

Book Reviews

SIR JOSEPH HUTCHINSON (ed.), *Essays on Crop Plant Evolution*. Cambridge University Press, 1965. 240 pp. 50s.

The eight essays presented here under the editorship of Sir Joseph Hutchinson are an adaptation of a course of lectures on the evolution of crop plants given in Cambridge in 1962. The lectures were planned to provide an opportunity to compare the evolutionary histories of a selected group of crop plants from both the Old World and the New. Each was given by a recognized authority in this branch of study and the series was introduced by an account of the beginnings of agriculture in north-west Europe. In the conversion from the lecture to the essay form, the personal nature of the individual communications has been successfully retained and one is grateful that by this means these scholarly lectures have reached a wider audience.

The researches described are primarily botanical, but ever since the publication in 1884 of de Candolle's classic work *The Origin of Cultivated Plants* it has been realized that the problems of crop plant evolution could not be solved without the aid of investigators in other fields, particularly those of archaeology and history. It is for this reason that the book under review will appeal to the agricultural historian. Strange to him, however, might be the use of experimental techniques to test the validity of evolutionary (and therefore basically historical) hypotheses.

De Candolle's study of the origin of cultivated plants covered more than three hundred species. In these essays, only a small selection of crop plants has been considered, and of them, all but the potato and the forage legumes are gramineous. There are a number of reasons for this. The grass family is an exceedingly successful one, the result of its great ecological adaptability and the efficiency of its reproductive mechanisms. Its growth habit in which the growing point is at, or just below, the surface of the soil, enables its perennial members to survive the effects of burning, inundation, drought, mowing, graz-

ing, and trampling. The large grains of the ancestral forms of the annual cereal grasses, in which carbohydrates and proteins are stored in the endosperm, must have been the original reason for their introduction into cultivation. The genetic flexibility of the family, including the tendency towards polyploidy (multiplication of the basic chromosome number) in many of its constituent genera, has provided the variation over which selection could act. It is not surprising, therefore, that grasses have been exploited by man for upwards of ten thousand years and that the great civilizations of the world have been founded upon them. It is natural, too, that pioneer studies of the origin of cultivated plants should largely be concerned with the Gramineae and the emphasis in the present collection of essays reflects this fact.

In the first article of the series, Harry Godwin, of the Botany School, Cambridge, describes the methods by which it has been possible not only to detect changes in the agricultural practices of the early cultivators in north-west Europe but also to establish that plant husbandry in the Old World began in northern Iraq and neighbouring territories some ten thousand years ago. Amongst the techniques which he describes is that of pollen analysis. Since the post-glacial period (*circa* 8000 B.C.) organic sediment incorporating airborne pollen has been steadily accumulating over vast areas in Europe. As pollen grains are virtually indestructible and as they can be identified with a high degree of accuracy, the analysis of such deposits provides a means of tracing vegetational changes over long periods of time. Godwin discusses the application of this method to the reconstruction of the vegetational history of north-west Europe, including Britain; a study to which he, himself, has made most valuable contributions.

To the historian, the essay by Paul C. Mangelsdorf of Harvard University will probably be of greatest interest. In it, he brilliantly unravels the problem of the origin

of maize (*Zea mays*) and describes how he is putting to experimental test theories which were the result of archaeological discovery and botanical investigation. In the course of evolution maize has completely lost the ability to survive in the wild and can only continue its existence with the aid of man. The nature of the original wild form has long been the subject of speculation but as the result of Mangelsdorf's imaginative researches it now seems likely that the ancestral type was a wild maize bearing tiny cobs morphologically similar to those recovered from the occupational debris of the Coxcatlán Cave in Mexico (radio carbon dating 5000 B.C.) and the Bat Cave, New Mexico. By a skilful piece of botanical synthesis, Mangelsdorf and his co-workers have successfully reconstructed such primitive forms. If the field tests now in progress show that these are capable of surviving competition then it has been possible to retrace experimentally the evolutionary history of one of the world's most important crop plants.

H. Doggett of the East African Agricultural Research Organization has assembled in an easily accessible form the greater part of the available information concerning the classification and geographical distribution of the genus *Sorghum*. To this he has added the results of his own observations in the field, experiments in hybridization, and examination of herbarium specimens. The data are as yet incomplete but, even so, the author has been able to give a valuable preliminary account of the early history and evolution of the sorghum crop. There is as yet no archaeological evidence to pin-point the time and place of the original domestication or to indicate the morphology of the wild prototypes. One can only surmise that the sorghums were first cultivated in north-east Africa by a people familiar with cereal wheat and barley.

In two consecutive contributions, each a perfect example of the lucid presentation of extremely complex topics, G. D. H. Bell and R. Riley, both of the Plant Breeding Institute, Cambridge, discuss the phylogeny of the temperate cereals, wheat (*Triticum*), rye

(*Secale*), barley (*Hordeum*), and oats (*Avena*). Polyploidy has played an important part in the evolution of the grasses and as each of the genera considered here presents a different picture as regards the rôle of polyploidy in its evolution, their study is particularly rewarding. The evolutionary prospects of a polyploid depend entirely on its genetic stability and degree of fertility. The demonstration by Riley and Chapman of the "diploidizing" mechanism in the polyploid wheats which rendered them both stable and fertile is of extreme significance. Had this not arisen during the evolution of the genus *Triticum* it could never have supplied the world's greatest cereal crop.

Taxonomically, the genus *Solanum*, to which the potato belongs, is of great complexity, and one is indebted to K. S. Dodds of the John Innes Institute for the masterly fashion in which he outlines those features of the classification which are necessary for the understanding of the possible modes of evolution of the cultivated forms. Various wild species have been named as putative progenitors of the domestic potato usually on the evidence of very vague morphological similarities. As Dodds points out, there is a complete lack of cytological confirmation and the difficulties in the way of obtaining this are enormous. Progress can only be made as the result of continued research in the field into the distribution, ecology, and genetic variability of the wild tuber-bearing species. At the same time relationships between species must be established by the methods of comparative taxonomy and experimental hybridizations.

It is fitting that the author of the essay on the evolution of the forage grasses and legumes, J. P. Cooper, should be a member of the staff of the Welsh Plant Breeding Station, for it was this institution which pioneered the study of the genetics and ecology of forage crops. These crops are almost entirely members of the families Gramineae (grasses) and Leguminosae (legumes) and as their introduction into cultivation took place comparatively recently they provide excellent material for

the investigation of changes which take place during the early stages of plant domestication. It is in this direction that Cooper's own researches are bent. Furthermore, for many important species, e.g. lucerne (*Medicago sativa*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), Italian rye-grass (*Lolium multiflorum*), there is documentary evidence for their selection and spread from the time of their first introduction into cultivation.

In the final essay of the series, the editor, Sir Joseph Hutchinson, discusses the principles which have governed the development and improvement of the world's crop plants and in so doing justifies his opening statement "that in the study of evolution this small group of plants provides one of the most rewarding fields of enquiry." Such plants include not only ancient forms with perhaps more than nine thousand years of cultivation behind them, but also recently domesticated species which still maintain genetic contact with their wild progenitors. As a result of domestication many crops such as the temperate cereals, the potato, and cotton (*Gossypium*) have greatly increased their geographical range. The ease with which they are able to adapt to new environmental conditions is an indication of the existence of a pool of genetical diversity within them out of which new genotypes can emerge when different selective influences are encountered. It is this flexibility which man successfully exploits.

The publication of these stimulating essays once again emphasizes the need for a comprehensive account of the origin, evolution, and taxonomy of the world's crop plants. Enough is now known to make the integration of knowledge culled from all sources worth while and one awaits the emergence of a second de Candolle.

HELENA H. CLARK

P. D. A. HARVEY, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cuxham, 1240-1400*. Oxford Historical Series. Oxford University Press, 1965. x+194 pp. 30s.

The collection of documents belonging to

Merton College relating to the College's manor of Cuxham forms an outstanding source for medieval manorial history. Thorold Rogers, who used the Cuxham account rolls in his *History of Agriculture and Prices*, said of them: "Of the many thousand accounts which I have investigated, none equal those of Cuxham for intelligence, accuracy, and order." And, he might have added, for quantity, for there survives an almost complete run of accounts from 1288 to 1359, and a long series of court rolls from 1294 to 1509, complete except for a few short gaps (one of which, regrettably, is for the years immediately after the Black Death, as is so often the case). Further valuable source material is provided by the Merton documents relating to the College's administration of its estates. These comprise a large collection of deeds, terriers, and rentals, a custumal of 1295, and tax assessments of 1295 and 1304. As it is seldom possible to collate manorial and governmental documents relating to the same village the survival of these last is particularly fortunate. In the case of Cuxham, manor, parish, and village were identical—a fact which, whatever its wider historical significance, is always a decided advantage to the local historian.

Altogether, this is a remarkable wealth of material and in Dr Harvey it has a historian worthy of it. He has used a wide range of sources to build up a notably coherent and detailed picture of the working of this small village from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. He describes it as an agricultural community in its own right, as part of the Merton College estates, and, what is more unusual, as a physical settlement, for he has been able to work out the layout of the village giving the location of all the individual tenements, and has provided a fascinating plan of the *curia*. Seigneurial policy was at its most effective in the thirteenth century when the demesne arable was consolidated into compact blocks under the rigorous landlordship of Ralph Chenduit. The College ran Cuxham mainly as a wheat-producing manor with great effectiveness, and with a careful eye to

keeping up standards and yields. Wheat yields, although they showed a long-term decline, were remarkably high, even topping the ambitious targets of the anonymous *Husbandry*. Although the manor was linked loosely with other nearby Merton manors, primarily to supplement its supplies of wood and rough grazing, it was essentially managed as an independent unit. "The economic life of Cuxham was tied far more closely to the surrounding region than to the Merton College estates." These regional trade connections are usefully mapped. The College employed a mixed labour force on the demesne, of six to nine *famuli*, customary tenants, and hired hands and Dr Harvey shows the varying importance and cost (although not on a comparative basis) of each type of labour, and the difficulties attendant upon each. Even at the period of maximum exploitation of customary labour it only accounted for about a third of the total requirement (the shortage of this type of labour was often felt by lords of small manors), it was cumbersome to administer, and it virtually ceased after the Black Death. The number of *famuli* remained virtually static, but these skilled and specialized labourers became difficult to recruit after the Black Death when unskilled daily wage labour became a much more attractive proposition for the working man and the College's wage bill for hired labour rose to six times its previous level.

Did the College make a profit out of Cuxham? And did it know whether it did or not? Some of the account rolls have a *profectus* entry which probably took into account the value of the considerable amount of produce delivered to headquarters. The College's administrators would have been able to learn from these figures that the Black Death brought about a steep fall in the productive value of the manor (from between £20 and £60 to about £10). In leasing the demesne in 1361 for £20 p.a., therefore, Merton struck a good bargain, for like so many other landlords it had reached a period when high overheads and declining yields made demesne farming unprofitable.

Of necessity the chapters on the inhabitants of Cuxham deal with them rather as tenants of the College than as villagers, for such a bias is implicit in most of the available documentary evidence. The village population was small—23 heads of households in the Hundred Rolls—and was hit hard by the Black Death. The same forceful seignorial policy which brought about the consolidation of the demesne in the thirteenth century did so at the expense of the amount of land let to the tenants and was accompanied by the conversion of some free tenures into villeinage.

The cottagers, less involved with the system of labour rent and thus with the record-keeping of the manorial administration, are generally the least well documented section of the manorial population. Dr Harvey demonstrates their function at Cuxham as a distinct class, clearly differentiated from the villeins not only by the nature of their tenure (by money rent rather than labour service) and their customs of inheritance but also by geography and origin. The cottage tenements lay in a separate area of the village from that of the villein holdings, which represent an earlier settlement. Cottagers could, and did, move up into the class of half-virgaters, but in general they "seem to have been worse off than the villeins but to have had greater personal independence."

The inheritance of villein tenements followed traditional lines until the Black Death. Inheritance was by one son—probably but not certainly the eldest—with careful provision made for the rights of widows and equally careful curtailment of those of second husbands. With such a small, self-contained village population a good deal of reliable and interesting information on peasant surnames emerges: Cuxham had a tradition by which a man who acquired a holding by marrying a widow normally assumed the surname of her late husband. One wonders whether this practice was an attempt to continue the tradition of associating surnames with tenement-names; a tradition which was dying out by the fourteenth century. (One would like to

know more, too, about these peasant marriages and inheritances; to learn, for instance, how often the members of such a small community inter-married with those of neighbouring villages.) This tradition-bound peasant society was considerably changed by the impact of the plague. With the steep fall in population the old rigidity of inheritance and tenemental structure broke up: short-term demesne leases and peasant sub-letting became common and, as elsewhere, conditions became favourable for the emergence of a group of prosperous peasants, some of them sheep-farmers.

Is Cuxham "a perfect example of the classical manor" as Dr Harvey claims? Certainly in its demesne policy and the fortunes of its tenantry, it shows many "classical" features and in his analysis of one particular aspect—the effects of the Black Death—he has done much to rehabilitate the "classical" view. Whether or not the classical manor has any real existence outside the textbook is another question. One thing is certain: this is a work of classical manorial history.

ROSAMOND JANE FAITH

FRANCES M. PAGE (ed.), *Wellingborough Manorial Accounts, 1258–1323, from the Account Rolls of Crowland Abbey, with a note on the dating of the rolls by T. H. Aston*. Northamptonshire Record Society, Vol. VIII, 1936, reprinted 1965. xlii+144 pp. 50s.

Dr F. M. Page's book, *The Estates of Crowland Abbey*, was one of those studies based on the documents of a monastic estate which before the war greatly advanced our understanding of the economic and social diversity of medieval England. The publication by the Northamptonshire Record Society of her edition of the early account rolls of Crowland Abbey's Nene valley manor of Wellingborough made it possible for students to get an idea of this immensely valuable class of agrarian record. There are not all that many account rolls as early as 1258 even in manuscript, so it was particularly useful to have a reeve's account for that date in print. This

and the succeeding accounts (by 1289, divided between reeve and rent collector) are very detailed both on the cash and on the stock and grange sides, giving considerable insight into many aspects of manorial production, labour organization, purchases and sales, and transfers of cash and kind to the estate centre in Crowland. Miss Page's introduction in which she described the different aspects of manorial organization, like other pioneer works, is now outdated. An attempt has been made by Mr T. H. Aston to correct Miss Page's dating of the rolls in an inserted note. He also points out a few of her mistakes, though his implication (p. xxxix, n. 2) that she was unaware of manorial liveries in kind to Crowland is not correct. She shows that she was fully aware of those liveries (p. xxx), though she did not apparently convert them into cash values when working out the manorial finances. However meritorious it is for local record societies to publish records of this type (and not a few account rolls have since been published by other societies), one wonders whether reprints serve much purpose. Local, and in particular agrarian, history has developed considerably since 1935, and there are certainly other Northamptonshire records still in manuscript which would be worth printing in up-to-date editions.

R. H. HILTON

F. G. EMMISON, *Some Types of Common-field Parish*. Standing Conference for Local History (National Council of Social Service), 1965. 16 pp., with maps. 3s. 6d.; DOROTHY CROMARTY, *The Fields of Saffron Walden in 1400*. Essex Record Office Publications, No. 43. Chelmsford, 1966. 19 pp., with maps. 5s. (6s. 6d. post free); WARREN O. AULT, *Open-field Husbandry and the Village Community*. Transactions of the Series, vol. 55, pt. 7. Philadelphia, 1965. 102 pp. \$2.50.

Discussion of the evolution of English field systems has recently entered upon a new phase, with the views of Gray and the Orwins coming under radical examination by Dr

Joan Thirsk, whose opinions in turn have not gone unchallenged. Studies of English field systems have frequently been confused by the use of an imprecise terminology and muddled by an erroneous assumption that similar forms within rural landscapes necessarily have similar origins. Each of the three works under review makes a distinctive and valuable contribution to the current debate.

The reprinting of F. G. Emmison's pamphlet *Types of Open-field Parishes in the Midlands*, originally published by the Historical Association in 1937, reflects the course of this debate. On the suggestion of Dr Thirsk, the publications committee of the Standing Conference for Local History have re-titled this reprint *Some Types of Common-field Parish*, although the term *open-field* has been retained in the text. Apart from this significant alteration and a few insubstantial changes in the footnotes, the reprint retains its original form, providing brief descriptions and sketches of field patterns in six Bedfordshire parishes and a lengthier account and more detailed map of field patterns within a seventh parish. Using principally pre-enclosure, enclosure, and tithe maps, it illustrates the diversity of field patterns among common-field parishes, ranging from the simple three open-fields grouped around homestead closes at Fardish to the complex multiple open-fields and groups of closes at Colmworth.

Descriptions of field patterns are most precise when based on cartographic evidence, but for explanations of their origins and development it is necessary to turn to more ambiguous verbal sources. Understanding of medieval field systems is likely to be much enhanced if, from manorial documents, diagrammatic pictures can be reconstructed of the layout of fields and of properties within individual townships.

Dorothy Cromarty has successfully carried out such a reconstruction in Saffron Walden, making an adroit analysis of a detailed land and rent survey of 1400. An abundance of later surveys and a set of estate maps of 1758 have enabled Mrs Cromarty to locate most fields named in the 1400 survey and so to

reconstruct cartographically certain aspects of Saffron Walden's field system at that date. Two of her maps (Maps 1 and 2) illustrate a close relationship between fields and topography, with names of fields and of furlongs changing with slope. More importantly, another map (Map 5) showing the distribution of most field names and the cropping season under which they lay in 1400 indicates that the three components of the rotation (fallow, winter-sown grain, spring-sown crops) did not lie in homogeneous blocks but were scattered irregularly over the cultivated area (the furlong being the unit of cultivation). This irregularity is, however, only apparent for a further map (Map 3) portraying boundaries of sheep folds in relation to cropping seasons reveals that within the fixed limits of sheep folds there was some land under each cropping season, ensuring foldage for flocks within each fold during each season of the year. This pattern, Mrs Cromarty suggests, may have evolved in response to the disposition of individual tenement lands, for the evidence (some of it presented in Map 4) suggests that strips of an individual holding, although not concentrated in compact blocks, tended to lie in those fields nearest to the hamlet in which the capital messuage was situated. This painstaking reconstruction, so closely linking history to the ground, clearly demonstrates the existence at Saffron Walden in 1400 of several agriculturally independent groups of open-fields, a multiple open-field system which is assumed to have developed as a product of gradual assarting and settlement expansion.

A sedulous attention to detail is less evident in Professor Ault's study of open-field farming as revealed in medieval agrarian by-laws. This important work is unfortunately marred by a slipshod presentation. Footnotes are often defective: n. 238, p. 25, refers to "Titow, *loc. cit.*, p. 386," but there has been no earlier reference to any work by Titow; n. 66, p. 17, refers vaguely to "*History of Tatenhill* 2: pp. 31, 39," a reference which could be traced only with difficulty by anyone not familiar with this work. Places are

sometimes incorrectly identified and inadequately indexed: Morden, Surrey, is given (p. 38) as Mordon and does not appear in the index in either its correct or incorrect form; Wimbledon is wrongly located (p. 26) in Middlesex instead of Surrey. Other authors are occasionally misquoted: Dr Thirsk is erroneously and carelessly said (p. 10) to have asserted that in Suffolk, Kent, Surrey, and Sussex fields had all but disappeared in 1500. Despite these failings and despite the ill-digested account of English field systems which forms his introduction, Professor Ault's study is of considerable interest.

In addition to an extensive and well exemplified text, 223 transcripts of by-laws representative of various phases of open-field husbandry on 37 manors in 11 counties are printed in an appendix. The resulting picture of the organization of open-field farming is both commendably detailed and inevitably incomplete. It illustrates well the diversity of open-field farming both from place to place at the same time and from time to time at the same place. Numerous examples show how farming communities regulated harvesting, dealt with the problem of theft from open-fields, maintained enclosures and boundaries, and managed a multitude of day-by-day, season-by-season, activities. It demonstrates clearly that open-field farming was an evolving system. This is seen, for example, in relation to the changing provisions made for the pasturing of the stubble after harvest. A typical sequence of by-laws was that at Newton Longville, in Buckinghamshire, where in 1290 it was provided that no one could pasture his beasts in any *cultura* until the grain of one acre adjacent had been wholly removed; in 1331 it was declared that no one shall cause his beasts to pasture next to rye, mixed corn, or oats before a space two acres wide had been cleared of grain; in 1387 the space to be cleared was ten acres; in 1608 "the beasts shall not be kept uppon any furlong of stubble untill all the corne of the same furlong be all carried from the same furlong." If common-field husbandry was to work well, or at all, such rules of customary procedure had to be

established. Professor Ault's volume is the fruit of a prolonged search of a great body of manorial court rolls. From them he draws a vivid picture of medieval agrarian activity. Yet the picture can never be complete, for it is his opinion that most rules of procedure, as "ancient custom," went unrecorded.

ALAN R. H. BAKER

J. D. CHAMBERS, *Laxton. The Last English Open Field Village*. H.M.S.O., 1964. 44 pp. 3s. 6d.

All agricultural historians, making their solemn pilgrimage to Laxton, will welcome this new and handy guide, written with authority, spirit, and enthusiasm by Professor Chambers. The village and its lands were put up for sale in 1951 on the death of Lord Manvers, and for one brief moment an idea was entertained that the University of Nottingham should buy it. In the event the purchaser was the Ministry of Agriculture, and clearly this was much the better solution. The estate was in need of modernization and in the first ten years of its administration the Agricultural Land Commission invested £24,000 in it. One suspects, however, that even now Professor Chambers feels himself cheated of the chance to spend his retirement tilling the selions. But had he done so, he would almost certainly have had no time to write this essay. And it would have been a great pity. He has succeeded in this short booklet in providing the visitor to Laxton with a most readable and lively introduction. The layout of the fields in the seventeenth century is illustrated with the aid of the map of 1653, first published by Mr and Mrs Orwin, and the later history is based upon estate, manorial, and parish records. In the 1860's, we learn, Laxton was on the brink of enclosure, and an enclosure award was drawn up. In 1904 another drastic reorganization took place when strips were consolidated and common rights over some of the fields were extinguished. But still enclosure did not follow. And now the village and its open fields are to be preserved "for the instruction and delight of its friends and admirers." How

long this will be practicable remains to be seen. As Professor Chambers admits with engaging bluntness, "there are twenty-two farmers making a modest living from a system of farming that is utterly obsolete." But he does not discuss the implications of this unreal situation.

It is to be hoped that this booklet will find a ready sale for it is attractively produced and illustrated and very modestly priced. It demonstrates one of the many ways in which the Ministry of Agriculture is discharging with imagination and generosity its responsibility towards the village and to agricultural history, and the venture deserves every encouragement and support.

JOAN THIRSK

L. W. HANSON, *Contemporary Printed Sources for British and Irish Economic History, 1701-50*. Cambridge University Press, 1963. xxiv+978 pp. £10 10s.

The period 1700-50 is among the most obscure and difficult in the history of British agriculture, and all agricultural historians will therefore welcome the appearance of this valuable bibliography. Over sixty of the most important libraries in Britain (including Ireland) and one or two in the U.S. and Canada have been searched for material, and the bibliography covers all works published for the first time between 1701 and 1750. Economic history, of course, is a subject without any very precise frontiers, and on its boundaries the author's selection is necessarily subjective. Economic includes social history; newspapers and all periodicals not dealing exclusively with economic affairs are excluded, as are all public acts. Private enclosure acts and all bills are included, but these are a somewhat random collection since the holdings in local record offices, where the most complete lists are kept, have not been searched. For the local historian, then, this bibliography is not the complete guide, and, indeed, it is not really designed to cater for his needs: the general index which lists enclosure acts under each village does not indicate the county in which they are situated. On the

other hand, he will doubtless find in this work many precious items that have previously escaped his attention: is the existence of a table of yearly charges for the poor of Norwich, 1620-1720, in the Goldsmith's Library, University of London (no. 2869) generally known? For the agricultural historian it is at first disconcerting to find that the section headed *Agriculture* includes mining as well as fisheries, with the result that in some years none of the publications under this heading have anything to do with agriculture. In a few cases the titles do not reveal whether the subject is agriculture, fisheries, or mines (nos. 3824-8, for example), and a brief indication would have been helpful. The subject classification is sometimes a little erratic: cattle-droving in item no. 46 comes under the heading of commerce (and, incidentally, does not appear in the General Index under droving) while two other items on droving (nos. 3998-9) find a place under the heading of Transport. These, however, are small quibbles. To prepare a bibliography with nearly 6,500 items and over 250 pages of index is like wrestling with a mammoth, and it is inevitable that some inconsistencies should occur. Mr Hanson deserves the deepest gratitude from all economic historians for his labours. A bibliography is not usually recommended for continuous reading, but, in fact, great profit is to be derived from such an exercise, for the multitude of items on some subjects and the absence of others provoke a host of questions. We may hope that the result of this publication will be a more vigorous attack on the agricultural history of the first half of the eighteenth century.

JOAN THIRSK

JÜRGEN HOHNHOLZ, *Der englische Park als landschaftliche Erscheinung*. Tübinger Geographische Studien, Heft 15. Tübingen, 1964. 91 pp., maps and illustrations.

This dissertation on the English park is both easy and pleasant to read. A planimetric measurement of the parks encircling the 7,000 or more great houses of England shows that they cover 3 per cent of its area, and in-

clude almost half the woodland of the country. The author has been able to show where, here and there, the Ordnance Survey has erred in using the sign for a park. He traces the consolidation of the medieval demesne, and the development of a convenient large house to the point where, at the end of the sixteenth century, Bacon was ready to prescribe the gardens to go with it. Later the geometrical French style came into vogue, but the Romantic movement foreshadowed early in the eighteenth century the characteristic English style, and this was exploited by the professional park-makers, Brown, Repton, and others, who created the studied 'natural' park. He says that a standard park may contain within its wall a series of zones round the great house, consisting of parterres, lawns, park gardens, meadows with clumps of trees, a girdle of forest, and woods with crop land. It becomes more artificial and formal as it approaches the house. He evaluates the position of the home farm which in places is swept out of view. He quotes many Northamptonshire examples, using clear maps to show their development, and nowhere trying to compel instances into a strict scheme. Some useful detail is provided in the list of trees growing in Stourhead, and in frequent quotation from those poets and writers who reflected the trends which the gentry were to follow. He shows how nowadays the park of a nobleman or industrialist may pass to the National Trust, or be used for housing, public parks, pleasure grounds, or a zoo. The writer succeeds in understanding the special English way of looking at things, a notably difficult feat. Though the subject of the book is the English park, and the author refers, in passing, to some of the gardens in Germany called 'englische Gärten', one would have welcomed a more detailed comparison.

D. J. DAVIS

TERENCE ARMSTRONG, *Russian Settlement in the North*. Cambridge University Press, 1965. xii+224 pp. 50s.

This is a clearly presented and well documented survey of the Russian advance into

the north, here taken to mean north of the Arctic Circle in European Russia and latitude 60° in Siberia, but modified at the extremes to include the Kola Peninsula and Kamchatka. The main focus of interest is on the history of man's relation to his environment and Dr Armstrong has done well to give so illuminating an account from sources which are for the most part not primarily concerned with problems of settlement. The period dealt with extends from the first appearance of Russians in the north to 1959. Material from the 1959 census is included and indicates that the total population of native peoples in the area has remained almost at the 1926 level and, indeed, has increased relatively little, less than 10 per cent, above the 1897 level: in the first half of this century the population of the area which is now the USSR roughly doubled; since 1926, the Slav population in the north has increased by roughly 50 per cent. This is but the latest wave of Russian settlement in the area, though it differs from earlier efforts in that its basis has been the rapid industrialization of the country, the need to exploit the mineral resources, and the use, in part, of labour camps as a means. One of the most interesting parts of the book deals with the viability of settlement in the north of both the Soviet Union and North America. In such severe environmental conditions labour turnover is high, but high rates of pay are likely to attract the short-term worker. Attention should, therefore, be paid to Soviet attempts to develop secondary industries and improve living conditions, rather than raise pay.

The earlier settlement of the area by Slavs was fundamentally a movement of peasants. Even in the seventeenth century, crops, mainly rye, were being grown north of latitude 60° in a few areas. Dr Armstrong also makes the point that the Russians lost Alaska because there was no peasant settlement of the area. At the same time he stresses the importance of the Cossack freebooters and fur-hunters in the acquisition of Siberia. "The motive for its acquisition was the same as that which impelled the western European powers

to go overseas—the search for wealth. Fur replaced precious metals.” But, even allowing for a concentration of interest on an area north of the main centres of peasant settlement in Siberia, this is something of an exaggeration. The impact on the Russian economy of the acquisition of furs, which long preceded Russian penetration into Siberia, was scarcely comparable with the impact of bullion from the New World upon western Europe. In a few other instances, generally, where Dr Armstrong ventures opinions about the Soviet system, rather than about the Soviet north, it seems possible to question his judgements. For example, the Soviet system is not “well known for its proliferous bureaucracy.” Like the tsarist system, it seems rather to suffer from inefficiency as a result of shortages in this respect.

Dr Armstrong ends his book with a plea to the Soviet Union to “open its northern gates, so that the rest of us may see, admire, and learn.” To this I can only add a desire to see Russian books with maps and illustrations

as clear and helpful as those in this volume.

R. E. F. SMITH

HAROLD BONNETT, *Saga of the Steam Plough*.

George Allen & Unwin, 1965. 208 pp. 42s. Mr Bonnett knows about steam engines. He has a special affection for “the beautiful balance of round shapes in boiler, smoke box, chimney, cylinders, rope, drum, flywheel and road wheels” of the ploughing engines and tackle which, in their heyday, drew the crowds at the Royal Shows. Much of the book is devoted to the technical problems and achievements of that brief period from the 1860's when steam cultivation seemed to promise so much, particularly to the farmers on the heavier soils. It would be unfair to have expected any detailed discussion of the economics of steam cultivation in this book, but for those who may pursue that aspect of agricultural history, Mr Bonnett has provided a useful background account of the first phase in power farming which is both readable and well illustrated.

ANDREW JEWELL

Notes and Comments

THE SOCIETY'S FIRST PRESIDENT

Members of the B.A.H.S. will have learned with regret of the death on 5 August 1966 of Sir James Scott Watson. He was Professor of Rural Economy at Edinburgh and Oxford, and from 1948 Chief Scientific and Agricultural Adviser to the Ministry of Agriculture. But members of this society will remember him most gratefully as their first President.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The fourteenth general meeting of the British Agricultural History Society was held at University College, Gower Street, London, W.C.1, on Saturday, 16 April 1966 at 11 a.m., with Dr W. H. Chaloner in the Chair. Professor H. P. R. Finberg was re-elected Presi-

dent of the Society, Mr C. A. Jewell was re-elected Treasurer, and Mr M. A. Havinden was elected Secretary. Mr G. B. Bisset, Professor W. E. Minchinton, and Miss E. H. Whetham retired from the executive committee. Professor Minchinton was re-elected, and Mr E. J. Collins and Dr G. E. Mingay were elected to the vacancies.

Dr W. H. Chaloner presented the report of the executive committee and expressed the committee's regret that Mr T. W. Fletcher had been forced to give up the Secretaryship owing to ill health, and that it had been necessary to postpone the Dublin conference until 1967. After a slight setback last year membership had risen again from 646 to 665.

The Treasurer reported that the cost of

producing the REVIEW had risen from £596 in 1963 to £869 in 1966 and was likely to continue to increase still further. He was therefore obliged with regret to sponsor the amendment to Clause 4 of the Constitution raising the annual subscription to two guineas.

The Meeting carried unanimously the following amendments to the Constitution: in Clause 4 in the sentence reading "the annual subscription shall be one guinea due on 1 February", the words "one guinea" were replaced by "two guineas;" in Clause 8, in the sentences reading "The President, Treasurer, and Secretary, and one quarter of the ordinary members of the Executive Committee shall retire at each Annual General Meeting. The retiring ordinary members shall not be eligible for immediate re-election," the last sentence was deleted; in Clause 10, in the sentences reading "The Annual General Meeting shall be held as near as possible to 1 February. At least twenty-one and not more than twenty-eight days' notice of the Annual General Meeting shall be sent to members of the Society," the words "and not more than twenty-eight" were deleted.

A leaflet setting out the new Constitution is inserted in this issue of the REVIEW.

FUTURE CONFERENCES

The December conference of the Society will be held jointly with the Association of Agriculture on Saturday, 3 December 1966, at the Institute of Education, Malet Street, London, W.C.1. The subject will be 'Agrarian Unrest in England'. Dr E. J. Hobsbawm will read a paper on unrest in the 1830's and '40's, and Mr J. P. D. Dunbabin on agricultural unionism in the 1870's and its sequels. Mr Rex Russell will take the Chair. Members who wish to attend are asked to fill in the enclosed registration form. It is hoped to be able to circulate summaries of the papers before the conference.

The 1967 spring conference and annual general meeting will be held in Dublin from Monday, 3 April, to Thursday, 6 April, following the meeting of the Economic History

Society in Belfast. The conference will be devoted to the history of Irish agriculture from the earliest times. Papers will be read by Professor D. A. Binchy on 'Agricultural Evidence from the Old-Irish Law Tracts', Professor E. Estyn Evans on 'The Survival of Ancient Agricultural Practices in Ireland', Mr Patrick Lynch on 'The Rôle of the Guinness Brewery in Irish Agricultural Development', Mr R. A. Butlin on 'Agriculture in County Dublin in the Eighteenth Century', and Mr John O'Loan on 'Farming in Ireland under the Union, 1800-1920'. The Directors of the Guinness Brewery have very kindly invited members to lunch and a tour of the Brewery, and it is hoped to organize another excursion in the countryside around Dublin. Details of accommodation have not been finally settled, but it would be helpful if members who are interested would return the enclosed slip.

UNIVERSITY OF READING FARM RECORDS COLLECTION

Reading University has recently acquired on long-term loan the Rothamsted Experimental Station's manuscript collection of historical farm and agricultural records as described in the Station's *Library Catalogue of Printed Books and Pamphlets on Agriculture* (1926 and 1940). The University Library now has a substantial accumulation of farm records for the period 1700 to 1940, relating to over 200 farms situated mainly in southern and eastern England. A more geographically representative sample should be achieved within the next year. The collection is now available for research purposes and the University Archivist welcomes inquiries. The University expects to publish a detailed catalogue of accessions in mid-1967.

INHERITANCE CUSTOMS

Considerable attention is being directed nowadays to the effects of inheritance customs on farm size and social structure, and it is clear that an index and map of such customs in England and Wales is urgently needed. The appendix to Dr Rosamond Faith's article in

this issue makes a good starting point for such a compilation. The editor of the REVIEW is willing to act as storekeeper of such information, and invites anyone who has documentary evidence of inheritance customs in any part of England and Wales to send her a note, giving details of the manor or village, class of tenant, date and type of evidence, and the system of inheritance. It is hoped that in time enough material will be collected to justify the publication of a map or catalogue or both.

ORIGINS OF THE EUROPEAN RURAL LANDSCAPE

A Symposium on *Die Genese der Siedlungs- und Agrarlandschaften in Europa* was held at the Geographical Institute of the University of Würzburg from 4 to 6 July 1966. This was a continuation of the series of conferences on European rural settlement which was initiated at the *Colloque International de Géographie et d'Histoire Agraire* held at Nancy in 1957. Some of the papers delivered at Würzburg were concerned essentially with types of settlement: G. Enequist discussed the distribution of nucleated and dispersed settlements in Sweden during the seventeenth century; C. Christians examined the importance of isolated farmsteads in the agrarian landscape of the Walloon part of Belgium; and X. de Planhol analysed the northern extensions of those settlement features which are characteristic of Lorraine villages. Other studies were concerned with changing field and rural settlement patterns during the Middle Ages: they included papers by A. Verhulst on Flanders, by A. R. H. Baker on Kent, by H. Grees on the influence of settlement desertions on surviving villages in southern Germany, and by B. K. Roberts on assarting in the Forest of Arden. S. Gissel dealt with the three-field system in Zealand before 1700. Further papers dealt with various aspects of agrarian landscapes in later periods: they included a paper by F. Gay

examining the relationship between rural economies and settlement patterns in Berry; by P. Brunet, discussing the impact of agricultural changes on the *bocages* of lower Normandy; and by J. Peltre, reporting on the influence on field and parcel patterns in Lorraine of improved surveying techniques from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. It is proposed to publish the papers read at the symposium.

The symposium in Würzburg had been preceded by a three-day field excursion, led by W. Müller-Wille in the Westphalian Basin, by H. Jäger in parts of the uplands of Lower Saxony and Hesse, and by H. Uhlig and A. Krenzlin in the Vogelsberg and Rhön.

GEOGRAPHICAL TERMINOLOGY OF THE AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE

A meeting of the international working group which is seeking to promote work on a glossary of terms relating to the agricultural landscape was held in Würzburg on 7 and 8 July. Discussion centred mainly on problems of organization and of equating terms used in different countries. This meeting demonstrated that there is a real need for such work, and that successful implementation of the aims of the group can be achieved only by the willing co-operation of individual scholars. At present, the British contribution inadequately represents the amount of work done in the field of agrarian studies, and many more offers of assistance are needed. Contributions take the form of suggested definitions and discussions of various terms by means of the circulation of a number of working papers.

The main centre for the glossary is the University of Giessen, but persons who are willing to help in this work are requested to contact Mr R. A. Butlin (Department of Geography, University College, Dublin, 2), who is acting as secretary of the British group. He will be pleased to provide further information and literature.