism, and semi-nomadism long persisted, but cultivation was practised on a small scale, and it is very possible that co-aration goes back well into the Celtic period. The rural landscape in the tribal areas was largely open pasture or common woodland, but enclosures round the *tyddynod* or tribal homesteads gradually increased in number, and ploughing might be carried on in small bundles of ploughing strips scattered over the *tref* or township, or in open strips in crofts or a small field usually called *maes* or *maes y dre* (i.e. the open field or town field), with strips called *erwau*, *lleiniau*, *accrau*, etc. In the bond *tref*, larger open fields not dissimilar from the English type might be worked. The *maerdref*, in its turn, was the *tref* of a chieftain and resembled the Norman manor in some respects.

It is difficult to estimate the importance and number of Norman settlers, but by the early seventeenth century, in the manors held by the Duchy of Lancaster in Gwent Iscoed, tenants with English surnames were rather fewer than those with Welsh.¹ It seems, therefore, a fair assumption that during the middle ages and until the Union, Welshmen maintained a numerical superiority throughout the area of south Monmouthshire, but

¹ In large parts of Wales, surnames only replaced patronymics at a very late date, e.g. surnames go back only some four generations or so in many Anglesey families. The existence of surnames in the seventeenth century among Welsh tenants in Gwent may be due to the record having been made by English clerks, or may be a reflection of anglicization. The data referred to come from *A Survey of the Duchy of Lancaster Lordships in Wales, 1069-1613*, transcribed and edited by William Rees, Cardiff, 1953.

that this was relatively small in the manors and probably overwhelming outside them. Place-names were freely anglicized, but nearly every place in southern Gwent had an old Welsh name. Field-names were similarly affected, with English ones prevailing in the manors, and Welsh in the townships of the old tribal areas, but even in the manors Welsh names can in some cases be traced from the fourteenth century to the present day.

UNDY

A number of the typical features of the land-use and agriculture of the period between the Norman conquest and the late enclosure phase in southern Monmouthshire can be illustrated from the parish and former manor of Undy. It lies across the fen margin, extending from low hills of 250 feet in the north to the coastline in the south and so stretches across two miles of upland and one mile of moors. Within its boundaries there were at some time included most of the types of land associated with a Norman manor in this part of the world: demesne, open arable fields, common meadow, common woods, and open common pasture. The small Coed y Mynydd on the northern fringe may once have been part of a continuous area of common woodland, represented at the time of the Tithe Survey by the small Common y Coed, while Knollbury Common immediately to the south may have functioned as either open common or common woodland. A group of closes in this belt most probably date from the late enclosure phase, and apart from a few other closes of irregular shape in the middle and south-east of the parish, the wide distribution of open-field boundaries and of strip-shaped enclosures at the tithe map period (1840) make it evident that practically the entire area had been farmed on a communal pattern, i.e. in common fields and in open common pasture and woodland. Six vestigial open arable fields survived in 1840: Undy Great Field, West Field, Benches Field, Little Benches Field, Upper Gernhill Field, and Lower Gernhill Field; and it is clear that they were at one time all adjoining in such a way as to occupy all the dry ground except the belt of the commons in the north and the area occupied by the houses and closes of the village in the south, together with the small Mill Common.

On the Levels, the northerly belt consisting of the ill-drained back fen appears at one time to have been entirely rough fen or moor pasture, and two considerable remnants still survived in 1840, known as Bridewell and Undy Commons. With the exception perhaps of the extreme south-eastern area, the rest of the moors formed a belt of irrigated water meadows held in common. These too were represented only by small vestigial fields in 1840, but there were seven of them: South Mead and Sour Mead (adjacent and

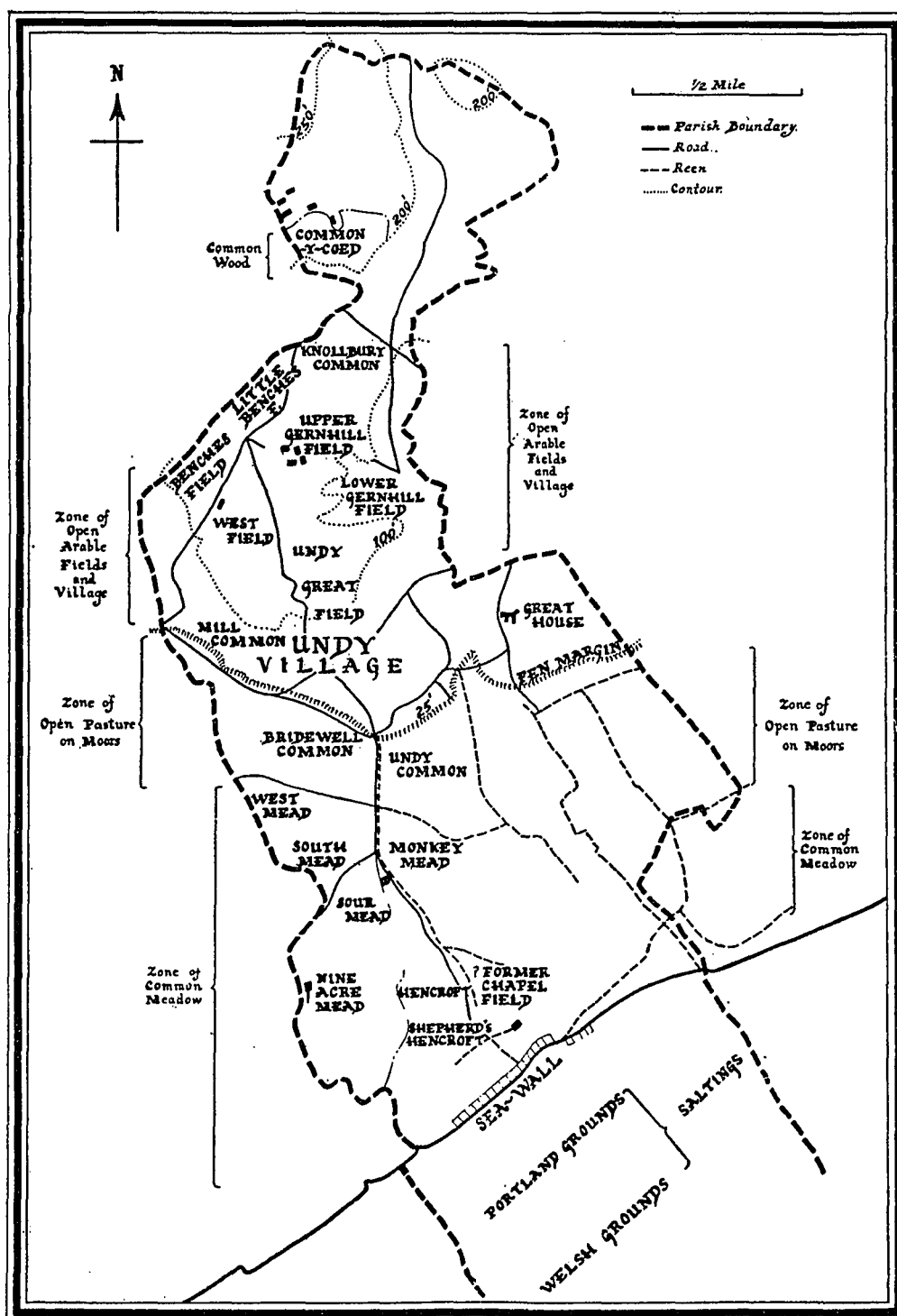


FIG. III. Sketch Map of the Parish of Undy at the Tithe Survey (1840).

perhaps originally a single field), Nine Acre Mead, Hencroft and Shepherd's Hencroft (also perhaps one originally), West Mead, and Monkey Mead. Near to Chapel Tump Farm, marked as a chapel on the tithe map, there may have been the former Chapel Field.¹

In the sixteenth century Undy had a number of common fields,² both arable and meadow, but by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries most of them went by different names, with the exception of West Field, West Mead, and South Mead. Names which had disappeared from the map by the nineteenth century included Little Field and Upper Field,³ Brym Field and Brym Mead, the last two lying in a now vanished manor known as Brym or Brymhold.⁴ Changes in open-field names here as elsewhere increase the difficulty of trying to determine on what course the arable fields were run.

Undy became Crown property after 1595, from which date there was no resident lord of the manor. Many former copyholds became leaseholds or freeholds and in the time of James I it was recorded that there were nine copyholders, eight freeholders, and "seven leaseholders and at rack rents."⁵ Demesne land diminished and although the name Great House survived, there was no park attached to it at the tithe survey. It is therefore the more surprising that disparate holdings and open strips survived so long, and that in 1840 open strip arable fields and meadows formed so striking an element in the field plan.

THE COMMON FIELDS OF THE COASTLANDS OF GWENT

In an area which offers so much of interest to the student of agricultural history, one feature in particular is selected as of outstanding significance. It is the common or open fields which developed only in certain parts of Monmouthshire in recognizably English form,⁶ for the history of Gwent was basically Celtic, and much of it has remained in many ways distinctly Welsh.

These open fields, which are particularly numerous in the coastlands of

¹ So named in a deed of sale of 1541 of 17 acres of "mede ground and pasture" of which 4 acres were "in Chapell felde in divers parcels together." The chapel was formerly attached to Tintern Abbey.

² E. A. Lewis and J. Conway Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 452, -/10 (1573). ³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Newport Borough Collection, Monmouth County Record Office, 5679 (1554), 5689 (1571), and 5690 (1582).

⁵ Sir Joseph Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire*, IV, ii, p. 262. This work is the standard history of the county and was published between 1904 and 1933.

⁶ The wider distribution of open fields in Monmouthshire and in other Border counties will form part of a study of the rural landscape of the Welsh Borderland in a volume now in preparation.

Gwent, are interesting for a number of reasons. First, they are known to have occurred in almost every parish which lies across the fen margin at some period of its history, and in a number of others besides. Secondly, the fields are of two types, common arable and common meadow, the two types being of comparable importance wherever the land was suitable. Thirdly, open arable fields of the English type dominate the map, but Welsh ploughing strips and Welsh open crofts and small open fields are also to be found in some of the 'upland' parishes, their relative adjacency underlining the fact that invaders along the coastal route were responsible for introducing the English type of field. Fourthly, open or common meadows, located in the ideal *milieu* of the Levels, were both numerous and large, and their plan resembled that of the open arable fields. In most parts of inland Britain, common meadows were small and restricted to narrow alluvial flood plains. Fifthly, and by no means of least interest, the location here of a not inconsiderable group of open-field townships is of significance in reconstructing the wider picture of open field in Britain which we now know to need so much in the way of additions, and therefore corrections.

THE COMMON MEADOWS

The common meadows of the Gwent coastlands were developed on the Levels, on land ideally suited for this purpose, and because of their unusual size and importance in the economy of this sub-region, they are given first place. The value of water meadows was high: for example at Bishton, in a 1788 Survey, moors were valued at 10s. per acre as compared with 4s. for hill land.¹ Not only the richness of the pasture, but the importance of the hay for winter feed, contributed to their value, especially before the use of roots and cake became general for this purpose.

Water meadows organized on lines similar to the open arable fields reached their major development in the part of the Levels which was formerly included in the lordship of Strigoil, i.e. from Redwick eastwards, and Redwick itself had the most remarkable common meadows in any part of the Welsh Borderland.

In 1844, 1,994 acres in Redwick were meadow or pasture out of a total acreage of 2,113, and there are indications that formerly well over half of the meadow acreage was held in common meadows. The meadows were divided into strips approximating to an acre or a subdivision of the acre as in the open arable fields. Broadmead, the largest of the Redwick meadows, was still held at the time of the tithe survey in over 130 separate doles or strips, and all of these were still open. Documentation in the case of Redwick meadows goes

¹ Newport Coll., M 431,3637. Survey and schedule numbered to a missing map.

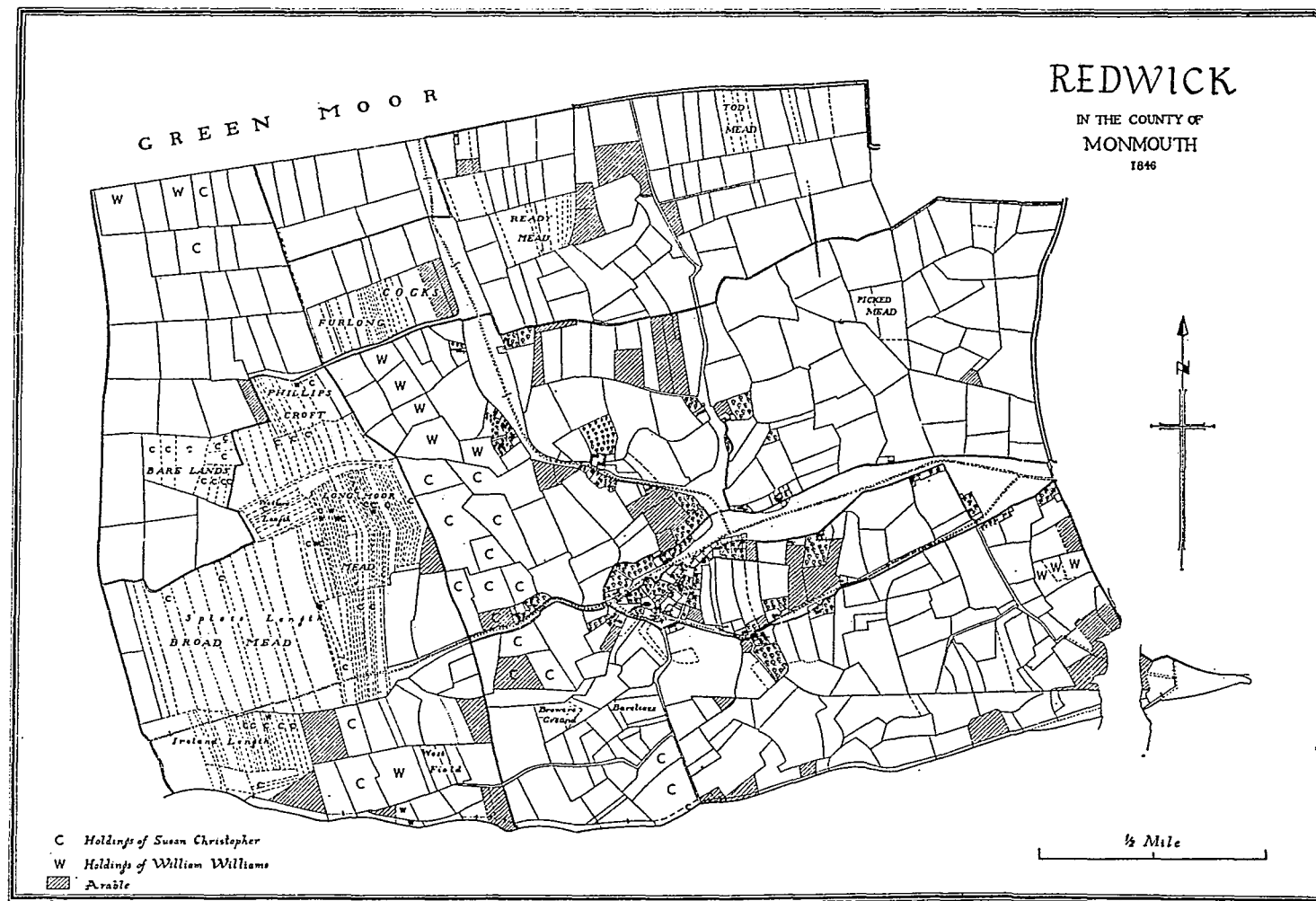


FIG. IV. The Parish of Redwick at the Tithe Survey (1844).

back to 1430, when dispersed acres in Chainesmeade were referred to in a feoffment.¹ A 1655-6 deed mentions three acres of meadow and pasture in a meadow called Broadmead in separate parcels of one acre and two acres.² An eighteenth-century deed refers to a piece of land in "the common meadow called Ready Mead" and another "in the common meadow called Broad Mead."³ A release of 1802 mentions "land called Changeable Acres in the Common Mead called Broadmead in Redwick,"⁴ and a draft release of 1832 referred *inter alia* to a parcel in Long Moor Mead (2 r. 25 p.), a parcel in Broad Mead called the Harp Acre (2 r. 33 p.), and a piece in Collywalter (1 a. 3 r. 5 p.).⁵

The tithe map shows that the greater part of the area to the north and west of Redwick village had once been divided into open strip fields, and several shrunken remnants remained in 1844. But Broad Mead was still of enormous size. Hence, like many arable fields, it was divided into furlongs or 'lengths' still named Phillips Croft, Wetters Length, Long Moor Mead, Splots Length, and Ireland Length on the tithe plan. Unless a small amount of enclosure had taken place on its eastern fringe this large meadow apparently retained its original size and shape. In addition, Cocks Furlong, Ready Mead, Tod Mead, and Picked Mead—this last almost disappeared—were remnants of once larger common meadows, as was Barelands. But it is possible that Barelands West Field and Cocks Furlong had at one time been small open arable fields, prior to the merging of Redwick with Magor in a single manor. Although in 1844 the rest of the parish formed closes, there were strip shapes among them which suggest a once more extensive open-field system or scattered Welsh ploughing strips. Those adjacent to Green Moor in the north-west are clearly recent allotments from the open moor.

Documentary evidence lends support to the suggestion that before they were merged Redwick strove to maintain open arable fields and that Magor had open meadow. But from the early seventeenth century, references to the common meadow called Avenellesmeade⁶ in Magor cease, and Redwick men held arable strips in Magor open fields and Magor men had reciprocal rights and holdings in Redwick's common meadows.

Of twenty-three known cases of townships which had common meadows in Monmouthshire, ten were in southern Gwent with their meadows on the

¹ *Ibid.*, M 437.3, 4002.

² Evans and Evill Collection, Monmouthshire Record Office, 0183.

³ Newport Coll., M 437.3, 2714 (1780).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1163.

⁵ Evans and Evill Coll., 0332.

⁶ It was mentioned in the Badminton Deeds and Documents, I, no. 1038 (1504) and other sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century documents. The Badminton Collection deposited in the National Library of Wales was consulted by permission of the duke of Beaufort.

Caldicot Levels. In addition to Undy, Redwick, and Magor already described, Christchurch, Bishton, Willcrick, Roggiett, Caldicot, Portskewett, and Mounton had their common meadows there. In fact, the greater part of the Levels within the old lordship of Strigoil were given over either to common meadows or to open moors used as common pasture.

The common meadows of Caldicot were also large. During the period of the Marcher lordships Caldicot became one of the most important manors in this district, eventually forming part of the Duchy of Lancaster estates. In the seventeenth century, at the time of the great Survey,¹ the lordship of Caldicot included St Pierre, Portskewett, Caerwent, Crick, part of Roggiett, and Shire Newton which was its detached Welshry. Since the tenants of all of them might hold land in any part of the lordship and share its commons and common rights, both types of common field were large and their working complex. The open commons included the poorest, most ill-drained stretches of Caldicot Moor, which in the middle ages extended to Undy and Roggiett as a single great common "for all manner of cattle commonable appurtenant to the said manor of Caldicot and Newton sawnce number," the tenants clearing the watercourses from Pool Rough to the sea.²

The remainder of the moors made good meadow land, and much of it was held in open dole meadows. Records of the Caldicot meadows go back to the late thirteenth century, when a grant referred to pasture in Biestediche,³ suggesting the original meaning of the nineteenth-century Bees Ditch. A grant of approximately the same date referred to two and three-quarter acres of meadow lying in Wlputtes,⁴ a name found on the tithe map, though no longer common meadow. The 1609 Survey also listed holdings in Smyth or Semyth Moor, Wellmore, Wellrink, Newemead, and Lord's Mead, all common meadows, or furlongs within larger meadows. Only Bees Ditch and Little Bees Ditch remained as open meadow at the time of the tithe survey of Caldicot.

The great Duchy of Lancaster Survey sheds less light on the Caldicot meadows than one could wish, but we learn that there was a yearly payment of 4s. hay money to the king for grazing Bees Ditch and that towards this "the Baylie ought so soone as the same meadowe called the Bisditch is open and Comon, to requier or distrayne one penny of every person which shall have any manner of Cattell grasinge in the saide meadowe," and that a customary tenant might "put out" his customary land from five years to five years for a total period of three score years.⁵ We also learn that a woman could only hold

¹ Rees, *op. cit.* ² Rees, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

³ Newport Coll., M 421.3, 5559 (n. d., late thirteenth century).

⁴ *Ibid.*, similar dating, 5557. ⁵ Rees, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

customary land during her lifetime, that the youngest son normally inherited customary land, but that if a man had sons he could, by surrendering his land first in court, then have it transferred to his eldest or any of his middle sons.¹ This suggests that something between Welsh tribal law and English law operated here. There is reference too to an enclosed meadow near Caerwent bridge, among the extensive lists of customary holdings,² whereas in nearly every other case strips were described as "lying separately" or "in divers parcels." The number of Caldicot men recorded as holding in Bees Ditch was not large, but, as in the case of the commons, men from the other places in the lordship held land in the Caldicot meadows.

What is known about these remarkably large common meadows of the Caldicot Levels can soon be summarized. They occupied at their greatest extent a large part of the better and sweeter soils of the moors, avoiding the ill-drained back fen at the lower altitudes, and it is possible that in the early middle ages severally held closes were rare or absent unless in the three most westerly parishes of Nash, Goldcliff, and Whitson in the commote of Lebenydd. The holdings in them were in the main in the early period those of customary or copyhold tenants and therefore, it may be assumed, they were lords' meadows. They were divided into strips, in some cases by ditches which it was the tenants' joint duty to keep clear, and the larger meadows at least were arranged in 'lengths' or groups of doles which were the equivalent of the furlongs in the common arable fields. In the first instance, all holdings within the meadows were disparate, and although some consolidation took place eventually, this system of intermixed strips still held good in many of the meadows up to the middle of the nineteenth century.

The Caldicot account in the Duchy Survey does no more than indicate the manner of working the common meadows, but the description of the meadow called Chippenham under the town of Monmouth gives a very fair and much fuller account, and it was probably similar in other manors. "... there is a certayne meade called Cheppinhome wherein theise men whose names are hereafter mencioned have severall parcells, knowne by usuall meares and boundes there, and helde as free Customary landes to them and their heires for ever, accordinge to the custome of the Mannor, for which they paie yerelie to his Majestie after the Rate of xx^d per annum for every acre, of which saide severall parcells every tennante hath accordinge to the quantitie he holdeth, the cropp and hay there yerelie to his use. And after the hay is mowed and carried awaie it is and remaynes in Comon for pasture to the inhabitantes and tennantes of the saide Towne, Burrowe and liberties thereof until the ffeaste of the purification of the Virgin Mary from which tyme until

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

² *Ibid.*, p. 149.

the hay be cutt agayne, it remayns all inclosed. . .” There follows a list of tenants holding the 43½ acres in the meadow including “one acre there called the Butt acre, which is given to the Towne for maynteyninge of the Buttes there, without rent.”¹

The principal physical differences between the Monmouth meadows and those of the Caldicot Levels were clearly that the last faced a far greater drainage problem, and were of greater size. The Bailiff collected rent for Caldicot meadows. A hayward was appointed for the Undy meadows.² The tenants had their duties in maintaining and cleansing the reens and ditches and maintaining the gowts or sluices. The sea-walls also had to be maintained to prevent flooding at exceptionally high tides and in an account of expenses for the Redwick portion of the Tredegar estates, Sir Charles Morgan in 1838 was still responsible for one-third the cost of its repair.³

THE OPEN ARABLE FIELDS

It has already been shown that Undy had six vestigial open arable fields in 1842-4. Bishton, Magor, Roggiett, Caldicot, Chepstow and its hamlets Moun-ton and Hardwick, all had fields of the English rather than the Welsh type, and on the far bank of the Wye in Gloucestershire were other open-field parishes, including Tidenham with its beautiful series of strip fields including the two great fields called Down Field and Treacle Field.⁴ These too lay in the old lordship of Strigoil.

A remarkably perfect three-field plan is revealed by the tithe map of Magor, and although changing names make difficult the task of tracing these fields back individually, it seems unlikely that they were not old-established. In this respect Magor is most unusual in that at the time of the tithe survey the total number of holdings was almost exactly equal in Lower Field (37), Middle Field (39), and Upper Field together with a small ‘annexe’ called Maes Bach (38). The fields were still open, and there was little to suggest that they had been diminished by enclosure at that date. The holdings were also still largely intermixed, but there was no longer any system in the way in which the eighteen tenants held their strips either as regards total holdings or the distribution of the strips in the three fields.

The open arable fields of Magor can be traced back to 1392 when reference was made in a will to three acres of arable land in the field of Magor,⁵ and

¹ Rees, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

² Badminton Manorial Records, II, no. 508 (1661). Returns of the hayward of the parish giving list of tenants summoned.

³ Newport Coll., M 437.3, 4705.

⁴ St Peer Atlas, 1765, Monmouth County Record Office. Treacle Field = St Tecla's Field.

⁵ Newport Coll., M 436,5808.

Bradney quotes a deed of 1448 which mentions a dispersed holding including *duas acras terre arabilis . . . in campo de Magor*.¹ From the middle fifteenth century to the late sixteenth, five open fields were mentioned by name in references to Magor, but none of these names has survived and almost nothing is known of them apart from their names. By the eighteenth century the open arable was again referred to as Magor Common Field,² but at the tithe survey the three fields were clearly defined, and it is difficult to suppose that there had ever been only one field within the period of documentation, though there may at one time have been more than three.

The open arable fields of Caldicot were far more numerous than those of Magor or Undy, clearly because of the intercommoning arrangements with its dependent manors already referred to. In 1609-13 the position was complex in the extreme and dispersed arable acres were listed in over thirty different fields and closes,³ including some which one suspects may have been part of an original Welsh arable system. Five of the largest of the seventeenth-century fields were still in existence at the tithe survey.⁴

In some of the smaller parishes such as Bishton there were two, and possibly three open fields, but on the whole irregularity in size, number, and arrangement was characteristic, especially by the nineteenth century. A further difficulty is the paucity of early cartographical evidence. Plans only become abundant by the eighteenth century with the estate maps and atlases, for example the Badminton Estate Surveys,⁵ the Lockwood Atlas, and the St Peer Atlas.

What is, however, one of the most extraordinary features of this area is the late survival of its common fields—so late, that they are still present on the tithe maps. Occasional examples of late survival can be quoted from some other parts of the Borderland,⁶ but there is nothing elsewhere to compare with the almost continuous line of parishes with open arable and open meadow which survived in the Caldicot Levels and their immediate hinterland until the middle of the nineteenth century. Caldicot was enclosed in 1850 and 1858, Magor in 1852, and Undy in 1852-3.⁷ The recency of this

¹ *Op. cit.*, IV, ii, p. 229.

² Lockwood Atlas, a 1751 MS. atlas ('Plans of Estates in the Co. of Monmouth') in the Lockwood Collection deposited in the National Library of Wales by J. C. Lockwood, Esq., of Bishop's Hall, near Romford.

³ Rees, *op. cit.*

⁴ These were West Field, Upper Field, North Field, Mill Field, and Sherfield.

⁵ 1763-79, in the Badminton Coll.

⁶ e.g. in Montgomeryshire. See Dorothy Sylvester, *op. cit.*, *Mont. Coll.*, pp. 19-20.

⁷ Annual Inclosure Act, 13 Vict., c. viii; do. 21 Vict., c. viii; (Magor) Second Inclosure Act, 1852, 16 Vict., c. iii; (Undy) *ibid.*, and Second Annual Inclosure Act, 1853, 16-17 Vict., c. cxx.

was brought home to me by the late Mr E. C. Dutfield, a retired surveyor of Penhow, whose grandfather remembered the enclosure of Magor common fields by Peachey Williams—and its unpopularity.

The extent and persistence of the system of open fields and of intermixed holdings are still reflected in the modern pattern of farm holdings in this area, which are fragmented perhaps to a unique degree. In the Monmouthshire Moors Draft Report it is stated that of 201 "economic units" in the Levels, only twenty-seven farms were, at the time of the inquiry, "compact and in one ownership." To quote further: "Some idea of the magnitude of this excessive subdivision of farms into separate parcels can be realized by the fact that the 450 agricultural units are split up into 1,208 blocks of land, consisting of a field, part of a field or a number of fields in one ownership and one occupation, being separate from other land in the same ownership and occupation. . . There is little stability in the units, changes in the occupation of one unit lead to changes in the make-up of other units . . . [a] farm more often than not consists of portions of land scattered over a wide area, the furthest fields being two or three miles from the homestead."¹ It is evident that centuries of intermixed holding in an open-field system are reflected in modern fragmentation, but it is equally important to recognize other underlying factors. One of these is the interdependence of the Levels and the dry ground which natural conditions have imposed and economic practice made customary. The Moors have long been the traditional grazing ground for cattle and colts from early summer to October or November according to the season and, apart from occasional years when ploughing up has been tried, they have remained under grass.² Maintained arable farming is only possible on the better drained uplands or dry ground behind the Levels, and the early example of Redwick's and Magor's reciprocity with regard to meadow and ploughland is reflected in the fact that so few farms in this area are without some land in both parts of the coastlands. The other reason which has contributed to the continuance of intermixed holdings in modern times is undoubtedly the fact that, like all regions where irrigation and drainage are of fundamental importance to the entire community, the communal habit is necessarily and deeply impressed into the economic, social, and administrative structure alike. No doubt this last point in its turn fostered the late survival of the open fields.

As to the problem of origins, it is less easy to evoke acceptable arguments, for the Dark Ages have not yet yielded their secrets in this part of the Border,

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

² The arable acreage in certain parishes on the Levels has occasionally been high, but a series of wet years or bad flooding always tends to recur and so cause a reversion to pasture.

and the extent, or indeed the reality, of a genuine Mercian settlement is a matter for speculation. The Domesday record is slight and unspecific, and beyond the significance of the fact that this was a carucated and not a hidated area, it has little to contribute as to the nature of arable farming here except to make evident that there was a not inconsiderable number of ploughlands somewhere in this region. What is clear, however, is that an intrusive pattern overlies the older Celtic system of inter-aration, and that the manorial organization associated with the Marcher lordships most successfully kept alive a common-field system which it developed if it did not in large part originate.

Notes and Comments

THE BRITISH AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The winter conference was held jointly with the Association of Agriculture at the London University Institute of Education on Saturday, 7 December, 1957. The chair was taken at the morning session by the President, Sir James Scott Watson, and at the afternoon session by the General Secretary of the Association of Agriculture, Mr Alexander Hay. The conference was attended by about fifty-five people.

In the morning a paper was read by Mr George Ordish, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Society, on the history of the control of crop pests and diseases. After lunch there were two short papers with a joint discussion. The first was by Dr L. G. Bennett, of the University of Reading Department of Agricultural Economics, on the development of market gardening, and the second by Mr Eric Hobbs, of the University of Bristol Long Ashton Research Station, on the history of soft-fruit growing.

THE CONFERENCE AT NANCY

The first international meeting of scholars interested in the growth and character of agrarian structures was held at Nancy in the

first week of September 1957. It was called on the initiative of the Faculté des Lettres of the University of Nancy, and, in spite of some difficulties, more than seventy individuals attended and some forty papers were presented. Field excursions to study existing (mostly open-field) systems and village morphology in Lorraine, the Vosges, and the Plain of Alsace occupied a day and a half of the conference's work. The members of the conference were mostly historical geographers, and the emphasis was on field layout, rotation systems, collective arrangements, and other matters connected with agricultural practice, rather than on social relations, tenures, and economy. However, these wider aspects of agrarian history were not neglected and there were some outstanding contributions from well-known French historians. The French representation at the conference was naturally the greatest, but there were also members from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, and Yugoslavia, as well as from England and Wales.

On the occasion of the conference, the *Annales de l'Est* devoted a volume to an important bibliography of French research

(continued on page 41)

Labour Relations in Scottish Agriculture before 1870

By GEORGE HOUSTON

AN outstanding feature of Scottish economic development in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the rapid growth of capitalist farming and the emergence of a large agricultural working class all over the lowlands. By the middle of the nineteenth century there were about 200,000 wage-earners working on the land, two-thirds of them on the 10,000 farms with the largest staffs.¹ The main characteristics of their conditions of employment are fairly well known. The great majority were hired for periods of six months or one year, new engagements often being arranged at feeing markets held regularly in many country districts. All types and grades of farm workers received a large part or in some cases the whole of their wages in kind. Unmarried servants generally boarded in the farmhouse or lived in an outhouse (or 'bothy'), while married servants lived in cottages on the farm. Conditions of employment varied over the country and many local customs were very long in dying out, but gradually a more homogeneous class of agricultural wage-earners was built up, and today minimum wages and conditions are enforced throughout the country.

A comprehensive history of this important section of the Scottish working class remains to be written.² The present article deals with only one aspect of such a history; it is a study of institutional factors which influenced relations between farm workers and employers and helped to determine working conditions in Scottish agriculture.

The article is divided into three sections, each corresponding to a stage in the general history of labour relations in Britain. In the first stage, although feudal relations had been abolished and workmen were nominally free, with the same legal status as their masters, the level of wages and conditions of work were regulated by law, and the workmen's freedom of movement, even at the conclusion of a contracted period of service, was severely limited. In the second stage, the market had become the 'regulator' and conditions of

¹ Estimates based on the 1851 Census Report. In 1956 there were about 90,000 employed workers in Scottish agriculture.

² There is useful source material in T. Johnston's *History of the Working Classes in Scotland*, 1920. For the post-1870 period a helpful and little known source is *The Plough*, published from 1893-5, initially for the Scottish Federal Ploughmen's Union. A complete file is in the B.M. Colindale Library.

employment were negotiated by individual employers and workmen. Relations between members of these classes were still strongly influenced by the law on master and servant, however, and disputes were settled in the last resort by individual recourse to the courts. The third stage saw the decline of individual bargaining and the growth of collective agreements, with the workmen beginning to come together in an organized way in order to improve conditions of work and to bring about changes in the law affecting their relations with employers. All three stages may be discerned from a historical study of relations between farmers and servants in Scotland before 1870, a convenient limiting date which marks the end of the 'golden age' of farming and closely follows the passing of the Master and Servant Act (1867).

I

REGULATIONS ON FARM SERVANTS, 1617 TO 1751

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries several Acts of Parliament were passed and many regulations issued by justices of the peace which affected farm servants and sought to control their conditions of work and freedom of movement. There were four main forms of intervention: (a) the fixing of wages; (b) the stipulation of long periods of service rather than daily or weekly engagements; (c) the enforced detention of farm servants on the land; and (d) the conscription of 'idle persons' for work in agriculture.

(a) The fixing of wages by the justices of the peace in Scotland was carried out under the acts of 1617 and 1661.¹ Both declared that at the Quarter Sessions in August and February the justices should lay down the wages and terms of hire of labourers, workmen, and servants. Those who refused to serve for the stipulated terms were to be imprisoned, and masters could be compelled to pay the proper level of wages should the servant sue for them. Evidence that the justices in several counties used their powers under these acts may be found in extant records of the J.P.s in Scotland.² In Peeblesshire in 1656 the justices fixed the wages of a ploughman boarding with a farmer

¹ *Acts Scot.*, IV, p. 537, and VII, p. 306.

² Some of these records have been transcribed and printed, e.g. C. A. Malcolm, *The Minutes of the Justices of the Peace for Lanarkshire, 1707-1723*, Scot. Hist. Soc., 1931, and W. R. McDiarmid, 'The Regulations of Farm Servants in Dumfriesshire in 1751', *Trans. of . . . Dumfries and Galloway Nat. Hist. and Ant. Soc.*, 1864-5, p. 37. Other printed sources are, for Peeblesshire, W. Chambers, *History of Peeblesshire*, 1864, p. 176, and, for Midlothian, C. H. Firth, *Scotland and the Protectorate*, Scot. Hist. Soc., 1899, pp. 405-11. The writer has also consulted the manuscript J.P. records for the counties of East Lothian, Kinross, Perth, Stirling, Wigtown, and Kirkcudbright that are in the possession of the county clerks of the peace. The information contained in section I is derived from these sources except where indicated otherwise.

at ten pounds Scots (16s. 8d. sterling) for the half year. In the same year the Midlothian justices issued regulations laying down the rate for ploughmen boarding with farmers at 40 merks (£2 4s. 6d. sterling) a year, considerably higher than in Peeblesshire. The Lanarkshire justices issued wage regulations in 1687, 1708, and 1716, fixing the ploughmen's rate at £2 per annum. In Wigtownshire in 1749 farm servants' wages were fixed at £1 5s. for the summer half year and £1 for the winter half year. In Dumfriesshire in 1751 wages were fixed at £2 10s. a year. There is also evidence that the justices in East Lothian and Stirlingshire issued similar regulations during the eighteenth century.

(b) From 1621 attempts were made to prevent farm servants from working for daily or weekly wages and to compel them to engage for at least six months. In that year an act was passed "anent servants goeing lowse and leaving their masters service."¹ Apparently many farm servants were in the habit of hiring themselves only for the six winter months, preferring to work for daily or weekly wages in the summer when the demand for labour (for working with peats, building dykes, and shearing in harvest) was greater and wages higher. On August 7th, 1716, the Lanarkshire justices laid down the minimum period of service for farm servants at six months, extending it to twelve months on May 6th, 1718. In Dumfriesshire in 1751 it was declared that farm servants should work at least six months with one master and twelve months if the latter wished it.

(c) The act of 1621 also laid down that farm servants engaged for the winter had to continue to work for their masters during the summer months unless they could prove to the justices that they were hired by another master for the whole period from Whitsunday to Martinmas. A regulation to this effect was passed by the Lanarkshire justices in 1716, and in the same year the justices in Stirling gave farmers the power to detain any of their farm servants "who design to Leave their Service after Martinmas next and have not feed themselves with any other master." Even where specific powers of detention were not granted, regulations were often laid down which must have made it very difficult for a farm servant to leave a master who wanted to keep him in service. In 1716 the Lanarkshire justices declared that servants could only leave if they gave 40 days' notice and obtained a certificate from their employer or the justices before applying for another place. Farm servants who left without permission were to be treated as vagabonds. In 1751 the Dumfriesshire J.P.s declared that farm servants must give three months' notice in the presence of two witnesses before leaving at the end of a term.

¹ *Acts Scot.*, IV, pp. 623-4.

(d) Regulations designed to force 'idle persons' to enter farm service date back to 1425 when an act was passed: "Gif ony idle men, that has not to live of their own, be received within his bounds . . . the Shireff sall gar arreist sik idle men . . . and . . . sall assigne fourty dayes to sick idlemen to Gett them masters or to fasten them to Laufull crafts."¹ This act was reproduced by the Lanarkshire justices in 1708 along with the act of 1621 which laid down that "the Justices of Peace and constable shall have power . . . to force and compell all and whatsoever lowse men and women to serve for competent hyre and wages."² In Stirlingshire in 1716 the constables were ordered to make out a list of "all idle persons and others out of service fitt therefore and in use to serve and fee termly or yearly" and to summon such persons to the next Quarter Sessions. For each person the constables received a reward of 20 shillings Scots (1s. 8d. sterling).

It is clear that, at least until the second half of the eighteenth century, the Scottish justices (many of whom were landowners) made periodic attempts to control the wages and conditions of farm workers and to limit their freedom to become day labourers or leave the land altogether. Regulations were passed concerning other workers as well, but in many of the counties the main energies of the J.P.s appear to have been³ "directed against the farm workers". Strengthened by their powers to imprison offenders, the justices must have wielded an important influence on working conditions in agriculture, and there is evidence that the wages actually paid in some parts of Scotland about 1750 were not very different from the regulation rates already noted.⁴ The rise in farm wages from 1650 to 1750 was not more than one-third—an astonishing degree of stability compared with the next hundred years, when there was an eight-fold increase in cash wages in Scottish farming.⁵ After 1750 the countryside saw rapid changes and many direct controls and regulations disappeared before the onslaught of economic progress. It was not until 1813 that the act enabling justices of the peace to fix wage rates was repealed, but long before then a change had begun to take place in the kind of control over labour conditions which the justices were able to exercise. Direct jurisdiction over wages and other conditions gave way to an indirect influence wielded mainly through the power to settle disputes between masters and workmen.

¹ *Acts Scot.*, II, p. 11.

² *Ibid.*, IV, p. 624.

³ C. A. Malcolm, *op. cit.*, p. xli.

⁴ Broadlee Day Book, 1748–55 (Byers MSS. on loan to writer); Hamilton, *Life and Labour on an Aberdeenshire Estate, 1735–1750*, Third Spalding Club, 1946, p. 80; *Old Statistical Account*, Penpont parish, Dumfriesshire. C. A. Malcolm considered that the justices' orders at the beginning of the eighteenth century were being disobeyed, *op. cit.*, p. xlii.

⁵ Cf. A. L. Bowley, 'Agricultural Wages in Scotland', *J. R. Stat. Soc.*, LXII, 1899, and G. Houston, 'Farm Wages in Central Scotland, 1814–1870', *J. R. Stat. Soc.*, CXVIII, 1955.

II

DISPUTES BETWEEN FARMERS AND SERVANTS, 1800-70

The period of transition from 'direct control' to 'indirect influence' cannot be clearly defined, but by the end of the eighteenth century the level of farm wages in Scotland was no longer regulated by formal decree and workers out of service were free to choose their masters or their work without interference by the justices.¹ The contract of service was decisive, and in theory it could take almost any agreed form. In practice labour contracts in farming were invariably informal and verbal, and, apart from the cash element in wages which often varied, were based on the customary practice of the district.

The influence of the justices was exerted through their interpretation and operation of the law on master and servant. Offending employers and workmen were not treated equally under this law, the former being liable in a civil action for damages or wages owing, whereas the latter could be sent to prison as criminals.² Prior to the act of 1823 (4 Geo. IV, c. 34), disputes between masters and workmen in Scotland were settled under common law,³ a feature of which was that servants could be imprisoned in order to enforce a contract of service. The practice was to send the servant to jail until he found security to fulfil his contract—a procedure which might mean a fairly long sentence.⁴ After 1823 action against servants in Scotland, as well as in England, was generally taken under the statute passed in that year which allowed three possible methods of dealing with offending workmen. They could be sent to a house of correction and held to hard labour for any period up to three months; their wages could be abated; or they could be discharged. In his evidence to the Select Committee set up in 1865 to consider

¹ In Peeblesshire in 1856, however, the Sheriff-Substitute declared that a farmer could refuse to allow a servant to go to the feeing market.—T. Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 353. This seems to have been an exceptional decision. By this time farm servants were in the habit of changing employers frequently.

² Cf. D. Simon, 'Master and Servant', Chap. vi in *Democracy and the Labour Movement*, ed. J. Saville, 1954.

³ A number of statutes covering Britain had been passed in the eighteenth century, e.g. 20 Geo. II, c. 19 (1747) and 6 Geo. III, c. 25 (1766), but they were never acted upon in Scotland.—P. Fraser, *Treatise on the Law of Scotland relative to Master and Servant*, 2nd ed., 1872, p. 243.

⁴ An example is provided from the columns of the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 7 Nov. 1808. Five servants of a "respectable farmer in the Carse of Gowrie" had "refused to remain at home and clean and dress their horses every night at 8 o'clock." The justices found "that the master's orders were not unreasonable, and granted warrant for committing them to Perth jail until they found security to fulfill their service, and obey all their master's reasonable orders."

the law on master and servant, Sheriff Barclay of Perth stated that servants in Scotland were still occasionally imprisoned under common law "as a sort of terror."¹

Contemporary accounts of a number of disputes between farmers and their servants taken to courts of law provide useful evidence on the state of labour relations in Scottish agriculture in the nineteenth century.² Farm workers were at an initial disadvantage in such disputes, for the cash part of their wages could be retained by their employers until the end of the agreed term of service.³ If a disagreement arose and the worker left his employer or was dismissed, he found it very difficult to obtain the wages owing him for the period actually worked. If he had taken the initiative in leaving his employer he would not only lose his wages but would run a serious risk of being brought to court by the farmer and might be sent to prison, fined, or ordered to return to his service and provide surety for his good conduct. If he had been dismissed and took his master to court, he had to show that the dismissal was unjustified, which generally meant proving that a certain order of the farmer was "unreasonable."⁴ Even when the servant managed

¹ Barclay, one of the more liberal Scottish sheriffs, criticized the law on master and servant in the following terms: "I am satisfied that [the act of 1823] has given great cause for dissatisfaction among the working classes upon this principle, that while the master failing to perform his part, can only be made civilly liable in damages, the servant is dealt with as a criminal, as a felon, and is convicted and sent to the felons' department of the prison, and alimented by public funds; treated, in short, as a thief or a robber; and, the contract being civil, I think that the servants have good cause to complain."—P.P. (H. of C.), 1865, VIII, Q.199.

² The writer has collected reports of over thirty disputes from newspapers. No detailed court records of such cases were kept as they came up before the J.P.s or Sheriff. Appeals to the Quarter Sessions were generally briefly recorded; e.g., only the decision was recorded in the Minute Book of the Haddington Justices (Sederunt Book, 1817–24, p. 193). Nor are legal digests very helpful, for out of nine cases involving farm servants taken to the Court of Session between 1800 and 1873 and recorded in *The Scots Digest*, five concerned grieves or managers. No ploughman won his case on appeal.—*The Scots Digest of Cases . . . 1800–73*, III, 1911.

³ Cf. T. Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 355. Some farmers no doubt gave occasional advances to their servants, but from a study of nineteenth-century farm account books it is clear that much of the cash wage remained to be paid at the end of the term. Regular, monthly advances to married ploughmen became more common in later years.

⁴ I have not found a single case in which an ordinary male farm servant succeeded in proving that his dismissal was unjustified, whereas there are reports of six cases in which the plea of "wrongful dismissal" was rejected. *Perthshire Courier*, 26 May 1838 and 24 Nov. 1842; *Scottish Farmer*, 4 Aug. 1848; *Peoples Journal*, 9 Oct. 1858; *The Scots Digest . . .*, III, p. 226. There are records of two grieves and one gardener who were successful in claiming wrongful dismissal (two on appeal), and Sheriff Barclay in 1842 awarded decree in favour of a woman (domestic) servant who had been "dismissed for refusing to go upon a Saturday evening to wash several pews in an Episcopal Chapel situated about a mile and a half beyond her master's residence."—

to convince the court on this point, he might find that he had to pay a sum for his own and the farmer's legal expenses which exceeded the wages owing to him.¹ A farm worker had to leave his tied house when dismissed; if he considered the dismissal unjustified he could sue for damages but must leave his house.²

Two common sources of dispute were the length of the working-day and the nature of the work the servant had been engaged to carry out. In 1807 a farm servant argued that the time spent in going to and coming from the field in which he was working should be held to be part of the five-hour yoking period. The Kelso justices rejected this argument and stated that "every master is entitled to order his servants to work daily two yokings, of five hours each, to be computed from the time the horses are yoked and ready to work, till they are loosed from the draught."³ In addition to their two five-hour yokings ploughmen had to 'supper' their horses in the evening and might find themselves in court should they refuse to carry out additional work at other times. In his book on Master and Servant, Fraser recorded the view that farm servants "cannot refuse to extend [their working hours] when necessity requires."⁴ A case from Aberdeenshire in 1848 illustrates how difficult it could be for a farm servant to prove that a certain task was outside his agreement.⁵

One afternoon, between five and six o'clock, a farmer had ordered his servant to get ready a horse and cart to take some furniture from the landlord's house to another house a mile and a half away. The servant had refused, was dismissed, and sued the farmer in the small debt court for his wages on grounds of wrongful dismissal. The farm servant's agent maintained that "such orders were unreasonable, so late in the afternoon; and besides that

The Scots Digest . . . , III, p. 226, *Haddingtonshire Courier*, 2 March 1860, and *Perthshire Courier*, 24 Nov. 1842.

¹ *Haddingtonshire Courier*, 2 March 1860. Sometimes the farmer might not dismiss the worker but would bring him to court for disobeying orders, in which case punishment could vary from imprisonment to a small fine. Cf. *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 14 May 1803, 7 Nov. 1808, 8 Aug. 1807, 26 June 1806; *Perthshire Courier*, 21 Oct. 1813, 2 Jan. 1845; *Peoples Journal*, 9 Oct. 1858.

² *North Brit. Agric.*, 8 Feb. 1865.

³ *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 8 Aug. 1807; a similar case was reported in the same newspaper on 26 June 1806. This question and that of "stable time" have caused many disputes in agriculture.

⁴ P. Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 66. He mentions a case in which a farm servant was dismissed for refusing to attend cattle on a Sunday in order to allow fellow servants to go to church.—*Ibid.*, p. 69. Sunday work was quite a common source of dispute; cf. *Perthshire Courier*, 2 Jan. 1845; *The Scots Digest* . . . , III, p. 226.

⁵ See also *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 14 May 1803, and *Peoples Journal*, 9 Oct. 1858.

the pursuer was expressly engaged as *first* ploughman, and was not bound to perform such extra services as carting furniture for other people. . .” In dismissing the case the Sheriff remarked that “although *frequent* orders to perform such services, after the ordinary time of labour, might be considered unreasonable and not within the contract, servants are bound to perform extra services, such as must occasionally occur and be necessarily required; and that the present was a case where the order given was fairly within the contract of master and servant.”¹

A more sweeping pronouncement came from the Kelso justices in 1807, who expressed “their unanimous opinion that it was a mistake in servants, hired by the year or half year, to suppose that, after their ordinary work hours, they are at liberty to dispose of or absent themselves as they please without their master’s leave; that, on the contrary, all such servants are bound to be at their master’s call, and to perform his lawful and reasonable orders, at all times during their service, by day or by night, when occasion requires.”²

Not every Scottish J.P. or Sheriff might have defined a farm worker’s duty in such terms, but it is obvious that in operating the law on master and servant many of them used their authority to maintain certain practices which some workers were trying to alter. The individual farm servant was in a very weak bargaining position with his employer and could expect little assistance from the law or the courts in any attempt to improve his position. Changes in the labour market could and did lead to higher cash wages, but other conditions of employment were more inflexible. It is not surprising that early attempts at combination among farm workers concentrated as often on changing the hours of labour and other working practices as on raising the level of wages.

III

EARLY ATTEMPTS AT COMBINATION

Trade Unions among farm workers are notoriously difficult to organize, and the sporadic attempts at combination before 1870 produced weak and generally short-lived organizations. Local newspapers provide practically the only contemporary records of these developments, so the picture that can be drawn is necessarily incomplete and leaves many questions unanswered.

The first attempt at combination among farm workers in Scotland which the writer has been able to trace was in the Carse of Gowrie in 1805.³ The

¹ *The Scottish Farmer*, 4 Aug. 1848.

² *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 8 Aug. 1807.

³ Apart from a reference to ‘Windy’ Shaw organizing ploughmen in Stirling about 1750 by J. Ramsay of Ochertyre in *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, 1888, II, p. 211.

following extract from the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 10 August 1805, shows that it was quickly suppressed.

"Public notices having been put upon several of the church doors in the Carse of Gowrie, requesting the ploughmen to meet in Perth on the 5th ultimo, to settle their wages and hours of working, the Sheriff convened before him four of the persons most actively engaged in the combination, who confessed the charges against them, and expressed extreme sorrow for their conduct. The meeting did not take place, and no further legal measures have yet been adopted against the other persons concerned, as they now profess themselves satisfied of the illegality of their proposed meeting. In order to prevent attempts at similar combinations, we think it proper to state that by Statute 39th and 40th Geo. III 'all servants or workmen who shall enter into any combination to raise their wages, or lessen their hours of working, or who shall issue public notices, requesting any person or persons to meet for the purpose aforesaid, or who shall make such requests verbally or by write, are liable to be imprisoned three months or sent to the house of correction.'"

There is no other reference to combination among farm servants at this time, but in August 1806 the *Farmer's Magazine* noted that "from the increased rate of wages, or from a scarcity of working people, many more disputes occurred in various counties betwixt masters and servants at last Whitsunday than known at any former period." Although the Combination Laws would have prevented any overt organization from being formed it may be that there were a number of attempts by farm workers to combine in order to gain some advantage from the prosperity of agriculture and the shortage of labour during the war years.

The outstanding effort to establish trade unionism among Scottish farm workers in the first half of the nineteenth century took place in Perthshire at the Whitsun term in 1834. It was noted briefly by the Webbs and by T. Johnston.¹ Shortlived though it was, the attempt is interesting because it reveals a level of militancy among farm workers in Scotland generally considered to be confined to English farm labourers at this time.

The *Dundee Advertiser*, which was sympathetically interested in trade unionism at this time, gave a very full and vivid account of a ploughmen's meeting held in the Carse of Gowrie, at which the movement was apparently launched. The opening paragraphs of the reporter's account both set the scene and summarize the main purpose of the meeting.—

"In consequence of a printed requisition which was extensively circulated

¹ S. & B. Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism*, 1907, p. 121 (their source was the *Poor Man's Guardian*); T. Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

throughout the district, and which was signed by seventy individuals of their number, a public meeting of the ploughmen and agricultural labourers of the Carse of Gowrie was held at Inchtute, on Thursday the 5th June (it being considered the most central place in the district), for the purpose of forming an association to procure a reduction in their present hours of labour, which are admitted by every reasonable person to be unnecessarily long. Previous to the hour of meeting, the Errol band of music arrived, accompanied by about two hundred persons from the West Carse, exclusive of a number who had gone to meet them; and bearing a flag, on which was inscribed 'Errol Musical Band'. To persons not much versed in the routine of public meetings, and particularly to those who were totally unacquainted with a display of popular feeling, the procession presented a very animating appearance as it passed along the road. When the band approached the place of meeting, they were received with three hearty cheers.

"David Watson, ploughman at Seaside, having been called by acclamation to the chair—and having read the requisition in consequence of which the meeting was called—Charles King, ploughman at Raws, moved the following resolution—viz.

"1. That it is the opinion of this meeting, that, from and after the term of Martinmas next, the hours of labour should be reduced to ten hours in summer and eight hours in winter.

"2. That while this meeting is of the opinion that the above hours are as much as the human frame can bear with a due regard to its physical and mental powers, yet, as the seasons are beyond human control, this meeting, having no wish to injure their masters' property or neglect the bounties of Providence, the persons composing it resolve—

"3. That in seed-time, hay-making, and harvest, they will work extra hours whenever their masters require them, provided they be remunerated, according to the rate of day-labourers, for every hour beyond the stipulated agreement.

"4. That in order to carry the above resolutions into effect, an Association shall be formed, and a committee appointed, to promote by every legal and constitutional means the object which we have in view, until it reach the 'consummation so devoutly to be wished for'."¹

The resolutions were passed unanimously and several speeches followed, two of them from men prominent in the trade union movement in Dundee at this time, James Begg (probably a weaver), and Edward Buik (a flaxdresser).²

¹ *Dundee Advertiser*, 13 June 1834.

² *Ibid.*, 16 May 1834 and 30 May 1834. There was an important weavers' strike in Dundee at this time.

Both Dundee speakers attacked the Corn Laws, which, said Buik, "are the cause of ruin to your immediate employers, the farmers as well as you. It is their operation that forces them to press hard upon your comforts, and appear tyrants in your eyes." Buik singled out the landlords, not the tenant farmers, for his main attack, arguing that they were the framers of the Corn Laws.¹ Other points from his speech included a reference to the "operatives in the towns of Great Britain around you [who] have united for the same purposes." He also suggested that a committee be elected to carry the resolutions into effect at Longforgan feeing market a few weeks later, and that they call a meeting before the market "to fix the method by which you intend to work on that day [and to declare] that no farm-servant shall fee or accept any proposals from the farmers, differing in the least from the rules, until he shall first have consulted with the Committee."

Buik urged the Committee, which was later elected by the 600 persons attending the meeting, to "do everything in their power to form bodies of a similar nature throughout Perthshire." At least one known attempt was made to do this, for the *Perthshire Courier* of 19 June (two weeks after the Inchtute meeting) reported a "general meeting of the Farm Servants in the parish of Forteviot," a few miles west of Perth. Whereas the Inchtute meeting had confined itself to passing resolutions on the length of the working-day and in favour of payment for overtime, the demands of the Forteviot ploughmen included references to the level of wages and to the suppering of horses. The 'rules' of the Forteviot ploughmen were:

"1. In the winter season to rise at sky and drop at sky.

"2. In the summer season to rise at 5 and work till 6 in the evening, with the exception of 2 hours in the middle of the day.

"3. Wages to vary from £11 to £14, according to the experience of the workmen, with meal and milk as formerly.

"4. Horses to be suppered at 8 from 3rd Friday of October till 1st March and in the summer season when they come from the yoke."

In commenting unfavourably on this development, the *Perthshire Courier* referred to associations of farm servants which "have been formed in various districts," suggesting that the movement was quite widespread. The newspaper argued that it had taken place "under the instigation of the leaders of

¹ If the farmers complain of poverty, said Buik, "tell them you cannot help that; they must insist for a reduction of rent from the laird. . . They will strive to frighten you by speaking of bringing over Irish labourers to fill your places. But I can tell you that, though they did, they would not keep them three months (*cheers*). They would find they had not the cannie Scot to deal with—(*cheers*)—they would find they had got as ugly customers as the stack burners of England (*great cheering*)."

the town unions," and was a consequence "of the late introduction of the demon of politics into the country districts." The farmers were not slow to retaliate, for, according to the *Courier*, "whenever they were aware that any in their service had connected themselves with these Unions, immediate intimation was given that they should quit at next term; and in no case will they re-engage or recommend any servant who has so attached himself."

Among the farm workers themselves an attempt was made to arouse opposition to the principle of trade unionism. At Methven, a few miles north of Forteviot, a meeting of farm servants was held on July 1st, 1834, and passed a number of resolutions, the first of which deprecated "the idea of dictating to their masters, after the manner of a trades union, in any way to interfere so as to throw impediments in the way of the regular operation of agricultural labour."

At the same time, the meeting (whose size was not stated) passed other resolutions very similar to those of the Forteviot ploughmen, except that no reference was made to the level of wages. These resolutions were published in an advertisement in the *Perthshire Courier*, 17 July 1834, and a petition was sent to the Perthshire Agricultural Association which, however, declined to receive it on the grounds that the association was "merely for the improvement of farm produce."

The outcome of these developments is obscure. The *Dundee Advertiser*, 27 June 1834, reported that "owing to the determined stand made by the farm servants for a reduction in their hours of labour, very little feeing took place" at Longforgan market. The less sympathetic *Dundee Constitutional* stated that "The Ploughman's Union has already well nigh fallen to pieces, and many of its members solicited employment from their masters on the old terms, and in the very teeth of the rules to which they not a month since bound themselves to conform."¹ Since there are no other known references to trade unionism among Perthshire farm workers for several decades after 1834, it is fairly certain that the organizations set up at Inchtute, Forteviot, and any other centres, collapsed very quickly. But it would be a mistake to conclude from this that they did not have any influence on working conditions in agriculture. The comments of a newspaper like the *Perthshire Courier*, which was antagonistic to trade unionism, make it clear that the demands of the organized ploughmen on such questions as the length of the working-day received widespread publicity and considerable support.²

¹ Quoted in the *Perthshire Courier*, 26 June 1834.

² The *Courier* stated that there were several farmers in the habit of "extracting 12 or 13 hours" of work from their servants, whereas other extensive farmers had declared that they had "never been in the habit of asking more work from their servants than in the intervals stated in

Eleven years after the Perthshire agitation, trade unionism seems to have had another short period of popularity among a section of farm workers, this time in the Lothians. Our knowledge of the 1845 developments is scanty and any organization must have had a very short life.¹ In the 1860's, however, a much more powerful movement spread throughout Scotland, starting off in Midlothian.

A Farm Servants' Protection Society was formed at a meeting held at Slateford, near Edinburgh, on December 15th, 1865, and appears to have lasted about seven years.² Local societies were formed in many other areas, e.g. in the counties of Kinross, Forfar, Perth, Kincardine, Stirling, Clackmannan, Peebles, Roxburgh, Berwick, and East Lothian,³ and by the end of January 1866 the society had changed its name to the "Scottish Farm Servants' Protection Association."⁴ The first set of rules approved by the Midlothian society appear to have been amended at later meetings, and local societies often adapted them to local circumstances.⁵ In Berwickshire, for instance, strong objection was taken to the 'bondager system' under which a ploughman had to provide a woman worker for a stated number of days' work in the year.⁶

The following account of the aims of the Clackmannan society probably describes the basis of most of the societies. "The association is open for farm servants and labourers, and the members provide that no member shall engage for less than fifteen shgs. per week, with free house and garden and fuel driven, and dinner in harvest, to be paid monthly. The hours shall be the same as at present, but that a half holiday be got, and the horses be suppered at 6 instead of 8 o'clock as at present. That for a weekly payment of a penny a sick fund shall be formed, and that when a member gets into a lawsuit with his master, the society shall protect him if a majority of the committee think

the prayer of the Forteviot petition." The newspaper went on to say that "we sincerely trust . . . that the farmers will distinguish between demands made in the spirit and through the medium of intimidating unions and the respectful and moderate requests of those who disdain all connection with such bodies or such objects."

¹ T. Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 355-6; *North British Agriculturist*, 20 Dec. 1865; *Haddingtonshire Courier*, 5 Jan. 1866.

³ *Ibid.*, 12 Jan. 1866, 2 Feb. 1866, and 16 Feb. 1866; *Alloa Journal*, 17 March 1866, 14 April 1866, 9 June 1866, 23 June 1866, and 30 June 1866; *Perthshire Advertiser*, 3 Jan. 1866, 6 June 1867, 21 Nov. 1867, and 24 Jan. 1867.

⁴ *North British Agriculturist*, 31 Jan. 1866.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 10 Jan. 1866. There was a call by a member at one meeting that higher wages should be paid to ploughmen who could plough 9 inches deep.

⁶ *Berwickshire News*, 28 Aug. 1923, and letter to Dr J. F. Duncan from R. Aitchison, Duns, 15 March 1923.

him right. The great object, however, is to secure a general rise of wages at next term by register offices (which are to be opened in every parish), so that the matter of increased pay may be at once set at rest."¹

There is evidence that some of the societies collected subscriptions and established a formal organization,² but sometimes this is only made clear because the society had to be wound up for lack of support and the funds distributed to members.³ Supporters of the union claimed a number of successes. At the hiring fair in Haddington in 1866, cash wages appear to have risen by about £2 per annum,⁴ and the bondager system seems to have disappeared on many farms as a result of the agitation against it.⁵ But other aims of the movement, such as the weekly half-holiday, the monthly payment of wages, and the replacement of feeing markets by registry offices, were not achieved at this time and reappear in the demands of the Scottish Federal Ploughmen's Union in the 1890's.⁶ Unlike this later union, the societies formed about 1866 do not appear to have set up a national organization with a full-time official, and most of them probably lasted for only a few months. In at least one district the farm workers most active in the movement were apparently forced to leave farming and went to work as miners.⁷

The significance of these early attempts at combination should not be measured solely by the permanence of the organizations set up. As long as disputes on working conditions arose only in a personal form, between an employer and an individual worker, they were settled in the last resort in a court, under the law on master and servant, and the wage-earner, as we have seen, was invariably at a serious disadvantage. Where the workers began to act as a group, their influence was considerably increased. Organizations set up on trade union principles had a short life, but not an ineffectual one. They failed to establish themselves as permanent bodies with a subscribing membership, but they helped to give expression and direction to criticism of working conditions in agriculture. Without exaggerating their importance,

¹ *Alloa Journal*, 14 April 1866.

² Dr J. F. Duncan has an old membership card of the Swinton (Berwickshire) Society, dated 8 Feb. 1866.

³ *Perthshire Advertiser*, 21 Nov. 1867; *Alloa Journal*, 23 June 1866.

⁴ *Haddingtonshire Courier*, 9 Feb. 1866. Another journal stated that "the agitation . . . has partially secured an advance of wages on some farms, rendering the rates of payment more uniform in certain districts."—*North Brit. Agric.*, 25 April 1866.

⁵ The agitation in the Lothians in 1845 possibly made the system less prevalent in that area.—T. Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 355, and *Haddingtonshire Courier*, 21 Feb. 1862. It was still prevalent in Berwickshire in 1866, but became less common after the agitation.—*North Brit. Agric.*, 25 April 1866.

⁶ Cf. *The Plough*, 1893-5, and the Union rule book, held by Dr J. F. Duncan.

⁷ Letter from R. Aitchison cited above.

these early attempts at combination probably had an influence in establishing the principle of a normal working day in agriculture, in abolishing the bondager system, and in other minor changes in the customary conditions of farm work. Of greater significance, perhaps, is that they prepared the ground from which rose the agricultural trade unions of the future, the Scottish Federal Ploughmen's Union already mentioned and, in the present century, the Scottish Farm Servants' Union which is now a section of the Transport and General Workers' Union.

NOTES AND COMMENTS (*continued from page 26*)

on the agrarian structure of France, the Mediterranean countries, and Africa.¹ In addition, the papers read to the conference, with the contributions to discussion, will be published, it is hoped within one year.

As a further practical outcome of the conference it is hoped to publish an international lexicon of agrarian terminology. During the conference there was considerable discussion about the exact meaning of certain terms, not least between members speaking the same language. A list of main headings covering most of the aspects of agrarian practice has been drawn up. The aim is to collect from various countries a list of terms, grouped under these main headings. Each word is to be accompanied by a short explanation, and, if helpful, a map or air photograph. It is hoped that various terms peculiar to regions will be submitted and defined by experts in local agrarian history.

The British representatives on the lexicon commission are Professor Jones Pierce of University College, Aberystwyth, Dr R. H. Hilton of Birmingham University, and Mr Glanville R. J. Jones of Leeds University. It is proposed to collect material as follows:

Persons with a knowledge of regional terminology are invited to submit terms with accompanying explanations. The list of main headings referred to above will be issued to help in drawing up lists of terms, and helpers are asked to apply for lists as under:

For the terminology of the northern English counties (Lancs, Yorks, Northumberland, Durham, Westmorland, and Cumberland), Scotland, Isle of Man, and Cornwall, to Mr Glanville R. J. Jones, Dept. of Geography, The University, Leeds 2.

For the rest of England, to Dr R. H. Hilton, School of History, The University, Birmingham 3. For Wales and Ireland, to Professor T. Jones Pierce, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth.

Returns of terms should be made to the address from which lists are obtained. Please apply for the list of main headings before submitting contributions.

SCHOOL OF SCOTTISH STUDIES

In January 1957 the School began publication of a new journal called *Scottish Studies*, which is to appear twice a year. The first number is

(*continued on page 51*)

¹ *Structures Agraires et Paysages Ruraux, un quart de siècle de recherches françaises*, by E. Juillard, A. Meynier, X. de Planhol, and G. Sautter. Nancy, 1957.

List of Books and Articles on Agrarian History issued since September 1956¹

Compiled by JOAN THIRSK

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¹ The date of publication is 1957 unless otherwise stated. The compiler wishes to thank Mr George Green and Dr Dennis Mills for help with this bibliography.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS (*continued from page 41*)

pleasingly produced and contains 151 pages. There are seven main articles, all relating to various aspects of Scottish Folk Culture. The first two outline the scope and activities of the School, and of the remainder two are of particular interest to the agricultural historian. One by Betty M. W. Third is on Scottish estate plans, and the other, devoted to the plough in Scotland, is by Ragnar Jirlow and Ian Whitaker. *Scottish Studies* is edited by J. Wreford Watson at 27 George Square, Edinburgh, and published by Oliver and Boyd Ltd, Tweeddale Court, High Street, Edinburgh. The subscription is £1 a year.

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

In 1957 the Edinburgh University Agricultural Society celebrated its centenary, and to commemorate the occasion a special number was published of the Journal of the Edinburgh Agricultural Former Students' Association. The Chair of Agriculture at Edinburgh has had only seven occupants since it was established in 1790; one of these was our President, Sir James Scott Watson, who held it from 1922 to 1925. He has written an article on

Scotland's contribution to agricultural progress. Among the many other articles is one by Denis Witney on the major economic trends in Scottish agriculture from 1857 to 1957; another is on agricultural research in Scotland since 1857, by Arthur Wannop; and there is also a history of the Edinburgh Agricultural Society by its President.

ULSTER FOLKLIFE AND TRADITIONS

In 1955 the Committee on Ulster Folklife and Traditions began publication of an annual volume called *Ulster Folklife*. Through the medium of this publication the results of the committee's work in recording the folklife and traditions of Ulster will be made available to the public. The volumes published so far have included a good deal of agricultural material. The annual subscription to *Ulster Folklife* is 5s. 6d. and the money should be sent to the Honorary Treasurer, Bryson House, 28 Bedford Street, Belfast. Manuscripts for publication should be sent to the Honorary Editor, R. H. Buchanan, Department of Geography, The Queen's University, Belfast.

Letters to the Editor

AMERICAN INDIAN AGRICULTURE

SIR,—In his article on neolithic agriculture Dr Steensberg unaccountably fails to make any reference to North American Indian agriculture. This is possibly no great flaw in a short paper, but Dr Steensberg should certainly not overlook the many studies of Indian life and agriculture. The climate of North America is and was similar to much of Europe, and the North American Indian was just entering late neolithic agricultural development when Europeans arrived.

Forest-burning, practised in Germany in the eighteenth century, continued in Canada and the United States in the nineteenth. Tree girdling, not chopping, was the usual American neolithic technique of forest clearance. As for the periodic migrations of neolithic farmers, the moving about of the relatively settled Choctaw, Creek, and Cherokee may be relevant. Stone-age cultures still exist comparatively unspoiled today, and I believe that those of the recent past of North America may be useful for comparison with Europe. Few accessible Stone-age peoples of a north temperate climate are now available for study.

Although the Indian is mongoloid rather than caucasoid, he was, for the most part, a neolithic farmer when first encountered. Perhaps because the culture of maize is different from the culture of wheat or barley, the techniques of the Indian may not be exactly transferable to prehistoric European settlers. Still, Indian farming could well be considered in any study of neolithic agriculture.

Yours, etc.,

JOHN T. SCHLEBECKER

*Iowa State College of Agriculture
and Mechanic Arts,
Ames, Iowa, U.S.A.*

THE PLOUGH IN WALES

SIR,—It was a disappointment to find at the end of F. G. Payne's most admirable article on the British plough such a prejudicial state-

ment concerning the non-usage of the single-furrow plough in Wales.

It was the coming of the speedier tractor during the war of 1914-18 that finally displaced the horse teams and the single-furrow ploughs from our fields.

Not all the fields have gone out of cultivation, because arable crops are still popular throughout Wales, particularly in Pembrokeshire. The small acreages handed over to the artillery range are of no consequence and surely it is untrue to state that lands growing timber are the "endless lifeless domain of the Forestry Commission." Most of the Commission's two hundred thousand acres of forest in Wales occupy upland areas which have never been under the plough. Not by any stretch of the imagination can it be said that a growing forest is an endless lifeless domain.

Yours faithfully,

R. PHILLIPS

Argoed,

Llangwryryfon, Aberystwyth.

SHOOTING ON HILL PASTURES

SIR,—Captain Sir Hugh Rhys-Rankin has certainly raised a point of some interest, but I feel he has tended to generalization on Scottish and Derbyshire experience. In this area, i.e. Weardale in west Durham, there would seem to have been little conflict between shooting and sheep-farming.

This valley, a part of the Palatinate of Durham, was from medieval times largely game reserve, for great deer-parks were maintained by the bishops. Considerable parts of the ancient walls still exist, and much more is traceable. Thus from early days the preservation of game was a major part of the economy of the district. Grouse appear to have been preserved also, and in the early nineteenth century this precipitated the so-called Battle of Stanhope, when reputedly large numbers of the lead-miner-farmers marched to Stanhope to release two of their number who had

been taken into custody for poaching grouse. The affray is celebrated in our local ballad, *The Bonny Moor Hen*. I take this as reasonable evidence of preservation long before Sir Hugh's date of 1870-5.

While the passing of the mature wether was responsible for a drop in sheep numbers, I cannot see that this can properly be laid at the door of shooting tenants. The development of the public taste for lamb, coincident with the rise of refrigeration and imports from the antipodes, seems a more satisfactory explanation. Let us also remember that in many cases the drop in overall numbers was accompanied by a rise in the number of ewes, and the hill concentrated on store lamb production.

Where there has been a decline in numbers I think there is another explanation: the deterioration of many hill grazings. Until comparatively recent years our fells carried large herds of ponies, partly no doubt because of the demand for pack ponies for the lead mines, many of which were completely inaccessible to any other form of transport. These ponies, locally called Caraway Gallo-ways, did much to keep the fell in order, and I am sure that the menace of bracken in the district over late years is largely due to the fact that their hooves no longer tread and bruise the bracken. In the last fifty years, according to the best evidence I can get, bracken has spread from fairly small patches on the commons, which were eagerly cut for bedding as soon as hay-time was done, to its present sprawl over many hundreds of acres. In passing I find it surprising that these herds were allowed to vanish when the potential market of the Durham coalfield was so close by.

I very much doubt that game preservation has had any part at all in causing a decline in

sheep numbers in this area. There is no real conflict between grouse-preserving and sheep farming, apart from occasional friction of personalities between the custodians. Indeed I can only see good resulting from the proper keeping of a sheep heft or the proper shepherding of a grouse moor. Either usually results in an improvement in the standard of heather management, and there is no more popular figure among shepherds than a really active keeper.

Yours truly,

JOHN NEWRICK

*High Whitestones,
Ireshopeburn,
via Bishop Auckland.*

SHEPHERDS' STAVES

SIR,—I have read with great interest the notes on *Shepherds' Staves* by Mr L. F. Salzman. I feel, however, that the information is incomplete without the Scriptural references, especially the 23rd Psalm. "Thy rod and thy staff comfort me." This phrase used to be a bit of a puzzle until I had direct evidence from Palestine. The "rod" is the club thonged to the shepherd's waist, distinctively a weapon of protection against adders, wild beasts, etc. I have one in my farm Museum here, little more than two feet long with an iron spike. The "staff," from which has sprung the shepherd's crook, was in Palestine a straight longish stick, an instrument of guidance and discipline as applied to the straying sheep. It was also useful there for fording a river (like a boy-scout pole); there were no bridges in Palestine in those days.

Yours faithfully,

PHILIP WRIGHT

*The Vicarage,
Woodford Bridge,
Essex.*

Book Reviews

ROBERT TROW-SMITH, *A History of British Livestock Husbandry to 1700*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957. x+286 pp. 32s.

This book is a notable contribution to the agrarian history of England. It brings together all the printed information—few items have escaped the author's notice—and a few unprinted documents, throwing light on English livestock husbandry from Paleolithic times to 1700. Its special value lies in its critical appraisal of past practice by a modern expert, for Mr Trow-Smith is on the editorial staff of the *Farmer and Stockbreeder*. There is evidently ample room for more research on the subject, but at the same time the amount already known about stock-keeping since about 1200 is impressive. Nor, it appears, was the practice of our ancestors always contemptibly inferior to our own. Considering their short commons in winter, the medieval pig and cow had a creditable progeny, while the medieval sheep was positively pampered. On the best-managed estates the flocks were housed in sheds in winter, a system of management which seems to have died out by the sixteenth century, and is only now being re-introduced. For these and other reasons, Mr Trow-Smith passes many sympathetic judgements on the skill and achievements of the stockmen and shepherds of the past. They learnt by example and observation, and, mercifully, did not read the textbooks, which lagged hopelessly behind current practice.

The author is wisely critical of those who attempt to trace back the pedigree of modern breeds of stock into the too remote past, for the scientist has no means as yet of putting any such theories to the test. Even though there is more evidence than usual to support the view that the white-flecked breeds of English cattle owe their high milk yields to imported Dutch stock, there was an indigenous breed with white markings in the Scottish islands from which this pied colouring may equally well be derived. As the author shows, there is plentiful testimony in medi-

eval and later sources that cattle and sheep travelled hundreds of miles from breeding to fattening grounds and thence to the butcher. In consequence, breeds were much inter-mixed. Undoubtedly, there were local herds and flocks with a reputation—a Chancery dispute in the 1530's, for example, refers to a contract for the sale of sheep "of the breed at Croft," in Lincolnshire. But this kind of celebrated local stock had none of the permanent characteristics of the modern pedigree.

Mr Trow-Smith's comprehensive study over a long period enables him to present a clear picture of the gradual change of values placed on different classes of stock and their various edible and marketable products. In the background lurks the problem, with which the author is naturally hardly concerned, of how this affected the Englishman's diet. For whereas Neolithic man fed his family on beef and particularly veal, the Anglo-Saxon built up a large herd of pigs to forage in the woodlands and supply him with pork and bacon, valuing his cattle for their powers of draught, and sheep for their milk and wool. The medieval peasant inherited the same scale of values, added manure but not meat high on the list, and did not kill his sheep and cattle unless they were weakling or too old to serve other purposes efficiently. It was not until the sixteenth century that much attention was devoted to the quality of meat of cattle and sheep. Until then the pig was the only domestic animal bred purely for food.

It is sometimes difficult for the modern historian to remember this list of priorities when interpreting the archaeological and documentary evidence of the past. When the sheep was introduced to Britain in the Bronze Age, its milk and its wool were the prizes. As soon as crop husbandry was established, the main purpose in breeding cattle was not to provide milk but to beget and maintain the plough-team. Hence, Mr Trow-Smith comes to the conclusion that the medieval vaccaries of Rossendale and Macclesfield were not large-

scale dairies but nurseries for young stock, and that the cheeses which appear in the accounts were made chiefly of ewes' milk. It was not until the sixteenth century that the cow was noticeably prized for her milk, and that the cheese and butter of counties like Suffolk became celebrated. Of course, in dating these developments we are to some extent misled by the topographers who first gave them publicity in the sixteenth century. There must have been a long period of slow growth preceding the fully-fledged specialization of the sixteenth century.

As for the pig, Mr Trow-Smith ventures the opinion, probably correctly, that it was numerically more important before 1066 than after that date when the woodland was gradually cleared. By 1500 pigs had probably declined in importance even more than he allows. It is true that the average peasant in Midland counties such as Leicestershire and Lincolnshire had about six pigs in the farmyard in the Tudor period, but in counties like Lancashire and Yorkshire, and in West Glamorgan too (see F. V. Emery, 'West Glamorgan Farming, circa 1580-1620', *National Library of Wales Journal*, x, no. 1, Summer, 1957, p. 24) they appear to have been far less common. There were one or two at most on the average peasant's holding, while as many as a quarter or a third of peasants leaving wills in Lancashire had none. Evidently one pig was as much as most husbandmen could feed, and was sufficient for a family's needs. The six pigs of the average Leicestershire and Lincolnshire peasant were unusual, doubtless for the reason later given by John Mortimer in *The Whole Art of Husbandry* (1707), namely, that the clay counties like Leicestershire and Northamptonshire and thereabouts grew large quantities of peas and beans which enabled them to feed a singularly large number of pigs. Michael Ryder's recent analysis of animal bones found at the excavation of Kirkstall Abbey showed very few pig bones and led him to wonder whether pork was not something of a luxury in the monastic refectory (see 'Kirkstall Abbey Excavation, Seventh Report, 1956',

Publications of the Thoresby Society). The answer may be that the only pigs marketed in quantity came from the Midlands and did not reach the Kirkstall butchers.

Other problems concerning the use of the horse in the plough-team, the use of goats in Domesday times, and their almost complete disappearance by 1500, cannot be discussed here. Suffice it to say that Mr Trow-Smith attempts to say something of value on every aspect of management of cattle, sheep, horses, and pigs. Marketing is not his concern, though his book may well provoke others to investigate it.

There are one or two slips in text and footnotes. Mr Emmison appears as Emminson (p. 207), Driffield as Duffield (p. 241), footnote 1 on page 201 is wrongly attributed, footnote 2 on page 232 is embarrassed with two references in the text. Errors have crept into the transcription of Thorold Rogers's table of sheep densities in the mid-fourteenth century (p. 141). They occur in the number of sacks of wool contributed by each county, but fortunately do not invalidate the arguments constructed round the table. The number of sacks for Cambridge should be 543, not 774, Rutland 112, not 110, Westmorland 157, not 557, Devon 515, not 505, Surrey 383, not 392, Kent 1,274 not 543. A questionable generalization is the statement (p. 182) that in the Tudor and Stuart periods the stinting of stock was practised in nearly every village in England where enclosure was not complete. This remark fails to take account of the extensive pastoral areas of England, including the fens, where there were still few enclosures and no stints. But these are minor criticisms of a book that will become a standard reference work. We look forward to the promised second volume, which will encompass the period from 1700 to the present day.

JOAN THIRSK

JOAN THIRSK, *English Peasant Farming: the Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957. xvi+350 pp. 40s.

It must be said at the very outset of this notice

that Mrs Thirsk's *English Peasant Farming* is a major achievement in the realm of agrarian history. As a pioneer in the new technique of the regional study of the development of British farming she reaps a full harvest from a corner of a field which hitherto has been only grazed over by an older generation of historians. The difference is that between intensive cultivation and dog-and-stick farming.

For a decade now this new school of rural history has insisted that the old random crop of inadequately substantiated generalizations and half-truths, the work of estimable but unscientific men, from Garnier and Ernle to their modern counterparts, must be replaced by a more exact discipline. To this end precise local studies must first be made, and only when these have been completed, gathered together, analysed, and interpreted, can an adequately substantiated and valid history be substituted for the historical semi-fiction which has hitherto paraded as real history.

The necessity for this destruction and reconstruction cannot be gainsaid. Ernle, if he may be used as a whipping-boy, refused to recognize that there was any agricultural history before 1066; presented his readers with a picture of medieval farming so generalized and so hedged about by the open fields of the English midlands as to be largely false; placed too much reliance upon the didactic writers, and used contemporary records so little, that the early modern period became in his hands theoretical, unreal, and sometimes absurd; and only when the work of Young, Marshall, Royal Commissions, and rural sociologists placed a profusion of facts at his disposal did he begin to write history. None the less, as Mrs Thirsk herself recognizes, Ernle's work—and that of some other writers of his category—was of sufficient merit to make it difficult of supersession, and indeed not yet superseded for the modern period. Not the least of its virtues lay, and lies, in its readability: his prose has a restrained force, an easy flow, and a vividness which place *English Farming* among the minor classics of history. His mind had the cultured humanism

of his age and class; and his background gave him a technical acquaintanceship with farm practice such as has been possessed only by Orwin and Scott Watson among historians of our own day, and without which one may perhaps write rural history but never agricultural history. With none of these qualities, one can still write history for the historian, as so many do; it may be very good history indeed—far more detailed, accurate, precise, and balanced than Ernle is—but it will lack the broad sweep, the acute technical perception, and the civilization of *English Farming*.

Mrs Thirsk has written very much of a historian's history. Where Ernle wrote passionately and vaguely of how "in the long winter evenings, farmers, their sons, and their servants carved the wooden spoons, the platters and the beechen bowls . . . or closed, in coarse fashion, the leaks in the leathern jugs," Mrs Thirsk writes dispassionately and precisely of the 'median' peasant farmer of the Lincolnshire uplands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, one who had a statistical average of 26 acres sown to crops, a flock which averaged 34 sheep, a herd which averaged nine cattle of which 58 per cent were "dairy and breeding" animals, and 42 per cent "draught and meat" animals (can any such fine distinction be accepted for this period?), an average herd of six pigs, and an average of five horses for his plows. The difference between the subjective approach of *English Farming* and its spiritual successors and the objective analysis of *English Peasant Farming* need hardly be laboured further.

Mrs Thirsk takes for her subject the peasant farming of Lincolnshire from the sixteenth century to 1914, and divides it into four parts topographically—the fenland, the marshland, the chalk and limestone uplands, and the clay soils—and into three major periods chronologically—the sixteenth century, 1600 to 1740, and 1740 to 1870—with a tailpiece for 1870 to 1914 in which all four regions of the county are joined in one chapter. The result is that the bulk of the book is made up of a dozen separate historical studies. In each of these Mrs Thirsk draws

upon original sources to build up her analyses of the farming in each period and place, and these are presented in subsections dealing with population, stock, crops, enclosure, and such other particular aspects of time and area as drainage and reclamation which call for treatment. As a backcloth against which to set the supra-regional facets of each sectional economy she uses, for the earlier periods, Hoskins's work on Leicestershire; and only in the last period does she allow Ernle to enter in to tell a national story to which her local findings can be related.

The supreme merit of this book is that it provides, for the first time for any area, the complete gamut of rural data as it falls within the somewhat circumscribed boundary which Mrs Thirsk draws around the agrarian history of Lincolnshire (of the circumscription more will be said in a moment). There are contained here exact analyses of the agricultural statistics taken from her sources: probate inventories, State Papers Domestic, the muniments in the Lincolnshire Archives Office among others. The significance of the general run of this information cannot be usefully discussed until similar facts from other counties and regions become available, with which it can then be compared. In passing it may be remarked that the reader may well wonder what the value of the statistical averages here presented may be: the median farmer of the sixteenth-century Lincolnshire uplands would certainly have been as elusive in person as the "average farmer" is today. Farming is, and has been through the historic period, an industry of great diversity. In one village there may be one group of men each with about 50 dairy cows and a score of sheep for scavenging, and another group of men each with 400 sheep and half a dozen cows for multiple-suckling calves: to say that the median farmer here is one with 210 sheep and 28 cows is absurd. Mrs Thirsk, as far as one can judge, never falls into this sort of trap; but such a danger always exists where unweighted averages are used.

Of the new specific knowledge which emerges there may be cited such sample facts

as these: that tacking, or the agistment of stock, was to be found in the fenlands at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, and that at about the same time sheep were being taken at halves; that the letting of dairy cattle was practised before the end of the sixteenth century; that there is a suspicion, but not quite of the weight Mrs Thirsk believes, that selected grasses were being sown for leys as early as 1591.

The somewhat narrow framework into which Mrs Thirsk has fitted her findings gives rise to a feeling throughout the bulk of this book that, however precisely some aspects of Lincolnshire farming are here presented, the agrarian history of the county has been emasculated. Those who have worked, in however elementary a fashion, among inventories of "peasants' " goods will know of the great mass of incidental information they contain: the descriptions of farm implements, the lists of the buildings which housed them, the colours of the cattle, and the age ranges of the ewes and wethers in the flock, all of which, and much else, help to build up a full picture of the farm and farming of John Doe. There is little here of such things; and nothing, until modern times, of the local implements of husbandry, of the Lincolnshire hired labourers, of the farm buildings, of the regional types of stock kept. This is one important lacuna.

A second, and equally important cause for criticism, is the constant failure to follow the technical implications of the facts to their reasonable conclusions. There is, for instance, much information here on the gradual increase in acreage of fodder crops and on the rise in livestock populations, but no correlation of the two in particular cases; and while sizes of flocks are constantly quoted, there is no attempt to work out, say, lambing percentages from the figures in the inventories which so often make it possible for this to be done. The list of omissions of such most relevant facts and arguments could be made a long one.

From the point of view of the general reader—and Mrs Thirsk must have had this, to the scientific historian, unpopular person

in mind when she gave her book the title of *English Peasant Farming*—the greatest error of omission is the absence of all national background to this regional history through most of its length. The author would doubtless retort that the only national background yet available is of too dubious a worth to allow its admission here. That may very well be so, but none the less this book would have gained immensely from some carefully qualified national commentary—gained in readability; become more intelligible to a wider circle of readers; and, moreover, avoided a number of false impressions which the absence of such a commentary allows in. One example must suffice. Mrs Thirsk implies that the loss of one-third of the 4,201 beasts on the East and West Fens in Skirbeck Wapentake in 1747 was due to “distemper” engendered by the wetness of the fen; in fact, of course, it was merely a small, local manifestation of a nation-wide epidemic of rinderpest. Too often the scrupulous parochialism of treatment gives rise to such misconceptions.

Two final criticisms stem from the title of the book itself. *English Peasant Farming* suggests at first sight that this is in fact a history of peasant farming in England. It is nothing of the sort, as a sub-title on the title-page and the dust cover—but not on the spine—makes clear. No study of Lincolnshire farming can claim to mirror all English farming, despite Mrs Thirsk's disarming explanation that Lincolnshire is “in some degree a model or typical county”—typical of the Cornish moors or the vale of White Horse or the rolling hills of Northumberland? And no man sowing some scores of acres of cereals and pulses in the year, such as figures largely here, can properly be called a peasant: the word today has a contemptuous connotation; but one is at a loss to suggest an alternative.

Nevertheless Mrs Thirsk has written a book of much importance, both intrinsically and as a signpost to future historians of regional agriculture. Whether, in fact, the method of statistical analysis she has established is the best one is open to doubt. The opinion of agricultural economists might well

be sought; they themselves have devised methods of examination of current farm statistics which are giving wholly valid results. These, borrowed and adapted, might possibly be better than the methods which Mrs Thirsk uses. But the fact remains that *English Peasant Farming* is one of the first of the major theses which will eventually place the history of British farming on a sound basis. This sphere of history has long been the preserve of the gifted dilettante: his day is now over and that of the dedicated historian has begun.

R. TROW-SMITH

WILLIAM M. FINDLAY, *Oats: Their Cultivation and Use from Ancient Times to the Present Day*. Oliver and Boyd (for the University of Aberdeen), 1956. 207 pp. 21s.

The late William Findlay was one of the last of that generation—of which the *doyen*, Sir John Russell, is still with us—who fought a winning battle against poverty for a scientific education; and then went on to found or adorn a branch of agricultural science. Up to the age of 25 Findlay was a crofter and village miller; he then began to cycle 25 miles each morning to attend university classes, and 25 miles home each night. In due time, as University Lecturer in seeds and seed-testing, he established himself as a prime authority upon oat-growing in Scotland. With his deep practical knowledge, skill in the laboratory, and patience on the trial plot, he could have made himself eminent in the field of agricultural botany. But, devoid of personal ambition and driven only by twin passions for pure knowledge and his fellow Aberdeenshire farmers, he disdained the professional ladders of the committee and the conference room; and he was content to live and die plain Will Findlay, for whom every oat-growing Scots farmer had an immense trust and a great affection.

His book is the man—plain, factual, and, it is only honest to say, a little behind the thinking of the younger generation of botanists; and, therefore, out of date even before it was in print. Its introductory chapters on

oats in history express the scientific humanism of an earlier decade, when the classical sources were as familiar as the sight of the Potato oats through the window but Helbaek was yet barely heard of. The bulk of the book, upon the science and practice of oat-growing, is, up to a point, as sound as the author was himself, the work of a man who spent every day in his year growing oats; but it stops short where the great advances in variety, bold manuring, and weed control of recent years began.

R. TROW-SMITH

G. A. HOLMES, *The Estates of the Higher Nobility in Fourteenth-Century England*. Cambridge University Press, 1957. 180 pp. 22s. 6d.

In introducing this work, the author points out that most studies in medieval agrarian history so far have been based on materials derived from religious houses. He quite rightly insists on the disadvantages of this concentration, and devotes his attention to such great lay estates as those of Lancaster, Mortimer, Beauchamp, Clare, Bohun, and others.

The most original and valuable part of Mr Holmes's book is that which explores the legal and institutional side of these foundations of aristocratic power. That marriage was a means of accumulation in medieval society is a commonplace, but there is certainly a need for the detailed study of how such accumulation was planned, and the legal devices by which it was preserved for the landlord's posterity. Mr Holmes's account of forms of enfeoffment, of entails and trusts, is very illuminating and provides concrete illustrations in their full social context of practices which are rather less vividly illustrated by the legal historians. In the same way, the use of landed wealth to create the power which rested on the military and social force of indentured retainers is demonstrated by an analysis of the retainers of some half-dozen of the leading fourteenth-century magnates.

The latter part of the book deals with the economic aspect of these great estates. There

is less that is new here. Obviously the problems which faced big secular landowners resembled those that faced the monasteries, and the solutions were similar. There are a number of interesting points of detail, particularly from the documents of the Clare, Beauchamp, and Lancaster estates, but there is no general revision of existing interpretations of the crisis of the fourteenth-century landowners. The analysis of the economy of the lordship of Denbigh, and to a lesser extent of the lordship of Usk, is less satisfactory. But this is largely because there is not enough known about the Celtic society on which these lordships were imposed. Apart from this, however, Mr Holmes's book, although short, is a scholarly and satisfying piece of work.

R. H. HILTON

L. ELLIS TAVENER, *The Common Lands of Hampshire*. Hants. County Council, the Castle, Winchester, N. D. [1957]. viii+124 pp., illus. 21s.

This is a solid compilation undertaken at short notice at the request of the Hampshire County Council. Its objects are: to provide information regarding surviving common lands and common rights in Hampshire, the precise nature of "commons" today, details of recent legislation on the subject, and a glossary of archaic terms still in use in connection with them. It will no doubt serve the purposes for which it was designed, and students in search of legal definitions of common usages in the past and the forms they take today will find it valuable. But economic historians will wince at the loose use of terms and puzzle over ambiguities of expression. The word "severalty" for instance is used three times (pp. 1, 11, and in the Glossary) in the sense of land held separately in the common field, but on pages 7 and 9 as land no longer subject to common rights; the allocation of common rights was determined in one place by "the stock which [the householder] kept for the service of the common field" (presumably the common plough), in another in accordance with "the lands which were par-

celled out to him," and in another according to "the number (of cattle) he could maintain in the winter on the homestead;" there was a determined attack on the commons in the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI as an "outcome of the religious and social agitation which was fully expressed in the Reformation;" the Board of Agriculture was formed in 1793 "somewhat akin to the Chamber of Commerce;" balks were used for turning the plough and for moving from one strip to another, but headlands are not mentioned; and the four lines on enclosure on p. 11 are, to say the least, not very helpful. But on the acts relating to commons from 1865, and on the purely local problems of the Hampshire commons, this book appears to have achieved its object. The illustrations are excellent.

J. D. CHAMBERS

W. G. HOSKINS, *The Midland Peasant: the Economic and Social History of a Leicestershire Village*. Macmillan, 1957. xxii+322 pp., illus. 30s.

To compare this book with H. S. Bennett's *Life on the English Manor, 1150-1400*, first published just twenty years ago, is to measure in some sort the advance which has been made in English historical studies in the social and economic field. It seems more appropriate to compare Dr Hoskins's book with Mr Bennett's than with, say, the austerer monograph of Miss Davenport on the Norfolk manor of Forncett because both his book and Bennett's are, in a good (though not equally good) sense, works of popularization, and not addressed solely to specialist readers. The comparison of these books' character, let alone technique, cannot stand without qualification, for *The Midland Peasant* deals with its subject from the arrival of the Teutonic invaders up till 1901, not with two and a half centuries only. Nevertheless, the comparison is useful, because both authors are writing about village communities for a large class of readers which has happily been springing up in England, but which will not, for the most part, pursue its own researches into more technical monographs. The quality of the book in the light of

its own object, then, is the principal test to be applied.

By such a criterion it seems that its merits far outweigh its defects. Dr Hoskins has chosen a particular village, Wigston Magna, just south of Leicester, in a countryside familiar to him and amply documented, anyhow for the post-medieval period, and has shown that this village, *as a community*, has a life-history which covers an immense span. Limited in space, extended in time, these are the conditions of English social history as we are now learning to write it, and as it must be written until a future genius can compose a credible synthesis. Social history is about societies, of kinship and neighbourhood, and respectable scholars can no longer offer their readers national generalizations any more than they can accept 'social history' in its older uncritical meaning.

Dr Hoskins carries the story of his village from the age of Anglian settlement and Danish conquest, through a discussion of manorial structure, to a longer analysis of the medieval free tenants and their economy and family dealings. He is at his best in singling out particular examples, like the Balle family and its lands, to render immediate our understanding of the whole, in working out detailed analyses of evidence, like that of field lay-out (pp. 62-8) or of peasant fines (pp. 115-24), to deduce or infer conclusions in a scientific manner, and in providing flashes of sharp insight into some known phenomenon, like the existence of two manors within a single village (pp. 95-8), which constitutional historians can only partially portray. Where Wigston needs to be set against the wider background of Leicestershire he displays, needless to add, that hall-mark of the professional which is the competent use of other people's work.

The scale becomes rather larger as the history proceeds and the evidence becomes more abundant. In the sixteenth century the population of Wigston increased considerably and the march towards economic inequality was rapidly resumed. The land market became intensely active, but for all that the continuity of village society was maintained, the more so

as manorial organization disappeared at the end of the century and Wigston lived as a purely peasant community, in which true landlessness was rare and migration to and from the outside world not yet very frequent. Greater changes occurred in the seventeenth century, when over-population became a serious problem, absentee landlords having property in a number of parishes began to exploit the land through tenant farmers, and pauperism appeared. There seems to have been a sort of local "rise of the gentry," but the treatment of this subject suffers from an incomplete thinking out of the meanings of that difficult word. If the author's phrase "peasant gentry" is admissible, it needs some justification.

The most dramatic moment of the book, the parliamentary enclosure of 1764-6, only sets the seal upon an agrarian inequality which the reader has watched coming into existence, remotely since the thirteenth century, strongly and immediately since the earlier seventeenth.

With the graziers the community of peasant cultivators was broken. The last part of the book describes the industrialization of a still populous but more rootless Wigston, where now the portion of most inhabitants was more likely to be poor relief and bacterial disease than the share in the domestic pig enjoyed by abidingly rural communities like 'Lark Rise'. A significant term is set to this long development by the erection in 1883 of the "extensive and handsome engine sheds" which the author compares in its effect to the building of a great abbey in a small country town of the twelfth century.

In writing for non-specialists a line must always be drawn somewhere between the provision and omission of apparatus, between a rigidly economical exposition and a spacious flow of illustration. The main faults of the book seem to spring from the mistaken drawing of this line. The title itself is symptomatic. It is saved from misleading inaccuracy only by the subtitle, uttered as it were in an explanatory whisper. Nor is the book primarily about the peasant (singular),

but about the community (collective). Perhaps a striving for popular appeal has made the publisher a little defensive about that limitation of object which has given the book real excellence. The prose is often repetitive and slack, and sometimes even falls short of lucidity: for example, the relationship between the Winchester and Duchy manors (pp. 23-7) and the Oxford and Turville manors (pp. 95-108) is not clear, and is made more obscure by the habit of breaking up the subject-matter in order to achieve a stricter chronological sequence. Most seriously, however, the failure to describe or list the source material is a great deprivation for readers who may be historians in fact or in desire. What are the Farnham MSS.? Where and how can the rich collections of documents casually alluded to on pp. xviii or 194-5 be found? Even if full footnoting is withheld, it seems needlessly unhelpful to refuse a page or two of what the French call *orientation bibliographique*, whereby the intelligent reader may recognize the scope of the author's endeavour and add perhaps to the tools of his own craft.

F. R. H. DU BOULAY

JOHN SAVILLE, *Rural Depopulation in England and Wales, 1851-1951*. Dartington Hall Studies in Rural Sociology. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957. xvi+253 pp. 28s.

Mr Saville has here combined the results of two investigations into rural populations, one general and statistical, the other local. From the occupational volumes of the census of population over the last century, he has analysed the nature of the exodus from the rural parishes in England and Wales and shows that, broadly speaking, "the more rural a county, the greater relatively to total population will be the rural exodus." Agriculture ceased to expand its employment after the mid-years of the nineteenth century and contracted markedly in the last quarter; the numbers engaged in rural industries also fell as the products of urban industry undercut the use of local materials; the development of motor transport carried the process a stage further with the gradual concentration of ser-

vice trades in market towns. Women moved out of rural parishes in relatively greater numbers than men and at an earlier age, preferring to work in factories or shops rather than in the domestic service which was increasingly the only female occupation in the country. And the fall in rural population intensified the fall in the demand for services, until in many areas the building craftsmen, using largely imported materials, are the sole survivors of a host of rural tradesmen; the smaller parishes cease to be social units and fall apart into isolated households or hamlets, from which the young people are glad to escape.

In the second part of his book, Mr Saville shows the process at work in a group of parishes in south Devon. The accidents of bus services have converted some into dormitories for the seaside resorts; in others, local industries have failed, or are likely to fail, because they are unsupported by the appropriate public services—water, sewerage, rural housing, electricity. One small factory does not make for a stable and contented population, and Mr Saville rightly suggests that at some stage the relevant planning authority must decide to build up strategic villages, rather than to scatter its resources thinly, and ineffectively, over a wide area of decaying hamlets. Mr Saville has given us a painstaking analysis of the statistics and a well-written description of the basic facts of rural life in the twentieth century.

EDITH H. WHETHAM

W. BRANCH-JOHNSON, *The Carrington Diary*.

Christopher Johnson, 1956. 184 pp., illus. 18s.

In the words of Jethro Tull, "Ploughing and writing are two different talents," and it is perhaps for this reason that there are so few diaries extant that have been kept by working farmers. Of the many important diaries that have been published the majority have been written by educated men, and the result is that their pages do not reflect the conditions and affairs of the more ordinary sorts of people. Many farmers through the centuries

have kept accounts, and some of the few that have fortunately survived are to be found today in record offices, while others are still in private hands. Some of these are annotated while others are accompanied by memorandum books which make them even more useful source material for the agricultural historian. The average farmer has, however, had other things to do even if he was sufficiently educated to keep a record of his activities. (Even up to the last war the number of farmers who kept any serious account of their business was comparatively small.)

John Carrington, who wrote the diary under review, was born in 1726 and died in 1810. He farmed at Bacon's Farm, Bramfield, a village two or three miles north-west of Hertford. Although he lived through years of crucial importance to British farming he, regrettably, does not appear to have taken to writing a diary until his wife died when he was 71 in 1797. If he did keep a diary earlier, then it has been lost, but it seems more likely that the combination of his wife's death and the fact that by this time he had handed over the active running of his farm to his younger son gave him more opportunity to compile his "memorandums." The diary is written not in a book but horizontally, vertically, and diagonally on any odd scraps of paper that came to hand—licensing regulations, instructions to Tax Assessors, and so on. It is now lodged in the Hertfordshire County Record Office.

Mr Branch-Johnson's edition tells the history of John Carrington's activities during the years of the diary both by summarizing the original and by the use of extracts; his commentary is good and never obtrusive. It is disappointing that the diary, in fact, tells us so little about Carrington's actual farming methods, presumably because he was no longer so intimately concerned with the farm; but, this apart, it does give an extremely interesting picture of a respected tenant farmer's duties to the community as highway surveyor, poor-law overseer, tax assessor, chief constable, and general pillar of the neighbourhood. Not least in importance is

the picture we get of the English countryside during the French wars.

Carrington's comments on his many and varied duties throw an interesting and perhaps uncommon light on several important happenings of the time. For example in 1801 he was one of those responsible for taking the first census of population, a task which was concluded in the 'Grandison Arms' with dinner and the drinking of beer, port wine, brandy and water. In another capacity he is concerned with the collection of the newly introduced income-tax, and on one occasion at a time when country bank failures were common he recounts how the Receiver General for Hertfordshire refuses a "drauft" for tax money and compels him to pay in cash.

The hardship brought on the countryside by the Napoleonic wars causes him continual concern, sometimes because of heavier taxation, on other occasions because of the need for more men for the forces. In addition to his tax-collecting responsibilities Carrington was, as chief constable, much involved in the raising of the militia. At one stage his younger son was, in fact, drawn for the supplementary militia, but a substitute was found to whom Carrington gave twenty shillings. In 1803 when invasion by "Bonipart" was hourly expected he notes, "So Nothing but Soldeiring three times a week." On another occasion four of his horses are pressed to draw "amonition." It is not only however with military preparation that he is concerned. The war makes itself felt in every aspect of life. After an unsuccessful visit to Hertford May Fair he notes: "Trade is bad, as so much Taxes to maintaine the War, for the Money is Wanting, all Sellers no buyers except Very Cheap."

But the troubles of his times apart, John Carrington emerges from the pages a happy, contented, genial, and generous character, the personification of a good John Bull. There is an infectious enthusiasm and robust simplicity about all that he does in life and there are times when one could wish that Mr Branch-Johnson had let him speak more for himself. The following quotations will

suffice to prove the point: "for no other reason than it being Mixs day Mr Bell was so minded to ask a few friends to partake of a Good Ghoose," or "... to Mr James Hankins burring at Tewin Church, he was brot from Brickendon in a Herse and Coach in pair & 2 little carts & buired about 3 clock, their was Leg, Shouldr of Mutton & pudings &c provided. . ." He was obviously a considerable character and a greatly respected local figure, he loved his food and his drink, and he was as much at home surveying highways or overseeing the poor as he was helping a neighbour out of difficulty or playing "rolely polley in the parler." It is small wonder that when he died a thousand people attended his funeral. Mr Branch-Johnson has provided us with a useful book which may encourage others to look in forgotten places for similar documents still remaining among family possessions.

J. W. Y. HIGGS

E. ESTYN EVANS, *Irish Folk Ways*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957. xvi+324 pp., illus. 35s.

Twenty years ago Conrad Arensberg produced a classic of social anthropology in *The Irish Countryman*. Estyn Evans in this book about the material culture of the Irish countryside has produced another equally penetrating and beautifully written study. Taking all the artefacts of man in Ireland within his scope, he is yet sensible of the influence on the tool, and on the tool user, of the meanings and beliefs which make up the social environment. *Irish Folk Ways* follows, in consequence, a complicated rhythm with artistry and grace; first, there are descriptions of the artefacts; second, regional variations are shown in maps and diagrams of the elemental forms such as the spade or the churn, and third, reconstructions of the possible place of this evidence are made against a historical sequence. Since most of the material has been sketched in the field, the historical scale is based as much upon archaeological evidence as on written records.

We begin with landscape and climate. Sub-

sequent chapters take us quickly from pre-historic settlement to the subsistence economy based on transhumance that medieval and Elizabethan English invaders found flourishing. Archaic forms surviving in this outpost isle may be primitive legacies from these epochs, but they are not simple. The one-storey, one-room-wide Irish cottage reveals its diverse origins as variations in wall, thatch, roof style, door, and internal furniture arrangement are described. In the gardens, and between the elaborate, but recent, field fences and gate pillars, native transport vehicles, such as the *slípe*, the *slide-car*, and the *wheel-car*, have persisted thanks to their unique suitability not only to the soils and slopes but also to the egalitarian and co-operative social system of the "mountainy men." Later chapters take us away from the single farm to the world of fairs and festivals and to the customs and values which have meaning for the users of the symbolic and useful articles drawn, photographed, and mapped in this book. Reading it, I recaptured the excitement which arose in the Geography

Department at Belfast when a new form of *slípe* was discovered, or when a variant of cottage building punctuated each subsequent field excursion with stops at ruined and near-ruined houses in a search for parallels.

By concentrating on survivals of the subsistence economy into the modern period, Professor Evans has made a significant contribution to agricultural history, for it is inevitable that most of this material will soon disappear. The fitting of the evidence into a coherent frame, using evidence from archaeology and from travellers' accounts, gives the text a richer life than any reconstruction from by-gones can ever have. This book is testimony to the need for studying material culture in the fields and farms and for using not only the faint light of folklore but also the inferences of the archaeologist and of the social scientist to place the tool and its user in a proper historical and social setting. It also testifies to the illumination that in skilled hands can come from such a synthesis.

JOHN MOGEY

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by ALAN HARRIS

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Agriculture in Roman Britain¹

By SHIMON APPLEBAUM

I

IF we consider that agriculture employed a majority of the population in non-industrial societies and is still man's staple occupation, we must admit that the agriculture of Roman Britain has concerned archaeologists and historians much less than it should, for on its vicissitudes depended to no small degree the well-being and decline of the province. The existence of Roman 'villas' was first recognized in this country in the age of Elizabeth, and they began to be excavated in the eighteenth century. The mosaics of the Stonesfield house, Oxfordshire, were found in 1711; Lysons published his handsome account of the Woodchester villa, Gloucestershire, in 1797. But it took a long time before antiquaries understood these remains to be those of farms. The gentlemanly outlook of the Victorian antiquaries, projected upon these relics, saw them as the country residences of Roman officers and gentry; gay mosaics and Horatian banquets were more attractive than cow-houses. In a new epoch (1900) Professor Haverfield, writing his introduction to the Romano-British section of the Victoria County Histories, revealed a clear theoretical realization that the normal 'villa' "was the property of a great landowner who . . . cultivated the ground close to it. . ."; ". . . the blocks (*sc.* of the villa's buildings) may consist of corridor house, barns, outhouses, and farm-buildings." But Haverfield never reached the point of attempting to identify such buildings in the villa-plans he knew. John Ward, to whom Romano-British archaeology owes so much on the practical side, also grasped the villas' agricultural rôle, particularly where the 'basilical' house was concerned. His work was published in 1911.² The next intelligent inkling occurs in A. H. Cocks's excavation of the villa at Hambleton, Bucks, in 1913, when a number of furnaces were found. These

¹ This paper summarizes the main contents of a broader piece of research on the agriculture of Roman Britain. For reasons of space it is not practicable to document all the details, and footnotes will be confined to certain selected or outstanding points. The various archaeologists and scholars to whom the present survey owes acknowledgements are too numerous to mention here, but I stand in particular debt to Mr C. E. Stevens of Magdalen College, Oxford, for his suggestions and criticisms. Others whose aid and advice evoke my special thanks include Miss J. Liversidge, Dr E. W. Russell, Mr C. W. Phillips and his staff of the Ordnance Survey Archaeological Section, Chessington; Mr G. W. Willis of Basingstoke Museum, the authorities of the Dutch Government's Institute of Archaeological Excavation, Aamersfordt, and a group of French *savants*, including especially Monsieur P. Fournier.

² J. Ward, *The Roman Era in Britain*, 1911; *Romano-British Buildings and Earthworks*, 1911.

Professor Gowland identified as being for the drying of grain.¹ In the later 'twenties, Dr Philip Corder excavated the villa at Langton, in south-east Yorkshire, with a clearer consciousness of its agricultural function, taking care to dig as many of the buildings as he could, identifying threshing-floor and corn-drying furnaces, analysing plant-finds and animal bones.² His more recent excavation of a Roman farm near Great Casterton, Rutland, is equally perceptive. Mr Raleigh Radford made an important contribution to our knowledge of Romano-British agriculture by his excavation of the Ditchley villa.³ He attempted to reconstruct its agrarian development with a scholar's attention to Roman social history and a farmer's eye for farming installations, crop-yields, and the extent of the estate. A further milestone on the way was Professor C. F. C. Hawkes's restudy of the Cranbourne Chase farms excavated by General Pitt-Rivers in last century, with special attention to their agricultural aspects (1948).⁴ This work owed a good deal to Dr G. Bersu's masterly excavation of an Early Iron Age farmstead at Little Woodbury near Salisbury in 1944.⁵ The year 1948 brought Mr F. G. Payne's comprehensive study of Romano-British ploughs and coulter, and the late Professor M. P. Charlesworth, in his Gregynog Lectures, devoted some attention to the plants introduced by the Romans into Britain.⁷ In the meantime the pioneer work of Mr O. G. S. Crawford, the Curwens, and Mr G. Holleyman had prepared another approach to Early Iron Age and Romano-British agriculture by the discovery and study of the 'Celtic' field system. Nevertheless several otherwise very competent excavations of villas have been carried out in recent years without due attention to their character as farms.⁸

II

One of the results of the progress of Romano-British archaeology in the last twenty years has been to establish that the roots of the Romano-British

¹ *Archaeologia*, LXXI, 1921, pp. 141 sqq. The furnaces, pp. 152-3. Pitt-Rivers was, I think, the first to report his finds of animal bones scientifically. McKenney Hughes was a pioneer in the consideration of the remains of Romano-British cattle (*Archaeologia*, LV, 1894); notable were Clement Reid's reports on the plant remains of Silchester (1896-1900) in *Arch.*, LVII-LXI.

² P. Corder, J. L. Kirk, *The Roman Villa at Langton*, Roman Malton and District, Report 4, 1932.

³ *Antiquity*, IX, 1936, pp. 472 sqq.; *Oxoniensia*, I, 1936, pp. 24 sqq.

⁴ *Arch. Jour.*, CIV, 1948, pp. 42 sqq.; A. Pitt-Rivers, *Excavations in Cranbourne Chase*, I-IV, 1887-98.

⁵ *Proc. Prehistoric Society*, 2nd ser., VI, 1940, pp. 30 sqq.; XIV, 1948, pp. 19 sqq.

⁶ *Arch. Jour.*, CIV, 1948, pp. 82 sqq.

⁷ M. P. Charlesworth, *The Lost Province*, 1948, pp. 71-3.

⁸ For a justified stricture on British archaeologists' neglect of the continental evidence to throw light on British villas, cf. Rostovtzeff, *Soc. Ec. Hist. R. E.*, 1957, p. 636, n. 52.

rural system lay in the British Early Iron Age. Not only did British farmsteads such as those in Cranbourne Chase, Dorset, continue in occupation in Roman times, but traces of pre-Roman dwellings have been detected beneath the remains of Roman villas at Park Street near St Albans; Lockleys near Welwyn; Rudston, Yorkshire; Catsgore, Somerset; and elsewhere. 'Celtic' fields are known to have been cultivated continuously under Roman rule. On the other hand, not much has been done to study the social implications of such continuity, or to relate archaeological features to what we know of Celtic society.

A few years ago, working from Helbaek's analysis of prehistoric grain-finds in this country,¹ I endeavoured to demonstrate that in the last 500 years B.C. a shift of emphasis began to take place in Britain from the cultivation of summer to that of winter grains, partly under the impact of climatic deterioration.² The same period saw the establishment of the mould-board plough to secure better drainage (Payne). I was able to correlate this agricultural change with the field-system of Figheldean Down, Wiltshire, where it was possible to argue the enclosure of a winter-crop area and the fencing of summer grazing-grounds for stock which moved on to the summer crop-areas in the winter. This development seemed to be part and parcel of the social evolution leading to the erection in the second or first century B.C. of a local hill-fort. The village unit at Figheldean Down covered about 370 acres of arable, feeding some dozen families. The known crops of the British Early Iron Age were eincorn, emmer, spelt, breadwheat, naked and hulled barley, and (uncultivated) oats, barley being the preponderating cereal. Beans were grown in the south-west. The introduction of spelt was associated with the technique of drying the grain in ovens before threshing. The 'square' field systems, as traced by air-photography and on the ground, chiefly on the chalk areas of the south of England, reflect, if the Welsh and Irish laws mirror the period, a régime in which the basic family unit was subdivided among the sons until the third generation. It would seem, on the other hand, that the Irish 'runrig' system of narrow strips and extreme fragmentation, recorded in Elizabethan documents and subsequently, represents a relatively late phase of that system, produced by the domination of chiefs, not the Early Iron Age system such as is reflected in the Romano-British 'square' fields and the codes. This is rendered more probable by the resemblance between some of the Irish pre-'runrig' patterns, traceable back

¹ H. Helbaek, 'Early Crops in South Britain', *Proc. Preh. Soc.*, XVIII, 2, 1952, pp. 194-233. Cf. H. Helbaek and K. Jessen, *Cereals in Great Britain and Ireland in Prehistoric and Early Historic Times*, 1944.

² *Proc. Preh. Soc.*, XX, 1, 1954, pp. 103 sqq.

to the Bronze Age, and English downland 'square field' complexes, e.g. that in the Ashley–Westwood area of south Wiltshire. While the Little Woodbury farm seems to have cultivated about 30 acres, the average Irish 'quarter', containing four to six farms, covered about 300 acres, corresponding to blocks of Romano-British fields in Sussex, where an average of 250–300 acres per village could be calculated.¹

In the Belgic period certain agricultural advances are traceable. While previous cultivation was mainly confined to the permeable chalk and limestone soils, Belgic settlement began to invade the medium loams and the stream-sides; an improvement of grains is noticeable, a larger ox and horse make their appearance, hides and grain are exported.² Farms begin to be sited with an eye to corn-production and communications, and are sometimes worked with slave labour. The heavy plough with broad blade is now found, possibly but not certainly with coulter and wheels, and some examples of ridge-and-furrow fields occur, also fields somewhat larger and longer than in the previous period. Iron tools in general became more abundant in the west and south in the last century B.C., but it was the Belgae who introduced the 'slip-eye' axe. With the Roman conquest, the Belgic *aedificium* or grain-cattle farm formed the first basis for the villa, but the British 'square field' system continued in the uplands and expanded, being associated both with isolated farms and with larger village units.

III

The Roman conquest did not fundamentally modify the areas in which cultivation was concentrated; these remained predominantly the porous chalks and limestones; however, the Belgic development of the loams (the "gradational" soils of Sir Cyril Fox),³ which combined maximum fertility with ease of clearance, continued in the Roman period, and a careful statistical site-survey of Kent, Essex, and Berkshire shows the striking preference of villa-owners for these soils, likewise for the margins between gradational and

¹ For the 'Celtic' field system, see O. G. S. Crawford and A. Keiller, *Wessex from the Air*, 1928, *passim*; Ireland: F. Seeböhm, *The English Village Community*, 1896; A. Meitzen, *Siedlung und Agrarwesen der West-Germanen*, 1895, 1; Hogan in *Proc. Roy. Irish Acad.*, (c), xxxviii, pp. 176 sqq.; O'Riordáin, *Proc. Roy. Irish Acad.*, xlvi, pp. 142–5, 175 sqq.; Ashley–Westwood: O. G. S. Crawford, *Air Survey and Archaeology*, O.S. Professional Papers, n.s., No. 7, 1924: End Map ii; Sussex: Holleyman, *Antiquity*, xi, 1938, pp. 443 sqq. and fig. 84. Cf. *Proc. Preh. Soc.*, xx, 1, p. 112, n. 2.

² A factor which seems to have escaped the attention of archaeologists is the close connection between the introduction of the potter's wheel (first century B.C.) and the increased ability to store large quantities of grain.

³ *Antiquity*, vii, 1934, p. 473.

heavy clay soils, i.e. the edges of woodlands, indicating that the latter now began to be cleared. In central Essex two well-known parallel Roman roads coincide precisely with the medium loam area, and would seem to represent large-scale deforestation followed by systematic grid-parcellation ('centuriation'). There is some archaeological evidence for assigning this work to the Flavian period, and the unit of measurement used may have been a Belgic one, possibly reflecting an adjustment of native rights with those of new settlers.

Our acquaintance with Romano-British crops has been much increased by the work of Messrs Helback and Jessen: the identified grains are *triticum vulgare*, *triticum sativum*, barley, oats, great millet (one isolated find), *triticum turgidum* and *compactum*, spelt, possibly emmer, and rye. Spelt is now a principal crop, and the oat, previously grown but probably not as a cultivated plant, is well established: it is found preponderantly in the north, where its spread is likely to have been encouraged by the introduction of Roman cavalry. Its presence may have contributed to the development of a three-course rotation. Wheat is distributed over most of the occupied area, but barley still competes: Roman site-distribution in Kent, for example, coincides more closely with the areas known for high barley production than with those producing much wheat. Villa-groups also coincide with barley soils in north-east Hampshire; in Essex, Surrey, and west Sussex, on the other hand, there is a close correlation between villa-siting and modern wheat-growing. The spread of wheat in the Roman period is indeed specifically evidenced by its introduction into the newly colonized areas of the East Anglian fens. The grain-finds at Verulamium (*trit. vulgare*, *compactum* and *turgidum*, oats, spelt, beans) may well reflect a winter-spring crop-sequence, implying a three-course rotation, such as is known to have been practised on Carolingian estates where the system of farming went back to Roman times.¹ The grains found at Malton, Yorkshire, on the other hand (various wheats, probably including spelt; barley, emmer, clubwheat, *avena strigosa* or *sativa*), included a majority of summer grains, reflecting what was long afterwards the widespread northern infield and outfield arrangement.²

Other known Romano-British plant-finds include the cabbage, broad-bean, parsnip, pea, radish, turnip, celery, carrot, mustard, vetch, tare, and corn-spurry. Flax is now introduced. Several potherbs are found. Turnip and rape were both used as cleaning crops in Gaul, and fed to cattle, and this

¹ See below, p. 82, n. 4.

² On this agricultural pattern, see H. L. Gray, *English Field Systems*, 1915, Ch. v; cf. Estyn Evans, *Irish Heritage*, 1942, p. 7.

may well have been the case also in Britain. Their growing would have depended on freedom from an open-field system, and have been peculiar to private estates able to enclose; the wintering of cattle in villas is well evidenced (see below). Fruits known from the Roman period are the cherry, medlar, plum, damson, bullace (probably domesticated), apple, and mulberry; among flowers, the rose and (on philological evidence) the lily, violet, and pansy. Although the cherry is specifically stated to have been introduced into Britain in A.D. 47, a specimen has actually been found in Britain in a Middle Bronze Age context. The vine, evidenced in the Roman period at Silchester, Tooley Street (London), Boxmoor, and Gloucester, possibly had already been introduced by the Belgae;¹ the fig and almond are also known. Trees first found in Britain in the Roman period are the Spanish chestnut, horse chestnut, sycamore, walnut, holm-oak, and possibly the Spanish laurel. The box, found at several sites in funerary deposits, was not a Roman introduction, but may have been encouraged for this and other uses.

IV

The problem of the Romano-British field system is closely bound up with the character of the ploughs used during the period. As already stated, pre-Roman fields continued in use over wide areas, and the system even expanded; hence clearly the small pre-Roman plough (like that of the Piercebridge model) also went on being used. The evidence of shares and coulter shows, nevertheless, that several types were used in the province; some, coulterless, had double ground-wrest and arrowhead share, ploughing one way; some, likewise without coulter, (apparently) a reversible mould-board for two-way ploughing,² and were possibly drawn by beasts in line ahead; others a symmetrical share turning the soil simultaneously to right and to left.³ Both the latter types would imply the formation of strip-fields. There was also in use a plough with large coulter cutting from six to twelve inches, and high-pitched plough-beam. Most of these coulters engaged to the left,

¹ Wine was being imported by the Belgae.—Fox in *Proc. Preh. Soc. E. Ang.*, VII, 1941, p. 160 and pl. v, 6c. The vine appears on the coins of Verica.—J. Evans, *Ancient British Coins*, 1864, p. 173, pl. ii, 9; cf. Stevens in *Aspects of Archaeology in Britain and Beyond* (ed. C. W. Phillips), 1951, p. 342 and n. 75.

² The Lewes model, *Arch. Jour.*, CIV, 1948, p. 97, pl. 8, whose slots at the base of the stilt were perhaps for reversible mould-boards. A share from Hartlip, Kent (C. Roach-Smith, *Collectanea Antiqua*, 1848, II, pl. vi, 8), resembles an example on a model plough from Cologne (K. Schumacher, *Der Ackerbau in Vorrömischer Zeit*, 1922, pp. 20–1, Abb. 10), which is set to turn the furrow-soil to the left.

³ The Frindsbury share.—*Arch. Cant.*, XIII, 1871, pl. ii, p. 190, fig. 1. Cf. M. Nightingale, *ibid.*, LXV, 1952, p. 156, pl. 1; p. 157.

so (presumably) raising a ridge, but one such appears to have engaged to the right, suggesting that alternating coulter were used to avoid ridging. This would also suggest that large fields were sometimes ploughed by two joint ploughs working narrow sectors divided by drainage furrows. The symmetrical share mentioned above was found in the Cliffe district of north Kent, where Roman allotments into square *centuriae* have been traced;¹ these appear to have been subdivided into strips of some five *iugera* or three acres, possibly corresponding to the old French *bunmier*, to be found on Carolingian estates originating in Roman times. The Cliffe fields, which lay on heavy loam, were ridgeless, and although there is no doubt that ridge-and-furrow fields existed in Roman Britain, the big coulters referred to earlier need not inevitably have raised ridges, since ploughing techniques exist whereby ridges can be avoided even by non-reversible ploughs.²

While 200-jugera squares subdivided into strips have been detected in the Cliffe district, a fragment of field-system attached to the villa of West Blatchington, Sussex, and revealed by air-photography and excavation,³ although laid out as a chessboard 'grid' system, consisted of a mosaic of small squarish plots of varying sizes, more 'Celtic' in character than Roman. This system originated at the end of the second century, contemporarily with the erection of a house of 'basilican' plan, replacing an earlier farm of native type; the site yielded evidence of intensive corn-production. Another basilican villa at Eastfield near Thruxton in Hampshire, on the other hand, was associated with a 'Celtic' field-system, which however appears to have undergone a partial revision at some date, larger strips being adopted.⁴ This revision seems to have been part of a process extending over a larger area. An inscription on a fourth-century pavement from this house coupled the name of a Roman citizen with a Celtic name, either of a person or a group.

The King's Worthy villa, Hants, was shown by air-photography to have replaced an Early Iron Age farm.⁵ It seems to have superseded a 'Celtic' field-system with a different pattern, probably composed of long strip-like fields. A villa at Bury Lodge, Hambledon, Hants, was associated with several long-strip lynchet fields, from 700 to 1,200 ft long. By contrast, the fields of the Little Milton villa, Oxfordshire, were small and squarish like those seen

¹ Stevens and Nightingale, *loc. cit.*, pp. 150-9.

² P. Leser, *Die Entstehung und Verbreitung des Pfluges*, 1931, pp. 8 sqq.; Abb. 2 and 3.

³ *Suss. Arch. Collns.*, 89, pp. 1-56; Air Ministry Photograph 4110, 20 April 1950, which I was able to examine thanks to the courtesy of the Archaeological Section of the Ordnance Survey, Chessington.

⁴ Air Ministry Photograph 2097, 30 Aug. 1946, examined by courtesy of the Ordnance Survey Archaeological Section.

⁵ The photograph was shown to me by courtesy of Commander W. H. C. Blake.

at West Blatchington; it is possible to demonstrate that they were modified at a later period, some fields being enlarged.¹

At Great Wymondley, Herts, the open-field system surviving till 1821 was laid out on a Roman road and surrounded the Roman villa.² This medieval pattern showed clear traces of a Roman grid-division into 200-jugera squares. The medieval strips could be demonstrated in a number of cases to be subdivisions of the Roman *centuriae*, averaging some 750 by 230 ft. A Romano-British village near Great Wymondley church, within this area, seems to have been evacuated in the later second or third century, when the villa was built, and the layout may have originated at that date. It may be of interest to note that the fields of Great Wymondley manor belonged, in the Middle Ages, to the two-field system.

A summary of the above evidence shows that Great Wymondley, Bury Lodge in the Cliffe district, and Eastfield had fields of two approximate sizes: viz. 600–700 by 230–250 ft, and 1,200 by 200–330 ft respectively. Fields corresponding to both these classes can be cited from other points in Hampshire and Sussex. It is notable that such fields are distributed equally among measured ‘grids’, on unmeasured arable, and on terraced slopes. The evidence therefore agrees with that of Romano-British ploughshares and coulter, indicating that the Romano-British field, when it was not of the ‘square’ Early Iron Age type, was a broad strip, not necessarily ridge-ploughed. But the ‘square field’ system is occasionally associated with villas in Hampshire and Berkshire.

V

Known Roman agricultural tools in this country include the sickle, the billhook (or ‘slasher’), the two-hand scythe, the mower’s anvil, the pruning hook (frequently difficult to distinguish from the small scythe), the hoe-rake, the mattock, hoes and spuds of various types, the rake, iron spade, iron fork, turf-cutter, ox-goad, carding comb, and axe. The use of carts is evident at various villas. Of the above tools, the Romans introduced the balanced sickle, the two-hand scythe, the mower’s anvil, the hoe-rake, the turf-cutter, the mattock, the iron rake, fork, and spade. The slip-eye axe also became common only after the Roman conquest. The most important of these innovations were the two-hand scythe, which made possible the close-cutting of hay and other fodder crops, and the iron spade, which would have had an important impact on field-drainage. There is further evidence that

¹ *Jour. Rom. Studies*, XL, 1950, pl. vi, and p. 102; Photograph, Cambridge University, O.61.

² The map of these fields is reproduced by Seeböhm, *Eng. Vill. Community*, facing p. 432.

the Romans introduced the water-mill and greatly superior querns into these islands.¹

VI

It is more difficult to establish the degree of amelioration of livestock in the Roman period, since much remains to be done in the study of animal remains found on Roman sites. The Romano-British sheep was of a breed resembling the modern Soay, known since Neolithic times, and termed *Ovis aries Studeri*; its female was for a long time erroneously identified as a distinct race, termed *Ovis aries palustris* or the 'Turbary'. A specimen possibly of a different, larger, breed has been noted at Barr Hill, Scotland. The Studer was bred essentially for wool, and was the source of the extensive Romano-British wool industry in the later Roman period. Mutton was less favoured than beef or pork as the diet of the Roman forces in the province, but sheep bones were better represented at Barr Hill, held by a Syrian unit, and at Corbridge, where there is evidence of an oriental element in the population. The absence of the liver-fluke in salt water probably explains the Romano-British settlements situated on the fringes of the Essex and Kent salt-marshes, which may well have been devoted to sheep-rearing.

Goats are well evidenced throughout the country, both a small short-horned breed and a type allied to *Capra Ibex* being found.

The preponderant race of cattle was *Bos longifrons brachyceros*, resembling the Kerry cow or Irish shorthorn, widely found on both pre-Roman and Roman sites. Remains of larger animals have been regarded as the result of cross-breeding with imported Roman cattle, but a larger animal already occurs in the Belgic period. At Newstead and Corbridge a race resembling the modern 'Chillingham' was noted. Dr Wilfrid Jackson further isolated at several sites a long-horned animal possibly akin to the Neolithic cattle, and to be connected either with *Bos primigenius* or with a hypothetical Megalithic (southern) group. The parallel existence of shorthorn cattle and animals with long erect horns is independently attested by escutcheons and bucrania of the Belgic and Roman periods. In this country, beef was the preferred meat ration of the Roman army, which had at least one cattle-depôt of its own, and evidence for the increase of cattle-rearing in south Britain in the third and fourth centuries is well marked.

The horse, not widely employed in agriculture in ancient times, was nevertheless used for threshing, harvesting, and transport, and to round up free-ranging cattle herds bred for meat and hides. This latter use is doubtless

¹ Watermills: J. C. Bruce, *Handbook of the Roman Wall*, ed. I. A. Richmond, 1947, pp. 80, 147, 166. A donkey-mill: *London in Roman Times* (London Museum Guide), 1930, pp. 109, 110. On the evolution of querns, *Antiq.*, xi, 1938, pp. 140 sq.

the explanation when horse- and cattle-bones are found together in quantities as they have been at some villas and farms.¹ The predominant remains, known from the Early Iron Age onward, are those of *equus agilis* and *robustus*, somewhat resembling the New Forest Pony; but at one or two sites a larger breed, possibly imported, appears in the Belgic period. At Newstead, Scotland, more complex finds suggested, besides *equus agilis* and *robustus*, the presence of crosses of two varieties of *equus agilis*, an Arab breed, and cross-breeds of several varieties traceable to Gaul and Germany. Corbridge also yielded a larger race thought to be a Roman introduction. An inscription from Irchester, Northants, is probably to be interpreted as evidence of local governmental horse-rearing.

The ass is found at one or two sites, including a villa. The presence or absence of mules, common in Gaul, remains an uninvestigated problem.

The remains of pig found on Romano-British sites show that pigs were kept on a large scale in romanized farms, being closely associated with woodlands; and evidence of grain-fattening in sties is available at several, in two cases within communicable distance of the legionary base at Caerleon, where pork was consumed only less than beef.²

The domestic fowl, though occurring at some Belgic sites, was introduced as a bird of economic value by the Romans, and is found widely, though not everywhere. One distinctive biggish variety is known, and other specimens possessing developed spurs were evidently bred for cock-fighting.

The domestic goose was also a Roman innovation, and has been found at various places; a specific British variety, the Cheneros, is mentioned in the Flavian period. The pheasant too is first found under Rome.

Pigeons are recorded from a few sites, and though their dung was recommended by Roman agricultural writers, it cannot be proved that they were widely bred in Britain.

VII

We now turn to the buildings of the Romano-British farm. The main residence of the Romano-British villa can be traced to a combination of two ancient plans: the first is the so-called basilical or barn plan, a long hall divided into nave and aisles by two parallel rows of posts; the second, a two-room dwelling, one part of which housed the family, the other the livestock. The basilical type appears in ancient Irish and Welsh literature and is found, for example, at Tara in Ireland; it survives in Frisia, and as a self-contained farmhouse containing men, crops, and animals, was common in medieval

¹ Rockbourne Down, Hambleden (Bucks), Appleton (Norfolk).

² Pitney (Somerset) and Woolaston Pill (Glos.).

Germany.¹ The two-roomed type, found, for instance, in the Early Iron Age in Scandinavia, is still to be seen in Scotland and Wales. It is traceable among Roman houses in Britain, Gaul, and Germany, usually as an outbuilding for hands and crops, sometimes as an independent farmhouse. The 'basilican' house appears in Roman Britain and in the north-west provinces of the empire, sometimes as an independent farm, sometimes as the quarters for hands and livestock attached to the residence of the owner. The residence, normally a 'corridor' house, originally developed from a fusion of the two older types, i.e. a two-roomed building containing one or more rows of posts, to which wings and a frontal verandah were later added. (This process is clearly traceable in Germany.) In course of time the large 'hall' shrank to one of a series of rooms behind the verandah, and the flanking rooms, which first served for stock, storage, etc., were converted to residential uses, their economic functions being transferred to outbuildings. In Britain the dwelling-houses of most villas soon became purely residential, and the relegation of agricultural tasks to outbuildings was correspondingly rapid, which spells a less patriarchal and more sharply divided society.

This is not true of the independent basilical house. Though this type is certainly pre-Roman, no proven pre-Roman case is known in Britain, and none of the Roman examples can be dated before the second century, while most belong to the third or fourth centuries.² Three cases at least were associated with the 'Celtic' field system; the West Blatchington example, as we have seen, was erected in association with a new field system of Roman pattern but containing small plots recalling the 'Celtic'. Another case at Tidbury Ring, Hants,³ lay within a hill-fort, in this resembling a Dark Age example (sixth to seventh century) excavated within the hill-fort of Castle Dore, Cornwall. In some cases, basilican houses, originally self-contained, were later subdivided into rooms for residence and their quarters for hands, stock, and crops relegated to outbuildings.

¹ On the 'basilican' house, see I. A. Richmond, *Jour. Rom. Stud.*, xii, 1922, pp. 96 sqq.; Ward, *Rom. Era Brit.*, pp. 174-82; Seebohm, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-42; C. Guest, *The Mabinogion*, 1849, II, pp. 393-5; *Germania*, xx, 1936, pp. 41 sqq.; Meitzen, *op. cit.*, I, p. 95; *Jour. Royal Inst. Cornwall*, 2nd ser., I, 1951, pp. 60 sqq. On the 'two-room' dwelling, *Antiq.*, xi, 1938, pp. 162 sqq. (Jutland); A. Grenier, *Manuel d'archéologie préhist. gauloise et gallo-romaine*, vi, 1934, ii, p. 750; R. de Maeyer, *De Romeinsche Villas in België*, 1937, *passim*; *Germania*, v, 1921, p. 65; *Arch. Jour.*, civ, pp. 55 sqq. (Iwerne); *Antiq.*, x, 1937, pp. 448-59 (Wales).

² Early instances at Park Street, Herts (*Arch. Jour.*, cii, 1946, p. 24), and Knowl Hill, Berks (*Berks Arch. Jour.*, xxxvi, pp. 28 sqq.; xxxviii, pp. 75 sqq.), are hardly convincing. It is difficult to accept some of the cases defined as basilican by J. C. Berry (*Jour. Rom. Stud.*, xli, 1951, pp. 25 sqq.).

³ As revealed by an air-photograph kindly shown to me by Mr F. Cotterill. Cf. *Proc. of the Hants Field Club*, xvi, 1951, p. 38.

VIII

The evidence of Celtic literature and of archaeology (e.g. in Frisia) shows that the basilican house originated among a cattle-rearing people, the stock being housed in the aisles. Basilican buildings were certainly used to house cattle outside several Romano-British villas. This and the study of Flemish farm-types closely comparable to Belgian villas, as well as comparison with the dimensions found in old Irish and Welsh farms, prehistoric steadings, and the outbuildings of Roman villas both in Britain and abroad, enable us to identify cow-houses and stables in various villas in this country. These prove that in some of them (e.g. Bignor, Hartlip, Spoonley Wood) considerable herds of cattle were maintained in winter.

Professor Hawkes's careful study of the evolution of the Cranbourne Chase farms, which were essentially of Iron Age character, showed that their economy in the later Roman period suffered the important modification of the addition of wells (unknown in the pre-Roman period), the increase of cattle-enclosures, and the installation of corn-drying furnaces. The significance of these changes was that the water-supply made it possible to winter stock in the farms, with consequent increase of manure and rise in yields. Fully romanized farms, on the other hand, show a devolution of agricultural functions into outbuildings, which are placed round one, two, or even three yards. The early appearance of fully developed 'corridor' houses (e.g. Ditchley, Bignor) indicates a rapid economic development. A general feature is the attention to water-supply, while the provision of a separate yard enabled stock to be kept close at hand and manure to be accumulated. The erection of byres, stables, and sties aided the latter process and improved the health of the stock. In some villas, a close association between barns for hay or grain storage and the stock buildings is noticeable (Bignor, Brading, Pitney, Hartlip), indicating the presence of a grain surplus for fodder, and possibly the use of legumes and roots for feeding.¹ At Bignor and West Dean (Wiltshire) water-meadows almost certainly played a part in the fattening of cattle. Part of the flock also seems to have been wintered at Bignor. At Pitney a connection is seen between pig-sties and grain-storage, indicating systematic fattening, also evident at North Wraxall (Wiltshire), Woolaston Pill, and possibly at Hambleden (Bucks).

¹ A calculation of total manure available at the Bignor villa on the basis of the livestock accommodation, checked against granary capacity, ox-stalls, and the natural boundaries of the estate, suggested an approximate dunging of 28 cwt. per acre annually. On the other hand, farmyard manure available for concentration (including human sewage) amounted to 12,000 tons per annum, which, in view of the evidence for the wintering of some 12 ox-teams and 55 head of other cattle, is in favour of its use for the growing of root-crops.

In some villas a degree of specialization may be supposed. Woodchester may have had a brewery; it is generally thought that Titsey, Darenth, Chedworth, and perhaps Hucclecote, had fulleries, and some farms in Kent and Essex are sited in a manner suggesting that they combined flock-grazing in salt-marshes with other branches of husbandry—in Essex perhaps also with oyster-rearing. A number of estates certainly supplemented their economy with industrial activity.¹ Grain-production, however, became predominant in the third and fourth centuries, as shown by the discovery in various country houses of drying furnaces whose insertion is frequently secondary and late, in a manner suggesting a lowered standard of living and brutal utilitarianism, perhaps under pressure of the state.² Such a theory is supported by the occurrence of some of the earliest examples at Woodcutts (second century) on what is believed to be a crown domain, and at West Blatchington, where the laying out of planned fields (second to third century) suggests state action.

The study of villa development from a sociological point of view reveals three stages. These are: first, centralization, in the sense of the concentration of man-power (slaves, clients, kindred) and means on one estate; this is most clearly exemplified in the self-contained basilican villa, which housed the chief and his kinsmen. As most of these dwellings belong to the late second and third centuries, their appearance suggests a legitimization of the Celtic social structure and its integration into the villa system in such a manner as to subordinate kindred to their clan-head in the capacity of an estate owner. This hypothesis would explain the resurvey and redivision at West Blatchington, in the Severan period, attributable to state action; it has been noted that the Eastfield house was associated with 'Celtic' fields, later modified.

The second stage is one of residential decentralization, hands and agricultural functions being transferred to outbuildings ranged about the yard (e.g. Ditchley, Clanville, Stroud, Brading, Mansfield Woodhouse). The further association of basilican houses with 'corridor' residences as outbuildings for hands, stock, and crops, suggests that kinsfolk and clients, rather than slaves, were the victims of the growth of centralized estates and social differentiation.

The third stage is devolution, the restriction of staff and stock accommodation, implying the out-settlement of slaves or hands in colonate hold-

¹ For a summary of the relevant evidence, see J. Liversidge, *Roman Villas in Britain*, 1949 (MS., Cambridge University Library).

² This explanation was first proposed by Mr R. G. Goodchild, *Ant. Jour.*, xxiii, 1944, pp. 148 sqq.

ings. This is illustrated at Ditchley, perhaps at Hartlip and North Wraxall; I have also found indications of peripheral holdings dating from the late Roman period in the Basingstoke district.¹ At Stroud and East Grinstead bath-accommodation in excess of the house's needs, and other factors, showed these farms to have been part of large estates. Traces of a Roman survey embracing several villas in the Andover district are probably also to be interpreted as evidence of a large domain. The Wiggonholt villa (Sussex) is closely associated with three or four minor sites which are explicable as tenancies, and Bignor villa occupies the centre of a tract which contained several subordinate sites in its western half. The land of Great Wymondley was systematically subdivided at a given period (third century?) presumably to accommodate tenants. Absentee proprietors seem to be indicated at Gayton Thorpe, and at a late stage at Llantwit Major. The 'barbarous' character of the late phases of occupation in many villas (e.g. Atworth, Great Witcomb, Stanton Chare) may sometimes betoken the breakdown of an economic system, when slaves or tenants remained on the estate after the proprietors had retired or fled; in some cases it may represent mere squatting after complete evacuation.

IX

The continuity of occupation from native farm to villa, now known at various sites, shows that a proportion of the villa-owners were Britons, and it is recorded that both the Emperor Claudius and Seneca lent large sums of money to British notables; as the urban development was then still to come, these sums may be presumed to have been lent for agricultural development. Round Basingstoke there is some abandonment of native sites between A.D. 50 and 100, Roman villas appearing there between 60 and 70, and this is the period of their origin in many other areas. At this time a fusion of pottery-styles in the Surrey area indicates growth of population, and various hill-forts are abandoned up and down the province. Some rural temples (Frilford, Weycock, and Lowbury if one agrees to classify it as a sacred enclosure) now come into intensive use. The Flavian deforestation of central Essex has been alluded to, and to this time also belongs the settlement of the Fenland marls of Cambridgeshire and East Anglia; both projects may well have been state concerns.² There is a hint that by

¹ *Proc. Hants Field Club*, XVIII, ii, 1953, pp. 126-7.

² The two projects are perhaps alluded to by Galgacus in his famous speech (*Tac., Agric.*, 31) in the year 84: "manus silvis ac paludibus emuniendis . . . coneruntur." The first to suggest that these words were not simply rhetorical was, as Mr C. E. Stevens reminds me, W. Dugdale, *History of Imbanking and Drayning*, 1662, pp. 16, 17. It is of interest that Vettius Bolanus,

this time the state cadastral survey of the province had been completed.¹

The prosperous era of town life between the later first century A.D. and the third century is certainly bound up with the growth of prosperous estates owned by the urban aristocracy, and parallel conditions of development can be archaeologically demonstrated between Verulamium and its hinterland on the one hand, and between Cirencester and its hinterland on the other. Many country houses, some the centres of large estates, were founded in the second century, and in Surrey a number of village sites have been shown to have been evacuated in the early years of the century, evidently to make room for villa-estates. Burial customs in eastern England suggest that wealthy landholding immigrants came thither from central Belgium in the later first and early second century. In the second century agricultural intensification is evident in Somerset, in Cranbourne Chase, and at such points as West Blatchington, Park Street (Herts), and Bignor, while heavy Romano-British ploughshares are found as far afield as Lowland Scotland.

The Severan age witnessed some displacement of villa-owners by civil war, and initiated a determined attempt to increase the production of the province both in agriculture and in other spheres. New estates were founded—displacement of peasants for this purpose is traceable in Suffolk—and the new villas sought the margins of the heavy soils for purposes of corn-growing. Cults in Cambridgeshire and Essex in the later second and third centuries bespeak the entry of new elements from Belgium and the Rhineland; new estates in Gloucestershire also evince links with Belgium, Gaul, and the Rhine valley. The development of villas in western Somerset is likewise intensive. The possibility of some significant social change in land-tenure at this epoch has already been mentioned, in the form of the transformation of chiefs into landlords of their kin. The traces of this process are still slight, but the notion of continuity between native kinship units and certain villa-estates gains some support from the areas of arable attached to the latter, in so far as these can be tentatively calculated from their ox-stalls, granary capacities, and natural boundaries. Thus Eastfield would seem to have cultivated some 320 acres, three other villas in the Andover district 380, 270, and 340 acres respectively, North Warnborough 250 acres, Pitney 312, Stroud 187, Wiggonholt 370, Cherington 300, Rodmarton 240, East Grinstead 230, Callow Hill 300. These areas recall the Irish 'townlands'

Vespasian's first British governor (69–71), is referred to by Statius as an energetic land-surveyor and clearer of forests—a citation I owe to Professor E. Birley, *Roman Britain and the Roman Army*, 1953, p. 15. But Julius Frontinus (governor 75–8) also had a reputation as surveyor.

¹ *Trans. Lon. and Middlesex Arch. Soc.*, 2nd ser., x, 1951, p. 226.

(c. 325 acres average), Figheldean Down (370 acres), and the already cited averages of Romano-British villages in Sussex (300, 252, 304 acres).¹

The later second- and third-century villas show signs of economic growth and increased production (Bignor is a striking example). In this period cattle enclosures at Rockbourne Down and elsewhere, and the appearance of fulleries at several villas, point to an expansion of cattle- and sheep-rearing. Such intensification may have been encouraged by the contemporary inflation of the currency, which increased the value of material produce, and by the German invasion of the Rhineland and Northern Gaul, the loss of whose production Britain would have been called upon to make good. But in the second half of the century some country houses show symptoms of disturbance. Ditchley, Saunderton, Magor, Park Street, and other villas are abandoned, and in Gaul peasant discontent leads to the rebellious movement of the Bagaudae. The Emperor Carinus, who reigned only one year (A.D. 285) and suppressed these risings,² left milestones at Bitterne (Southampton) and near Andover, where traces of a large (imperial?) estate are to be detected. Some coastal villas were evacuated in the face of attacks by the Irish and Saxons towards the end of the century.

Constantine's reconquest of the island involved disorder and expropriation, but was followed by another great restorative effort. The number of villas now rehabilitated indicates government assistance. Generally, the agriculture of the province continues stable, and literary evidence indicates that Britain was regularly exporting grain to the continent; this is borne out by the grain-drying furnaces now widely to be found in villas, and perhaps to be connected with the increased need of drying wet-cut crops in a deteriorating climate, under pressure of state demands. There is however a general impression of lowered standards of living and absentee proprietorship. At Ditchley the last rough fourth-century occupation is characterized by intensive corn-production, but the absence of drying furnaces at the villa could be explained if they were present in surrounding tenant holdings, while the neglect of the residence may imply that Ditchley had now become absorbed into a larger estate (? Northleigh).

Evidence is now found, as we have seen, for the out-settlement of *coloni*. The colonate in Britain is mentioned in the Theodosian Code, and there existed in the province the main constituents which made for its growth and

¹ Larger estates naturally existed: e.g., Bignor, 1,900 acres; Ditchley, 1,000 acres; Cromhall, with a huge granary, perhaps 2,000 acres or more. Woodchester must have been the centre of a very large farm indeed. Some sites in the Andover district would appear to have possessed tracts of approximately 600-900 acres.

² Eutropius, 9: 20.

legalization, viz. the lowered standard of town life and the concomitant increased importance of the landowning class; the existence of crown domains to serve as tenurial models;¹ the ownership of large estates by non-resident proprietors;² the displacement of native holders by villa-estates (e.g. Surrey, Suffolk); the abandonment of some estates, necessitating colonate settlement by the government; the increased pressure to maintain supplies; and the settlement of barbarian troops (*foederati*) and prisoners (*laeti*) on the soil.³ The result may well have been an agrarian social picture much like that presented by the French Carolingian cartularies (e.g. that of St Remy of Reims), which record estates directly derived from Roman villas, in which demesne farms (*fisci*; *mansi dominicati*) are surrounded by dependent holdings (*mansi*) held by free *coloni*, *lidiles* (*laeti*), and *serviles*, who contribute heavily in produce and labour to the *mansus dominicatus*.⁴ East of Reims, the archaeological map shows the *mansi* distributed in circles about the domain villas, and something similar is perhaps to be traced in the Basingstoke district in the fourth century, likewise in the Ditchley–Northleigh region. The Carolingian system is characterized by a three-course agriculture and open-strip field pattern, and the Great Wymondley evidence suggests, either that

¹ On an imperial estate in Somerset, CIL, VII, 62 (Combe Down); near Silchester, *Ephem. Epig.*, IX, 1267; a probable imperial stud-farm (Irchester), CIL, VII, 78; the *regionarius* recorded at Bath (CIL, VII, 45) is likely to have been responsible for domains in Salisbury Plain. Cf. Collingwood and Myres, *Rom. Brit. and the Eng. Settle.*, p. 224. For the suggestion that the Fens comprised imperial property, R. G. Collingwood in Frank, *Econ. Survey of Anc. Rome*, III, 1937, Britain, p. 86, possibly confirmed by an inscription from Sawtry, Hunts, *Jour. Rom. Stud.*, xxx, 1940, p. 186; cf. Stevens in *Rev. arch.*, 110–1, 1937 (i), pp. 26 sqq. Hawkes's view that Cranbourne Chase was *saltus Augusti* is expressed in *Arch. Jour.*, CIV, pp. 11–12.

² A "clarissima femina" who was a *civis Dumnonia*, buried at Salona at the beginning of the fifth century (Diehl, *Inscr. Lat. Christ. Vet.*, I, 1924–31, no. 185), must have had large estates in Devonshire to have been of senatorial rank. Her British mansion may well have been the villa at Uplyme. St Melania the Younger (383–439), who had vast domains in Sicily (*Vit. St Mel.*, 18), also held land in Britain (*ibid.*, 10).

³ For the settlement of barbarian troops and *laeti* in Britain, cf. Zos. I, 68, 3; *Hist. Aug.*, Prob., 13; Eumenius, *Paneg.*, v, 18; Richmond in *Jour. Rom. Stud.*, xxxv, 1945, pp. 15 sqq. Cf. also the hybrid 'Roman-Saxon' pottery found in East Britain.—J. N. L. Myres in *Dark Age Britain: Studies Presented to E. T. Leeds* (ed. Harden), 1956.

⁴ For such estates, see B. E. C. Guérard, 'Capitulaire de Villis', *Mém. de L'Ac. de Belles Lettres*, XXI, 1857; *id.*, *La Polyptique de l'Abbaye de St Remy de Reims*, 1853; A. Longnon and B. E. C. Guérard, *La Polyptique de L'Abbé d'Irminon*, 1886–95; M. Bloch, *Les caractères originaux de l'hist. rurale française*, 1931, pp. 67 sqq. On the continuity question, A. Grenier, *Man. d'arch. gall.-rom.*, VI, ii, pp. 914 sqq.; 930–41; Arbois de Jubainville, *Recherches sur l'hist. de la propriété foncière*, 1890, *passim*; Imbart de la Tour, *Les paroisses rurales du 4e et du 9e siècle*, 1900, etc. For a more adverse view of continuity in Belgium, R. de Maeyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 236–41.

an open-field strip pattern existed there in the Roman period, or that it grew out of the surviving Roman fields. In Kent, on the other hand, Roman fields survived in the Cliffe district; in the same county Roman centres were perpetuated in the Saxon period, there is evidence of Roman-Saxon continuity in some villas, and medieval tenure has been thought to evince Celtic influences. Here the medieval farms are isolated, not nucleated, and the two- or three-field system, long thought to be absent, has recently been shown to have existed.¹

X

When we come to attempt an estimate of the level and productivity of Roman agriculture in Britain, we must acknowledge that it involved advances over the pre-Roman system. A careful comparison of the Roman agricultural writers' works with the details of British villas shows that the Roman handbooks were being used in this country. We have further alluded to evidence for the investment of capital by immigrants from the continent. The introduction of certain new tools and techniques (the two-handed scythe, the iron spade, well-sinking, livestock buildings) meant a rise in production. The new plants and livestock introduced by Rome have been listed. Roman agriculture further understood the reseeded of meadows as part of a rotation, the three-crop course, the value of oats, legumes, and roots. It enjoyed in this country for two hundred years, at least, a stable government, a reliable judiciary, military security, and a vast improvement of communications that opened to it new markets. Yet already in the second half of the third century the towns were finding an insufficient basis for their economic activities in the rural life of the province, in the fourth century many villas were in decline, and by the sixth the chalk and limestone uplands had been drained of their Romano-British peasantry.

Civil war, barbarian invasion, over-taxation, and inflation certainly had a great deal to do with this decline, but they alone do not explain why the Romano-British rural system broke up so soon after the withdrawal of the central administration at the beginning of the fifth century. What other factors contributed to this break-up?

In the first place, the productivity of the villa system was not uniform. The system was not homogeneous, and, as we have seen, a proportion of the villas were rooted in the Celtic social structure and associated with the Celtic 'square field' system. This probably means that the highly developed Roman farming methods were restricted to a minority of the more important estates, some of which were developed by immigrant investors.

¹ By the unpublished researches of Mr M. Nightingale. I am grateful to Dr H. P. R. Finberg for this information.

Secondly, such evidence as we have (and more is needed) points to a climatic deterioration towards higher rainfall and lower temperatures in the latter part of the Roman occupation.¹ Romano-British agriculture developed the gradational loams, and only a slight increase of annual rainfall would have been required to make these soils unworkable in autumn and so occasion crop-failures in the succeeding year. Such a change would have encouraged a transition to stock-farming, for which, indeed, we have evidence, and an increased production of wheat, which is better fitted to moist conditions than barley. Further, both state pressure to produce wheat and wool, and the climatic change, would have affected the Celtic upland farming areas, sited on the permeable soils, and have upset their traditional farming pattern. This depended on a preponderance of summer cereals, whose stubble served in winter to graze the stock which fed in summer on the communal pastures. The growth of cattle-ranching and the expansion of sheep-raising in the later Roman period meant the invasion of the summer pastures by the state and the capitalist villa-owners, while the demand for winter wheat resulted in the reduction of the winter stubbles, leading to the decline of the native livestock and arable alike. Thus in the fourth century, just when increased rainfall should have encouraged intensification on the uplands, their population was on the decrease (a process hastened by the depredations of the invasion and social trouble of 367),² and by the tenth century, when a drier climate had set in, the move to the heavier lowland soils was complete.

In the villas themselves, moreover, there appears to have been a social break-up. Mr C. E. Stevens and Professor C. F. C. Hawkes long ago suggested that the thinning off of coin-finds in Roman villas after 367 is to be explained by a peasant revolt like that of the Gallic Bagaudae;³ Mr Stevens

¹ For the evidence of climatic deterioration, Godwin *et al.*, *Philos. Trans.* 229B, pp. 355-6, 393; 233B, pp. 233 sqq., 275 sqq.; C. W. Phillips in *Aspects of Arch. in Brit and Beyond*, pp. 258-73; *Jour. Ecology*, xvii, pp. 14, 15; *Jour. Anthropological Soc.*, v, pp. lxi sqq.; C. E. P. Brookes, *Climate through the Ages*, 1949, p. 299. For the Dutch evidence, E. Van Giffen in *Congress of Roman Frontier Studies*, ed. Birley, 1949, pp. 399-49; Waterbolk in *Een Kwart Eeuw Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek in Nederland*, 1947, pp. 86-90.

² R. G. Collingwood (*Rom. Brit. and the Eng. Settle.*, p. 223) suggested that "a great depopulation of the Wiltshire Downs was going on in the fourth century." This he thought "to indicate deliberate transplantation of village-dwellers to serve the policy of capitalistic landlords or a socialistic [*sic*] State." Without arguing how far the adjective "socialistic" is relevant to any feature of the later Roman Empire, we are bound to question this hypothesis, since close examination of the evidence of coins and pottery on Salisbury Plain, in so far as it has been recorded, does not confirm that occupation of sites generally died out with Constantine, as Collingwood thought.

³ Kendrick and Hawkes, *Archaeology of England and Wales 1914-31* (1932), p. 293; cf. Collingwood and Myres, *op. cit.*, pp. 303-4.

has further pointed to a chapter in the fourth-century work, the *Anonymus de rebus bellicis*, as possibly referring to Britain in the same year; it mirrors a genuine revolutionary outbreak.¹ The social process of devolution characterizing villas at this date, in the shape of the out-settlement of *coloni*, also made for technical decline. The centralized villa could enclose its fields and maintain rational rotations, including the growing of roots, controlled pasture, and the winter maintenance of stock. The breaking up of the large estate into tenant holdings meant the devolution of farming into the hands of men who were unable to continue this régime; while concentration of hands increased the possibilities of sedition, the colonate and absenteeism (whether in the person of the proprietor or the state) meant absence of the master's eye and technical decline. There was also a debit side to Roman techniques. It is difficult to prove that livestock was to any extent improved with the exception of the horse, and lack of chemical knowledge caused a static view of the quality of soils that prevented extensive amelioration. In crops the Romans introduced club-wheat and flax, and popularized rye and oats; they may well have brought roots and legumes. But the entire range of Roman agricultural techniques was not universally applied. Part of the villa system and the upland native cultivation remained more or less at pre-Roman level, with some improvements in detail.

It is also doubtful if the population increased to any extent. An investigation of the Basingstoke district from this point of view suggested that the average population was 8–12 per square mile, rising to 20 per square mile in areas near to heavier soils, woodland, water, and communications; and Collingwood's estimate of a total population of half a million in the province may not have been far wrong. In the few cases where we can check granary capacity with ox-stalls and estate areas, we arrive at an average corn-yield of 15–20 bushels per acre, a figure supported by data from Belgium and Germany. On this production, the province would have had little difficulty in both feeding itself and exporting a surplus. How far, however, it could have met the crushing and continuous exactions of the state, is another question. It was not inadequate technique, but inequality of application that was the weak point of Romano-British agriculture. Maladministration, inflation, over-taxation, political insecurity, and the consequent social disturbances, led to economic disintegration; the increased pressure of the Empire's needs added to a factor beyond human control—climatic deterioration—hastened the process of social differentiation and technical decline. It has been claimed that the Roman villa became increasingly autarkic. This view will

¹ *Cumb. and Westm. Ant. Arch. Soc. Trans.*, N.S. L (1951), p. 76, on the *Anonymus de rebus bellicis* (Schneider), 7.

not stand up to archaeological examination of the materials and objects found in country-houses,¹ nor to the inescapable needs of certain essential products (oil, salt) to be obtained only from afar. The breakdown of security and administration therefore meant the end of the villa, and with it, the essential basis of the province's civilization. The break-up of the estates as entities had already begun with the transfer of *coloni* to peripheral holdings. Thus, if the Roman estate survived, on occasion, into the Saxon period (and it is by no means certain that it may not have done so),² it was as a series of dispersed peasant holdings perhaps mingled with English settlers, who continued to work its fields as a loose community in the vicinity of the ruined residence.

¹ The wide distribution of New Forest ware in villas in the third and fourth centuries is one of the facts disproving such a theory. Cf. H. Sumner, *Excavations in New Forest Pottery Sites*, 1927, pp. 83-5. Notable also is the distribution of rosette-stamped ware, datable from the latter half of the fourth century.

² For a reopening of the rural continuity issue, see H. P. R. Finberg, *Roman and Saxon Withington, A Study in Continuity*: Leicester University, Occasional Papers, no. 8, 1955.

Notes and Comments

THE BRITISH AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The sixth Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at the Yorkshire (W.R.) Institute of Agriculture, Askham Bryan, York, on Thursday 10 and Friday 11 April 1958. Some thirty-eight members of the Society attended. The Thursday evening was devoted to two short papers on Yorkshire farming. Dr Joan Thirsk, Senior Research Fellow in Agrarian History, University of Leicester, spoke on Yorkshire farming in the sixteenth century, and Mr Harwood Long, Provincial Agricultural Economist, University of Leeds, described developments thereafter. On Friday morning Dr P. J. Bowden, Assistant Lecturer in Economic History, University of Sheffield, gave a paper on sheep farming and wool production in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, referring particularly to the diary of Henry Best, whose farm at Elmswell was visited later in the day. After Dr Bowden's paper, the members of the Conference spent the rest of the day on a

tour of the East Riding, during which they visited the deserted village of Towthorpe, where Mr M. W. Beresford led the party, Sledmere House, where they were shown round by Mr R. N. Cardwell, the agent, and Elmswell, where Mr Michael Kirkby of the Castle Museum, York, conducted the party. The Conference was brought to a close on Friday evening by Dr S. R. Eyre, Lecturer in Geography, University of Leeds, with a paper on the significance of the upward limit of cultivation on the East Moor of north Derbyshire.

In the unavoidable absence of the President, the Chair at the Annual General Meeting was taken by the Chairman of the Executive, Mr George Ordish. The retiring officers were re-elected and Mr M. W. Beresford, Mr G. E. Fussell, and Mr Alexander Hay were elected to the Executive Committee in place of Miss W. M. Dullforce, Dr W. G. Hoskins, and Mr R. Lamb who had retired. The meeting heard with regret that Sir James

(continued on page 96)

The East Anglian Foldcourse: Some Queries

By ALAN SIMPSON

DR K. J. ALLISON is to be congratulated on the account of the East Anglian Foldcourse which he furnished in Vol. V of this REVIEW. The characteristics of this peculiar institution, which were taken for granted by Tudor legislators and Stuart antiquarians, were almost forgotten until they attracted the attention of a few agrarian historians in modern times; and of these only H. L. Gray had made a serious attempt to explain the customs.¹ Dr Allison's account is altogether superior to Gray's, but it raises certain questions which it would be pleasant to have answered. The object of this note is simply to direct attention to them.

The first is a question of boundaries, which is only raised for the sake of tidiness. The foldcourse region extended over Norfolk, Suffolk, and Cambridgeshire, but contemporaries never felt it necessary to be precise. Dr Allison has provided a map for Norfolk showing the distribution of some 250 townships in which these pastoral customs have been found. It would be useful to have the same service done for the other two counties. So far as Suffolk is concerned, there is plenty of evidence among the customals of the monastery of Bury St Edmunds² and in the estate records of sixteenth-century families like the Bacons,³ that an area bounded by Bury St Edmunds,

¹ 25 Henry VIII, c. 13, has a special section on the management of foldcourses in Norfolk and Suffolk. Sir Henry Spelman commented extensively on the foldcourse system in his *Glossary*, his *Icenia*, his contribution to Speed's *Theatre*, and in the legal treatise mentioned in note 1, p. 89. Pioneer modern studies of East Anglian customs, such as W. J. Corbett, *Elizabethan Village Surveys* (1897), and F. G. Davenport, *The Economic Development of a Norfolk Manor* (1906), had nothing to say about the foldcourse. The first national writer to refer to it may have been G. Slater, *The English Peasantry and the Enclosure of Common Fields* (1907), whose curiosity was aroused by the terminology of the preambles to the Norfolk Enclosure Acts. H. L. Gray, aided by Holkham records, was the first to sketch its scope in *English Field Systems* (1915), pp. 325 *et seq.* From this date the consciousness that East Anglia had distinctive pastoral customs became fairly widespread (e.g. in the writings of D. C. Douglas, J. Saltmarsh and H. C. Darby, R. J. Hammond, and S. T. Bindoff), but no one, to this writer's knowledge, had attempted to dig deeper than Gray, or to clarify his inconsistencies.

² e.g. "The lord ought to have a foldcourse within the manor of Hinderclay;" "The lord may grant by copy to any of his tenants a foldcourse within the manor of Redgrave and none can be levied without the lord's license."—BM Add. MS. 31,970, ff. 78, 83, 88.

³ e.g. Bailiffs' accounts and acquittances for Ingham, Timworth, Culford, Rougham, Barnham, etc., in Bacon MSS., University of Chicago. See also Cullum, *History of Hawsted*, 1813, pp. 274-6.

Newmarket, Mildenhall, Thetford, Diss, and Ixworth was within the region; and it would be natural to expect the Cambridgeshire borders to be affected.¹

The second question is one of historical evolution, which this writer can do no more than state. The peculiarity of the East Anglian custom lies in the privileged position of the lord of the manor: only he, or his lessee, has the right to maintain a flock of sheep. A tenant flock, of the kind that Dr Kerridge described in Wiltshire,² is only possible in this region on the assumption that the lord has alienated his privilege. How does one explain the divergent development? Did similar customs once prevail in both areas? Or was Spelman's instinct sounder in supposing that these Norfolk customs, like some others which he knew in seventeenth-century England, had a local origin among the early English settlements?³ If we had to choose, most of us would probably incline to Spelman's guess, yet a casual examination of Wiltshire and East Anglian customs as late as the thirteenth century suggests there was very little difference between them.⁴ Is it possible that the East Anglian foldcourse simply represents the survival and special development of a seignorial monopoly which was once widespread, viz., the exclusive right to maintain a fold?

These two questions were outside the scope of Dr Allison's article. So far as the article itself is concerned, the most original and helpful feature was his explanation of what we may call the system of "shifts and exchanges" whereby the lord got the fullest use out of his foldcourse. Hitherto there was an almost insuperable difficulty in seeing how the East Anglian field system, as usually expounded, permitted the enjoyment of a foldcourse. How could the lord utilize his feeding privileges on the fallow ground and harvest stubble of the village if the villagers conformed to no system in their sowing? The region was supposed to be one of unlimited individualism, where cropping was neither by field nor by furlong but according to every individual's

¹ Sir Henry Spelman included Cambridgeshire in his description of the foldcourse region; *Glossarium*, 1687, pp. 210-11. The Elizabethan awards at Cottenham and Stretham, analysed by W. Cunningham, suggest that a similar system may have existed there: e.g. the tenants were set free to organize a town flock "and to erect as many sheep folds as they, or any of them, shall think good, at any time hereafter, within the arable fields of Cottenham."—*Royal Hist. Soc. Camden Series*, x, 1910, p. 202.

² E. Kerridge, 'The Sheepfold in Wiltshire and the Floating of the Water Meadows', *Economic Hist. Review*, Second Series, vi, 1954.

³ Add. MS. 27,403. For the attribution of this treatise to Spelman, see below, p. 89, n. 1.

⁴ e.g. 'Customs of the Four Manors of the Abbey of Lacock', *Wilts. Arch. Mag.*, xxxii, p. 311, compared with references in Redgrave Court Rolls, or Thornage Extents, Bacon MSS., University of Chicago.

choice, and where an individual's holdings tended to be concentrated in one part of the village. In short, there was supposed to be no tillage plan. But Dr Allison, while not disputing the inconsequence of field and furlong in the cropping pattern, insists that there was a plan: a pattern of 'shifts' (of winter corn, spring corn, and fallow) with compensations for the individual whose land might happen within a given year to fall disproportionately in a fallow shift.

This attractive solution for the puzzle is almost certainly correct. Dr Allison was assisted in reaching it by a contemporary treatise on the foldcourse,¹ supplemented by a few other references to the practice in estate records. More evidence can certainly be found.² Only two difficulties about accepting this theory exist at the moment. The first lies in the claim, which we find villagers making, that they have the right to sow where they please.³ This will have to be treated either as a deviation from the norm, or, as Dr Allison suggests, a symptom that the norm is disintegrating. The other difficulty is simply that we are far from having, at this moment, the volume of evidence which allows us to fix a custom on a whole region. When Dr Allison finds a shift-system in as many villages as he has found a foldcourse (viz. 250), the point may be considered settled.

Next, we must ask, who got the benefit of the fold (or, as it was called in Norfolk, the *tathe*) under this seignorial system? Dr Allison is ambiguous. At one point he remarks (rather inconsequentially, in the context): "But the tenants in some townships at least were obliged to make an annual payment for each acre that benefited from tathing by the lord's flocks." In another

¹ Add. MS. 27,403. Dr Allison does not point out that there is a marginal note attributing the authorship to Sir Henry Spelman, nor does his article refer to Spelman's observations about foldcourses in his other works, cited above. It may be, of course, that Dr Allison has mentioned these matters in his thesis, which this writer has not seen. There are striking correspondences between passages of Add. MS. 27,403 and passages in Spelman's *Glossarium*, and there are autobiographical references in the former which fit Spelman.

² The division of the town fields into 'shifts' is illustrated by the Stanford lease quoted below. Lists of exchanges are not uncommon—e.g. at Helloughton, a Townshend manor, a certain Thomas Fauconer had "laied of olde tyme" 18 acres and "newly laied for the Ladies course in the north fiede" a further 33 acres, for which he got 51 acres of demesne land in exchange.—Survey of Fauconers lands, 1 Sept. 1594, Safe 11 (16), Garsett House, Norwich.

³ e.g. verdict of a Harthill (Hunworth) jury, 1634: "Wee further say that wee have hard that the ancient use and custome of the seid towne hath bene for the tennants there to encloase there lands and to sowe there winter corne att there will and pleasuer Which wee believe to be true for anye thinge wee knowe or have hard."—N.R.S. 16,473, 32, D2, Norwich City Library. At the same time, the norm had probably been represented by the following item in a Bury St Edmunds' custumal for the manor of Ingham, Suffolk: "Sowing. All tenants and inhabitants within the said manor ought to forbear the sowing of there lands there every year where the lords sheep course or fold shall chance to be the same year."—Add. MS. 31,970, fo. 91.

case, he says that when tenants were able to enclose their lands, they "lost the benefit of tathing." But, on the whole, he seems to leave this important question unanswered.

There is less evidence on this subject than one might expect, but the underlying principle must surely be that as the sheep belong to the lord, so also does the 'tathe'. No doubt there will be some advantage to tenant land from the treading and casual manuring as the sheep feed over it; but there is no reason why they should be folded over tenant land unless some special bargain has been made. Such a bargain was a regular feature of shepherds' contracts in the Middle Ages, when they were allowed to fold the flock over their holding for two or more weeks in the year; but no such concession has been encountered in the sixteenth century—perhaps because shepherds were no longer raising a crop. Nor was there any understanding that the use of tenant land—the feeding of the 'quilllets' that lay in the foldcourse—would be paid for in 'tathe'; the general practice was to pay for this either in money, or in land elsewhere, or by the admission of tenant sheep into the lord's flock. What the lord did with the tathe must have depended on how he was situated. If he, or his farmer, was combining sheep-farming with corn-farming, he would naturally use his flock to fertilize his own lands. But if he was a great flockmaster with a dozen or more foldcourses like the Fermours or the Southwells in the sixteenth century, we should expect the tathe to be the subject of a bargain with the owners, or farmers, of the manors on which the flocks were feeding. One type of arrangement is illustrated by a Bacon lease of the manor of Eccles (c. 1606) in which the farmer assumes many of the responsibilities for the care of the Bacon flock and enjoys, in return, a stipulated amount of tathe.¹ But whatever the variations, tathe was an asset which belonged to the lord and for which there was a customary price in sixteenth-century Norfolk. When, for example, Sir Nicholas Bacon bought the manor of Stiffkey in 1570, with its foldcourse and a stock of sheep, he asked his agents what the tathe was worth, to be told that the customary price of 1s. 4d. an acre was less than its real value.²

Another interesting question is the extent to which the foldcourse privileges were a source of oppression. While acknowledging that the system could be mutually beneficial to landlord and tenants, Dr Allison inclines to

¹ In addition to his money rent, the farmer contracted to give the shepherd of the Bacon flocks certain corn rents, to wash and clip 560 sheep, and to supply five dozen hurdles for tathing. In return, Bacon undertook that the flock would tathe the land that was being leased to the farmer for 73 nights in the year, with the understanding that a shilling would be paid to the farmer for any night omitted.

² Bacon Correspondence, Garsett House, Norwich.

the view that it was greatly abused in the sixteenth century. His evidence appears to be threefold: the complaints drawn up by Kett's rebels in 1549; a petition submitted to the Queen in the early years of Elizabeth's reign by certain "poor inhabitants of Norfolk"; and a number of legal proceedings against offending landlords. No one would gainsay that Kett's Rebellion was a crisis in rural relations, even after one has noticed that its history has been as consistently written by the enemies of the landlords in the past century as it was written once by their defenders. However, it is an interesting fact that in the twenty-seven complaints of the peasants, which cover everything from the price of land and the size of a bushel to dovescotes and rabbit warrens, the foldcourse is never once mentioned. The pressure of the big grazer on the small husbandman can indeed be seen in more than one clause, and radical demands are made for excluding him from town commons and reducing the size of his operations. Nevertheless, none of the draughtsmen seems to have felt that the foldcourse privileges, as a species of seigniorial monopoly, were injurious *per se*, or that any of the several sources of friction associated with them were worth mentioning, apart from the offence of over-commoning (which was not, of course, confined to the owners of foldcourses).

This silence is not found in the second piece of evidence, the "Petition"—a very interesting sidelight on Norfolk's agrarian history which ought to be published in conjunction with the records of Kett's Rebellion and the legal treatise on the foldcourse. This was another protest by independent peasants against rural capitalists, which covered a good deal of ground. The grievances included the subversion of copyholds on the grounds that they were old demesne; the abuse of foldcourse privileges; the engrossing of stock and farms; the encroachment on commons; the insistence on rents in kind; the withdrawal of land from common use by emparking; dovescotes; rabbit warrens; and the dissolution of the abbeys, with their hospitality and their old rents. The paragraphs on the foldcourse privileges dealt with some of the typical sources of friction—the denial of as many "cullet rights" as the tenants thought they ought to have (i.e. rights to put a certain number of sheep in the lord's flock), the tendency of the flocks to feed on the tenants' winter corn (a practice which had caught Tusser's disapproving eye),¹ the length of time which the flocks spent in the "shack" (i.e. the harvest stubble), and

¹"The flocks of the Lords of the soile
do yerely the winter corne wrong:
The same in manner they spoile,
with feeding so lowe and so long.
And therefore that champion feeld
doth seldome good winter corne yeeld."

—*Five Hundred Pointes of Good Husbandrie*, 1878, p. 142.

the withdrawal of demesne from the "shack" with no compensating reduction of the lord's stock. Much the same complaints as these, with the addition of one or two others such as depopulation, were involved in the handful of cases which formed Dr Allison's third class of evidence.

Now the point is that when we have read this material we are still without any basis for a firm opinion about the scale of the abuses and the depth of the feeling engendered by them. Dr Allison believes that there was an "intensification of oppression" in the second half of the sixteenth century. How can he be sure? The evidence is surely too fragmentary to admit of anything that can be called proof. We may be confronted by nothing more serious than the perennial bickering of the countryside or the petty tyrannies of a few bad landlords. And if we assume, for the sake of argument, that the foldcourse privileges had been a source of oppression in the first half of the sixteenth century, why should we imagine that the hardships were intensified later? The ballooning of flocks, with the temptation to strain privileges, seems to have gone on before the mid-century, not after it. We know that several of the flockmasters subsided into *rentiers* after 1560; that others reduced their flocks below the top capacity of the foldcourses, or moved over from sheep-farming to cattle-grazing. We can study the records of Norfolk manors in the second half of the sixteenth century without discovering any symptom of friction, and we may wonder why, if the institution had a bad social history, Sir Henry Spelman felt precluded from hinting at it in all his interesting comments.

Other doubts may be expressed on the subject of landlord oppression. It is possible, for instance, that in a conflict between landlord and tenant there may be something to be said for the landlord, though the historians of the last generation have not always been eager to say it. The petition, which has been quoted, is far from being an unanswerable document. The object of the first two paragraphs seems to have been to prevent landlords from claiming that certain copyholds had been created out of demesne and were thereby less "free" than ancient copyhold. But it seems to have been a well-established principle in Norfolk that such copyholds (which had been created on a large scale by the heads of religious houses on the eve of the dissolution) were liable to double fines on alienation or descent, and not entitled to treat the timber on the copyhold as the property of the tenant.¹ Similarly, there is another clause in which the petitioners objected to the lords' demand of substantial corn rents (of course, as a hedge against inflation) for land which once had rented at 6d., 8d., and 1s. an acre. But was it oppression to insist on legal rights in the one case, and a higher rent in the other? Perhaps we can

¹ Townshend MSS., Garsett House, Norwich.

sympathize with hard-pressed peasants without believing that their lords were greedy cormorants.

Finally, it must always be a question who is behind a petition. The art of finding stooges in a warfare of giants is ageless. Often the victim of a fold-course monopoly was not the little man with a dozen acres and a few common rights, but the big man who had piled up two or three hundred acres of copyhold and freehold land and found himself prevented from keeping a flock of sheep. Judging from the evidence of surveys and field-books, there were not many independent smallholders in the 'champion' villages of Elizabethan Norfolk: the more typical structure was one where there were two or three big holders at the top and a lot of very little people at the bottom (shopkeepers, craftsmen, and labourers).¹ Of the big people, one would be the lord, or farmer of the manor, and cases are not unknown where the others, from some motive of rivalry or resentment, took it upon themselves to organize a petition against his "oppression." Until all the facts are known in any given case, it is only prudence to observe a little caution.

None of the foregoing remarks is intended to imply that Dr Allison has been guilty of recklessness. Their only object is to draw attention to other possibilities than those he has seen. In the same vein, it may be permitted to raise a doubt about one last topic: his interpretation of the history of infield-outfield practices in Norfolk. If I understand his position, he believes that these practices were "the creation of the later seventeenth- and eighteenth-century improvers" and "of an entirely different nature" from the infield-outfield systems which had existed from time immemorial in other parts of the country for the cultivation of infertile soils. When he looks at Norfolk's history, he seems to distinguish between three phases: (1) the traditional open-field system, persisting in the main until the seventeenth century, where there was simply one, or more, permanently cultivated field, surrounded by commons and sheepwalks; (2) an intermediate phase, where an infield-outfield system was introduced without any essential change in the husbandry. He would regard this phase as typified by the practices which H. C. Darby and J. Saltmarsh described at West Wretham, where seven outfield 'brecks' were tilled in rotation (after fertilization by the flock) while the infield was intensively cultivated. This situation at West Wretham seems to be the earliest detailed example which Dr Allison knew, the earlier references to an infield-outfield system which he found at Great Massingham and elsewhere being very vague and elusive; (3) an "improved" infield-outfield

¹ This impression is based on samples which include Stiffkey, Stody, Hunworth, and Little Ryborough. Admittedly, the surveys and dragges are only concerned with *ownership* and it is quite impossible to discover what sub-letting went on.

system, characterized by many more brecks, new rotations, the elimination of summer fallow, and, ultimately, complete enclosure. "In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, both heathland and open fields were completely enclosed, and the terms 'infield' and 'outfield' were widely used for the permanently cultivated closes and the periodically tilled brecks."

I have no quarrel with the description of Phase 3. My only question is, did not Phase 2 have a much older history? So old, indeed, as to have been always combined, in some instances, with Phase 1? In other words, is it not possible that places like West Wretham had had an infield-outfield system as long as there had been flocks to make periodic cropping possible?

The difficulty is in detecting an infield-outfield system in the days before adequate map-making. Surveys provide us with a tenurial map, but how much do we ever learn about the tillage map? Even after map-making had begun, it was very common to produce an excellent tenurial map without the slightest hint of the tillage arrangements: a map on which, for instance, there would be nothing to indicate whether a furlong, or a part of a furlong, lay in the infield or the outfield. Dr Allison cites a Holkham map of 1590 and North Creak map of the early seventeenth century as illustrations of Phase 1. But how can he be sure there was no infield-outfield plan which the map-maker ignored? There is a sixteenth-century map of the manor and foldcourses at Timworth in the West Suffolk Record Office which is as innocent of any boundaries between infield and outfield as Dr Allison's maps, but the ornamental legend at the foot of the map contains a reference to "infields." And there are cases of maps as late as 1690 which are purely tenurial, though we know that an infield-outfield system had existed there for over a century.¹

Though the evidence is fragmentary, we can hardly doubt that an infield-outfield plan was in full swing in many of these villages at least as early as the first half of the sixteenth century. The evidence used by Darby and Saltmarsh for West Wretham was taken from a terrier of 1611;² but a lease of about 1560 of the neighbouring manor of Stanford shows exactly the same system; the farmer undertakes to crop six outfield shifts in rotation (with no more than two crops off each shift at one time) while dividing the infield into four shifts, one of which will be fallow.³ At Ingham, near Bury St Edmunds, a farmer contracts to leave forty acres of infield in summertill at the end of his lease and as much in the outfield as shall happen in the course of rotation.⁴

¹ e.g. at Ringstead, uncatalogued L'Estrange MSS. (Box E.H.8), Norwich City Library.

² H. C. Darby and J. Saltmarsh, 'The Infield-Outfield System on a Norfolk manor', *Economic History*, III, 1935, pp. 30-44.

³ Townshend MSS., Garsett House, Norwich.

⁴ Bacon Leases, Bacon MSS., University of Chicago.

Other instances could be given,¹ but perhaps it will be enough to use the L'Estrange records of the manor of Ringstead to show how an eighteenth-century organization of brecks may have an old history behind it.

If we open a survey-book for this manor of the period 1720-30, we find Dr Allison's Phase 3 beautifully and meticulously illustrated—permanently cultivated closes and periodically tilled brecks. The brecks are numbered 1-11, in each of the two fields (North and South) that make up the village, and the furlongs composing each breck are plainly marked on the maps. Sometimes a breck includes more than one furlong, and sometimes a furlong is partly in the infield and partly in a breck. There are also tables to show when the brecks are in tilth and how tenants are compensated whose land has to be kept in grass for sheep feed. With this picture in mind, we can work our way backwards through the field books, maps, and surveys of the previous century and a half to see how far we can find traces of the infield-outfield system. It becomes quite inconspicuous in the sixteenth century, so far as the outward appearance of the records is concerned, but the basic features can still be found. There is, for instance, an early survey of Elizabeth's reign which precedes the earliest maps, in which we can read the following entries:

"Sheepspasture Smeeth	}	Another furlong more north voc Smeth between Shepeling on the east and the infield ground on the weste. . .
Shepespasture Lingestyhill	}	Another furlong more north called Lingstyhill: heading south upon the former: sydinge on the weste upon the aforesaid haulfe acre of Mrs Reade where the shepescourse and the Infield parts. . .
Shepespasture Middlefurlonge	}	. . . south upon Longestyhill sydinge on the west upon the Infield. . .
Shepespasture Greengate	}	. . . between the Infield on the west and Thornham mire. . ." ²

These are furlongs in the outfield, just beyond the limits of the infield, which are fertilized by the sheep and periodically tilled. In later field books and maps they are called brecks, and they can be identified, in the survey of 1720, with the 4th, 5th, 7th, and 8th brecks, respectively, in the South Field.

This is as far back as the evidence takes us. But is there any reason, apart

¹ Thus we find the following entry in a survey for Great Massingham: "Arrable in the field in divers small pieces—lxxiiij acres. In breks in the shepes pasture yerely xxv acres for somerly, xxv for rye, xxv for barley, xxv for otes—v^{xx}".—MS. 126X6: 20417, Norwich City Library.

² Uncatalogued L'Estrange MSS. (Box E.H.2), Norwich City Library.

from the present silence of the records, for wondering if the system had not existed long before the sixteenth century? The farmers at Stanford and Ingham seem to have been accepting customary obligations. There is nothing in the Ringstead survey, just cited, to suggest that an outfield was a recent novelty. Spelman, who certainly knew his Norfolk, took it for granted that some kind of infield-outfield system had existed from time immemorial.¹ It would be interesting if Dr Allison, in his further researches, should stumble on its tracks.²

¹ See, for example, the description of Norfolk contributed to John Speed's *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain*, 1611.

² A survey of Redgrave, Suffolk, for 17 Edward I, refers to more than one 'wong' as being "in the breck" (Bacon MSS., University of Chicago). The term is ambiguous, but it is not improbable that the furlongs in the breck were being periodically tilled with the aid of the flock.

NOTES AND COMMENTS (*continued from page 86*)

Scott Watson wished to retire from the Presidency at the next Annual General Meeting.

Mr George Ordish in presenting the report of the Executive Committee said that membership of the Society had risen from 461 at the last Annual General Meeting to 516. He also reported that at a meeting of the Executive Committee held earlier Dr H. P. R. Finberg had been unanimously reappointed Editor of the Society's publications.

In presenting the Treasurer's Report, Professor Thomas pointed out that the accounts showed an improvement over the previous year, there being a profit of £55 13s. 6d. as at 31 January 1958, as opposed to a loss of £57 18s. 6d. the previous year. The balance at that date was £224 6s. 7d.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee

held later in the day, Mr George Ordish was re-elected Chairman.

FUTURE CONFERENCES

The Annual General Meeting and Conference for 1959 will take the form of a joint meeting with the Economic History Society. It will be held at Wye College (University of London), near Ashford, Kent, from the evening of Friday 10 April till breakfast time on Monday 13 April. There will be a wide and varied selection of papers on agrarian topics and it is hoped that there will also be a tour of the College farms and an expedition to Romney Marsh.

The One-Day Joint Conference with the Association of Agriculture will be held at the Institute of Education, University of London, on Saturday 6 December 1958.

The Lost Village and the Landscape of the Yorkshire Wolds

By ALAN HARRIS

THE enquiries of the historian and the archaeologist have shown that the deserted village site is a feature of many English countrysides. It is now possible to assign a date to the final disappearance of many of these places, and to say why they disappeared. Little attention has been paid, however, to the later history of the village lands. In particular, their physical character during the eighteenth century, when widespread changes were effected by enclosure in many areas, has been virtually ignored. Yet the evidence from the chalklands of the East Riding of Yorkshire suggests that important changes in the landscape occurred in a number of deserted villages at this time, the initial depopulating enclosure having modified but not destroyed the old open landscape at some earlier period.

The wolds remained largely unenclosed until well into the eighteenth century. During the years of Parliamentary enclosure (1730-1850) approximately two acres in every three were enclosed, a higher proportion than in any other part of the Riding. The events of these years changed the face of the district. In 1850 large, hedged fields, windbreaks, and isolated farmsteads occupied what had once been portions of unenclosed arable fields, pas-

tures, and rabbit warrens. A number of depopulated townships shared in these changes.

The sites of between forty and fifty lost villages with some wold land attached can be traced from Mr M. W. Beresford's lists.¹ It is difficult to assign an exact acreage to these, for their boundaries are in some cases obscure. Twenty-nine of them lay within parishes or townships with an aggregate area of about 30,000 acres. A total area of some 45,000 acres may not be far wrong for these villages. But the significant fact for the present argument is that at least 12,000 acres of land in these places lay open and unenclosed, in the physical sense of the term, until the age of Parliamentary enclosure.² In all probability, the area lying in this state was considerably greater than 12,000 acres, for a number of places known to have been in possession of open land early in the eighteenth century have been omitted from the calculation because of the imperfect nature of the data. Altogether, some twenty deserted townships are known to have been affected by late enclosure. They lay in all parts of the wolds.

Events in Eastburn and Cottam, it is suggested, may be regarded as typical of what had occurred in a number of places by the eighteenth century. In the 1660's there was a

¹ *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, xxxviii, 1952.

² Octon, 1770, at least 900 acres (Thwing enclosure award, Registry of Deeds, Beverley); Pockthorpe, 1773, 680 acres (Nafferton enclosure award, R.D.B.); Croom, 1775, about 1,000 acres (*House of Commons Journals*, 1774-6, xxv, 1803, p. 136); Tranby, 1796, 400 acres (Hessle, Anlaby, and Tranby enclosure award, R.D.B.); Wauldby, 1796, about 900 acres (Elloughton, Brough, and Wauldby enclosure award, R.D.B.); Riplingham, 1801, 1,400 acres (Little Weighton and Riplingham enclosure award, R.D.B.); Holme field in Wetwang, 1806, 430 acres (Wetwang enclosure award, R.D.B.); Arras, 1770-1820, about 800 acres (*infra*, p. 98, n. 9); Eastburn and Battleburn, after 1720, about 1,200 acres (Book K, 1726, pp. 49-50, R.D.B.); Southburn, Eastburn, and Kirkburn tithe papers, 1843-4, Department of Geography, University of Hull); Little Givendale, after 1750, 370 acres (Castle Howard Estate Survey, 1743-7, Castle Howard, Yorks); Cowlam, after 1780, 1,900 acres (W. Marshall, *Rural Economy of Yorkshire*, II, 1788, pp. 249, 261); Cottam, open 1706, partially enclosed by 1843-4, enclosure award 1851, about 2,000 acres (*infra*, p. 98, n. 8), P.R.O., K.R. Misc. Bks., 38, ff. 244-5, lists 200 acres of closes in 1569. There were extensive tillage lands with intermingled properties here early in the seventeenth century (P.R.O., C2 Jas. I, B22: 13).

small cluster of dwellings in Eastburn.¹ The village or hamlet consisted of four husbandmen's houses and three cottages. At some time between 1667 and 1671 at least three of the houses and possibly one of the cottages were pulled down by a John Heron and "all grounds belonging the townshipp converted into Meadow and pasture."² But this did not lead to a physical enclosure. In 1698 the grounds of Eastburn and its neighbour Battleburn were lying "open for Sheepe Walks . . . & . . . not devided by Fences or ditches."³ By 1715 a rabbit warren had been planted in Eastburn.⁴ The final destruction of this, and its replacement by ploughed, hedged fields did not take place until the middle of the following century.⁵

In Cottam, too, an 'improvement', in the course of which houses were pulled down and changes made in the pattern of land use, did not lead to the disappearance of the unenclosed landscape. In 1698 the Dean and Chapter of York leased their estate of Cottam (83 oxgangs of 27 acres each) to Mary Mountaign, of York.⁶ Nine messuages and cottages were leased with the land. Eight years later Cottam was still a small village lying amidst its open lands: "The Township of Cottam hath within it but 92 Oxgangs of Land . . . of these 9 are Freehold . . . The Messuages and crofts with small peices of Inclosure about the Town are all included in the [rent of] 10 sh.p.Ox[gang]." But changes were in prospect in 1719. In that year the

lease came up for renewal. The Dean and Chapter decided to authorize the demolition of all but four of the houses, the task to be carried out "as soon as conveniently may be."⁷ A warren was planted shortly afterwards, and survived as a great tract of open ground until the nineteenth century.⁸ The economy of these wold warrens would repay investigation.

It is not always easy to trace the progress of enclosure in the depopulated townships, for much of it took place without leaving any record in the form of an enrolled award or deed. Occasionally, however, some chance reference, or the survival of a plan, throws light on the matter. This is so in Arras and Cowlam.

In the 1840's Arras was owned by William Constable Maxwell, and farmed by William Stephenson.⁹ In Stephenson's youth most of the 800 acres on the farm had been devoted to rabbits. There were no hedges, but a sod wall defined the outer boundary of the farm where it adjoined other warrens. Arras was described by Stephenson as being then "open to Sancton, Market Weighton and Gardham . . . there was no close or garden or subdivision fence . . . rabbits came up to the windows." This was the state of Arras until the late eighteenth century, when members of the Stephenson family began to plough, subdivide, and hedge the farm. This they achieved between about 1770 and 1820. In the 1840's almost all the estate was under the plough.¹⁰

¹ RAS 21B: 7, 1682-3, RAS 21B: 14, 1682-3, Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York. There is evidence in these papers for demolitions in Eastburn at an earlier period than the one discussed here. The events of the late seventeenth century appear to have affected what was already a shrunken settlement.

² *Ibid.* ³ RAS 43: 4, 1698, B.I.H.R. ⁴ DDHO 39: 2, 1719, East Riding Record Office, Beverley.

⁵ *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, series 2, v, 1869, p. 403.

⁶ S 1(1) A and C, Dean and Chapter library, York.

⁷ The lease book records, in 1706, that the tenants were poor and the houses difficult and costly to maintain in repair because of the shortage of timber.

⁸ Tithe map and apportionment, 1843-4 (Tithe Redemption Commission, London); enclosure award, 1851 (County Hall, Beverley). Large areas outside the warren were enclosed by 1843-4. The award of 1851 appears to have confirmed existing enclosures, extinguished rights of stray, and facilitated further enclosures.

⁹ Arras and Market Weighton tithe papers, 1838-44, Department of Geography, University of Hull. Stephenson was aged seventy-two in 1842, and had lived at Arras all his life.

¹⁰ The Tithe Apportionment gives the acreage of Arras as 874 acres, of which 825 acres were arable land.

A similar sequence of events occurred in Cowlam. In 1783 Cowlam farm contained about 1,900 acres of land, of which 1,500 or 1,600 acres were rabbit warren, about 200 acres arable land, and the remainder sheep walks.¹ The subdivision and hedging of the farm took place between 1783 and 1844, by which year a pattern of hedged fields covered the township, the warren had gone, and most of the land was under the plough.²

The character of the depopulated townships mentioned so far has been fairly clear: they were unenclosed, at least in large part, until the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, and they possessed considerable tracts of warren and pasture. There existed also a number of other depopulated places about which much less is known at this period, but which were certainly unenclosed.

The grounds belonging to the hamlet of Pockthorpe were awarded to Robert Macfarland in one block of nearly 700 acres, under the terms of the Nafferton enclosure award of 1773.³ Macfarland was to ring-fence where necessary, to separate his land from that of others. The Reverend Robert Rousby enclosed his Croom estate with the aid of an act of Parliament in 1775. Holme Field in Wetwang, which lay about the site of the village of Holme Archiepiscopi, was enclosed with the open fields of Wetwang in 1806.⁴ The open arable field of Tranby was enclosed at the same time as the open fields of the surviving settlements of Hessle and Anlaby in 1796. There is evidence that open land ex-

isted in other places, but no record of the date of enclosure is known.⁵

A decision to enclose in one township affected interests in an adjacent one in several of the places mentioned. Thus Macfarland held land in Nafferton fields next to Pockthorpe, and the arable field of Tranby was farmed by Hessle men.⁶ Circumstances such as these may explain why enclosure affected places at the same time. But the subject requires more attention than can be given it here.

The presence of unenclosed depopulated townships at this time is at first sight surprising, for there are numerous examples of the making of closes in such places, and at much earlier dates.⁷ But when considered in the light of the physical character and land-use history of the wolds, the existence of open lands becomes explicable.

There is evidence for depopulation and conversion of arable land into pasture in a number of wold villages before the eighteenth century, but little to suggest that those responsible for these events thought it worth their while to embark upon a physical enclosure of the property. There were good reasons for their reluctance.

If, as seems likely, depopulation was frequently followed by conversion of tillage to sheep pasture and rabbit warren, a full enclosure was unnecessary. Farming of this type could be successfully pursued without subdividing the land. In the case of sheep farming a ring-fence would reduce the labour

¹ Marshall, *op. cit.*, II, p. 262.

² Acreage 2,013, of which 1,564 acres arable (Tithe Apportionment). No record of the enclosure exists in Beverley.

³ For references in this paragraph see above, p. 97, n.2, unless otherwise stated.

⁴ The acreage awarded was 450 acres. That this included much, if not all, of the lands once belonging to the village of Holme is suggested by Torre, *Peculiars*, fo. 1073 (Dean and Chapter library, York), which gives the area of Holme as 32 oxgangs. The acreage of the oxgang in the parish of Wetwang varied, but its average size was 15 or 16 acres. I owe the Torre reference to Mr H. Dunton.

⁵ Easthorpe, 1690 (Inventory, Simon Newbald, May 1690, York Probate Registry); Raisthorpe, 1712 (Book E, pp. 51-2, R.D.B.); Neswick, 1714 (Book E, pp. 181-2, R.D.B.); Towthorpe, 1744 (Book R, p. 280, R.D.B.); Drewton, 1723 (Book H, pp. 585-6, R.D.B.); Cleaving, circa 1816 (Londesborough, enclosure plan, R.D.B.). But see Book F, 1717, pp. 62-3, *ibid.*, for enclosures here by a much earlier date.

⁶ DDHB 30: 25 and 26, undated, E.R.R.O. (for Pockthorpe); DDHB 1: 30, *ibid.*, and P.R.O., L.R. 229, ff. 49-63, 1608 (for Tranby).

⁷ M. W. Beresford, *Lost Villages of England*, 1954, *passim*.

bill for shepherding, but it was not essential. Furthermore, the attitude towards enclosure was strongly influenced by the knowledge that the wolds presented the would-be encloser with considerable problems. The local chalkstone does not make satisfactory field walls, and quickset hedges were required.¹ As the landowners of the eighteenth century found to their cost, these were not easily established on the higher parts of the district.² Timber for posts, rails, and gates had also to be imported into the area, for until the plantations of the later improvers began to yield there was very little available locally. The problem of fencing was fully appreciated in the age of Parliamentary enclosure, and there were attempts to find some substitute for full enclosure. The village bylaws were modified to allow seeds and turnips to be sown within the open arable fields, or the process of consolidating the scattered lands was hastened.³ It is perhaps significant that when an en- clo-

sure was made, it was sometimes many years before the ring-fenced allotments were subdivided into smaller closes.⁴ In sum, the depopulating squire of an earlier age could usually achieve his immediate end without going to the trouble and expense of a full enclosure. When changed circumstances provided an incentive, his descendant did in the depopulated township what others were doing, in spite of difficulties, elsewhere. The new landscape was created in populated and depopulated township alike.

The object of this paper has been to draw attention to the existence of lost villages on the wolds unenclosed until the age of Parliamentary enclosure, and to suggest, in general terms, reasons for their presence. Only a detailed study of individual villages will reveal the extent to which the pattern of land use was influenced by circumstances peculiar to each.⁵ It is hoped that this brief article will provide some basis for such detailed studies.⁶

¹ A good contemporary account of the problem in the eighteenth century is contained in *Trans. East Riding Antiq. Soc.*, II, 1894, pp. 69 ff.

² Isaac Leatham, *General View of the Agriculture of the East Riding of Yorkshire*, 1794, pp. 45-7.

³ The crops of the new husbandry were grown in the open fields of South Cave, Helpthorpe, Weaverthorpe, West Lutton, and Hunmanby during the eighteenth century.

⁴ Forty years after the execution of the award (1773), there were large tracts of land in Kilham awaiting subdivision.

⁵ Riplingham, for example, had a full set of open arable fields and pastures until 1801. The hamlet appears to be an example of shrinkage. There were ten dwellings standing in 1801, but foundations are known to exist near by. The pattern of dwellings in Riplingham in 1801 was essentially that of the present day. See enclosure award (R.D.B.); note-book of the commissioners for enclosure (Department of Geography, University of Hull); DDHB 35: 62, 1786, and DDHB 35: 64, 1802 (E.R.R.O.).

⁶ A preliminary investigation of some of the Holderness material suggests that the unenclosed lost village was relatively uncommon there (as would be expected if the argument advanced above is approximately correct), but was not unknown. See Book I, 1725, pp. 217-18, R.D.B. (open land in Hilderthorpe); agreement to enclose, 1758, Department of Geography, University of Hull, and act for the enclosure of Hornsea, 1801, R.D.B. (open fields in Southorpe in Hornsea); Book N, 1735, pp. 436-45, R.D.B. (open fields in Danthorpe). Both Southorpe and Danthorpe had a full and orthodox set of open fields until the enclosures. But in Southorpe the lands were farmed by persons who lived elsewhere.

Work in Progress

Compiled by JOAN THIRSK

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Yorkshire farming in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries.
- LONGMAN, J. FORD, *Department of Geography, Birkbeck College, London*.
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- MACPHERSON, ARCHIBALD, *Department of Geography, Edinburgh University*.
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- MARTIN, J. M., *Faculty of Commerce, Birmingham University*.
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- MATHIAS, PETER, *Queens' College, Cambridge*.
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- MCGREGOR, O. R., *Department of Social Studies, Bedford College, London*.
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- McHUGH, B. J., *Department of Geography, The Queen's University, Belfast*.
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- MINGAY, GORDON, *London School of Economics, London, W.C.2*.
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- MINTON, Miss J. G., *Fairbourne, Rose Valley, Brentwood, Essex.*
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- MOISLEY, H. A., *see under* CAIRD, J. B.
- MONTEITH, Mrs D., *6 Elm Court, Albert Road, Watford, Herts.*
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- NEWLYN, Miss ANNE C., *Department of Agricultural Economics, Reading University.*
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Climate and farming in Anglesey in the first part of the eighteenth century.
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Land drainage and reclamation in the marsh district of Lindsey.
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Income and estates of Coke, Townshend, Walpole, and other East Anglian noble families in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
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- PAWSON, Professor H. C., *University School of Agriculture, King's College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.*
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- PELHAM, R. A., *The Court House, West Meon, Hampshire.*
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- PERKIN, H. J., *Department of History, Manchester University.*
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- PETTIT, PHILIP, *Magdalen College, Oxford.*
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- PLUMMER, B. A. G., *Department of Geography, University College of Swansea.*
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- PORTMAN, DEREK, *Exeter University.*
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- POSTAN, Professor MICHAEL, *Peterhouse, Cambridge.*
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- PROUDFOOT, V. B., *Department of Geography, The Queen's University, Belfast.*
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- REVILL, S., 85 *Bedale Road, Nottingham*.
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- REYNOLDS, B., *Department of Geography, Queen Mary College, London*.
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- RILEY, K. C., *Department of Geography, Birkbeck College, London*.
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- RUSSELL, REX, 11 *Priestgate, Barton-on-Humber, Lincs.*
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- RUTHERFORD, S., *Department of Geography, Birkbeck College, London*.
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- RYDER, M. L., *Fernville, 68 Ash Road, Headingley, Leeds 6*.
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- SCHOVE, D. JUSTIN, *St David's College, 29 South Eden Park Road, Beckenham, Kent*.
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- THOMAS, E., 46 *Washington Road, Maldon, Essex*.
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- THOMPSON, F. M. L., *Department of History, University College, London*.
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- VOLLANS, Miss ELEANOR C., *Department of Geography, Bedford College, London*.
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- WILDING, J. R., 1 *Highgate Drive, Dronfield, near Sheffield*.
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- WILSON, C. P. H., *Peddar's Way, East Wretham, Thetford, Norfolk*.
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- WILSON, M. J., *Department of Geography, The Queen's University, Belfast*.
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- WITNEY, D., *Department of Economics, The Edinburgh and East of Scotland College of Agriculture, Edinburgh*.
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- YOUND, G., *Department of Geography, Liverpool University*.
Common lands and enclosure in Lancashire.

Letters to the Editor

OVER-POPULATION

SIR,—In two recent works, Mrs Thirsk's *English Peasant Farming*, and Dr Hoskins's *Midland Peasant*, it has been argued that there was over-population in Tudor and earlier times in some parts of rural England. This argument is one that must have aroused the greatest scepticism in more minds than mine. It seems almost impossible that there should be over-population in any rural district when the total population of the whole country was only about four millions, and wide areas still remained open to occupation.

Leaving that aside, Mrs Thirsk's story indicates that the Fenland farmers owned more cattle than they could conveniently feed rather than that there were more people than could maintain themselves, but this part of the question is not so easily answered as that in Dr Hoskins's book.

On p. 64 he states that each of the three open fields at Wigston contained approximately 900 acres, while on p. 62 he states that the pressure of population was acute. The cultivation was apparently the ordinary rotation of winter crops (mainly wheat and rye), spring crops, and fallow. There was therefore one field of 900 acres every year under winter corn for human eating, and one field of 900 acres under spring corn for human drink and animal feed. The third 900 acres was fallow. Each field included some ley strips; a generous, possibly excessive, allowance would be 200 acres. In the field under winter wheat and rye there would be 700 acres, and this would be the area under these crops every year. I think 200 acres of ley in each field is probably more than there actually was, because that would make a total of 600 acres ley in the three fields, but only Dr Hoskins could say precisely.

In the period under discussion Walter of Henley estimated only three times the seed as yield, but the anonymous *Hosebondrie* of about the same date recommends $1\frac{1}{2}$ quarters maslin or wheat seed on five acres, or 2.4

bushels an acre. The return was the greater in volume as the proportion of rye in the mixture was increased. Equal parts gave six times the seed; wheat alone only five times, the maslin yield being 14.4 bushels, the other 12. These estimated yields are optimistic for the time. Walter of Henley himself thinks wheat at times only returned three times a seeding of 2 bushels. In a favourable year the yield was somewhere between the two, and may perhaps have been as much as 10 bushels average for clean wheat or maslin of one mix or another. Wheat alone might be less; maslin might be more. Ten bushels is not, I think, excessive. On the 700 acres of the field under winter corn some 7,000 bushels of grain for human food would then be harvested. If the yield was lower, and the area of the field under crop was 800 acres or more—as it may very well have been—the result would not have been very different. There would have been getting on for 7,000 bushels to dispose of.

From this gross harvest the seed for the following year had to be saved, between 2 and 2.5 bushels an acre, or one-quarter or one-fifth of the whole. Estimating on the maximum seed requirement of $2\frac{1}{2}$ bushels, some 5,250 bushels were left to feed the population for a year. The maximum population stated by Dr Hoskins was 120 households in A.D. 1377 (p. 60). It was often much less. Taking Dr Hoskins's factor of 3.8 adults to each household, a total of 456 persons is obtained.

In the numerous writings of the eighteenth century dealing with the production of corn it is usually assumed that the healthy labourer consumed a quarter of wheat per annum. It seems doubtful whether rural dietetic habits had changed very much during the intervening 400 years, and reference to Maitland (*Domesday Book and Beyond*, p. 441) suggests the same bread requirement. The production of the wheat field at Wigston would therefore, on the basis of 10 bushels' yield on 700 acres, supply 525 persons; on the basis of 8 bushels only 385, and there would come a strain.

However, Maitland, dealing with the country as a whole, not a particular village, suggests that 2 acres per head were required to produce the bread and beer each individual consumed. One acre of this at Wigston was in the winter corn (wheat and rye) field, the other in the spring corn (barley, oats, etc.) field. If therefore the calculation is made on this basis 700 acres in the winter corn field would supply bread for 700 persons. Maitland mentions that some wheat and rye might be made into beer: he does not mention that some of the barley and oats might be consumed as bread.

If I have been over-generous in granting 200 acres of each of the three fields to be under ley, and there was really a much less amount, as I think likely, the position of the villagers would be by so much improved, and the problem of over-population less immediate. If there was so much, or indeed any, it was a reserve of land that could have been broken up for crops as the population increased. I feel that over-population at Wigston is "not proven."

G. E. FUSSELL

Mrs Thirsk writes: I have always tried to avoid using the term 'over-population' when writing of sixteenth-century England, since it is liable to conjure up a picture of modern China or parts of East Africa, where peasant holdings have become so much subdivided that they only support a family in conditions of semi-starvation. By "pressure of population on the land" in the sixteenth century I mean the problem that arose all over England, and was not simply confined to the fens, when the population of a township rose while its land remained fixed in area. It was a common phenomenon for a village of thirty households to increase its population to forty families within a matter of two or three generations. The additional householders, if they did not get their living as craftsmen or shopkeepers—and few people in the villages depended on this source of income alone—had to find a living on the land. Every one felt the pinch when more and more stock were pastured on the common grazings and more of the waste

was taken in and used to extend the arable land. To meet this situation various devices were adopted for using the land more economically. In the less congested parishes, economies were effected by turning unregulated wastes into regulated common pastures, in others by reducing the stint of animals previously agreed upon. In the more populous parishes, pressure on the land led to ley farming, less frequent fallowing in the open fields, and enclosure. There is no doubt that pressure of population on the land was the second agrarian problem of the sixteenth century, the first being that examined by Professor R. H. Tawney in *The Agrarian Problem of the Sixteenth Century* (1912), namely the effect of the price revolution on rural society.

Dr Hoskins writes: Like Dr Thirsk, I try to avoid the use of the term 'over-population'. In my book I refer to "pressure on the land" during the thirteenth and the early fourteenth centuries, and again towards the end of the sixteenth century. Even so, it is well known that there were great variations in the density of population between one part of England and another in these periods, and it was quite possible for the east midlands, for example, to be *relatively* over-populated and for other regions, such as most of northern England, to be *relatively* under-populated. There can be little doubt about the growing pressure on the land in England generally by the end of the sixteenth century, in the sense that tenants were seeking farms rather than landlords seeking tenants. I would have thought that both Dr Thirsk's book and my own showed this pressure at work in various parts of the east midlands at this period and later.

Mr Fussell's ingenious calculations about the production of bread-corn seem to me to be beside the point. By pressure on the land I meant the relationship between the number of farms available in a given parish or region and the number of people seeking farms, not whether people were getting enough to eat. The pressure of a growing population in most parts of England was aggravated by the

increasing tendency towards the engrossing and consolidation of farms. In the parish which I chose for study I showed that by the middle of the eighteenth century only one-third of the families occupied any land; two-thirds of the village population occupied no land at all but had to buy their food with their wages. In these circumstances calculations about the total output of food from a given area have little relevance to the argument.

I agree with Mr Fussell that "over-population at Wigston is 'not proven'." Economists will know that it is nearly impossible to prove that over-population exists at a given time and place, however one defines it. In my introduction (p. xv) I myself said that "one might almost have called the economic history of Wigston a study in over-population, but the materials are lacking to make such a study completely convincing." That is all that Mr Fussell is really saying, but for the wrong reasons.

FARM INVENTORIES AND PEASANTS

SIR,—Mr R. Trow-Smith in his review of Dr J. Thirsk's book *English Peasant Farming* (A.H.R. vi, p. 57) suggests that inventories of "peasants'" goods contain a great mass of incidental information such as: descriptions of farm implements, lists of buildings which housed them, the colours of cattle, and the age ranges of ewes and wethers in the flock. He complains that there is "little here (in the book) of such things." Can it be because he happens to have selected just the details on which farm inventories are unhappily silent or unreliable? I have examined and analysed a considerable number of farm inventories for this region of Sussex (see *Sussex Arch. Coll.*, xciii) and I have found little to support his ideas. It would be interesting to know on which part of England Mr Trow-Smith bases his notion and the number of inventories he examined. Here the implements are simply "ploughs, harrows, dung-pots, yokes, and harness." The farm buildings, many of which survive from the seventeenth century at least, are rarely mentioned and then only as "wheat in the barn" or "dung in the gate." I have yet

to see a reference to colour of cattle. The sheep, pigs, and young stock of all ages are usually grouped, e.g. "100 sheep and lambs." In general the livestock figures are valuable because they give some idea of the relative amounts of draught oxen to horses, cattle to sheep, which happened to be on the farm at death, and when used in bulk they may provide useful comparisons with other soil regions and other periods. But the young stock figures, if they happen to be given, are usually hopelessly ambiguous and inaccurately defined, e.g. "1 sow and 5 pigs" tells us something, but "15 pigs" is not much use because we do not know the amount of breeding stock. Livestock value was all that concerned the appraiser and the name was simply a peg on which to hang that value. A rough definition such as "a plough" or "the sheep" was all that was necessary in appraising a man's goods and chattels. Occasional amplifications are very welcome, but one or two stray inventories provide wholly unconvincing evidence from which to generalize. Probate inventories are not 4th-of-June returns from which anyone can produce nice tidy statistics. They are an invaluable source of agrarian information, as two scholars of great experience in their use, Drs Hoskins and Thirsk, have shown. Both understand their merits and their limitations.

Talking of peasants, can the authorities agree and define exactly what they mean by an English peasant? The O.E.D. does not help. If ten interested persons were asked to define an English peasant, I suggest there would be at least ten different and vague answers. Yeomen, husbandmen large and small, part-time tradesmen-smallholders such as millers and molecatchers, bond and free, are they all peasants? Was the parson using his glebe a holy peasant? Were the town-dwelling butchers and maltsters who farmed, urban peasants? By all means let us make use of the word, if there is no other, but let us know exactly what it means.

Yours truly,

G. H. KENYON

Kirdford, W. Sussex.

Book Reviews

A. A. PREOBRAZHENSII, *Ocherki kolonizatsii zapadnogo Urala v XVII-nachale XVIII v.* Akademiya nauk SSSR, 1956. 302 pp. 11 rubles 70 kopeks.

V. I. SHUNKOV, *Ocherki po istorii zemledelii Sibiri, XVII vek.* Akademiya nauk SSSR, 1956. 432 pp. 18 rubles 30 kopeks.

At first sight it might seem that these two works, Preobrazhenskii on the colonization of the western Urals in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and Shunkov on the history of agriculture in seventeenth-century Siberia, are of little relevance for West European readers. But even in a narrow sense the colonization of the western Urals is part of European history, since the Urals are the accepted boundary between Europe and Asia. Preobrazhenskii's book is also of interest in showing one late aspect of the vast process of agricultural settlement in Europe, while Shunkov's book, on the other hand, is concerned with settlement across the Urals in Siberia and with the spread of European farming techniques into Asia. Both books are thus of interest in providing material for comparison with the phase of colonial settlement experienced by many other European nations. Moreover, consideration of Russian colonization may help in focusing attention on one of the central economic problems of agrarian countries, the problem of accumulation.

In 1552 Kazan' fell before the artillery of Ivan the Dread. The collapse of the Kazan' khanate led to a rapid expansion of Muscovy, southwards down the Volga to the Caspian Sea and eastwards to the northern half of the Urals and beyond them into Siberia. In 1598 Verkhotur'e (60° E.) was founded; in 1649 Okhotsk (140° E.). In the previous year Popov and Dezhnev had sailed into the Pacific from the Arctic Ocean.

This extremely rapid expansion from the Urals to the Pacific was, of course, far from uniform and left behind vast areas of this sparsely occupied land untouched by Russian colonization. Preobrazhenskii is concerned

with the colonization of one such area, the main town of which, Kungur (which gave its name to the area), was not founded until 1649. Settlement was carried out mainly by fugitive peasants from more northerly territories bordering on the White Sea, sometimes with assistance from the merchant family of the Stroganovs, who were greatly concerned in the development of the area, or of the state. The native population, mainly semi-nomadic hunters and fishers, paid dues, known as *yasak*, in furs, which constituted a valuable item in Russian trade.

Colonization for the most part seems to have been peaceful, although the difference in culture between the Russians and the native Tatar, Ostyak, Vogul, and Bashkir peoples made the latter easy prey to merchants engaging in usury and to simple expropriations by the Muscovite state and land-owning monasteries. The Russian peasantry who settled the area also came to suffer increasingly from feudal imposts; peasants settled by the state were subject to a predial tithe, and there was a continued growth of money rents. The opening up of mines for iron and copper ores led to an increase in the services demanded. Such conditions sometimes led to revolts both by the native peoples, as in the Bashkir rising of 1662-4, and by the Russians, many of whom took part in Stenka Razin's revolt in 1671; but the ultimate resort was always flight into Siberia where land was abundant even if climatic conditions were more severe.

Shunkov's book consists of a series of essays on each of the five main agricultural areas in seventeenth-century Siberia and on a number of specific topics, such as pre-Russian agriculture in the areas, techniques used, the grain trade, and the feudal system in the countryside. From 1598 till 1763 Verkhotur'e was the officially recognized gateway to Siberia. The government strove, for fiscal and other reasons, to restrict entry into Siberia to the recognized route starting at Verkhotur'e, going east along the Ob' to

Narym, then across the Yenisei and along the Lena to Yakutsk. Four of the five regions described by Shunkov lay along this route. The fifth was the less important Transbaikal and Amur region. In fact, there was a general tendency, as one moved eastwards away from the more densely populated European areas with their long-established agricultural techniques, for agriculture to be relatively less important and to have less advanced techniques. Even in the seventeenth century the Verkhotur'e agricultural area and the Yenisei area produced a surplus of grain, and there was some individual production for the market. But other areas remained consumers of grain, which often had to be imported over very great distances. While the three-field system was well established in western and central Siberia, eastern Siberia retained the two-field system. The techniques in use, in fact, varied considerably, but all appear to have been based on Russian experience supplemented by local knowledge, especially in the question of the crops to be grown. The traditional centres of agricultural activity which had formerly existed in Central Asia lay far to the south and were only incorporated in the Russian Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; moreover, they had never regained their former level after the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century.

Both books make a real contribution towards reassessing Russia's eastward expansion. This has usually been explained as due to trade expeditions, largely for the furs to be won from the peoples of the Siberian forests. Even the works of so eminent a scholar as Bakhrushin contain hardly any references to peasant colonization. Yet, even if the later colonization of Siberia had its ancestry in the plundering expeditions sent out by the city of Novgorod from the early Middle Ages, the regularization of similar expeditions and the growth of *yasak* required peasant settlement. The scale of operations by the state and by such merchants as the Stroganovs, the distances to be covered, and the severely continental nature of the climate meant that the forces used to extract *yasak* had to be self-

supporting. The native agriculture was inadequate for such a task. The result was that by the end of the seventeenth century almost half of all Russians in Siberia were peasants and many of the remainder engaged partially in agriculture.

The development of Siberian agriculture described in these books, although at a higher level in that it was more productive than native forms, was extensive rather than intensive in its efforts to increase output. The horse-drawn *sokha* (a two or more tined ard) replaced the hoe and digging stick; but the iron shoes for tipping the *sokha* long continued to be imported from European Russia and consequently were extremely costly in the more easterly regions. Moreover, such imports could only be undertaken by those with large capital who could wait the long periods necessary before any return was obtained. Shunkov points out that the grain trade, similarly, was to a large extent in the hands of the state and large merchants. The need for capital and the results of this in the particular conditions of seventeenth-century Siberia are not as fully developed as they might be in Shunkov's book; but such a large question is perhaps outside the scope of such a work.

Both books are particularly valuable to a reader in this country in that they make use of many sources, some unpublished, not available here, and they are well documented. It is regrettable that the only map included by Preobrazhenskii should be the Academy of Sciences map of 1745 which, although of interest, is so badly reproduced that the inscriptions can hardly be deciphered. The maps in Shunkov's book are clear and well produced but diagrammatic. Both books lack an index.

R. E. F. SMITH

HAIM HALPERIN, *Changing Patterns in Israel Agriculture*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957. 28s.

The agricultural historian accustomed to a study of the relatively slow changes in the agriculture of most European countries might at first raise his eyebrows when con-

fronted with this book. It sets out to trace the developments in Israel's agriculture over a period of only six years, from the time Israel achieved statehood in 1948 till the year 1954. The author, however, succeeds in showing that even in this very short time significant trends are discernible.

One is apt to think of Israel as an agricultural country because the whole process of the Jewish return to recognized nationhood had been conceived by Zionism as a return to the land. It is, therefore, interesting to learn that the share of primary occupations of the total earning population had declined from about 47 per cent in 1942 to only about 18 per cent in 1954, and that, conversely, the earners in tertiary occupations had increased their share from about 31 to roughly 50 per cent. Equally, in 1942 the rural population still constituted 54 per cent of the total population, but by 1954 it made up only 30 per cent. The contribution of agriculture to Israel's national economy was estimated in 1954 to amount to 13.8 per cent, producing only about 50 per cent of the country's consumption of agricultural products.

We are told that hand in hand with the mentioned national trends went an urbanization of originally purely agricultural settlements. The first of the modern Jewish settlements established in Israel had been created by private settlers on their own individual initiative and with their own private funds. The author traces how many of these settlers—particularly in the settlements in the plain near towns—have taken on urban occupations in addition to their agricultural pursuits. One is reminded, for instance, of the similar experience of the mid-nineteenth century Chartist settlements in Oxfordshire.

Another important trend has been emphasized by the author. The outstanding achievement in the settlement of the country and in the development of Israel's agriculture by the collective type of settlements is well known. The author compares the development of the relative importance of the two main types of settlement, the "individualistic" and the "collectivist" ones. In 1947 still over 7 per

cent of the total population of Israel lived in "collective" settlements, but by 1952 only just under 5 per cent. On the other hand, the share of the people in the "individualistic" settlements had risen from 3 to 5 per cent. However, the "collectives" in 1953 still cultivated an area double that of the "individualistic" villages, i.e. somewhat less than half of the gross cultivated area of the country.

The book provides a well documented account of one of the most fascinating spectacles in agrarian history: the development in less than a lifetime from the Arab village in which a biblical agriculture was still carried on in the twentieth century to the most modern experiments in human and technical effort to produce food. For a person not familiar with Israeli technical terms it is sometimes not easy to follow the author, and his knack of often providing differently arranged sets of figures to show or prove the same point is slightly disconcerting. G. P. HIRSCH

M. W. BERESFORD and J. K. S. ST JOSEPH,
Medieval England, an Aerial Survey.
Cambridge University Press, 1958. xiv +
276 pp. 45s.

This handsome volume provides the best possible introduction to the visible remains (churches excepted) of medieval England. It contains 111 fine air-photographs by Dr St Joseph, and twenty-eight maps and plans. The subjects include field systems, villages, parks, mills, market towns, ports, castles, mines, quarries, salterns, roads, causeways, and hundred meeting-places. One might perhaps wish that the subjects had been more evenly distributed geographically: the index map on p. 275 shows that Wessex is but thinly represented, and the west midlands hardly at all. But the survey is not meant to be exhaustive; it is rather a selection of typical sites. To each illustration Mr Beresford appends a commentary in which he relates the history of the place, drawing upon a wide range of published and unpublished sources, and frequently supplementing them from his personal explorations. Always an interesting and scholarly writer, Mr Beresford has found

here a medium which suits him better than a work *de longue haleine*, and this succession of short articles displays him at his very best.

One example, chosen at random, will show the wealth of interest to be found in these pages. Fig. 98 illustrates Bentley Grange in the West Riding parish of Emley, a farm which until the sixteenth century belonged to the Cistercians of Byland. Behind the farmhouse ridges of ancient ploughland are discernible. These must be at least 750 years old, for the lines of the ridges are interrupted and overlain at frequent intervals by spoil-heaps, consisting of waste material from iron-pits which were worked from the late twelfth to the early sixteenth century. In the centre of each spoil-heap a hollow, now harbouring a tree or thorn-bush, marks the position of the ancient shafts which have collapsed. A light-coloured strip in the foreground was produced by the bull-dozer in 1951, when open-cast mining for coal was in contemplation.

Two points in Mr Beresford's remarks on open-field agriculture invite criticism. On p. 23, speaking of "the basic units of medieval fields," he seems to equate the selion with the strip and also with the unit loosely described in Latin documents as *acra*. But in west midland charters we find references to "two acres containing five [or it may be six] selions," and in two examples from an east midland village cited by Dr Hoskins, fourteen out of forty-one strips consisted of two selions together, and twenty-three consisted of a single selion. Secondly, no one reading Mr Beresford's remarks about grass balks would gather that these balks occur as boundaries of strips in practically all our surviving open fields except at Laxton, and that Miss Beecham, writing in this REVIEW (IV, pp. 40-4), cited numerous instances from the past. Moreover, the survey of Newark-on-Trent published by Mr M. W. Barley provides the medieval evidence for these balks (*metae*) which the late Dr Orwin desiderated: evidence which, by the way, can be supplemented from a medieval court-roll of that most unlikely place, Tooting Bec.

H. P. R. FINBERG

MARY D. LOBEL (ed.), *A History of the County of Oxford*, Vol. v, Bullingdon Hundred. O.U.P., 1957. xxvi+344 pp. 63s.

The Victoria History of Oxfordshire enjoys some important advantages, notably the use of the Bodleian Library's rich collections of topographical material and the presence, in the muniment rooms of Oxford colleges, of a mass of documents relating to the administration of estates in the county. This wealth of material is fortunately in the hands of an enlightened editor, and the present volume, which deals with the twenty-six parishes of Bullingdon Hundred, is a lively and in many ways an exemplary contribution to the series.

Bullingdon is "one of the larger and . . . the most central" of the hundreds of Oxfordshire, stretching eastwards from the Isis and the Cherwell to the Ray and the Thame, and its constituent parishes range from St Clement's, by Magdalen Bridge, and industrial Cowley, through Iffley and Wheatley to the remoteness of Waterperry and Piddington. There is as much variety to be found in these few miles as anywhere in the country, and it is perhaps a pity that the introductory chapter has to deal baldly with the hundred as a fief and an administrative unit, and so misses an opportunity of unifying the diverse parish histories that follow. It is true that hundred boundaries often trace an arbitrary pattern on the ground, as do those of Bullingdon, but it is at least arguable that as the hundreds have been chosen as the units of county history their geology and topography should receive the same attention as their descents.

This deficiency does not impair the parish histories themselves, which are written on an unusually generous scale. The villages are carefully described; their churches and great houses are illustrated by reproductions of prints and drawings, while an excellent series of field maps deserves special mention as an innovation that could profitably be imitated in other counties. Another striking feature of this volume is the length of the sections on social and economic history, which are written with a careful eye to topography, and present in particular a coherent and reason-

ably detailed history of agricultural practice in the region.

Inevitably there is more to be said on some topics than can be included in such a survey, and such matters as the foundation of Cuddesdon Theological College and John Buchan's residence at Elsfield receive only summary notice, but compression weakens the history only when we turn to the industrial and suburban parishes of Oxford, where Cowley in particular suffers from the cramping scale to which the editor has to work. The "history and topography of this area after 1928" are to be treated in the volume on the city of Oxford, but even so the following passage seems under-emphatic: "Early in the 20th century the Church Army opened a small printing works in the disused Congregational chapel in Temple Road, and in 1912 the firm of Morris Garages began to assemble the parts of motor cars at Temple Cowley. The working of the poor law between 1714 and 1833 can be gathered. [&c.]" St Clement's, which contains nothing so intractable as Morris Motors, has fared rather better, although the description of the parish in the eighteenth century and after, enlivened by reminiscences of Thomas Hearne and Richard Steele, may not prepare the reader for a sight of its scruffy reality. In the rural parishes, on the other hand, the presence of council houses and the infrequency of omnibus services are justly recognized as matters of no less significance in village history than are fractions of knights' fees, and they are scrupulously noted.

The lack of balance between the urban and rural parish histories is a failing not of this book but of the series to which it belongs, and derives from the uniformity which the Victoria History seeks vainly to impose upon English local history. There is another and more dangerous pitfall which the Oxfordshire editor and her learned contributors have avoided, and for this the reader may be grateful. The most unsatisfactory feature of the Victoria History is commonly its unnatural and monotonous impersonality, qualities that remind us that the history of this village

or of that is included, not because some one thought it urgently interesting and wanted to write it, but because this is the Victoria History and it must be done. There is little zest in reading where there is none in writing, and there can be none where the writer's own judgement is superseded by arbitrary rules mechanically applied. In this history of Bullingdon Hundred an ampler scale and a freer use of material carry a conviction that the work is worth doing for its own sake. It would be as well if this quality were to spread widely, but there is unfortunately a prefatory note that speaks of the best articles here as "an experiment," and one that is "not for universal imitation." Imitation, that is to say, within the little universe of the Victoria History: subscribers in the other counties will regret the decision. GEOFFREY MARTIN

ROBERT DAUVERGNE, *Les caractères originaux de l'histoire rural française, Tome deuxième*. Paris: Armand Colin, 1956. xxviii+230 pp.

The first edition of this work was published in Oslo in 1931. Its author, Marc Bloch, had collected material for a second edition and most of this was retrieved in 1944 and, with the remainder of his library, is now lodged in the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris. Marc Bloch served with the Résistance and was shot near his birth place at Lyons in June 1944.

This supplement, based on his published papers and manuscripts, has the same chapter headings as the first edition. M. Dauvergne integrates into each chapter the work of Marc Bloch and that of other authors subsequent to 1931. He shows how the inquiring mind of a great scholar was ranging widely over customs and clearances, settlements and farming methods. Marc Bloch was examining both variations throughout Europe and in French regional patterns. The work is prefaced by a bibliography of related works, mainly by French authors, published between 1930 and 1955, and it draws attention to a mass of widely scattered material. Above all, it shows how much is owed, in studies of rural life, to the work and stimulus of Marc

Bloch. Subsequent work, still so inspired, may make a further supplement necessary. In this case, some illustrated examples, comparable to the fine series in the 1931 edition, might be added, together with a full index to replace the inadequate place-names index in this volume.

MARGARET DAVIES

JOHN T. SCHLEBECKER and ANDREW W. HOPKINS, *A History of Dairy Journalism in the United States, 1810-1950*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1957. xi+424 pp., illus. \$6.

Since the middle of last century a large number of American journals have been started which have been concerned with dairy farming, cattle breeding, or the dairy industry itself. Many of these journals had a short life before ceasing publication or being absorbed by other periodicals. This book is an attempt to survey these journals and the influence that their editors and contributors have had on dairying in the United States, and to assess the rôle of dairy journalists as interpreters and translators of scientific discovery and information for the benefit of the dairy industry generally. The survey is not concerned with the scientists and others who have actually contributed to the developments in the American dairy industry.

In compiling the information for this book, the authors state that in most cases they have read one volume in every five of each journal but have examined every volume when the periodical lived for less than five years. In addition, to get a large cross-section of editorial opinion on important events in American history, many publications were read for such years as 1893 (the panic and Columbian Exposition) and 1898 (the Spanish-American War). Information was also obtained by direct contact with the editors of the journals which still exist.

The period 1810-1950 is divided into thirteen chapters, some covering a short and others a much longer period of time. The reason for choosing these very unequal lengths of time is not very evident to the reviewer but they appear to be roughly related

to periods of development or recession in American farming and dairying circles. Before 1852 there were no dairying periodicals, the agricultural press supplying the medium for any journalists' articles on dairying subjects, but two journals were started between 1852 and 1875, thirteen between 1875 and 1883, and six between 1883 and 1885. This latter period saw the advent of two of the best-known journals, *Hoard's Dairyman* and the *Jersey Bulletin*. The editors of these two periodicals, W. D. Hoard and D. H. Jenkins, had a great influence on the dairy-farming public and became leaders of opposite camps in the dairy world, fighting many a wordy battle between 1885 and 1910. During this period a further seventy-one dairying journals appeared but none of them assumed the prominence of Hoard's and Jenkins's publications. Since 1911 some seventy more journals have begun publication. A large number of them are, however, no longer in existence, but *Hoard's Dairyman* still continues to have a very large subscription list, now believed to be over a third of a million.

Throughout this survey, brief references are made to editorial comments on the introduction of such developments as silos for conserving feed, cream separators for butter-making, starters for cheese-making, pasteurization of milk, tuberculosis eradication, and the Babcock test for butter-fat. The authors also frequently quote editorial columns on such topics as monopolies, oleomargarine, State legislation, and other controversial subjects, and show how the editorial policy of these dairying journals attempted to sway farming and dairying opinion.

Throughout, the picture is purely a national one, and as such, will probably be of limited interest outside the United States except to the student of American social or agricultural history and possibly some dairying students and librarians. The book is printed by the photo-offset process from typescript and contains over 100 pages of appendices, notes, bibliography, and a good index.

A. W. MARSDEN

Members of the British Agricultural History Society

- Aberg, F. A., The Museum, High Street, Ipswich, Suffolk.
 Adams, R. H., Poplars, Midford Road, Bath, Somerset.
 Agate, R. G., 12 Wilton Grove, Wimbledon, S.W.19.
 Agriculture, Fisheries & Food, Ministry of (Library), 3 Whitehall Place, S.W.1.
 Alderton, D. L., 34 Wall Road, Norwich, Norfolk.
 Allison, K. J., 57 Huntington Road, York.
 Archbell, Mrs J. E., Manor Farm, Stokeham, Retford, Notts.
 Arnold, B. J., 20 Stanborough Green, Welwyn Garden City, Herts.
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 Ashmore, O., Willow House, Clitheroe Road, Whalley, Blackburn, Lancs.
 Aston, T. H., Corpus Christi College, Oxford.
 Baggs, Miss B. M., 26B Ely Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warks.
 Bagshawe, T. W., Angmering House, Angmering-on-Sea, East Preston, Sussex.
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 Baulkwill, W. J., 62 Shepherd's Close, Hurley, nr Maidenhead, Berks.
 Beauchamp, Cdr L. K., R.N. (ret.), Elmhurst, Manor Way, Lee on the Solent, Hants.
 Beavington, F., 39 Snow Hill, Maulden, Bedford.
 *Beecham, Miss A., Florence Nightingale Hall, University Park, Nottingham.
 Beeson, A. J., The Stone House, Boughton Monchelsea, Maidstone, Kent.
 Belfast Museum and Art Gallery, Stranmillis.
 Belfast, The Queen's University.
 *Beresford, M. W., Dept. of Economics & Commerce, The University, Leeds 2.
 Binnall, The Rev. P. B. G., Barkwith Rectory, Wragby, Lincoln.
 Birch, J. W., Dept. of Geography, The University, Bristol 8.
 Birmingham University, Edgbaston.
 Bissett, G. B., 7 Redlands Road, Reading, Berks.
 Black, C. J., Agricultural Economics Section, Leeds University, 40 University Road, Leeds 2.
 Blagburn, C. H., 27 Marlborough Avenue, Reading, Berks.
 Bledisloe, Rt Hon. Lord, P.C., K.B.E., Redhill, Lydney, Glos.
 Boatfield, G. S., Oak Cottage, Little Wenham, Colchester, Essex.
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 Bones, J., Wells Farm, Eastry, Sandwich, Kent.
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 Bowden, P. J., 49 Vainor Road, Wadsley, Sheffield 6, Yorks.
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 Bristol University, Agricultural Economics Dept., 1 Courtenay Park, Newton Abbot, Devon.
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 Cambridge University, Dept. of Estate Management, 74 Trumpington Street, Cambridge.
 Cambridge University, School of Agriculture, Downing Street, Cambridge.
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 Cash, Miss M. E., Shepherd's Crown, Tadworth, Surrey.
 Cave, W. E., Lower House, Everleigh, Marlborough, Wilts.
 Chaloner, W. H., Room 6, Arts Building, The University, Manchester 13.
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 Chapman, D. H., 8 Church Street, Wye, Ashford, Kent.
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 Christie, Mrs H. E., The Pound House, Croftsthorpe, Pershore, Worcs.
 Clark, F. C., Ceylon House, The Common, Cranbrook, Kent.
 Clark, Mrs H. H., School of Agriculture, King's College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1.
 Clark, Miss K. M., 54 Bayswater Road, W.2.
 Clark, R., 91 Highcliffe Road, Sheffield 11.
 Clarke, H. E., 6 Grange Park, Ealing, W.5.
 Clayton, Miss J., Hollies, Beech Grove, Greenmount, Bury, Lancs.
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 Coppock, J. T., Dept. of Geography, University College, Gower Street, W.C.1.
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 Crossley, J. C., 21 Waverley Terrace, Bradford 7, Yorks.
 Crowther, C., 79 Cheam Road, Ewell, Surrey.
 Curnow, P. W., Manor Farm, Milton, nr Wells, Somerset.
 Darby, H. C., Dept. of Geography, University College, Gower Street, W.C.1.
 Davidson, T. D., Wedgwood, 44 Fairdene Road, Coulsdon, Surrey.
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 Doncaster West End Secondary School, Kirkby Avenue, Doncaster, Yorks.
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 Fleck, Sir Alexander, Imperial Chemical House, Millbank, S.W.1.
 Fletcher, T. W., Agricultural Economics Dept., The University, Manchester 13.
 Ford, C. P., 46 Culvers, South Harting, Petersfield, Hants.
 Forde-Johnston, J., 17 Yewtree Close, Liverpool 12.
 Fox, R. J., Agricultural Offices, The Grove, Mount Tavy, Tavistock, Devon.
 Franklin, T. B., 23 Orchard Road South, Edinburgh 4.
 Franks, C., 29 Mosley Street, Nelson, Lancs.
 Fuller, Miss G. J., Dept. of Geography, The University, Nottingham.
 *Fussell, G. E., 55 York Road, Sudbury, Suffolk.
 Gailey, R. A., c/o Dept. of Geography, The University, Glasgow.
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 Handley, J. E., St Mungo's Academy, 48 Parson Street, Glasgow, C.4.
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 Havinden, M., Sandfield, London Road, Headington, Oxford.
 *Hay, A., The Association of Agriculture, 53 Victoria Street, S.W.1.
 Hayes, A. B., 35 Russell Drive, Wollaton, Nottingham.
 Hellier, Miss R., Cranesden, North Street, Midhurst, Sussex.
 Henderson, H. C. K., 557 Uxbridge Road, Hatch End, Pinner, Middx.
 Henriques, Col. R. D. Q., Winson Mill Farm, Bibury, nr Cirencester, Glos.
 Hewitt, G. E., Heapham Mill, nr Gainsborough, Lincs.
 Higgs, C., Hatton Rock, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warks.
 *Higgs, J. W. Y., Dept. of Agriculture, Parks Road, Oxford.
 Hill, W. L., World Crops, Stratford House, 9 Eden Street, N.W.1.
 Hilton, N., 3 Eldon Square, Reading, Berks.
 *Hilton, R. H., Phoenix Cottage, Fladbury, Pershore, Worcs.
 Hodson, J. H., 415 Derby Road, Adams Hill, Nottingham.
 Hoskins, W. G., 3 St Leonards Road, Exeter, Devon.
 *Houston, G., 71 Victoria Park Drive South, Glasgow, W.4.
 Howells, B. E., Erw Wen, Brynglas Road, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, Cards.
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 Jenks, J. E. F., West View, Horseshoe Road, Pangbourne, Berks.
 Jennings, B., 2 Conan Gardens, Richmond, Yorks.
 Jervoise, Major F. H. T., Herriard Park, Basingstoke, Hants.
 Jewell, C. A., Museum of English Rural Life, 7 Shinfield Road, Reading, Berks.
 Jewell, P. A., 37 Newton Road, W.2.
 Johnson, S. A., 79 County Road North, Bricknell Avenue, Hull, E. Yorks.
 Jones, J. O., Agricultural Economics Research Institute, Parks Road, Oxford.
 Keil, I., Dept. of Economics, The University, Liverpool 7.
 Kennedy, R. A., Art Gallery & Museum, Brighton, Sussex.
 Kenyon, G. H., Iron Pear Tree Farm, Kirdford, nr Billingshurst, Sussex.
 Kerridge, E., 'Deva', Hooton Road, Willaston, Wirral, Cheshire.
 Ketton-Cremer, R. W., Felbrigg Hall, Roughton, Norwich.

- King, L. J., Punccknowle Manor, Dorchester, Dorset.
 Lackham School of Agriculture, Lacock, nr Chippenham, Wilts.
 Laird, Sir Patrick, K.B.E., C.B., 18 Highfield Road, Hertford.
 Lamb, R., Knighton Manor Farm, Broadchalke, Salisbury, Wilts.
 Lane, G. M., 38 Hamlet Road, Romford, Essex.
 Langdon, A. J., 27 Woodthorpe Road, Tetterhall, Wolverhampton, Staffs.
 Lawton, R., Dept. of Geography, 12 Abercromby Square, Liverpool 7.
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 London University, Kings College, Strand, W.C.2.
 London University, Wye College, Ashford, Kent.
 Long, D., Upper Woodend Farm, Fawley Green, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon.
 *Long, W. H., Dept. of Agricultural Economics, The University, Leeds 2.
 Lowe, D., Elvingston, Gladsmuir, E. Lothian.
 Lyth, P., Nottinghamshire Farm Institute, Brakenhurst, Southwell, Notts.
 MacTaggart, Sir Andrew, Ockhams, Edenbridge, Kent.
 Manchester University.
 Manx Museum, Douglas, Isle of Man.
 Marshall, J. T., Beech Cottage, Ixworth, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.
 Marsden, A. W., 76 Elmhurst Road, Reading, Berks.
 Mason, T. A., Reynard Ing., Ilkley, Yorks.
 Massey-Ferguson Ltd, Fletchamstead Highway, Coventry, Warks.
 Maxwell, S., National Museum of Antiquities, Queen Street, Edinburgh 2.
 McCann, N. F., Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food, Government Buildings, Lawnswood, Leeds 16.
 McGregor, O. R., Far End, Wyldes Close, N.W.11.
 McKergow, P. R. W., 14 Hatter Street, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.
 McKerral, A., Morton, Mid Calder, Midlothian.
 Mead, W. R., Dept. of Geography, University College, Gower Street, W.1.
 Meiklejohn, A. K. M., Edinburgh and East of Scotland College of Agriculture, 5 Duke Street, Edinburgh 1.
 Midgley, Miss L. M., 84 Wolverhampton Road, Stafford.
 Milburn, T. A., Federation of Young Farmers Clubs, 23 Old Elvet, Durham.
 Miles, B., 139 Albert Street, N.W.1.
 Miller, T. E., 19 Yorkersgate, Malton, N. Yorks.
 Millington, A. G. E., The Training College, Bognor Regis, Sussex.
 Mills, F. D., 12 Richmond Road, Caversham, Reading, Berks.
 *Minchinton, W. E., University College, Swansea, Glam.
 Mingay, G. E., 16 Fair Oak Drive, Eltham, S.E.9.
 Minton, Miss J. G., 86 Truro Road, Bowes Park, N.22.
 Morohundiya, S. O., 61 Brackenbury Road, W.6.
 Morris, S. T., Dept. of Agricultural Economics, 1 Courtenay Park, Newton Abbot, Devon.
 Morten, I. H., The Plex Farm, Burbage, Buxton, Derbyshire.
 Munby, L. M., Pestells, West Wickham, Cambs.
 Nash, E. F., Dept. of Agricultural Economics, Cambrian Place, Aberystwyth, Cards.
 National Farmers' Union, Agriculture House, 25/31 Knightsbridge, S.W.1.
 National Institute for Research in Dairying, Shinfield, Berks.
 National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, Queen Street, Edinburgh 2.
 Neame, T., Macknade, Faversham, Kent.
 Newlyn, Miss A., Agricultural Economics Dept., 7 Redlands Road, Reading, Berks.
 Newrick, J. A., High Whitestones, Ireshopeburn, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham.
 Nightingale, M., 21 Dartmouth Row, S.E.10.
 North of Scotland College of Agriculture, 41½ Union Street, Aberdeen.
 North Staffordshire, University College of, Keele.
 North Wales, University College of, Bangor, Caern.
 Northampton County Library.
 Northern Ireland Public Record Office, Law Courts Building, May Street, Belfast.
 Norwich City Museums.
 Nottingham University.
 Nottingham University, School of Agriculture, Sutton Bonington, Loughborough, Leics.

- Nowill, Miss A. C., St Michaels House, Sutton Bonington, Loughborough, Leics.
 Oliver, J., Dept. of Geography, University College, Swansea, Glam.
 O'Loan, J., Dept. of Agriculture, Government Buildings, Dublin, Eire.
 O'Mahony, D., Robinscourt, Model Farm Road, Cork, Eire.
 *Ordish, F. G., 178 London Road, St Albans, Herts.
 Orwin, Mrs C. S., 229 Whitecross, Woolton, Abingdon, Berks.
 Oschinsky, Miss D., The University, Liverpool 3.
 Owen, A. E. B., 2 Fellows Road, Hampstead, N.W.3.
 Owen, G., Alison, Church Road, Woodley, Reading, Berks.
 Oxford University, Agricultural Economic Research Institute.
 Oxford University, Dept. of Agriculture.
 Parker, R. A. C., The Queen's College, Oxford.
 Partridge, E. A., Kersey, Hadleigh, Suffolk.
 Pawle, I. P., Gales Farm, Peasenhall, Saxmundham, Suffolk.
 Pawson, H. C., 56 Dunholme Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 4.
 Payne, F. G., Welsh Folk Museum, St Fagans Castle, Cardiff.
 Perry, P. J., Green Acres, Quarry Lane, Snarestone, nr Burton-on-Trent, Staffs.
 Pettit, P. A. J., Syresham, nr Brackley, Northants.
 Phillips, J. H., British Broadcasting Corporation, Carpenter Road, Birmingham 15.
 Phillips, R., Kilrie, Caradoc Road, Aberystwyth, Cards.
 Pledge, H. T., 30 Woodlands Road, Redhill, Surrey.
 Postan, M. M., Peterhouse, Cambridge.
 Price, P. A., Glenhyng School, Dodderhill, Droitwich Spa, Worcs.
 Prince, H. C., Dept. of Geography, University College, Gower Street, W.C.1.
 Proudfoot, V. B., Dept. of Geography, The Queen's University, Belfast.
 Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, W.C.2.
 Rankin, Sir Hugh Rhys, Bart., Green Lane, Bryngwyn, via Kington, Herefordshire.
 Ransomes, Sims & Jefferies Ltd, Ipswich, Suffolk.
 Rea, E., Windrush, Rotherfield Greys, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon.
 Reading University.
 Rees, W., Willowfield, St Edryn's Road, Cardiff.
 Reid, J. A., 28 Anderson Street, Airdrie, Lanarkshire.
 Renold, Miss P., 2 Palace Gardens Terrace, W.8.
 Reynolds, L. C. K., The Upper Flat, Woolstaples, Prentice Street, Lavenham, Suffolk.
 Roberson, L. H., The Grammar School, Fowey, Cornwall.
 Roberts, R. A., University College of N. Wales, Bangor, Caern.
 Robinson, G. G., Claybridge Farm, Sykehouse, nr Goole, W. Yorks.
 Rosewarne, J. N., Cliffside Private Hotel, Perranporth, Cornwall.
 Ross, H., Leighton Villa, Wellhead Lane, Westbury, Wilts.
 Rothamsted Experimental Station, Harpenden, Herts.
 Rowe, W. J., Dept. of Modern History, The University, Liverpool 3.
 Royal Agricultural Society of England, 35 Belgrave Square, S.W.1.
 Royal Dublin Society, Ball's Bridge, Dublin, Eire.
 Royal Highland & Agricultural Society of Scotland, 8 Eglinton Crescent, Edinburgh 12.
 Rudkin, Mrs E., Willoughton, Gainsborough, Lincs.
 Rumble, C. D., 2 The Homestead, Old Church Road, Clevedon, Somerset.
 Rural Industries Bureau, 35 Camp Road, Wimbledon, S.W.19.
 Russell, R. C., 11 Priestgate, Barton-on-Humber, Lincs.
 Ryder, M. L., 68 Ash Road, Headingley, Leeds 6.
 Rye Grammar School, Sussex.
 Salaman, R. A., 8 Holly Bush Lane, Harpenden, Herts.
 Saltmarsh, J., King's College, Cambridge.
 Saltzman, L. F., 53 The Avenue, Lewes, Sussex.
 Sandilands, Miss M. M., Dept. of Agricultural Economics, St Michael's House, Sutton Bonington, Loughborough, Leics.
 Sayce, R. U., 7 Broadway, Withington, Manchester 20.
 Science Museum, S.W.7.
 Science Museum Library, S.W.7.
 Scott, Mrs R., Llanidan Hall, Brynsiencyn, Anglesey.
 Sephton, C. C., Summerseat, Broad Lane, Moss Bank, nr St Helens, Lancs.
 Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warks.
 Shaw, D. H., 28 Brantwood Road, Luton, Beds.
 Sheppard, Miss J. A., Dept. of Geography, Queen Mary College, Mile End Road, E.1.
 Simpson, J., Clovelly, Church Lane, Southery, Norfolk.
 Sinnhuber, K. A., Dept. of Geography, University College, Gower Street, W.C.1.
 Skillington, Mrs F. E., 20 Victoria Park Road, Leicester.
 Slack, W. J., 8 Woodlands Park, Wenlock Road, Shrewsbury.
 Smee, Miss D. K., Dept. of Geography, Bedford College, Regent's Park, N.W.1.

- Smillie, D. M., Agricultural College, Auchincruive, Ayrshire.
 Smith, A. H., Wolverstone Hall, Ipswich, Suffolk.
 Smith, J. H., 10 King's Cross Terrace, Aberdeen.
 Smith, R. E. F., 13 Langley Road, Small Heath, Birmingham 10.
 South Wales, University College of, Cathays Park, Cardiff.
 Stamp, L. D., Ebbingford Manor, Bude, Cornwall.
 Statham, M. P., 21 Barton Hill, Fornham St Martin, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.
 Stayt, J. R., 43 Tuffley Avenue, Gloucester.
 Stell, C. F., c/o R.C.H.M. (England), 34 Chester Terrace, Regent's Park, N.W.1.
 Stephenson, G., c/o Barclay's Bank, Parliament Street, York.
 Stirling-Lee, O., Grimsthorpe House, Grimsthorpe, nr Bourne, Lincs.
 Stone, L., 231 Woodstock Road, Oxford.
 Stratton, J. M., East Farm, Codford St Mary, nr Warminster, Wilts.
 Street, F., Heathermead Nursery, West End, nr Woking, Surrey.
 Stutely, A. G., 73 Marion Road, Maidstone, Kent.
 Suffolk Rural Community Council, County Hall, Ipswich.
 Swales, T. H., 'The Jolly Farmers', Yaxham Road, Dereham, Norfolk.
 Swansea, University College of.
 Sylvester, Miss D., High Beach, 15 Park Drive, Wistaston, nr Crewe, Cheshire.
 Symon, J. A., 38 Fountainhall Road, Edinburgh 9.
 Tattersall, Miss J. E., 46 Pimlico Road, Clitheroe, Lancs.
 Tawney, R. H., 21a Mecklenburgh Square, W.C.1.
 Teulon-Porter, N., High Land, Great Lane, Shaftesbury, Dorset.
 *Thirsk, Mrs J., 36a Oppidans Road, Hampstead, N.W.3.
 Thomas, B. C., 34 North Street, Tywardreath, Par, Cornwall.
 *Thomas, E., Agricultural Economics Dept., 7 Redlands Road, Reading, Berks.
 Thomas, W. L., Yateley Cottage, Blackwell, nr Shipston on Stour, Warks.
 Thornton, D. S., Hill Rise, Upper Basildon, Berks.
 Thorpe, H., Dept. of Geography, Birmingham University, 34 Bristol Road, Birmingham 5.
 Thorpe, Miss S., 23 Lexton Gardens, S.W.12.
 Trow-Smith, R., Elm Paddocks, Weston, Hitchin, Herts.
 Unilever Ltd, Food Research Dept., Colworth House, Sharnbrook, Bedford.
 Vallis, J. L. H., Heywood Cottage, Mount Street, Diss, Norfolk.
 Vollans, Miss E. C., Bedford College, Regent's Park, N.W.1.
 Voysey, A., National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs, 55 Gower Street, W.C.1.
 Wales, University College of, Aberystwyth, Cards.
 Wales, University College of, Dept. of Agricultural Economics, Aberystwyth, Cards.
 Wales, University College of, Institute of Rural Science, Aberystwyth, Cards.
 Walker, T. E. C., Spring Grove, Water Lane, Cobham, Surrey.
 Walrond, L., Stroud Museum, Lansdown, Stroud, Glos.
 Wannop, A. R., Hill Farming Research Organization, 48 Palmerston Place, Edinburgh 12.
 Ward C. T., Valewood Farm, Haslemere, Surrey.
 Ward, G. E., Copyhold Farm, Bradfield, Berks.
 Warwick County Museum.
 Waters, G. H. C., Holly Bank, Giggleswick, Settle, Yorks.
 *Watson, Sir James Scott, 4 Sheldon Avenue, N.6.
 Webber, E. R., 57 The Wells House, Well Walk, Hampstead, N.W.3.
 Welbourne, E., Emmanuel College, Cambridge.
 Welsh Folk Museum, St Fagan's Castle, Cardiff.
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 Whitchurch, M., 17 St Catherine's Court, Bedford Park, W.4.
 Wilding, J. R., 17 Highgate Lane, Dronfield, nr Sheffield.
 Wilkerson, J. C., Sells Close, Barley, nr Royston, Herts.
 Willan, T. S., The University, Manchester 13.
 Williamson, F. J., 49 Crompton Road, Pleasley, Mansfield, Notts.
 Wilson, C. P. H., Peddar's Way, East Wretham, Thetford, Norfolk.
 Winder, G. H., Springhead Farm, Harlequin Lane, Crowborough, Sussex.
 Witney, D., 6 Spylaw Bank Road, Colinton, Edinburgh 13.
 Wood, A. L., Dolbadarn, 30 Hillfield Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.
 Woods, A. M. A., The Ashes, Welford-on-Avon, Warks.
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ITALY

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JAMAICA

Rees, A. M. M., c/o Dept. of Agriculture, Kingston, B.W.I.

JAPAN

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Kyoto University, Nogakubu Toshoshitsu, Osaka.
Nagoya University, Showa Kyoku-kunai, Nagoya.
Nitta, Y., 92 Omotemachi, Bunkyo-Ku, Tokyo.
Rikkyo University, Keizai-Gaku-Bu, Ikebukuro 3-chome, Toshima-Ku, Tokyo.
Shiina, S., Dept. of Agricultural Economics, Tokyo University, Tokyo.
Ugawa, J. K., 1008, 2-Chome, Ikebukuro, Toshima-Ku, Tokyo.
Waseda University, Ohkuma Institute of Social Sciences, Totsuka-machi, Shinjuku-Ku, Tokyo.

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UGANDA

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 Illinois University Library, Urbana, Illinois.
 Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.
 John Crerar Library, Chicago, Illinois.
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 Jordan, W. K., Office of the President, Radcliffe College, Cambridge 38, Massachusetts.
 Kendall, E. C., R.F.D. 5, Box 198-N, Vienna, Virginia.
 Loehr, R. C., History Dept., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis 14, Minnesota.
 Matthias, R., 5427 University, Chicago 15, Illinois.
 Minnesota University, Agriculture Library, St Paul 1, Minnesota.
 Minnesota University Library, Minneapolis 14, Minnesota.
 Missouri University Library, Columbia, Missouri.
 Moore, D. C., 'North Point', King William, Virginia.
 New York Public Library, Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street, New York City, 18.
 Parker, W. N., Dept. of Economics, University of North Carolina, Carroll Hall, Chapel Hill, N. Carolina.
 Pattison, W. D., Dept. of Geography, University of California, Los Angeles 24, California.
 Rasmussen, W. D., 913 Ridge Road, Columbia Pines, Falls Church, Virginia.
 Schlebecker, J. T., Dept. of History and Geography, Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa.
 Simpson, A., Dept. of History, University of Chicago, Chicago 37, Illinois.
 Stanford University Food Research Institute, Stanford, California.
 Stromberg, R., 6310 Kansas Avenue, N.E., Washington 11, D.C.
 Texas University Library, Austin 12, Texas.
 Thrupp, Miss S., Faculty Exchange, University of Chicago, Chicago 37, Illinois.
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U.S.S.R.

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 Biblioteka Akademii Nauk, ul. Komsomolskaja 31, Aakhbad.
 Moskovskoje Oldelenije, Nauk 2, Donskoj Proezd 9, Moscow 71.

YUGOSLAVIA

Foreign Trade Research Institute, Belgrade.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Shimon Applebaum, B.Litt., D.Phil. (Oxon), served with the British forces in the Middle East 1940-5, and has had practical experience of agricultural work in Kent, Samaria, Galilee, and the Sharon. He has also carried out excavations and published articles in a number of archaeological journals. Since 1956 he has been investigating the ancient agriculture of the Negeb as a research fellow at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Alan Simpson, M.A., D.Phil. (Oxon), is associate professor of English History at the University of Chicago. He is engaged on a study of the estates of Nicholas Bacon and other East Anglian gentry.

Alan Harris, M.A. (London), lecturer in geography at the University of Hull, is at present working on the agricultural geography of the East Riding.

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Hertfordshire, England.*