

Book Reviews

G. E. FUSSELL, *The English Dairy Farmer, 1500-1900*. Frank Cass & Co., 1966. iv+358 pp. 75s.

Mr Fussell's book is a well-documented review of the developments in management and method which have carried dairy farming from its technically backward Tudor state to the threshold of the scientific revolutions in feeding and product processing which have occurred in the present century. Beginning with the cow, it continues through chapters on animal nutrition, dairy accommodation, dairy equipment, and the techniques of cheese and butter making, to conclude with a brief but valuable treatment of marketing organization.

This work has appeared at a time when our understanding of what has happened in corn-orientated farming systems is becoming almost sophisticated. It reveals in its indirect way the present inadequate knowledge of an enterprise which has constituted the major farm activity for much of midland and western England, and whose overall contribution to the national agricultural product has always been of critical importance. Mr Fussell has provided an excellent technical background but a thorough treatment of the determinant economic and social factors of change is still required. Dairy farming is still regarded as a more or less monolithic industry with little distinction between the several and radically different types of enterprise practised on pastoral farms, arable farms, suburban smallholdings, 'rented dairies', cottagers' cow commons, and in town dairies.

Perhaps the outstanding problem requiring investigation is the rôle and development of the dairy farming sector during the Agricultural Revolution period. Both historians and contemporary observers have concentrated excessively on the more conspicuous successes in output and technique secured in arable and mixed farming systems. Mr Fussell has tried extremely hard to redress the balance of achievement and to suggest a parallel,

if less spectacular, progress in dairying. Some measure of progress there must have been but its extent even at the close of 'The Golden Age' was by most accounts still unimpressive. Pastoral dairy farmers were being accused of the worst possible form of ignorance, "the lack of knowledge of their ignorance." Literary evidence seems to imply that the Agricultural Revolution had passed them by. Mr Fussell discusses at great length the potential of new fodder crops and artificial feeds for raising livestock yields, but significantly he has not proved their extensive use on any but the most progressive dairy farms. In terms of output and productivity dairying may have lagged badly behind corn and fatstock enterprises. But without more complete indices of output, yields, per capita consumption, and price movements this important issue will hardly be resolved. Quantification to any degree of accuracy cannot be expected, but at this stage it would be useful to command a convincing analysis of the economic and social incentives, constraints, and rigidities, which are likely to have determined progress. Such, in fact, as has already been done for other products in other farming systems.

Mr Fussell has led the way. He has shown by his unique familiarity with the contemporary literature that here at least is a vast reservoir of source material to be exploited by anyone prepared to shift their ground from corn to kine.

E. J. COLLINS

J. M. LEE and R. A. MCKINLEY (eds.), *A History of the County of Leicester, vol. V, Gartree Hundred*. O.U.P., 1964. xvii+367 pp. £7 7s.

This is the first of the Leicestershire volumes of the Victoria County History to cover the detailed history and topography of a rural hundred. We have already had three general volumes of the history and one devoted solely to the city of Leicester. The hundred of Gartree includes thirty-seven ancient parishes

and four chapelries, and takes in the whole of the south-eastern quadrant of the county between Leicester and the Welland valley.

Except for the town of Market Harborough on the southern boundary, and the urban sprawl of Leicester on the north-west, which has now almost completely obliterated the old villages of Evington, Scraftoft, and Thurnby, it remains rural and mainly pastoral. Most of it is rolling country, rising to 700 feet in places, some of it very beautiful and strangely remote. It is composed of glacial drift overlying the Lower Lias clays. Though there is a variety of soils, it basically makes good grassland and many parishes have been enclosed for cattle and sheep pastures since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This is 'High Leicestershire', the Paradise of the Quorn and Fernie hunts.

The villages were founded mostly on small islands of glacial sands and gravels, watered by copious springs at the junction of gravel and clay, and all had their common fields on the standard midland pattern—probably of two large fields evolving at an early date into three, as at Newton Harcourt. The reference in Gray's *English Field Systems*, p. 470, to two fields at this place at an early date seems to have been missed by the learned editors. It is not often that one catches out Mr McKinley in the medieval period. By the early fourteenth century there were three fields (*V.C.H.*, p. 344) which lasted until the enclosure in 1772.

There are all the familiar features of the *V.C.H.* pattern, and one could make the familiar criticisms. As Professor Finberg put it in the cent number of this REVIEW, the *V.C.H.* "falls rather uneasily between two categories: it is much more than a work of reference, but something less than a finished history." By reason of the traditional division of the parish histories into 'subjects' one fails to obtain a coherent picture of villages and their vicissitudes, nor does one get a picture of the historical development of the region as a whole.

Yet it is easier to criticize this massive enterprise than to suggest practicable reforms

in its arrangement and layout. Just as it used to be said that one could never design a battleship from scratch, so complicated was its evolution, so the *V.C.H.* with its 120 or so volumes cannot easily be redesigned at this late day.

Despite the archaic origin of the hundred, and its almost complete disuse today (though I once sat on a committee in Leicestershire which appointed a number of representatives to some body in London on the basis of the hundreds we lived in), it probably remains the most practical subdivision for the building-up of a county history in several volumes. My own view is that the reader would profit immensely by a long introduction to each of the 'hundred' volumes, bringing together as far as possible the main threads of the agrarian, industrial, and social history of the area under discussion, an introduction written, of course, after all the separate parish histories had been completed. Such an introduction would be no easy task, and it would be open to the objection that the hundred rarely makes a true region in the geographical sense; but it would be of great help to the reader in using the volume as a whole and would bring the *V.C.H.* a considerable step nearer to being a finished history.

Thus we get no general and clear picture of the agrarian history of this quadrant of Leicestershire, or even, to take a narrower theme, of its enclosure history. Some villages disappeared as early as the fifteenth century (e.g. Keythorpe and Holyoak) and at the other end of the time-scale the large parish of Medbourne was not finally enclosed until 1844. It seems quite likely that in Leicestershire the seventeenth century saw the great swing-over from common-field arable to enclosed pasture, a movement in which this south-eastern quarter of the county was particularly important, but it is impossible to discover whether this is so or not without further research through all that is said here about all the parishes. The information is here, but it has to be excavated from the account of each parish. A good long introduction, which avoided the danger of bogging down the

reader in still more detail and yet gave him a scholarly account of the major themes of the history of the region, would perhaps be the biggest single improvement open to the *V.C.H.* in its present form.

The volume as a whole represents the work of two excellent historians of what one may still call the 'Leicester School'. There could have been more line-maps—the *V.C.H.*, like most histories, is still strangely allergic to maps—and there might well have been more attention to the place-names of the often. These are sometimes interpreted but area. passed over in silence. There are good photographs, themselves often a unique record of the past. Altogether this is a volume one is glad to have on the shelves: it is sad to think that the rest of the county remains undone for lack of public funds.

W. G. HOSKINS

R. H. HILTON, *A Medieval Society: The West Midlands at the End of the Thirteenth Century*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966. x+305 pp. 50s.

Professor Hilton's work in the field of English medieval social and economic history is already well known and extensive. In this study he has put us further in his debt. The book provides an overall survey ("an imaginative understanding" as he calls it) of one region of England, the south-west Midlands, at the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The period has been chosen as an era of relative stability (although Professor Hilton shows himself well aware of those changes, such as the growth of the lords' fee'd retinues and the developments in the machinery of government, which characterized the period); and the study is intended to set the stage for a later work dealing with the changes in the social and economic pattern which occurred in the two succeeding centuries.

The regional approach is much more difficult than one which concentrates on the better-documented single estate, but in its own way is more rewarding. The area chosen, the counties of Gloucester, Worcester, and Warwick, has perhaps little geographical

unity but much of it had a historic unity in the days of the Anglo-Saxon settlement and later in the diocese of Worcester. Within the region, two main areas of settlement are discernible, the older in the valleys and uplands with a complementary economy based on grain, or on grain and sheep, and characterized by nucleated villages and open fields; and a later settlement of hamlets and enclosures, mainly within the forest areas of the region. The emphasis on historical as well as geographical factors to explain differences in the settlement pattern is welcome, although some readers of this journal will regret Professor Hilton's use of the term 'open fields' instead of 'common fields'. The region is treated in isolation, but despite the political events which took place within its boundaries in the second half of the thirteenth century, the author clearly feels that in many ways it was isolated.

The picture drawn is of a society dominated in village, town, and forest by local lay and ecclesiastical lords, even though as many as a half of the villages of the area may have had no resident lord. In the south-west Midlands, the monastic influence was the most potent, "primarily as preservers of the 'classical' type of medieval landlordism." This seigneurial domination expressed itself in two main ways—in an increased demand for cash, even when in the villages demesne farming as against leasing of estates was increasing; and secondly (and closely associated with the former aspect), in the increasing servility of the peasant population. This latter was mainly, but not wholly, achieved by the increasing jurisdiction of the manor court at the expense of the hundred court, but the other royal courts assisted. The process was uneven, however, and the result was a complex society of peasants, where economic and legal status by no means coincided. But in general the peasant classes were poor and primitive, under the crushing burdens of providing more cash and increased (though often commuted) services to their lords. Peasant holdings under the pressure of increasing population were growing smaller, arable was expanded at the expense of

pasture, thus aggravating the peasant's normal lack of feeding stuffs for stock, and as a result villages everywhere were understocked.

This degradation was associated elsewhere with peasant violence and flight from the manor, but in this region there are few signs of this, perhaps owing to less pressure of population on arable and pasture than in other regions. Such violence as there was, and there seems to have been a good deal, was often led by the gentry, and much of it consisted of the exploitation of the forest areas by officials and inhabitants at the expense of the king.

There is much else of value in this book: towns and their government; urban and rural industry; and the whole range of secular and ecclesiastical jurisdictions. Such a wide-ranging survey inevitably raises problems of arrangement of material, and there is some repetition. Nor is the book easy reading. There are several misprints and the index is not impeccable. More seriously, there is no general map of the region (the plate based on the Ordnance Survey is too confusing to be of much use). Nor are there any references in the text to the plates or the maps, a fault made worse by the lack of a list of maps. But these are minor blemishes on a work whose excellence makes us look forward to the sequel.

ALAN ROGERS

A. C. CHIBNALL, *Sherington: Fiefs and Fields of a Buckinghamshire Village*. Cambridge University Press, 1965. xxiv+304 pp. 8 maps. 84s.

Dr Chibnall's beautifully produced book is a product of one of the oldest traditions in the writing of local history. His interest was first aroused by the history of the Chibnall family, which appeared in Sherington in the fourteenth century, and gradually extended itself to include both the history of the other estates in Sherington and the fields and landscape of the village itself. The book represents work undertaken over the last forty years as a labour of love.

Its faults are partly the result of this background. Parishes chosen for research for

human rather than purely historical reasons often frustrate the researcher by lack of suitable documentation. In this case, there were no medieval accounts, no court rolls or Hundred Roll entry, and no map before enclosure in 1797, although there was a series of charters dealing with the affairs of the free peasantry in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In the circumstances, the agricultural historian looking for information on the cultivators of the Sherington fields, rather than the holders of the Sherington fiefs in the Middle Ages, has necessarily to be somewhat disappointed.

The major merit of this section of the book is Dr Chibnall's reconstruction of the fields and furlongs in the parish. Anyone who has wrestled with the problems of mapping an open-field parish in the thirteenth, or even the sixteenth, century will admire the persistence with which Dr Chibnall has created his maps of Sherington *circa* 1300 and in 1580 by assembling pieces of the monster jigsaw of the furlongs from the abutments given in a long series of terriers, and pushing these pieces around on the base provided by the enclosure map, until they fitted each other. A careful analysis of the furlong names then shows that the two medieval open fields of the village were in complete cultivation very early, judging from the absence of elements indicating clearance in them. The predominance of pre- and even post-conquest clearance elements to the north and east of the village where the block demesne lay, shows, on the other hand, that this was a later creation.

A major change in the village economy took place some time in the sixteenth century, probably between 1530 and 1561, when the original two open fields of the village were re-organized into a three-field system. This may have been a result of seigneurial initiative, or a reaction to the beginning of the population rise. There were 33 taxpayers in 1524 and 41 families in 1563. The lords of the Sherington manors made the familiar sixteenth-century attempt to increase the number of their sheep, both by overstocking the commons and by enclosing the demesne in scattered parcels. The attempt was foiled at Sherington, but was

successful in the parishes round about. By the seventeenth century Sherington was an open-field parish surrounded by a ring of enclosed villages. Some of these local enclosures were certainly classifiable as 'depopulating'. Dr Chibnall shows that an enclosure which appeared depopulating in the neighbouring parish of Tyringham was in fact carried out simply by not replacing migrating families or those which died out. He shows himself how rapid the turnover at Sherington was; if this mobility is, as seems highly likely, typical, then the depopulating landowner of the sixteenth century must often have had an easier, and less brutal, job than is supposed.

The immediate effect of the nearby enclosures on Sherington was to accelerate the already rapid growth of the place by an influx of labourers. There were 93 houses by the decade of the Hearth Tax and over half of these were exempt from the tax on the grounds of poverty in 1671. Dr Chibnall links this wave of distressed outsiders with the appearance of dissent in strength in Sherington in the 1630's, and its hold there right through to the 1680's, when at least 40 families were involved. He does not, unfortunately, cite direct proof of the association.

While the number of poor grew, the yeomen of Sherington had their period of greatest prosperity. At the end of the sixteenth century, while the manorial lords were in difficulties and selling out to their neighbours, or to their own tenants, the freeholders who were still farming their own land, like the Chibnalls, were benefiting from the economic situation. The prosperity of the yeomen lasted until the 1660's. In the middle of the seventeenth century, only 12 per cent of the land was owned by non-residents. The next fifty years saw a major change. By 1700, only half of the Sherington farmers tilled their own land. The Knight family had farmed the largest freehold in the village in 1653, and had, according to the rector's valuation for tithe, a gross income from grain sales of £204 in a year of low prices. By 1700, they had been forced by their debts to become soap-makers in Southwark. The engrossing of holdings

continued, and more and more of them fell into the hands of merchants and outsiders in the neighbouring towns. It seems increasingly likely that the second half of the seventeenth century is the period when the fall of the yeomen really began. Dr Chibnall adds another instance.

This is not an easy book. The constant references to tables earlier or later in the text would be more willingly made by the reader if page references had been supplied. The tables themselves would have been made much easier to comprehend by further compression and rearrangement. As it is, the reader is given a great deal of information on changes in landownership in the village at different dates, but has to make a considerable effort to analyse this information himself. Despite these criticisms, the book provides another of the series of examples of local agricultural history on which generalization must ultimately rest.

MARGARET SPUFFORD

E. C. K. GONNER, *Common Land and Enclosure*. 2nd edn with new introduction by G. E. Mingay. Frank Cass, 1966. xxx+462 pp. 70s.

We give a warm welcome to a new edition of yet another of that rich feast of studies in English agricultural history which appeared in the years just prior to 1914, the fruit of much discussion of contemporary agricultural problems. The book has an admirable new introduction by G. E. Mingay which places the work in its historical setting, and also draws attention to those aspects of Gonner's account which have been amplified or seen some modification by subsequent research.

Gonner has, perhaps, stood up better than most to the detailed researches of generations of scholars. The reason for this lies in the book's basic maturity of approach to its subject. On first appearance, in 1912, the work was acclaimed by one reviewer for directing "the white searchlight of scientific analysis on the facts" of the enclosure movement. Gonner consciously set his face against the sweeping

generalization based on a few fascinating, but perhaps untypical, case-histories. His declared aim was to uncover the broad economic forces which underlay the movement and determined its progress and character, linking this to a sober and balanced assessment of its effect on the economic life of England. His method was a systematic and detailed scrutiny of such evidence as was available to him.

The result was a study of the enclosure movement remarkable for its comprehensiveness and its perceptive insight into the complex many-sidedness of the movement. Above all, later scholars have been indebted to Gonner for the initial formulation of a number of problems connected with enclosure, to whose solution their own researches could be directed. His cautious use of statistics in his examination of enclosure problems established the method of enquiry which later scholars were to adopt.

Gonner devotes the first two of his three main sections to a consideration of the process by which enclosure of common field and waste took place, and of the complex nature of this process. He rightly saw it as a piecemeal movement, taking many forms, influenced by a variety of factors, and stretching over three centuries. He does, however, tend to over-emphasize the purely physical influence of environment, and pays little attention to the variable community and landownership structure, its agricultural arrangements and customs, all of which must have greatly influenced the progress and character of the movement. Nor does he discuss, except in a very general way, the complex organization of the regional food market and other more general economic forces, which must also have had a bearing on enclosure, either as cause or effect. Looking at the process during the parliamentary era, he reached the conclusion that the local commissioners carried out their work fairly, an opinion which still generally prevails amongst scholars who have made a more systematic examination than Gonner was able to do of commissioners' awards, enclosure costs, and so on.

The third section, in which Gonner con-

siders the effects of enclosure, is the most important part of the work. He emphasized that its results depended on a wide variety of local conditions. He was able to show that there was no direct causal relationship between enclosure and depopulation or pauperism except in a very localized and temporary form. Distinction was drawn between the controversial impact of common-field enclosure and that of common pasture and waste, which was entirely beneficial to the rural community. All this has been confirmed and amplified by later research.

On the other hand modern scholarship has very considerably diminished the significance of enclosure as an agent of change in agriculture and within the rural community. Common-field farming was far less backward and inflexible than Gonner and his contemporaries imagined, while the growth in the size of farms was determined by many factors not considered by Gonner, apart from enclosure, and was in any case a long-drawn-out process.

Looking at the rural community, we know that in many unenclosed villages the landowners were, as a body, no more than a small fraction of the total householders even at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Furthermore, historians have observed that a marked inequality in the division of land had commonly developed before enclosure was undertaken. In any case great variety existed in the character of rural communities between one locality and another, and this was so even within the same neighbourhood, being dependent on a variety of historical and geographical circumstances. This makes generalization about the effect on the community difficult. Gonner believed that the movement to enclose must have advanced the steady and widespread disappearance of the small owner-occupier, but this also probably depended on the particular circumstances of time and place. We now know, for example, that during the French wars this type of owner may well have seen a noticeable, if temporary, recovery.

Gonner paid comparatively little attention to the impact of human enterprise and personality, so that it is no surprise that we find

little about the new balance of social forces which enclosure helped to create in the countryside. He gave little notice to the men behind enclosure, or to the new tenant-farmer class who were, perhaps, its main beneficiaries.

The statistical tests used by Gonner are also open to some criticism. His grouping of parishes undergoing enclosure may not always have been meaningful, since he failed to distinguish how much, or what type, of common land was being enclosed by parliamentary Acts that sometimes dealt mainly with acreages of common waste. Furthermore, his tables might not always show up the effects of enclosure within limited localities.

It is important to remember that the inevitable shortcomings of this book, reflected, in reality, less on its author than on the limited outlook of contemporary discussion and of knowledge in this subject. For its comprehensive and scholarly qualities this pioneer study of enclosure remains without equal.

J. M. MARTIN

E. E. GILLETT, REX C. RUSSELL, and E. H. TREVITT, *The Enclosures of Scartho, 1795-1798, and Grimsby, 1827-1840*. Library & Museums Committee of the County Borough of Grimsby, 1964. 58 pp. 3s. 9d. incl. postage.

Recent references in the press to the use of an enclosure award in determining financial responsibility for maintaining certain public highways near Shrewsbury reveal the continuing importance of these planning documents. This excellent publication adds to the growing volume of published material on enclosure awards at a local level.

In his opening chapter Mr Gillett shows that the urban and agricultural elements in the community at Grimsby had become separated by the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The town was growing rapidly and the freemen were closely divided over the provision of new building lots in the East Marsh in 1825. Only two years later, however, the urban party gained the ascen-

dancy and agreement was reached for the promotion of a Bill to enclose the remaining open grounds.

The pre-enclosure scene is described with the aid of Mr Russell's admirable maps and the history of the Bill's progress is recited by reference to the comprehensive range of surviving papers. Not the least of the difficulties encountered by the promoters were brought about by their choice of enclosure commissioner. Although John Burcham had had twenty-six years of experience preparing other Lincolnshire enclosures before he started at Grimsby, he was known to be dilatory in executing the task. In this case he took thirteen years. The writers suggest that his position as steward to one of Grimsby's chief landowners, Lord Yarborough, led to his appointment. When Burcham died his estate amounted to £600,000. No doubt much of this money came from other sources, but when one considers his expenses at Grimsby and notes that he had been a commissioner for at least sixty-nine enclosures, "it would certainly be surprising if John Burcham had not died a rich man."

By contrast, the enclosure of the neighbouring village of Scartho was carried out more rapidly by three commissioners. Their work, which is discussed in detail, was completed within three years of the Act's being passed.

Both awards contain references to local terms, two of which are of special interest. It was noted, for example, that certain persons claimed *mudfangs*. Quoting Peacock's *Glossary of words used in the Wapentakes of Manby and Corringham, Lincs.*, the writers note that a mudfang is a portion of land, usually about two feet in width, in which the roots of a boundary hedge may grow when that hedge has no adjacent ditch. Sometimes the term is applied to a hedge and the land for two feet on either side even where there is no division of property. In Scartho, too, the Scandinavian term *wong* is used to refer to a group of furlongs.

Since the execution of the awards Grimsby has expanded so that now the two settlements

are linked by continuous building, a process that was expedited by the awards themselves.

BRIAN LOUGHBROUGH

MICHAEL TWYMAN and WILLIAM ROLLINSON, *John Soulby, printer, Ulverston*. Museum of English Rural Life, Reading, 1966. 54 pp. No price stated. [10s.]

It was a fortunate chance which enabled the Museum of English Rural Life to acquire a collection of nearly five hundred posters, handbills, trade cards, billheads, and other ephemera, the work of John Soulby, a jobbing printer and stationer of Ulverston in Furness between 1821 and 1827. Two similar collections, already held by Barrow-in-Furness Public Library, cover the work of the Soulby family from 1796 to 1827. The existence of this corpus, providing as it does a unique opportunity to study the output of a provincial printer during an eventful period of typographical history, has inspired the Reading authorities to compile and publish a handsomely illustrated study in which Dr Twyman, lecturer in typography and graphic design at the university, works out the history of Soulby's business and analyses the elements of his printing style. Mr William Rollinson, of Liverpool University, contributes a description of Ulverston as it was in Soulby's time. The student of agrarian history can see from the reproductions how the local farmers and auctioneers advertised cattle fairs, sales of hay, timber, clover, and rye grass, and farms to let. On the lighter side, we can see the people of Ulverston being invited to view an exhibition of tight-rope dancing, to attend a card assembly, or to purchase "a beautiful pink stain for silk stockings."

H. P. R. FINBERG

M. A. BARG, *Narodnyie Nizy v Angliyskoy Burzhuaznoy Revolyutsii XVII veka, Dvizhenie i ideologiya istinnykh Levellerov*. Moscow, 1967. 350 pp. No price stated.

This is an excellent study of radical movements among the lower classes during the seventeenth-century English revolution,

which might with advantage be translated into English. It contains two main arguments, the second of more exclusively political interest, the other of general social and agrarian interest.

Professor Barg suggests that historians have insufficiently appreciated the central significance for seventeenth-century English history of the abolition of feudal tenures and the Court of Wards. He argues that this abolition and the form which it took was of crucial importance for the agrarian history of England. In consequence of the conversion of land previously held by knight service into freehold, agriculture was freer than industry from obstacles to capital investment and long-term planning. Equally important was the point stressed by Winstanley and other contemporaries, that though feudal tenures were abolished for the gentry, the "feudal" incidents of copyhold were not abolished. This had a long pre-history. Before the negotiations for the Great Contract in 1610, the abolition of feudal tenures had been discussed in Parliament on more than one occasion. As early as 1610 the House of Commons was insisting in this context that fines, heriots, suit of court, and work days should all remain even if knight service was abolished. This point was passed over in silence in the order of 1646 abolishing the Court of Wards, no doubt because at that date it would have been inexpedient to alienate the support of copyholders for Parliament against the King; but in the confirmation of this order in 1656 "all rents certain and heriots due to mesne lords" were explicitly retained. This was confirmed again in the Act of 1660, which was regarded as so important that it was the first business the House of Commons took up after hearing the Declaration of Breda—i.e. after accepting the restoration of Charles II.

As we know there was much agitation in the sixteen-forties and -fifties for the abolition of copyhold and its conversion into freehold, or at least for a rationalization and stabilization of the incidents of copyhold. Professor Barg sees two alternative courses of agrarian development open for seventeenth-

century England at this stage. The one finally taken was the abolition of feudal tenures for the gentry but not of copyhold; the alternative—the abolition of feudal tenures for peasantry as well as gentry—would have produced a social structure more like that which emerged in France after the Revolution of 1789, a social structure less favourable to the rise of large-scale agrarian capitalism. It is in this context that Professor Barg sees the Diggers as the most radical variant of the movements which aimed at clearing away all vestiges of feudalism and establishing a land-owning peasantry—though the Diggers wanted to see communal ownership and cultivation once landlordism had been abolished.

This brings us to Professor Barg's second, more political point. The Diggers called themselves "True Levellers." Professor Barg argues that we should not think of the Levellers as being a united party or movement. He produces a good deal of evidence, some of it admittedly circumstantial, to suggest that Lilburne and Wildman led the moderate, constitutional wing of the Levellers, and that there was a more radical wing in London (with which Walwyn and Overton may have sympathized) and especially in the country districts around London. Professor Barg sees the three *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* pamphlets as expressions of this radical trend, apparently quite independent of the Diggers; and the latter's experiment on Cobham Heath as merely one particularly well-documented example of a movement which was repeated at Wellingborough and perhaps elsewhere. The Wellingborough Diggers sent emissaries through Buckinghamshire, Surrey, Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Huntingdonshire, and Northamptonshire; evidence also happens to have survived of Diggers in Kent, Essex, and Gloucestershire. Winstanley and his band of Diggers, Professor Barg suggests, may have been only the visible tip of the iceberg of True Levellerism.

This theory certainly deserves further examination. It seems on the face of it to make sense of many facts which have hitherto been

confusing—the failure of official Leveller pronouncements to take a clear and decisive stand in favour of copyholders until after the Levellers' defeat; the apparent difference in emphasis in the Putney Debates on the franchise between Wildman on the one hand, and Rainborough, Sexby, and Petty on the other; Ireton's determination at Putney to convict the Levellers of communism, despite their indignant denials, and the difficulties into which he forced them by stressing the "natural right" basis of their arguments about the franchise: for Gerrard Winstanley was to build his communist theories on natural rights. It would explain Lilburne's apparently excessive concern from 1648 onwards (i.e. before the Digger movement had appeared) to disavow any communist theories as well as his repudiation of the "True Levellers" in 1649. It would also help to account for the ease with which the Levellers were isolated and suppressed after 1649. Professor Barg would suggest that Lilburne and those who thought like him differed from the Independent Grandees only in degree, since both assumed the immutability of existing property relationships. The Grandees stole the Levellers' republican clothes, and the constitutional Levellers had no basis for an appeal to the peasant majority of the population on a specifically anti-landlord platform. Hence their apparently unprincipled readiness to conspire with royalists against the Independent republic. The "True Levellers," Professor Barg points out, were convinced and consistent republicans, since the monarch for them was merely the chief captain of the army of landlordism. Professor Barg's thesis here would seem, as he suggests, interestingly to complement that advanced by Professor C. B. Macpherson in *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*.

There is much else of interest in Professor Barg's book, notably a long chapter on the religious background of Winstanley's ideas stressing analogies between his thought and that of Thomas Münzer, as well as that of the Family of Love (whom Walwyn defended). Whether or not all of Professor Barg's argu-

ments are accepted, there is much in this fresh and stimulating book for reflection and discussion.

CHRISTOPHER HILL

WILHELM ABEL, *Agrarkrisen und Agrarkonjunktur*. Verlag Paul Parey, Hamburg and Berlin, 1966. 2nd edn revised and enlarged. 302 pp. No price stated.

Professor Abel's study of agrarian crises and economic fluctuations first appeared in 1935 and was an epoch-making work. It skilfully gathered up the different strands of economic change in the countries of western Europe and endeavoured to weave them into a unified, consistent whole. And it was remarkably successful. By tracing the movements of prices, wages, rents, and population, Professor Abel brought to light the remarkable similarities in economic trends in all west European countries between the thirteenth and the nineteenth centuries. The shape of the late medieval depression, the scale of the desertions of villages that accompanied it, the implications of the price revolution of the sixteenth century—these became some of the notable landmarks which have guided historians ever since.

In this new edition of his book Professor Abel has revised and enlarged his previous work, extending his narrative from the nineteenth into the twentieth century, and attempting a closer analysis of the short-term fluctuations as well as the long-term economic trends. He is especially thorough in incorporating recent German research, and since agrarian history flourishes in Germany, there is much to tell on this score which deserves the attention of British historians. The book does not do justice to the recent work of English agrarian historians, however; too much of the argument about England still rests on material from Macaulay, Tooke and Newmarch, and Thorold Rogers. And the sources on France do not embrace the many local studies that have appeared in recent years.

This last point of criticism, however, merely demonstrates the difficulty of revising an

old book instead of writing a new one, and Professor Abel must himself be more keenly aware of this problem than any of his critics. Some of the new material that has been collected in recent years can be fitted more or less satisfactorily into the old framework; but much of it refuses to submit to this treatment. New wine cannot be poured into old bottles. Hence, while Professor Abel's original book still needs to be read by anyone exploring economic developments throughout Europe, it no longer stands as a reliable guide to the next stage of research. Many problems which Professor Abel was unable to solve in 1935, and still cannot solve, are now being approached from other directions altogether. For example, our knowledge of the differences in farming types and social structure in different regions of Europe is growing so rapidly that it seems unlikely that we shall be able further to elucidate the "crisis" of the fifteenth or the late seventeenth centuries with the aid of price tables that represent *national* averages. Nor can we make a finer analysis of wage movements without some knowledge of the social structure of diverse farming regions. Differential movements of prices of corn and animal products in the later seventeenth century are beginning to yield clues which Professor Abel mentions but does not explore in depth. Yet they must have exerted very different effects upon the communities growing grass for a living compared with those growing corn. In short, the way forward for those who have digested Professor Abel's work but hope to answer some of the questions he left unsettled is by way of more regional studies. Fortunately, those published up to 1958 were brought together most successfully in Professor Slicher van Bath's *Agrarian History of Western Europe, A.D. 500-1850*. His study overlaps that of Professor Abel in some ways, but to a larger extent they complement each other. The two together form a comprehensive survey of European agrarian history. It is fairly certain that the student will have to wait many years before another European conspectus supercedes them.

JOAN THIRSK

FRIEDRICH-WILHELM HENNING, *Herrschaft und Bauernuntertänigkeit. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Herrschaftsverhältnisse in den ländlichen Bereichen Ostpreussens und des Fürstentums Paderborn vor 1800*. Beiheft zum Jahrbuch der Albertus-Universität, Königsberg, Preussen, no. xxv, 1964. 340 pp. 28 DM.

This volume comprises four studies of landlords and peasantry in Germany before 1800. The first and third are comparative studies of the administrative and judicial functions of the nobility and lesser landlords in rural East Prussia and in the bishopric of Paderborn in Westphalia; the second and fourth examine the status of serfs in the same two areas in the eighteenth century. The nobility and landlords exercised a powerful influence in both regions, despite the differing origins of their authority. In Paderborn the bishop was supreme overlord, but lay lords were administrators and judges under the supervision and control of the bishop. In East Prussia the landed classes owed their power to the defeat of the Teutonic knights in the fifteenth century and the dissolution of the Order in the sixteenth. They stepped into the breach and were not challenged in their exercise of judicial and administrative functions until the second half of the seventeenth century, when the Dukes of Prussia had accumulated sufficient financial and political strength to appropriate effective authority to themselves.

The status of serfs in the two regions was dissimilar in significant respects. In East Prussia serfs represented 60 per cent of the peasant (i.e. landholding) population on noble estates, and about 20 per cent on the estates of lesser lords. But in the latter case their numbers rose by 53 per cent between 1700 and 1780-90, although they represented a diminishing proportion of the total population. Labour services were still heavy and were regularly demanded, for the shortage of labour was acute, particularly on the lands of the nobility. Nevertheless, serfdom lost much of its sting and its significance declined steadily throughout the eighteenth century

owing to the general improvement in the condition of the peasantry and the rise of population. Impersonal economic trends, in fact, anticipated the legislative reforms of the nineteenth century. In Paderborn, serfdom also continued theoretically in full force—serfs totalled 20 per cent of the total population, compared with 13 per cent in East Prussia—but it was easier for serfs to obtain permission to leave their lords. Indeed, for children who had no rights to inherit land a request to leave the estate was a mere formality. Labour services had fallen into disuse and there was little reason for lords to retain landless people on their estates. In both regions of Germany, therefore, serfdom was being eroded, but by different means. This is a useful contribution to the study of the German peasantry before 1800. Over a comparatively short period it gives a valuable glimpse of the varied local circumstances which in every region modified the impact of outwardly uniform feudal institutions.

JOAN THIRSK

ERNST KLEIN, *Die Entwicklung des Pfluges in deutschen Südwesten*. Der Museumsfreund: aus Heimatsmuseen und Sammlungen in Baden-Württemberg. Heft 7, 1966. 60 pp. Illus. No price stated.

Studies of plough history multiply: but this is one of the more welcome. It covers the whole space of time in a peculiarly agricultural area, and is supremely well illustrated with reproductions of early MSS. drawings, and photographs of old ploughs preserved in various places.

There is, of course, as Dr Klein pertinently remarks, no written evidence available before Roman times, but a good deal is known about early plough types (the *ard*) from the researches of A. V. Glob and others. Dr Klein reproduces a picture of a Stone-Age plough reconstruction showing how a stone share may have been used. We come to more certain ground when he discusses Pliny's so-called Rhaetian plough which may have been used in later Roman times in south-west Germany, but I find it difficult to accept his conclusion

that the addition of wheels to what can only have been an *ard* made for easier traction. It may have been so in light land, but the wheels would almost certainly have been an embarrassment in heavy clay. In such heavy soils a swing plough seems always to have been used in England.

Plough types are acknowledged to be dependent upon soil types, land configuration, climate, types of culture, and cultivation systems, but the peasant farmer could not adopt better designs if they were too costly. The consequence is that there was a rather stubborn adherence to the traditional and well-known design, the *Haken*, which was, in fact, the *ard*, *aratrum*, or *araire*.

The earliest *Beetpflug* (asymmetrical mouldboard plough) that Dr Klein has been able to discover is dated about 1170. This plough turned a furrow, and so prepared a better seedbed, but required more power to haul it, and more skill on the part of the ploughman to use it. He suggests that it was no accident that this plough came into use in place of the *Haken* in the medieval colonizing period. Some *Haken* were provided with a wheeled forecarriage in the fifteenth century, but these were possibly lineal descendants of Pliny's Rhaetian plough or the much earlier Greek *ards* with wheels.

Dr Klein is one of the few historians who possess a detailed knowledge of plough construction and of plough parts. This has led him to a criticism of some of the pictures of ploughing scenes. For example, the mouldboard plough depicted in Plate VI, dated 1525-30, is shown as turning a furrow to the left, something I observed in an illustration to Carlo Poni's work noticed in this REVIEW, vol. XIV, part 1. This may be a mistake on the part of the artist; it was certainly unusual. It was not the case with the old German plough in the Bezirksheimatmuseum, Bad Mergentheim, shown in Plate X. This turned the furrow to the right as is most usual.

I have always been intrigued by the *Ruchadlo-Schar*. Dr Klein illustrates it in Plate XI, No. 22. It was used in the Netherlands as well as south-west Germany; but its

purpose eludes me—to my sorrow, I confess it. It seems to have been a sort of digging plough.

Later developments are fairly well known, and have a degree of similarity throughout Western Europe. The most important development of design was the 'winding' mouldboard, which has been dealt with by a good many scholars, not least by Dr Klein himself in an essay "Über das Alter des gewundenen Streichbretts" in *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte*. . . , XIII, 2, Oct. 1965.

From this point of time, the history of animal-hauled ploughs in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is rather uniform in most countries, and south-west Germany is no exception, although the influence of Schwerz and the Hohenheim factory must have been paramount there. Nevertheless there were some curious survivals such as the *Schwarzwälder Stichelpflug*; but on the whole one may say that south-western German development was not very different from that of other countries. Draining ploughs, mole ploughs, one-way ploughs, and potato-lifting ploughs were all used, and, of course, metal played a larger part than it had done in the past. In the nineteenth century many parts were made of iron, and finally the whole implement was constructed of this material.

This is a valuable essay for all who are interested in the technique of farming, and the technical development of what is still perhaps the most important implement on the farm—the plough.

G. E. FUSSELL

ERNST KLEIN assisted by WILHELM KREPELA, *Die historischen Pflüge der Hohenheimer Sammlung landwirtschaftlicher Geräte und Maschinen*. Quellen und Forschungen zur Agrargeschichte, Vol. XVI. Gustav Fischer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1967. 230 pp. with 454 plates. DM 86.

Few collections of early agricultural implements, especially ploughs, of full size and in models, can be as old as that at Hohenheim, although there is a collection of model ploughs dating from the eighteenth century at Ul-

tuna, Sweden.¹ This is not quite the same thing. Schwerz founded Hohenheim as a college of agriculture for teaching and research. Here ten years later the then Director began the collection with specimens brought from his estate, Gut Assumstadt. In addition models and full-scale ploughs were brought to Hohenheim for use by the implement factory as patterns.

Naturally the collection has been added to and accumulated ever since it was begun. Besides ploughs and models of ploughs it includes all sorts of hand-tools used on farms, cultivation implements, seed-drills, and harvesting machinery as well as specimens of household goods, brewing and sugar-beet equipment amongst other things. The present study is, however, as its title states, confined to the plough.

Dr Klein's introduction supplies a brief history of the plough, both the symmetrical and asymmetrical designs, with critical references to previous writers on the subject, but the history of the plough is much more meticulously delineated in the large number of pictures of material in the museum.

The first group is of *Haken* (*ard* or *aratrum* type), and includes Etruscan, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman, Indian, Arabic, and other specimens. Each picture is carefully annotated. Illustration no. 46 shows what was once believed to be the pattern of the Anglo-Saxon or Belgic plough, provided with wheels and a coulter, but no mouldboard. Dr Klein thinks, very reasonably in the light of recent research, that the attribution is an error, and that this specimen is more likely to derive from the twelfth century.

The Slavonic *Zocha* developed along rather different lines from the plough of Western Europe. In most of the examples shown here, it has a sort of double share, or rather two shares, each fixed to the ends of a sharebeam that is divided partway along its length. In this gap a kind of shovel or shovel-shaped metal blade fixed to a long handle can be adjusted by the ploughman to turn the soil to one

side or the other as required. It is not precisely a coulter because its purpose is not to cut the sod but to turn it to one side or the other in the manner of a one-way plough.

Rather more than 200 of the pictures show examples of the asymmetrical mouldboard plough which seems to have been developed in the Middle Ages. From this all the more modern patterns are derived, even the steam-plough. And in the nineteenth century many special-purpose ploughs were designed for use in cultivating for particular crops, the ridging plough for root crops for example, and the mole plough for drainage.

Dr Klein has put all agricultural historians in his debt with this piece of work. Few can have realized the wealth of material for plough history that can be studied at Hohenheim, but the opportunity to visit such places to study is not always easy to find. Here, however, is an annotated catalogue that does not precisely make it unnecessary to see the objects themselves, but tells us what they were, their origin, and date, and shows us what they looked like. It seems to me to be a work that is compulsory for all farm institutes, colleges of agriculture, and university departments of economic and social history.

G. E. FUSSELL

BERTHOLD SCHULZE, *Brandenburgische Besitzstandskarte des 16. Jahrhunderts. Der ritterschaftliche, geistliche, städtische und landesherrliche Besitz um 1540*. Historischer Atlas von Brandenburg, Neue Folge, Lieferung 1. Berliner Historische Kommission beim Friedrich-Meinecke-Institut der Freien Universität, Berlin. Walter de Gruyter & Co., Berlin. 1962. No price stated.

A remarkable series of four maps portraying the ownership of land in Brandenburg circa 1540 has been published by the Berlin Historical Commission at the Friedrich-Meinecke Institute of the Free University, Berlin. They depict the lands in the hands of ecclesiastical institutions, of knights, urban authori-

¹ Ragnar Jirloff, *Plough Models from the Eighteenth Century*, Swedish Institute of Agricultural Engineering, Ultuna, Report no. 213, 1948.

ties, and other private landlords. The maps are coloured so that it is possible to take in at a glance the proportions of land in the possession of these different categories of owners. The scale is 1:350000. It is a notable contribution to the Historical Atlas of Brandenburg.

JOAN THIRSK

G. OBEYESEKERE, *Land Tenure in Village Ceylon*. Cambridge University Press, 1967. xii+320 pp. 70s.

This fascinating book describes land tenure in the village of Madagama in south Ceylon between 1790 and 1961. The approach is largely based on E. R. Leach's classic study of *Pul Eliya*. The author starts by outlining the ideal and traditional systems and rules of land tenure as embodied in legal textbooks of the nineteenth century and the statements of villagers. In chapters 4-10 he shows how far facts accord with ideals. Among the many topics covered are inheritance systems, marriage arrangements, the effects of weather on landholding, the treatment of widows, the results of heavy taxation, and the formation of powerful 'cliques' through the ownership of land. The sources for this largely historical study, apart from the legal textbooks already mentioned, are marriage-registers, deeds of sale, taxation records, a census of 1911, and the memorized genealogies of present informants. The material is so similar to that used by historians of European communities that many passages read exactly like their work.

The use of historical material is at times too uncritical, especially if we compare it with the scepticism of Dr Leach. For instance, there is no discussion of the reliability of the sources for the construction of the 'traditional' picture (p. 51) and it is therefore too easily assumed that legal manuals give an accurate picture of what really happened. One wonders whether something more might have been squeezed out of the Grain Tax registers and the 1911 (and other?) censuses. Is there anything equivalent to the tax lists of 1889 and 1890 of which Leach makes such excellent use? The study of *Pul Eliya* suggests that the more maps and diagrams the better in

studies of the vastly complicated arrangements of land: we would have benefited from more maps of landholding in Dr Obeyesekere's work. The major theoretical under-emphasis is the absence of a discussion of population growth. The implicit conclusion of both *Pul Eliya* and the study of Madagama might be seen as the social effects of population changes on marriage, kinship, and land tenure. For instance, both authors stress that it is demographic change, rather than any special inheritance system, that leads to fragmentation of ownership. On p. 305 of *Land Tenure in Village Ceylon* we learn that there were 79 people in Madagama in 1911, on p. 8 we discover that in 1961 there were 289. We cannot merely dismiss this 400 per cent growth in fifty years as irrelevant.

The chapters on changes in the late nineteenth century are among the most interesting in the book. Dr Obeyesekere argues that the unequal grain taxation led to the dispossession of poorer villagers whose land was bought by wealthy village headmen. The changes were "a revolution in ownership of property," "analogous to that of the enclosure movement in England" (pp. 126-7). In fact it is the difference between Madagama and England that is interesting. Similar pressures seem to have led to entirely different consequences. In Madagama there does not seem to have been the growing gap between wealthy yeomen and a 'class' of landless labourers which has been illustrated for Wigston Magna and Chippenham. The process of the levelling of wealth in Madagama through conspicuous hospitality and partible inheritance would repay further investigation. Another theme of this work is the changing effects of land-pressure on residence after marriage. The ideal system whereby women resided in their husband's village broke down as men were driven from their villages by shortage of land. Again one wonders whether marriage 'flow' was directly connected to accessibility of land in pre-industrial Europe.

Neither Dr Obeyesekere nor Dr Leach has succeeded in making the necessary detail

wholly readable. Yet for those who are prepared to make the effort there is a rich reward to be had. For those interested in Ceylon, and particularly government officials who are prepared to face the immensely harmful consequences of misunderstanding, the work will be most useful. For anthropologists it has the double interest of being a pioneer attempt at historical/anthropological analysis, and of supporting Dr Leach's basic thesis, namely that 'kinship' is merely a way of talking about property relations and not a 'thing in itself'. For the agricultural historian,

read in conjunction with *Pul Eliya*, it should unbar fresh pastures. It shows that the study of land tenure cannot effectively begin until we know much more about marriage, kinship, and inheritance patterns. A new dimension would have been added to recent historical studies of English rural life if their authors had been able to read and ponder these two works. Dr Obeyesekere's book makes it clear that if historians do not do the job properly, anthropologists will soon do it for them.

A. MACFARLANE

Letters to the Editor

MADAM,—Three articles have appeared in your REVIEW which touch upon sheep-rights in East Anglia.¹ The patterns described by your contributors differ much from that revealed by a study of the history of such rights at Eriswell in the south-west corner of Breckland, a parish whose economy was singularly undisturbed throughout the Middle Ages. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in its six and a half thousand acres, there were nine sheep-rights, and details of the sizes and composition of the flocks, and of the boundaries of the rights, which were controlled by custom, are well documented.² There is nothing to suggest that the agrarian pattern in Eriswell during those two centuries differed from that of the two preceding ones (or, indeed, from that of even earlier times, but documentation sufficient for forming opinions begins only with the fifteenth century). In the area now covered by the parish the Domesday Survey places a manor of Eriswell and a (slightly larger) berewick of Coclesworth, each with its hall but under one lord. Charters of the early Middle Ages continue to

link the two names together as forming, for some purposes, a unity. In the later Middle Ages Coclesworth became known as Chamberlains (after an established but rising family of manor-tenants) and the whole was called "The Manor of Eriswell *cum* Chamberlains," as it is today. There was but one court leet and one court baron, though each section of the vill had its own distinct field system which remained intact until the enclosure award of 1818. I have ventured to name this structure a "duplex manor" differing, as it does slightly, from the common East Anglian pattern of two or more distinct manors in one vill.

In the parish all the people, save the rector (and his copyhold tenant) and some of the employed men, were either freehold or copyhold tenants of the one (duplex) manor. Three of the sheep-rights belonged to the manor, and six to persons who were manor-tenants, and each of these six was attached (as of right) to a specified messuage. These rights could be, and were, bequeathed, leased, and bought and sold. The earliest mention of a

¹ K. J. Allison, A.H.R., v, pp. 12-31; Alan Simpson, A.H.R., vi, pp. 87-96; M. R. Postgate, A.H.R., x, pp. 80-101.

² Elveden Hall Archives; Norwich Wills, Clearke, 323 ff.

sheep-right was a gift of grazing (and of land) by the lord of the manor to Royston Priory in 1261;¹ it is idle to surmise, there being no evidence, whether or not there were other sheep-rights at that time, or in whose hands they were. Within a century the Chamberlain family had acquired the Priory's possessions in Eriswell, and in 1448 sold four sheep-rights.² In the fifteenth century we find no suggestion that such rights were a monopoly of the lord; in fact they were free-tenancies, as much as were the messuages to which they were attached.

For Eriswell the wills of owners of sheep-rights are a valuable source of information. They provide a realistic picture, undistorted by specious claims of those who hoped to acquire rights which were not theirs by custom: a few examples will suffice. In 1474 the lord of the manor had to buy a sheep-right in Eriswell to endow a chantry.³ Another right, very well documented until its value disappeared with the enclosure award (when all nine rights were in the hands of one owner),⁴ was bequeathed by John Bacon of Hessel in 1513;⁵ it was acquired by a John Fisher, who bequeathed it to his widow in 1562;⁶ on her remarriage it became the subject of illuminating litigation which will be mentioned later: in the following two centuries it was bought and sold half a dozen times. In these transactions this particular right was spoken of as belonging to a messuage known as Bacons (later as Baldwins, the subsequent owners). Another right was bequeathed in 1522 by Thomas Collye to his widow as "longing" to his house: he instructed his executors to allow his widow to have the "theryings" of the fold-free (here is the local name for the fertilizing benefits of fold-ing).⁷

At Eriswell foldage (also called fold-free) was not a right belonging to the manor, but one which might be part of a sheep-right in anyone's hands. Though the exact nature of

each flock's rights varied slightly one from the other, all had each or most of these customary privileges: (a) grazing on specified areas (i) of heath land, (ii) of stubble after shack day (raking between sheaves was forbidden as decreasing the value of shack), (iii) of the ley-shift, (iv) of fen; (b) foldage on an area of the owner's land in the ley-shift. At Eriswell there is no shadow of doubt that the 'field' was divided into three 'shifts' (or 'wents'), and these into 'furlongs' which comprised 'acres'. Owing to the duplex nature of this manor, the complete system was duplicated, and each year, in each of the systems, one shift lay fallow. My predecessors, the rectors, held land in each shift in both systems, serving, as they did, a church in each section of the vill. The importance of holding land in each of three shifts is illustrated by a will of 1593, where the testator bequeaths his wife "nine acres, three in each shift," and a younger son twelve acres, four in each.⁸

The law-suit mentioned above⁹ resulted from an accusation of trespass made in the 1580's by a man who had leased Eriswell Hall, and the demesne lands worked from it, from the absentee lord of the manor. This leasing by a tenant for money for a period of years is not to be confused with the customary tenancies of the manor-tenants. The defendant was the second husband of the widow of the John Fisher mentioned above. He had erected a fold of thirty hurdles (said to be the customary number) on some of the land inherited by his wife, which was in the ley-shift, thus denying that portion to the plaintiff's sheep. The plaintiff claimed that a sheep-right depended on a specific grant by a manor lord to a particular individual (such claims were rife at the time). The defendant said that from time out of memory his wife's predecessors in their messuage had owned the sheep-right which was attached to it, and that the right included one to erect a fold. The defendant won his case, and, until the enclosure

¹ Cart. Rolls, 35 Hen. III, mem. 7.

² Feet of Fines (Suff.), 26 Hen. VI, 24.

³ Norwich Wills, Gelour 122 ff.

⁴ Elveden Hall Archives.

⁵ Norwich Wills, Johnson 119 ff.

⁶ Canterbury Wills, Chayre 7.

⁷ Sudbury Wills, Newton 82.

⁸ Eriswell Church Terriers.

⁹ Bury Record Office E18/400/1.3.

award, the right remained attached to that message.

It is possible that a laborious examination of all available wills made in the area would reveal in other places as well a pattern similar to that in Eriswell. It appears (at least in the case of some of Eriswell's neighbours) that the rather large number of 'fields' noted by Postgate originated at a formative period, when the vills comprised two or more manors, each with its field systems, and not because of any agricultural desirability.

J. T. MUNDAY

ST PETER'S RECTORY,
ERISWELL,
BRANDON, SUFFOLK

MADAM,—May I request some space for a plea for help? As part of the Nature Conservancy's research programme on hedgerows I have been undertaking a study of the factors affecting the number of species of shrubs in individual lengths of hedge. At the moment the most important factor appears to be the age of the hedge and it seems to operate in such a way that on average a hedge 100 years old has only one species of shrub in it, a hedge 200 years old has 2 species, and so on until a hedge 1,000 years old has 10 species.

Now if this correlation could be shown to be valid over the whole country or if the modifying factors, if any, such as soil type could

also be measured we would have a useful technique for dating field systems in the absence of documentary evidence.

Unfortunately to establish the correlation in the first place, we have to have a large number of accurately dated hedges from a variety of soil types, etc. So far we have made use of a number of Enclosure Award maps, early estate maps, and some Saxon charters but this leaves a very large gap of 500 years between A.D. 1050 and 1550 for which we have no precisely dated hedges.

Could I ask members of the British Agricultural History Society, who come across such hedges, either to make a note of the number of species of shrub in a 30-yard length together with any other information such as the soil type and form of management of the hedge and send it to me or, if this is not possible, to let me have a note of the whereabouts of such hedges so that I may examine them myself?

If any member is currently engaged in a survey of field systems to which he thinks this botanical approach might materially contribute, I should be happy to collaborate as far as my other commitments allow.

M. D. HOOPER

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