

The AGRICULTURAL HISTORY REVIEW



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*

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Some Differences between Manors and their Effects
on the Condition of the Peasant in the
Thirteenth Century
by J. Z. TITOW

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The Re-leasing of the Ellesmere Estates
1637 - 1642
by E. HOPKINS

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The Rural Economy of a Kentish Wealden Parish
1650 - 1750
by C. W. CHALKLIN

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Some Differences between Manors and their Effects on the Condition of the Peasant in the Thirteenth Century¹

By J. Z. TITOW

FOR the study of the English peasantry in the late Middle Ages the fourteenth century is extremely important, since it was in that century that the two best things to have happened to the peasantry as a whole took place. The first half of the century saw the great famines of 1315-17, and the second half was overshadowed by the great plague of 1349 and its recurrences. It may seem callous to call disasters of such magnitude a "good thing." In terms of human suffering and misery they were indeed great tragedies, but seen in historical perspective they emerge clearly as the turning-points at which the downward trend in peasant prosperity was first checked and then decisively reversed. There was, of course, nothing new in people dying of epidemics, or from starvation following bad harvests; such happenings were commonplace throughout the Middle Ages. What was new was the scale of these disasters, and the point I am trying to make here is that the position was already so serious that nothing less than disasters of this magnitude could have had anything but a passing effect.²

At the root of the decline of peasant prosperity over the thirteenth century lies undoubtedly the great increase in population which occurred at the time. Professor Postan long ago expressed his belief that the rural population of this country in the thirteenth century was equal to that in the early eighteenth century and possibly even greater,³ and I fully subscribe to that view. But whatever may be argued about the magnitude of this increase in absolute terms, there can be very little room for argument, on existing evidence, as to the state of relative overpopulation prevailing at the time on a great many

¹ This article is based on the paper read at the Annual Conference of the British Agricultural History Society at Newton Abbot, 7 April 1961.

² I should perhaps make clear at this point that I see the condition of the peasantry as a whole over the thirteenth century as one of growing impoverishment unchecked until the great famines of the early fourteenth century and reversed only with the advent of the Black Death and subsequent epidemics.

³ View put forward at the Annual Conference of the Economic History Society in May 1949.

manors. Conditions differed, naturally, from place to place and manor to manor, but if one disregards small local variations due to a variety of causes it is possible to distinguish certain types of manors—or perhaps it would be more correct to speak of certain factors present on some manors and absent from others—which would noticeably affect the condition of the people living on them.

At least three lines of division spring to mind at once. It may be argued that peasants living on manors with an exclusively arable economy would be worse off than peasants living on manors with extensive opportunities for pastoral activities. On the latter the meagre income from land could be supplemented by the profits of sheep-farming or stock-raising. Personally, I do not believe that this aspect of peasant economy was ever of very great importance except, perhaps, in a few rather exceptional cases.¹

Another line of division would run between manors on which, by virtue of their location, large-scale emigration would be possible, and those on which it would not. By reducing the number of mouths to be fed such emigration would alleviate the lot of the remaining villagers, but in the thirteenth century emigration was very seldom on a sufficiently large scale to make any significant difference.

The most important division of all is a different one. Since in the thirteenth century the problem everywhere was one of too many persons chasing too few acres, the most important line of division would be between those manors on which new land was still available and those on which it was not—between the colonizing and non-colonizing manors.

It is not my purpose in this article to discuss differences in the condition of the peasants characteristic of all these major types of manor. What I intend to do is to examine the more important differences between colonizing and non-colonizing manors only, partly because I consider availability of land by far the most important factor in peasant prosperity, and partly because existing evidence for the Winchester estates is inadequate for the proper study of other manorial types. The method I propose to adopt is to discuss the conditions on the Somerset manor of Taunton, the most extreme case available to me of an anciently settled manor with no colonizable resources worth speaking of left to it by the middle of the thirteenth century, and to draw comparisons at various points with corresponding developments on the Berkshire manor of Wargrave and the Oxfordshire manor of Witney, the two most colonizing manors of the bishopric.

Out of the forty-odd manors regularly represented in the Winchester account rolls some twenty-six have customals dating from about the middle

¹ Such as the economy of special regions, e.g. the Fenland.

of the thirteenth century. Taunton, Wargrave, and Witney are all among them. These custumals make it possible to examine the pattern of land-holding and thus provide a good starting-point for an investigation of the peasants' economic position. Statistics based on custumals, however, are subject to one important reservation. There can be no doubt that there has always been a great deal of land transference between peasants, either by permanent alienation or through short- and long-term leases. Since the custumals are not concerned with sub-tenancies the tenurial pattern depicted in them may not necessarily correspond with the pattern of actual occupation. It must therefore be borne in mind that the figures calculated on the basis of custumals may, and almost certainly do, underestimate the number of smallholders.

When holdings recorded in the custumals are sorted out and those expressed in customary units (such as virgates and their fractions, and cotlonds) converted into acres, and all the tenants are grouped according to the totality of their holding, the following figures are obtained. At Taunton 56 per cent of the tenants had under 15 acres each and only 7·6 per cent more than 30 acres. At Wargrave 66·2 per cent of the tenants had under 15 acres each and 12·5 per cent more than 30 acres. At Witney some 73·6 per cent of the tenants had under 15 acres each and only some 5·3 per cent more than 30 acres.¹

On the face of it there does not seem to be very much difference between these manors, and such differences as there are seem to be in favour of Taunton. The figures show the same striking feature everywhere: a very high percentage of smallholders. The main difference between the two colonizing manors and Taunton is the higher proportion of tenants with only a few acres to their name on the former; 51·5 per cent of tenants with less than 5 acres apiece at Witney and 45·5 per cent at Wargrave as against only 13 per cent at Taunton. This was only to be expected, for at Wargrave and Witney, with new land being made continuously available, a great number of hitherto landless persons could receive some land and enter into our purview as tenants. On the non-colonizing manors, like Taunton, this was not possible, but the fact that the percentage of smallholders was there very much smaller does not mean that the land situation on such manors was healthier. Paradoxically, perhaps, it meant the opposite, for the number of landless peasants concealed behind the façade of tenancies and dependent on the tenants for their means of subsistence must have been on such manors very much greater. This brings out in a striking manner the greatest deficiency of custumals and rentals as guides to the general level of peasant prosperity. For the only valid

¹ There is some uncertainty as to the exact size of some rather substantial holdings.

criterion of the level of prosperity in a community whose wealth rests primarily, if not exclusively, on the utilization of land is the amount of land per head of population; but custumals, rentals, and similar documents completely disregard the landless elements of the community and give us only the total tenant population. They thus present a picture which is rosier than the reality. On manors like Wargrave or Witney, where about half the tenants had less than 5 acres apiece, the seriousness of the situation is quite obvious, but on a manor like Taunton the picture presented by the custumals creates an impression of much greater prosperity than there was in fact.

Fortunately this defect can be partly remedied. We do not know what was the total population of Wargrave or Witney, but it is possible to arrive at a pretty close estimate for Taunton. What is even more important, it is possible to demonstrate the magnitude of the population increase at Taunton over the thirteenth century and its effect on the level of peasant prosperity. It would seem from the evidence of the hundred-penny fines that between 1209 and 1311 the population of Taunton more than doubled itself, that about 1248 the amount of land per person was only some 3.3 acres, and that this had probably dwindled by about 1311 to some 2.5 acres per head at the most.¹ This represents a truly desperate state of affairs, and if it is remembered that there were great inequalities of distribution, the majority of the peasants must have been far worse off than these figures suggest.

What were the practical consequences of this situation? The most obvious one, of course, was that many peasants at Taunton must have lived on, or below, subsistence level. This comes out very clearly in the remarkable correlation between mortalities and years of bad harvests at Taunton.²

The second important effect of this acute land shortage was to make such land as was available extremely costly to obtain. Because there was no colonization land was extremely hard to come by, and competition for any vacant holding became so fierce that the landlord could raise the entry fines (and even the rents) higher and higher each time. This steep increase in the general level of entry fines, which in itself would be sufficient indication of an acute land shortage, is very much in evidence at Taunton, where they rose from a very low level at the beginning of the thirteenth century to £40 a virgate and 63s. 4d. per acre of the demesne land by the end of the century.

The situation was slightly alleviated by the considerable letting out of the

¹ J. Z. Titow, 'Some Evidence of the Thirteenth-Century Population Increase', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., XIV, 1961, p. 218.

² M. M. Postan and J. Z. Titow, 'Heriots and Prices on Winchester Manors', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2nd ser., XI, 1959, p. 392.

demesne during this period, but the total amount of land so released over the period of the greatest population increase was not sufficiently great to be of much significance. Besides, we must not imagine that the letting out of the demesne was a form of poor-relief on the part of the lord. Quite often the lord was simply shedding unproductive land, and although land of good quality may at times have been let out to tenants, much of the land released must have been of very poor quality. The high price which demesne land at times commanded should be seen as indicative not so much of its quality as of the acute land shortage which would force peasants to take up land even if its productive capacity was almost, though not quite, worthless. The case of John le Porter, who in 1330 paid an entry fine of £13 6s. 8d. for 40 acres of demesne land, of which "20 had fallen out of cultivation and 20 could be sown, though it was not worth while for the lord to do so, for they were poor in themselves,"¹ illustrates this very well. That is why the palliative effect of the letting out of the demesne can easily be exaggerated.

It is also quite likely that the soil exhaustion from which much of the demesne land suffered extended to the tenants' holdings as well, and that the gravity of the situation brought about by rising population was further aggravated by the declining productivity of some of the peasant land. The fact that so much land which lapsed to the lord after the Black Death was not taken up at all, and that the proportion of lapsed holdings from which rent could not be raised was very high, may be held to support this supposition.

At Wargrave and Witney the population increase over the century must have been as high as, if not higher than, on the non-colonizing manors. But because land in considerable quantities was continually being carved out of the waste and added to the arable available to the tenants, there was, on these manors, nothing like the land hunger we have observed at Taunton. This is reflected in the entry fines on these manors. At Wargrave, although the highest fine per virgate ever paid was £12, there were only five fines above 66s. 8d. out of the total of 277 fines recorded over the period 1248-1348. At Witney there were no higher fines per virgate than 53s. 4d. At Taunton the average fine per virgate for the period 1283-1348 stood at £5 9s. 2d.; it was only 23s. 4d. at Wargrave and 24s. 2½d. at Witney, or 38s. 10d. and 40s. 4d. respectively when corrected for differences in the size of the virgate between Wargrave, Witney, and Taunton. The figures for Wargrave and Witney would be somewhat higher if they were corrected for differences in the fertility of the soil, for the average yield at Taunton was considerably higher

¹ Hampshire County Record Office, Eccl. Com. 2/159342. "De Johanne le Porter xiii lib. vi s. viii d. pro xl acris terre de dominico domini in Loscombe unde xx acre frisce et xx que seminari possunt et non est ad proficuum domini quia debiles in se."

than at Wargrave and very much higher than at Witney, but they would still not be anywhere near the average fine for Taunton.¹

The effect of colonization on the amount of money a peasant had to pay for available holdings is brought out even more forcibly by a comparison between Witney and Adderbury, a manor of comparable size though somewhat higher fertility, forming an administrative unit with Witney.² There was no colonization and no letting out of the demesne at Adderbury. Its rent roll, which in 1211 stood at £24 1s. 2d., rose by 1306 by only 34s. as against Witney's increase (in round figures) from £24 to £73 and Wargrave's increase from £25½ to £70 over the same period.³ The average fine at Adderbury was 73s. 4½d. per virgate as against 24s. 2d. at Witney; and while there were no higher fines at Witney than 53s. 4d. per virgate, at Adderbury fines between £4 and £6 13s. 4d. were the rule.

There was a very marked upward trend in the level of entry fines at Taunton from the beginning of the thirteenth century onwards, while the level of entry fines at Wargrave and Witney had hardly risen at all. This is unfortunately very difficult to demonstrate satisfactorily in figures because in the early part of the thirteenth century the size of the holdings was usually not specified and thus fines per virgate cannot usually be calculated. This is true of Taunton to about 1283, of Wargrave to about 1277, of Witney to about 1268, and of Adderbury to about 1283. But something of the trend can be seen, perhaps, if the averages of the highest fines in each year are considered for three periods: 1209-1232, 1233-1266, and 1267-1300. At Taunton these averages were: £1 19s. 6½d., £5 5s. 7d., and £7 3s. 7½d. At Wargrave they were: 33s. 3½d., 29s. 2½d., and 53s. At Witney: 30s., 42s. 6d., and 26s. 4½d. At Adderbury: 17s. 2½d., 52s., and 63s. 5d.

The most important difference, however, apart from the direct effect of the availability of land on the level of prosperity, lies elsewhere. Professor Postan has on various occasions drawn attention to the importance of widows in medieval peasant society. The account rolls for Taunton bring this out very clearly indeed. With no new land coming in, and the prospects of succeeding to the family holding open only to one, usually the eldest, son, and

¹ Taunton: 867 entries 1283-1348 (complete coverage 1289-), virgate=40 acres, gross yield of wheat (as a multiple of seed) 1209-1350=5.3.

Wargrave: 277 entries 1248-1348 (complete coverage 1277-), virgate=24 acres, gross yield of wheat 1209-1350=4.2.

Witney: 73 entries 1246-1348 (complete coverage 1283-), virgate=24 acres, gross yield of wheat 1209-1350=3.6.

² Both were usually under the same bailiff.

³ Hants. R.O. Eccl. Com. 2/159270B and 2/159321. Witney £29 os. 6d. and £73 4s. 5¾d., Wargrave £25 10s. 11½d. and £69 19s. 3¾d., Adderbury £24 1s. 2d. and £25 15s. 2d.

not all that good at that, marriage with a widow became a habitual way of acquiring a holding. A young man (young that is by medieval standards) wanting to set up a home of his own and tired of waiting for the paternal holding, or an inheritance from some distant relative without heirs of his own, would find in marrying a widow his only chance of deliverance. With luck she might be old enough to die after a reasonably short period of waiting, leaving him free to marry somebody young and attractive, for there can be little doubt that to the majority of men who married widows the widow's holding must have been her chief or only attraction. This led to what Professor Postan has often called the marriage fugue, the point-counterpoint situation, whereby a relatively young man married a woman considerably older than himself, after whose death, himself already an aged man, he would marry a girl very much younger than himself, who, in turn, on his death would still be young enough to re-marry perhaps twice or even three times. One of the effects of such a state of affairs, apart from its purely demographic implications, would be to make the eldest son's chances of succession to the paternal holding even more remote; for in a great many cases to succeed to the paternal holding he would have to outlive a young step-mother or a youngish step-father.

The practical result of this was that the family holdings had a way of wandering about, and the notion of a family holding passing down from father to son, from generation to generation, belongs to the same brand of fiction as that of the typical manor. A few schematic representations of some typical transmissions of holdings are given below. An additional factor contributing to this greater mobility of holdings, one which on the non-colonizing manors made the family rather than the individual the unit of landed wealth, was the restriction on acquisition of customary holdings by those who already held one such holding. Such restriction does not seem to have existed, or if it did was obviously not enforced, on manors where the supply of land had not as yet dried up.

On the colonizing manors the situation seems to have been quite different. The fact that there were very few marriages with widows and apparently next to no cases of widows remarrying more than once, and that the average number of marriages per 1,000 tenants was very much lower on the colonizing manors, must argue the absence of that great disparity in ages between the contracting parties in marriage which alone could have made it possible on manors like Taunton for a woman to go through two or three marriages in her lifetime, as against the usual one on manors such as Wargrave or Witney. As a result of this, on the highly colonizing manors succession to the family holding was left largely undisturbed and the family holdings seem to have

passed from father to son, usually via the widow, with far greater regularity.

It is rather difficult to give hard figures for the marriages of widows, for the total number of such marriages cannot be established with certainty. This is so because in a large number of cases in which a man paid a fine for marrying a woman with land her marital status is not specified. At Taunton such women can usually be traced back to the point of acquisition of their holdings, and when this is possible they almost invariably turn out to have been widows. At Wargrave traceable cases are very few, and the women in question usually turn out to have been daughters provided with land by their fathers or succeeding to their fathers' holdings. At Witney no such cases are traceable, and this might mean that they were mostly widows, since at Witney widows, it seems, did not have to pay a fine in order to retain the holdings of their deceased husbands. We thus have in each case two sets of figures; the minimum representing marriages with known widows and the maximum including as well all the marriages with women who may have been widows. With this important distinction that at Taunton the maximum figure was almost certainly the true one, at Wargrave the minimum was probably nearer the truth, and at Witney the real number may have been nearer the maximum than the minimum.

In terms of acquisition of land the figures are as follows. Of all the holdings acquired between 1270 and 1315 those obtained through marriages with widows constituted between 8.1 and 12.3 per cent at Taunton, between 0.4 and 1.3 per cent at Wargrave, and between 1.1 and 1.8 per cent at Witney. But if holdings of a few acres only (or fractions of an acre) are disregarded and only holdings of more than 5 acres considered, then the figure for Taunton rises to a possible maximum of 24 per cent. In terms of marriages, those with widows constituted between 21.6 and 32.6 per cent of all the marriages contracted at Taunton over the same period, between 4.6 and 14.8 per cent at Wargrave, and between 15.9 and 26.1 per cent at Witney. The figure for Witney is unexpectedly high but there is, I think, an explanation for it. Although at Wargrave and Witney the extent of colonization was almost identical in terms of absolute increase, there was a significant difference between them. Up to 1256 colonization on both manors took the form of a practically continuous stream of addition, the extent of reclamation (estimated on the basis of rent) being almost identical in each case; some 1,110 acres at Witney as against some 1,094 acres at Wargrave. The amount of land reclaimed between 1256 and 1306—when for all practical purposes reclamation may be said to have ended on both manors—was again practically identical: some 660 acres at Witney and some 680 at Wargrave. But while colonization at Wargrave still took the form of more or less con-

tinuous addition, at Witney it consisted of three great intakes of new land in 1285, 1293, and 1303, while only some 10 acres in all were reclaimed between 1256 and 1285.

This, I think, explains the greater attraction of marriages with widows at Witney than at Wargrave, especially if it is remembered that of all the manors of the bishopric, except one, Witney had the lowest average yield. The high percentage figure, as such, may also be partly due to the fact that when samples are small, as is the case with Witney, relationships expressed as percentages of the total appear unduly large.

I would like to conclude with an example of an actual case which illustrates rather well a number of points: the wandering about of holdings, the importance of marriages with widows, the changes in the level of entry fines, and the effect of the prohibition on holding more than one customary tenement. The case chosen is that of Adam de Shordich of Taunton and his descendants (p. 10). Black lines indicate family descent, dots indicate holdings, and the dotted lines trace the descent of holdings. Numbers in brackets refer to the summary which accompanies the diagram. All spellings have been standardized and holdings other than the usual customary ones disregarded.

(1) 1237 (2/159285)¹ Adam of Shordich paid a fine of 6s. 8d. for an unspecified holding. In the custumal of c. 1248 he had $\frac{1}{2}$ -virgate and $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres of moorland (*more*).

(2) 1255 (296) Edith, widow of Adam of Shordich, paid a fine of 5s. for her husband's holding.

(3) 1255 (296) John of Halfnakede paid a fine of 66s. 8d. for the holding of Adam of Shordich with his widow.

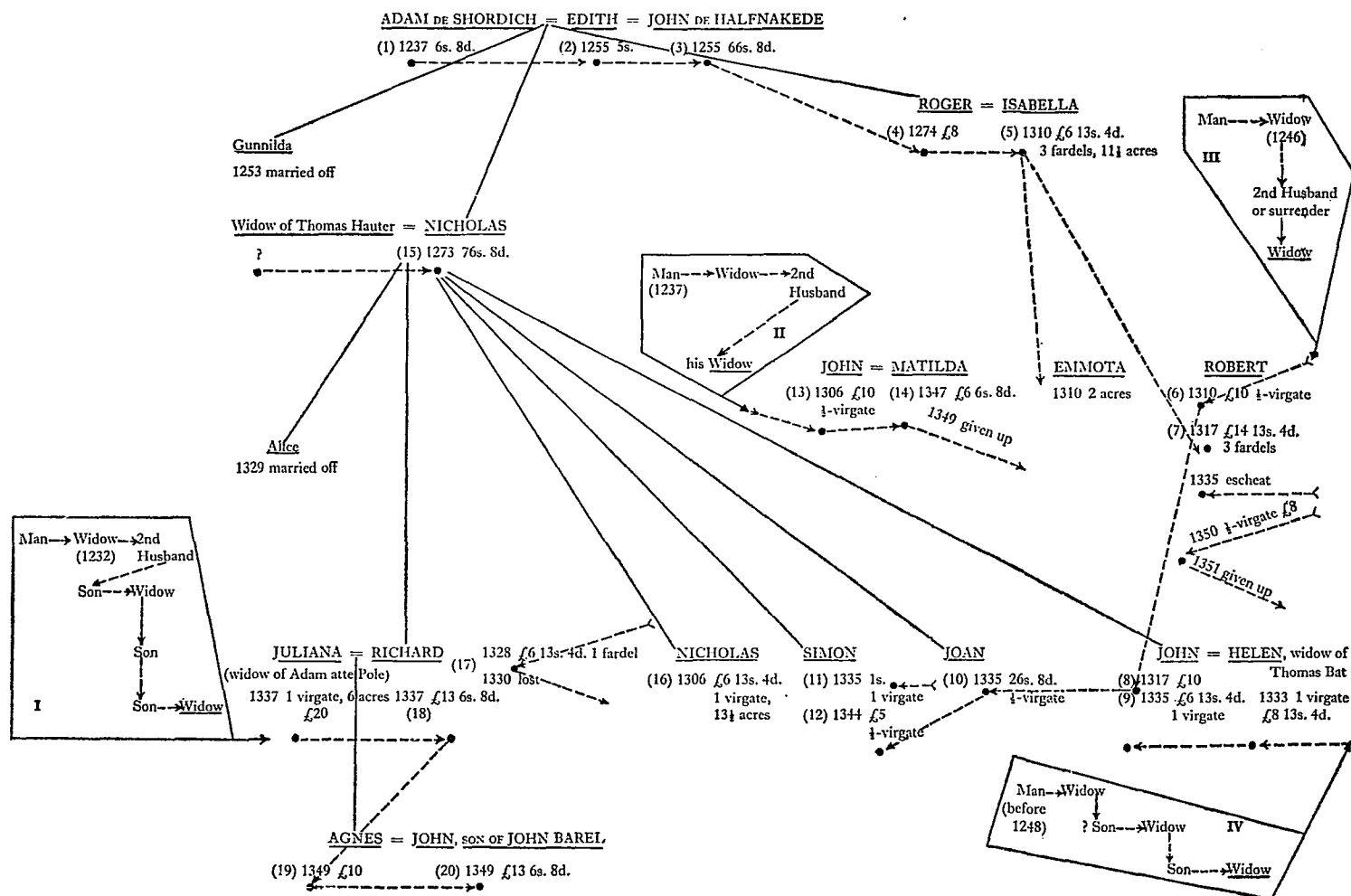
(4) 1274 (458 $\frac{2}{2}$) Roger of Shordich, step-son of John of Shordich, paid a fine of £8 for the whole of his father's holding but his mother was to retain half of it. It seems that John of Halfnakede after his marriage into the 'de Shordich' holding became known as John of Shordich. This is a very common practice.

(5) 1310 (325) Isabella, widow of Roger of Shordich, paid a fine of £6 13s. 4d. for 1 messuage, $\frac{1}{2}$ -virgate, 1 fardel, and $11\frac{1}{2}$ acres which were her husband's. The original $\frac{1}{2}$ -virgate holding of Adam of Shordich must have been increased by an additional fardel between 1248 and 1310. The most likely supposition is that John of Halfnakede who married Adam's widow in 1255 (3 above) probably had a holding of 1 fardel at the time.

(6) 1310 (325) Robert of Shordich, son of Isabella, paid a fine of £10 for 1 messuage and $\frac{1}{2}$ -virgate surrendered in his favour by Margery, widow of Adam Fouke (for the provenance of this holding see inset).

(7) 1317 (331) Robert of Shordich paid a fine of £14 13s. 4d. for 1 messuage and 3 fardels which were his mother's. But Robert already had a holding acquired in 1310 (6 above), so he now disposed of that holding in favour of John, son of Nicholas of Shordich (8 below). Robert also paid a fine of 40s. in 1335 (346) for an unspecified holding which had escheated to the lord.

¹ The full reference is: Hants. R.O. Eccl. Comm. 2/159285. Henceforth only the three significant (final) figures are quoted.



He also paid a fine of £8 in 1350 (359) for 1 messuage and $\frac{1}{2}$ -virgate of a dead tenant, but surrendered it in 1351 (360), the new tenant paying 53s. 4d. for it.

(8) 1317 (331) John, son of Nicholas of Shordich, paid a fine of £10 for the $\frac{1}{2}$ -virgate which Robert of Shordich (7 above) surrendered in his favour.

(9) 1335 (346) John, son of Nicholas of Shordich, married Helen, widow of Thomas Bat, paying a fine of £6 13s. 4d. for her with 1 virgate of land (for the provenance of this holding see inset). But he already had a holding which Robert of Shordich surrendered in his favour in 1317 (8 above), so he now surrendered that holding in favour of Joan, his sister.

(10) 1335 (346) Joan, daughter of Nicholas of Shordich, paid a fine of 26s. 8d. for the $\frac{1}{2}$ -virgate which her brother John surrendered in her favour. She died in 1344, and the holding went to her brother Simon (12 below).

(11) 1335 (346) Simon, son of Nicholas of Shordich, paid a fine of 1s. for 1 messuage and 1 virgate at Otterford which was surrendered in his favour. Otterford holdings were notoriously bad, hence the ridiculously low fine. The very poor quality of the holding must have been the reason why he did not have to surrender this holding in 1344.

(12) 1344 (354) Simon, son of Nicholas of Shordich, paid a fine of £5 for 1 messuage and $\frac{1}{2}$ -virgate vacant on the death of his sister Joan (10 above).

(13) 1306 (321) John, son of Roger of Shordich, paid a fine of £10 for 1 messuage and $\frac{1}{2}$ -virgate surrendered in his favour by Agnes, widow of William de Tobrigge (for the provenance of this holding see inset).

(14) 1347 (357) Matilda, widow of John de Tobrigge, paid a fine of £6 6s. 8d. for 1 messuage and $\frac{1}{2}$ -virgate which were her husband's. It seems that John, son of Roger of Shordich, became known as John de Tobrigge after marrying into the 'de Tobrigge' holding (13 above). She surrendered this in favour of Joan, daughter of John Oseborn, who paid £7 for it in 1349 (358).

(15) 1273 (301) Nicholas, son of Adam of Shordich, paid a fine of 76s. 8d. for the widow of Thomas Hauter with her land. He may have subsequently married again. He also acquired some demesne land in various years.

(16) 1306 (321) Nicholas, son of Nicholas of Shordich, paid a fine of £6 13s. 4d. for the half of 1 messuage, 1 virgate, 6 acres of land, and $7\frac{1}{2}$ acres of moorland (*more*) which were his father's, and was to have the other half after the death of his mother.

(17) 1328 (340) Richard, son of Nicholas of Shordich, paid a fine of £6 13s. 4d. for 1 messuage and 1 fardel surrendered in his favour by Cecilia Berewe, a widow. She had previously recovered this holding from (*recuperavit versus*) William Palmer who, in turn, recovered it from (*recuperavit versus*) Richard in 1330.

(18) 1337 (348) Richard, son of Nicholas of Shordich, paid a fine of £13 6s. 8d. for Juliana, widow of Adam atte Pole, with 1 messuage, 1 virgate, and 6 acres of land.

(19) 1349 (358) Agnes, daughter of Richard atte Pole, paid a fine of £10 for 1 messuage, 1 virgate, and 6 acres of land which were her father's, who seems to have died in the plague. From the description of the holding in question it seems certain that Richard became known as Richard atte Pole after marrying into the 'atte Pole' holding.

(20) 1349 (358) John, son of John Barel, paid a fine of £13 6s. 8d. for Agnes, daughter of Richard atte Pole, with her land.

INSET I:

?

RICHARD DE POLA

1232 (282) Mabilia, widow of Richard de Pola, 33s. 4d.

1232 (282) Thomas de Pola £4 6s. 8d.

1245 (287) Walter de Pola £13 6s. 8d.

1273 (301) Alice, widow of Walter atte Pole, 30s.

? Hugh atte Pole gets main holding from his mother.

1321 (334) Adam atte Pole, son of Hugh, £20.

1337 (348) Juliana, widow of Adam atte Pole, £20.

INSET II:

1237 (285) JOHN DE TOBRIGGE 26s. 8d.

1258 (293) Agnes, widow of John de Tobrigge, 5s.

1258 (293) William le Cheleward 33s. 4d.

1288 (310) Agnes, widow of William de Tobrigge (William le Cheleward must have become known as William de Tobrigge after marrying into the 'de Tobrigge' holding), 26s. 8d.

INSET III:

? WILLIAM FOUKE

1246 (288) widow of William Fouke, 4s.

1246 (288) Adam de Chilewardeswode (must have become known as Adam Fouke after marrying [?] into the Fouke holding) 13s. 4d.

1308 (323) Margery, widow of Adam Fouke, 46s. 8d.

INSET IV:

bf. 1248 WALTER BAT

1275 (302) Claricia, widow of Walter Bat, 26s. 8d.

? William Bat, probably her son.

1309 (324) Claricia, widow of William Bat, £5.
(Claricia Battes)

1331 (343) Thomas le Bat, son of Claricia, £20.

1333 (345) Helen, widow of Thomas Bat, £8 13s. 4d.

SOME EXAMPLES OF TRANSMISSION OF HOLDINGS AT TAUNTON

1. *Radulphus Dawe* → Widow 33s. 4d.

(bf. 1274 $\frac{1}{2}$ -virgate)

↓
Son £12 → Widow → 2nd Husband
£4 13s. 4d. £8

↓
Daughter → Husband (1350)
£5 6s. 8d. £7 10s. 0d.

2. *Walter Cone* → Widow (1286)
66s. 8d. 5 fardels

↓
surrendered to a
Man £6 13s. 4d. → Widow
£20

↓
surrendered
to a Man → Widow → 2nd Husband (1347)
£26 13s. 4d. £11 £20

6. William deHurne

↓

Son (1271)	→	Widow	→	2nd Husband
53s. 4d. $\frac{1}{2}$ -virgate		33s. 4d.		£8

|

↓

back to her

40s.

↓

Son	→	surrendered on marriage into land
£5		(1337)

The Re-leasing of the Ellesmere Estates

1637-1642

By E. HOPKINS

THE Ellesmere estates in north Shropshire were purchased by Sir Thomas Egerton, then Lord Keeper, in the year 1600 from the co-heirs of Ferdinando, fifth earl of Derby, who had died in April 1594.¹ This was the second large-scale purchase of land by Egerton in this area, for two years earlier he had bought the Whitchurch estates, which lie to the east of Ellesmere, from Edward Talbot, later eighth earl of Shrewsbury.² The acquisition of these properties constitutes an important stage in Egerton's progress from a comparatively lowly position as illegitimate son of a country gentleman, Sir Richard Egerton of Ridley in Cheshire, to first Baron Ellesmere and Lord Chancellor of England in 1603.³ They led on to the purchase of the Harefield estate in Middlesex in 1601, to be followed by the buying of the larger Ashridge estate near Berkhamsted in 1604.

It seems, therefore, that about the turn of the century Egerton had reached a stage in his career when it was convenient for him to invest the profits of office in land, and the buying of the Shropshire manors was the first major step in this direction. His social position was further consolidated by his marriage to Alice, widow of Ferdinando, earl of Derby, shortly before the Ellesmere estates were purchased, this being his third wife. He was later to become Viscount Brackley in 1616, but the earldom said to have been promised him by James I⁴ was conferred not on the father but on the eldest son, John, who became the first earl of Bridgewater in 1617. The career of Thomas Egerton thus provides an admirable example of the economic and social progress of a gentleman who came to court in the Elizabethan period, prospered in office, and then invested the profits therefrom in land. Hence, the purchase and administration of the Ellesmere manors must be seen in this perspective.

Precisely how much John, earl of Bridgewater, derived from the Ellesmere

¹ Salop Record Office: Bridgewater Collection, Boxes Ellesmere Title Deeds, I and II.

² Salop R.O.: Bridgewater Collection, Box Blakemere, Whitchurch, purchase and fines of the manors.

³ For biographical detail, see the Dictionary of National Biography; Ormerod, *Cheshire*, 1819, 1; *The Complete Peerage*, II; B. Falk, *The Bridgewater Millions*.

⁴ *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1611-18*, p. 453: a letter from John Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton.

properties each year immediately after his father's death cannot be ascertained, as the necessary documents have not survived. The sum would naturally vary from year to year, dependent on the number of leases which fell in, the fines levied, and the variations in rents. There was the further complication that the earl's step-mother had a life interest in part of the estates, by which the income must have been substantially reduced. So far as the earl's expenditure is concerned, there is no doubt that it was heavy. His appointment as president of the Council of the Marches in 1631 must have meant considerable expense for him; his bond debts in January 1636 were £28,377. He was to die in 1649 owing £26,950 (excluding annuities of £1,654) together with a further sum of £51,700 resulting from the debts of his son-in-law, William Courten, who failed disastrously as a merchant.¹

Consequently, the death of the step-mother in 1636 and the extinguishing of her life interest in both the Ellesmere and Whitchurch properties must have afforded welcome financial relief. All the leases which she had granted in her lifetime for twenty-one years "if she so long live" now fell in. In this way it became possible for the earl to review the position on his estates, and then to embark on an extensive re-leasing designed to bring in the maximum amount possible. So extensive was this re-leasing that although begun in 1637 it appears that it was not completed even by 1642. It is the character of this re-leasing which is examined in some detail below.²

I

The estates visited by the earl's commissioners in 1637 contained fifty-five townships, many having a mere handful of inhabitants.³ Enclosure of the open fields had taken place in the previous century;⁴ only at Knockin were there still three town fields. The land was farmed by 358 tenants whose holdings varied from the small parcels of the cottagers to holdings of up to 100 acres. There was one farm of 232 acres, but this appears exceptional. From

¹ For the first earl's debts at various dates, see Hertford R.O., Bridgewater Collection, letters and papers of the second earl of Bridgewater.

² This article is based largely on Chapters III and IX of my unpublished thesis for the degree of M.A. in the University of London, 'The Bridgewater Estates in N. Shropshire in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century'.

³ Salop R.O.: Bridgewater Collection, Box Ellesmere Surveys, Liber 'A' (1637), Liber 'C' (1637), John Charlton's Book of Survey and Valewes (1638). These are the source of all the facts stated relating to 1637 and 1638, unless otherwise indicated.

⁴ W. E. Tate, 'A Hand List of English Enclosure Acts and Awards', Trans. of the Shropshire Archaeological Society, LII, 1947; H. L. Gray, *English Field Systems*, 1915; A. H. Johnson, *The Disappearance of the Small Landowner*, 1909; E. C. K. Gonner, *Common Land and Enclosure*, 1912; C. S. & C. S. Orwin, *The Open Fields*, 1954; J. Plymley, *General View of Agriculture in Shropshire*, 1803; J. Nightingale, *The Beauties of England and Wales*, XIII.

the acreages available it seems that there was a substantial number of tenants in the range 30–100 acres, perhaps about a third, a proportion of whom would need to employ paid labourers. Much would depend on the type of husbandry practised, of course, and this was generally of the mixed variety, as indeed it is today, with the usual accompaniments of the occasional orchard, hemp yard, or hop yard. The area was well known for its richness and fertility.¹

Some of the tenants held their land as a result of grants for either three or two lives which dated back to the period when the estates were still owned by the Derbys. Others, the majority, held by virtue of the twenty-one-year leases dependent on the life of Alice, dowager countess of Derby, granted both before and after her marriage to Egerton. What fines were demanded for these later leases is not known, but the reserved rents are not markedly different from those recorded in the survey which was made in 1602.

Nevertheless, the rent roll of 1637 gives a figure of £579 14s. 3d. as compared with the 1602 figure of £246 17s. The difference is accounted for partly by new enclosures in Tetchill Moor and Kenwick Park, and partly by the practice of demanding improved rents, mainly in Knockin and Myddle. Tetchill Moor was formerly “a great waste of mosse and morishe ground overflowed with water and overgrown with alders and other underwoode of no great value.”² It therefore had first to be drained before letting. Kenwick Park was already in lease to two men in 1602, but by 1637 had been re-leased to twenty-five tenants at a total rent of £193 4s. 4d. As regards improved rents, the improvements vary greatly from tenant to tenant, but they account for £75 6s. 1d. of the increased rent roll of 1637 as compared with that of 1602.

From this brief general description it is clear that the commissioners of 1637 had the opportunity of carrying out a wholesale re-leasing of the estates to the existing tenants, an opportunity which was seized with both hands. So far as can be seen, no major changes had been made since the beginning of the century. Save for the enclosures and improved rents noted above, the estates in 1637 appear to be little different from the estates of 1602; but the visits of the commissioners in 1637 ushered in a period of fierce bargaining, echoes of which were still to be heard thirteen years later.

The general procedure adopted by the commissioners as they summoned each tenant to parley at harvest time, 1637, was to examine leases and then negotiate for the issue of new ninety-nine-year leases determinable on three

¹ Edward Leigh, *England Described*, 1659, p. 161; Camden's *Britannia*, 1695, I, p. 477.

² Salop R.O.: Bridgewater Collection, Box Ellesmere and Tetchill: papers re accounts & Rentals, 1640–61.

lives.¹ Most of the tenants would have no option in the matter, for the expiry of the leases granted by the Lady Alice had left them mere licensees on the land. Others who held leases from the earlier period might stand by the validity of those leases, but only five did so; there was little point in incurring the enmity of the commissioners when the lease would be bound to expire in any case within a few years. Steady pressure and a certain degree of cajolery therefore brought about what was termed by the commissioners a "willing surrender" in nearly every instance. The only tenants who were not caught up in the extensive bargaining for leases were small cottagers who were too poor to fine, and the holders of enclosures on Tetchill Moor or in Kenwick Park. These had to improve their rents, sometimes substantially in the case of the former, and by 1s. an acre in Tetchill Moor and 4d. an acre in Kenwick Park in the case of the latter.

Thus the average tenant was faced by the need to offer a sum of money which would purchase him a new lease for three lives. This would take the form of a lump sum, half of which had to be paid by the next audit, when security had to be given for the remaining half. In addition, a further gratuity of a few pounds was payable to the eldest son, Viscount Brackley, and the heriot and services due were also carefully defined. The whole offer, of course, had to await the consent of the earl, usually to be given by the following Candlemas, except where the offer was clearly so small as to merit outright refusal on the spot. In such cases the tenant would have to pay an improved rent for the time being, often very much larger than the small reserved rent under the previous lease. Otherwise the rent offered would nearly always be the same as formerly.

Undoubtedly the fines offered in 1637 were very much greater than those recorded in the survey of 1602. At the earlier date the majority of fines which had been paid when the survey was taken were well under £10, and no gratuities are mentioned at all. In 1637 it is common to find fines of between £50 and £100, and there are twenty-three offers of over £100. Indeed, there are several of £200 or more. The total of fines offered for all the townships amounts to the striking sum of £10,398 13s. 4d. (see Table A). In assessing the significance of this figure it must be remembered, of course, that it includes fines for new areas of enclosures since 1602; but these amount to only £326. Again, no fines at all are recorded in 1602 for the fifty-two twenty-one-year leases granted by the countess of Derby and in existence at that time. Nevertheless, the figure of £10,398 13s. 4d. just mentioned contrasts

¹ For a description of the methods commonly used on such occasions, see *Surveys of the Manors of Philip, First Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, 1631-2*, ed. Eric Kerridge, Wilts. Archaeological Society, 1953.

TABLE A

	1602			1637		
	<i>Tenants</i>	<i>Rents</i>	<i>Fines</i>	<i>Old Rents</i>	<i>New Rents</i>	<i>Fines Offered</i>
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Ellesmere	16	4 10 6	15 0 0	30 15 1	13 14 1	497 13 4
Cockshutt	21	13 9 1	40 0 0	10 3 7	19 18 0	1,172 16 8
Crolesmere						
Kenwickswood	23	7 3 8	29 13 0	10 4 2	19 13 10	516 0 0
Tetchill	—	—	—	20 5 10	40 19 0	26 0 0
Tetchill Moor	8	3 2 11	21 0 0	1 11 8	1 2 8	230 0 0
Ridge	1	55 0 0	—	—	—	—
Birch	8	4 10 8	25 0 0	4 10 8	16 2 6	295 0 0
Newnes	14	4 15 3	57 6 8	5 19 9	4 14 9	323 0 0
Novamarton	11	5 13 8	17 13 4	29 7 5	17 1 11	908 0 0
Northwood	16	9 17 5	20 0 0	11 8 0	5 11 5	506 0 0
Trench	2	18 0	16 6 8	193 4 4	144 1 10	300 0 0
Kenwick Park	5	2 13 0	10 15 3	1 2 4	5 8 8	717 0 0
Old Marton	18	8 10 4	49 6 8	8 7 6	30 1 5	702 6 8
Hampton	—	—	—	1 3 2	1 3 2	120 0 0
Hampton Wood	17	5 12 6	22 0 0	13 1 8	6 19 3	929 13 4
Colemere	45	34 7 7	160 9 4	55 2 0	57 16 8	1,498 6 8
Myddle	5	7 6 0	16 13 0	—	—	—
Marton	1	1 6 8	—	—	—	—
Newton	1	8 6	—	—	—	—
Marton Moor	23	4 2 4	38 16 0	68 2 9	63 10 1	844 16 8
Knockin Villa	1	3 5 6	13 6 8	—	—	—
Morton	1	6 0	—	—	—	—
Osbaston	2	4 16 7	3 0 0	—	—	—
Dovaston	3	4 14 6	—	6 7 4	6 7 3	474 0 0
Nessestrange	1	6 8	—	—	—	—
Nessecliffe	3	1 10 8	—	—	—	—
Hopton	23	56 2 4	104 13 4	63 16 0	74 2 8	138 0 0
Kinton	3	2 6 8	—	1 0 0	—	200 0 0
Whottall	—	—	—	44 1 0	18 1 6	—
St Johns	—	—	—	—	—	—
	272	£246 17 0	£660 19 11	£579 14 3	£546 10 8	£10,398 13 4

NOTE: The table summarizes the information contained in the 1602 Survey and the 1637 Liber 'C'. The fact that a township appears under the former heading but not under the latter indicates that its tenants have been classified under some other township in 1637. St Johns, on the other hand, was not purchased till 1609.

markedly with the figure for fines in the 1602 survey of £660 19s. 11d.

In view of such an increase it is perhaps not surprising to find evidence of competition for leases in 1637, and of tenants increasing their first offers "on better consideration." It is clear that the offers made were scrutinized by the earl himself, and his comments thereon, often of a caustic nature, are scattered about the 1637 survey, Liber 'C'. At the end of this book there is his note: "mem. where competition & di[ve]rs petitioners," together with other notes bearing witness to his dislike of leases for two lives, and to his dissatis-

faction with the work of the commissioners. It was this last fact which was to lead to a further round of bargaining in 1638.

This time the bargaining was preceded by a fresh survey, that is, an actual measuring of the land, presumably so that final amounts could now be agreed upon. The tenants were then asked to increase their previous offers, only those tenants already paying improved rents in St Johns, Tetchill Moor, and Kenwick Park, together with a few cottagers, being exempted from this second stage in the re-leasing. Far from improving their offers, some tenants could not pay even their 1637 offers; others kept to their original sums, refusing to give more. Both classes had to take at an improved rent for that year. In fact, less than half seem to have made offers which the commissioners thought worthy of their master's consideration. A determined effort must have been made to secure an all-round increase of 10 per cent or more, and this certainly defeated the financially weaker tenants. All the same, the new offers for consideration amounted to £6,910 10s., representing a gain of about £700 on the previous offers concerned.

Yet even this was not the end of the matter, for there is evidence to show that further bargaining took place during the course of the next four years.¹ Some time during that period a number of offers made in 1638 were increased substantially. To take two examples: Edward Thomas of Ridge offered £100 and £10 (the gratuity to the earl's son) in 1638; by 1642 he had increased this to £170 and paid off £56 13s. 4d. Jane Clowes of Myddle originally offered £265 and £10; by 1642 she had paid off £272 6s. 8d. from a fine increased to £320. In other cases, tenants who had had their 1638 offers refused and who had therefore taken at an improved rent, clearly had increased their offers later on. Thus, Richard Hampton of Cockshutt offered £100 in 1637, failed to improve this in 1638, but by 1642 had paid off £114 from a fine of £134. Two important leases were also signed in 1640, one of Northwood Park for ninety-nine years for a rent of £2 13s. 4d. and a fine of £496 9s. 3d., the other of Maynewaring's farm in Hampton for a rent of £11 2s. 10d. and a fine of £481 10s. 11d. Both these fines had been paid by 1642. Insufficient evidence has survived to make it possible to compile totals of the offers made after 1638, but the arrears on fines in March 1642 totalled £2,221 9s. 8d.

II

From this sketch of the re-leasing which took place in and after 1637 it will be seen that three matters in particular merit lengthier consideration and explanation: they are the mode of calculation of the fines, their significance as

¹ Salop R.O.: Bridgewater Collection, Box Ellesmere Manor, Compoti & Rentals, 15th-17th Century, 'Note of the Accompts for Fynes in Ellesmere etc.'

TABLE B

Township	Name	Old Rent	1637 Offers			1638 Valuation	F
			Fine	Gratuity	Rent		
		£ s. d.	£ s.	£	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£
Cockshutt	William Jenkes	11 7	70 0	5	11 7	11 10 0	85
	Anthony Heylin	11 9	70 0	3	11 9	10 10 0	70
	Thomas Richards	8 6	45 0	3	8 6	7 0 0	45
	Thomas Wisherley	8 8	65 0	5	8 8	8 0 0	72
	Robert Higley	7 10	45 0	5	7 10	6 18 8	
	William Bough	1 1 8	120 0	5	1 1 8	16 2 0	
	John Multinex	8 7	—	—	—	5 14 6	35
	Richard Jenkes	12 1	85 0	5	12 1	14 17 4	120
Northwood Pk	Sir Thomas Hamner	2 13 4	300 0	—	2 13 4	44 6 0	330
	John Weaver	6 8	75 0	2	—	10 17 0	80
Cockshutt	Francis Lloyd	1 2 8	90 0	3	1 2 8	13 0 0	60
	Margaret Bickley	1 6	1 10	—	—	—	
	Edwarde Jenkes	10 7	80 0	5	10 7	—	
Ridge	Richard Hampton	12 1	100 0	—	12 1	14 0 0	100
	Edward Thomas	8 8	65 0	3	8 8	15 15 0	100
	Edward Thomas, Jr	9 0	70 0	5	9 0	13 16 8	80
Northwood	Thomas Adams	18 1	150 0	5	18 1	19 15 0	160
	Edward Bartley	8 4	100 0	5	8 4	20 15 4	140
Old Marton	Thomas Drury	10 4	60 0	3	10 4	—	
	Robert Bedowe	7 7	70 0	2	7 7	10 6 0	
Trench	Arthur Pitchford	14 0	70 0	3	14 0	16 10 0	
	Wm & Mary Pitchford	4 0	20 0	—	4 0	4 10 0	20
	Richard Price	10 2	58 0	2	10 2	8 0 0	70
	Randle Phillips	3 2	20 0	1	3 2	4 10 0	20
Newnes	Michael Meredith	8 6	30 0	—	—	14 0 0	100
	John Gough	4 0	14 0	1	4 0	2 0 0	15
Myddle	Bart. Pearne	1 8	8 0	1	1 8	1 6 8	8
	Jane Clowes	3 6 8	250 0	10	3 6 8	30 0 0	265
	Elizabeth Pickstoke	9 0	95 0	2	9 0	11 0 0	66
	Thomas Hodden	11 6	50 0	2	11 6	8 0 0	
	Robert Morre	—	130 0	5	1 2 8	—	
	William Cleaton	1 3 4	160 0	5	1 3 4	20 0 0	160
	Richard Hunt	4 0 0	35 0	3	9 0	6 0 0	40
	William Gosseling	4 6	35 0	3	4 6	5 0 0	35
	Allen Challoner	2 0	5 0	—	2 0	—	
	Thomas Davies	4 0	—	—	—	2 0 0	
	John Lloyd	10 6 8	80 0	5	2 0 0	14 10 0	85
	Michael Chambers	9 4	8 0	1	—	1 6 8	
	Alice Matthews	9 0	—	—	—	—	
	Widdow Onslow	1 0 0	—	—	—	—	
	Thomas Acherley	8 6	13 6	—	—	—	20
	Richard Lloyd	19 4	—	—	—	5 6 8	40
	Margery Holland	9 0	10 0	—	—	—	
	Peter Ledsam	13 0	65 0	2	—	10 15 0	80
	Sam Widdowes	4 0	40 0	3	4 0	—	50
	William Puleson	16 0	6 0	—	2 0	—	
	John Leigh	10 0	—	—	—	—	
	Jane Wynne	—	—	—	—	—	
Knockin	John Payne	7 10 0	55 0	5	7 10 0	—	
	Susan & Ed. Kynaston	1 1 4	80 0	5	1 1 4	12 0 0	
Nessestrange	John Gittins	13 4	70 0	3	13 4	10 9 8	80

THE RE-LEASING OF THE ELLESMERE ESTATES

21

TABLE B

1638 Offers	Fine	Gratuity	1642 "State of the Fines"		Comments
			Fine	Paid Off	
£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
85 0	2 10	129 11 2	50 0 0		
70 0	3 0	99 0 0	33 0 0		Surrender of lease from Henry, earl of Derby
45 0	3 0	42 0 0	28 6 8		For 1638 offer, one life now deceased
72 0	—	80 0 0	80 0 0		
—	—	42 10 0	21 5 0		Not able to fine 1638. Set this year, £4 6s. 8d.
—	—	156 0 0	37 0 0		Set 1638, £10 13s. 4d.
35 0	3 0	28 10 0	25 0 0		Valuation disputed
120 0	5 0	125 0 0	85 0 0		Surrendered lease, one life in being
330 0	—	496 9 3	496 9 3		1637 rent lately improved to £25. Lease in 1642 was to
80 0	—	84 0 0	20 0 0		[James Houghton]
60 0	5 0	70 0 0	70 0 0		Rent with 1638 offer, £6 10s. Indebted £350
—	—	1 10 0	1 10 0		
—	—	86 0 0	86 0 0		
100 0	—	134 0 0	114 0 0		
100 0	10 0	170 0 0	56 13 4		
80 0	5 0	90 0 0	60 0 0		
160 0	—	200 0 0	182 6 8		
140 0	5 0	178 0 0	59 6 8		
—	—	96 0 0	20 0 0		
—	—	58 6 8	39 0 0		
—	—	94 3 4	20 0 0		
20 0	—	26 0 0	26 0 0		
70 0	—	51 13 4	17 4 6		
20 0	1 0	43 6 8	21 13 4		
100 0	4 0	108 0 0	71 0 0		1637 offer refused, set at £4 10s. for one year
15 0	—	16 0 0	16 0 0		
8 0	1 0	12 10 0	12 10 0		
265 0	10 0	320 0 0	272 6 8		
66 10	2 0	155 0 0	128 6 8		
—	—	45 0 0	15 0 0		
—	—	150 0 0	150 0 0		
160 0	5 0	189 0 0	189 0 0		
40 0	—	58 0 0	55 15 0		
35 0	3 0	100 12 6	99 13 4		
—	—	38 10 10	12 6 8		Surrender of lease from Henry, earl of Derby
—	—	18 8 0	6 2 8		Surrender of lease from Henry, earl of Derby
85 0	2 0	135 0 0	98 13 4		Old rent lately improved
—	—	10 6 8	10 6 8		
—	—	35 10 0	35 0 0		
—	—	23 0 0	15 6 8		
20 0	—	23 0 0	15 6 8		1638 offer refused for "abuse offered"
40 0	4 0	60 6 8	60 4 6		
—	—	22 15 0	22 15 0		
80 0	4 0	138 1 0	115 10 8		1638 offer was by Lewis Davies
50 0	5 0	45 0 0	38 0 0		1638 offer increased because of competition
—	—	8 10 0	6 16 8		Old rent was improved rent
—	—	10 0 0	6 13 4		
—	—	481 10 11	481 10 11		Lease of Maynewaring's Farm made 1.8.1640. Rent
—	—	65 0 0	65 0 0		[£11 2s. 10d.]
—	—	129 18 6	104 12 4		
80 0	8 0	98 3 4	32 14 3		

TABLE B—*continued*

Township	Name	Old Rent	1637 Offers			1638 Valuation	Fi
			Fine	Gratuity	Rent		
		£ s. d.	£ s.	£	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£
Colemere	Eliz. & Richard Wenlocke	10 3	85 0	3	10 3	21 15 0	140
	Thomas Birche	12 3	90 0	3	12 3	17 2 0	100
	Richard Birche	3 3½	22 10	1	3 3½	5 15 0	-
	William Jeffries	3 3½	22 10	1	3 3½	4 18 4	22
	John Tunna	6 1½	40 0	2	6 1½	8 5 6	54
	Richard Jeffries	6 1½	50 0	2	6 1½	7 0 0	50
	Hugh Hughes	12 3	80 0	2	12 3	19 7 0	140
	Thomas Leigh	6 1½	35 0	3	6 1½	9 1 9	50
	John Jeffreys	6 7	43 0	2	6 7	7 1 6	40
	John Jeffreys	12 3	90 0	3	12 3	—	100
	Richard Wenlocke	7 4	70 0	3	7 3	18 2 0	110
	Richard Edward	8 4	65 0	3	8 4	9 16 8	62
	Henry Langford	12 8	60 0	2	12 8	11 0 0	80
	John Richards	7 0	60 0	2	7 0	7 10 0	67
Tetchill	John Warburton	9 8	60 0	2	9 8	7 17 4	50
	John Higgison	12 6	40 0	2	—	—	50
	Humphrey Mulliney	1 0 0	60 0	3	1 0 0	9 0 0	70
Ellesmere	John Langford	13 4	38 0	2	13 4	3 10 0	-
	Anthony Lyth	3 1 4	20 0	1	10 0	2 16 8	-
	Alice Trevor	10 0	—	—	12 0	—	-
	Edward Evans	1 17 0	60 0	5	1 0 0	8 1 8	75

NOTES

- (a) This table illustrates the course of bargaining for leases between the years 1637 and 1642.
 (b) The sources for the 1637 offers and the 1638 offers and valuations are Liber 'C' and John Charlton's Book of Survey and Valewes.

compared with earlier fines, and lastly their value as evidence of the state of north Shropshire agriculture at this time.

As regards the calculation of fines, the obvious fact must be stressed that the amount finally decided upon would depend to a considerable extent on the individual circumstances of both landlord and tenant. On the one hand, Bridgewater wanted the maximum sum; on the other, the tenants wished to pay as little as possible, realizing nevertheless that they must pay up within certain limits if they were to retain their holdings. The amounts demanded by the commissioners, in the nature of things, would usually be too much for the tenants, while the sums offered by the latter would be too low; the figures finally agreed upon would be somewhere between the two.¹

Of course, both sides would be aware of what would be considered a reasonable offer upon which negotiations might be based. This was the so-called

¹ For examples of this kind of bargaining in Wiltshire, see E. Kerridge, 'The Movement of Rent, 1540-1640', *Economic History Review*, Second Series, VI, no. 1, 1953.

38 ation	1638 Offers		1642 "State of the Fines"		Comments
	Fine	Gratuity	Fine	Paid Off	
s. d.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
5 0	140 0	10 0	130 17 6	75 0 0	Surrender of lease from Henry, earl of Derby
2 0	100 0	3 0	102 16 3	69 0 1	
5 0	—	—	53 14 7	53 14 7	
8 4	22 10	1 0	42 2 0	20 0 0	
5 6	54 0	4 0	79 0 0	79 0 0	
0 0	50 0	5 0	60 0 0	13 0 0	
7 0	140 0	10 0	122 6 3	61 3 1	
1 9	50 0	5 0	37 18 8	25 6 8	
1 6	40 0	5 0	70 0 0	70 0 0	
—	100 0	3 0	100 0 0	50 0 0	
2 0	110 0	10 0	149 2 4	—	
6 8	62 0	—	108 10 0	102 0 0	
0 0	80 0	—	66 0 0	44 0 0	
0 0	67 0	—	72 0 0	72 0 0	
7 4	50 0	2 0	40 18 4	6 0 0	
—	50 0	3 0	57 0 0	57 0 0	
0 0	70 0	3 0	92 0 0	92 0 0	
0 0	—	—	40 0 0	40 0 0	
6 8	—	—	20 0 0	13 6 8	
—	—	—	5 0 0	2 0 0	
1 8	75 0	—	81 0 0	81 0 0	

NOTES

- (c) The table is confined to those tenants who appear in the 1642 "State of the Fines;" many tenants appear in the 1637 and 1638 surveys, but not in the 1642 document.
- (d) The comments are taken from the surveys in order to give some indication, where possible, of the circumstances in which the bargaining took place.

annual value multiplied by ten in the case of a lease for ninety-nine years determinable upon three lives;¹ but it is necessary to proceed with great caution in defining this basic figure. In the first place, the estate surveys are full of values in the form of undated annotations, so that there are at least four if not five sets of valuations which might have formed the basis of calculation. Secondly, although the annual values presumably represented possible rack rents, it is important to note that when tenants made unsatisfactory offers for fines the improved rents paid by them forthwith were at no time as high as the annual values. The possibilities here are that either these tenants were allowed to pay temporary rents on specially advantageous terms, or if the annual values were truly estimates of rack rents, they were wide of

¹ This is the calculation used in John Charlton's *Book of Survey and Valewes* (1638). In *Liber 'C'* (1637) the calculation is different, being by 7 for one life, 9 for two lives, 10 for 21 years, and 11 for three lives. Evidently 21 years and 3 lives were not always regarded as equivalent.

the mark. Certainly the rents paid in the 1650's were still less than the pre-war annual values. Thirdly, certain tenants were entitled to allowances as being "ancient tenants;" both the amount of the allowance and the qualification for it are unknown. For all these reasons it is impossible to select one set of values, multiply them by ten, and thereby obtain figures which were necessarily the fines demanded by the commissioners. In practice, the fines offered in the second round of bargaining in 1638 which the commissioners submitted for Bridgewater's approval were between two-thirds and three-quarters, multiplied by ten, of the values in the book of survey of that year. By 1642 many of these offers had been increased, however, and amounts paid off an agreed figure. Only by this date were fines reaching and sometimes exceeding the full ten years' rate on the 1638 valuations; just over half of the fines recorded in 1642 fall into this category.¹

From this it is clear that no simple formula will explain exactly the calculation of fines during the re-leasing. The heart of the matter is undoubtedly the ten years' rate, but the precise mode of operation remains obscure because none of the offers made in 1637 or 1638 is anywhere near ten times the annual values of 1638. Nor do the rents offered for the new leases afford any clue; they are nearly always the same as the rents payable under the earlier leases amounting to only a few shillings, and thus so small as to have little consequence for any calculations made.² The difference between the full capital sum payable, based on the annual value, and the fines actually offered may nevertheless be explained in a number of ways.

For example, the ages of the lives contained in the proposed leases might obviously be the reason why the fine offered in respect of one lease might approach the full ten years' rate, while the fine for another remains well under it. These ages are not stated in the surveys, so that it is not possible to put this assertion to the practical test; but it seems to be a reasonable assumption. Again, competition or the lack of it might affect the fine ultimately agreed upon very considerably. Further, agreements among tenants to keep down offers were not unknown. Another point to bear in mind is that some allowance must have been made for the fact that in paying his fine the tenant was

¹ A failure to pay the full fine demanded was probably not uncommon. Dr Finch notes that the fines offered by the Leicestershire tenants of the Brudenells of Deene were less than half the sums which they had to pay, and fines offered on the Northants estates half or less than half the amounts exacted.—M. E. Finch, *The Wealth of Five Northants Families, 1540-1640*, Northants Rec. Soc., xix, 1956, p. 158.

² For this reason it is not possible to base the valuation of the fines on the reserved rents. This is not to say that such a method is not commonly employed on other estates. See H. J. Habakkuk, 'The Long-term Rate of Interest and the Price of Land in the Seventeenth Century', *Economic History Review*, Second Series, v, no. 1, 1952, at p. 26.

in effect paying rent in advance for the duration of three lives. This might have been taken into account in fixing the ten years' rate, and certainly there is nothing to show that interest calculations were made by the commissioners; there is no reference in the surveys to any tables in use by them. Lastly there is the simple possibility that certain holdings were incorrectly valued in that the annual values decided upon did not accurately represent their true rack-rent value. This would naturally distort any bargaining on the basis of the ten years' rate.

Indeed, the more one considers the many influences at work in determining the fine at length agreed on in each case, the greater the emphasis which must be placed, as already indicated, on the circumstances of each tenant. This is why the annual value and the ten years' rate do not of themselves lead directly to the fine ultimately paid, but merely establish a standard to which reference must have been made constantly during the bargaining. To say this is not to ignore the fact that the profitability of any one farm, for example, the nature of the soil, drainage, accessibility of water, state of the buildings, and so on, will be reflected in the annual value. But other factors will inevitably affect the final outcome during re-leasing; to give an extreme instance, one otherwise reasonable offer was refused altogether for abuse offered the commissioners. More commonly, the commissioners would have to weigh up such matters as the probable resources of the tenant, whether he was likely to keep the land in good heart, above all, whether his final offer might be exceeded by some competitor. Thus, the fundamental task of the commissioners was to obtain the maximum offer, given the existing circumstances, and to refrain (if they were wise) from making demands so unreasonable that they would stand no chance of being met. The tenants, for their part, would do all they could to keep the offer down without running the risk of a heavy rack, or even eviction.

To turn to the contrast between the size of the fines offered and those paid at the beginning of the century: in order to see this in proper perspective it must be remembered that the 1602 figure for fines was not the result of a re-leasing carried out in that year; it was merely the total of fines which had been paid for leases then in being, some of them of many years' standing. Again, as already stated, the 1602 total contains nothing in respect of the fifty-two leases for twenty-one years granted by the countess of Derby. Consequently, it would be unwise to over-emphasize the fifteenfold increase between 1602 and 1637, although the contrast between the amounts of individual fines remains striking.

Part of the explanation undoubtedly lies in the fact that no thorough-going re-leasing had been carried out for some years, possibly because the life-

interest of Bridgewater's step-mother, the dowager countess, might have made this difficult.¹ Any new leases made during the thirty-five years were issued piecemeal as the old leases fell in, and there is nothing to show that any surveys were made during the period. The result is that there was a good deal of leeway to be made up in the administration of the estates by 1637.

Nevertheless, when all necessary qualifications have been made, the increase in fines still seems abnormally large when seen against the background of the rise in rents elsewhere in north Shropshire at this time.² This remains true to some extent when the comparison is made with rent movements in other counties, although regional variations in the figures available prevent any useful conclusions being reached on this point.³ In the absence of further information it would be unwise to draw out too many implications from this increase, but one question inevitably presents itself: what indications are given by the whole episode concerning the profitability of farming on the Ellesmere estates before the Civil War?

Again, to answer this question directly would require a greater knowledge of estate conditions at this time both in Shropshire and elsewhere than is available at present. Certain considerations, all the same, appear to point to at least a moderate prosperity upon the estates, quite apart from what might be argued to be the *prima facie* evidence of the rise in fines, and the size of fines paid. The existence of competition for holdings seems to bear this out. A comparison of the surveys for 1637 and 1638 with that for 1650 is revealing. The latter survey is full of complaints by the tenants that they cannot fine, usually because they have been ruined by the wars; and when fines are offered they are much smaller, on the whole, than pre-war offers. It may be argued that such complaints are merely the response of any body of tenants faced with the prospect of increases in rent; but this would be to ignore the com-

¹ The legal position is obscure. Presumably the first earl was completely barred beneficial enjoyment of the rents until her death, while for her part she could not grant an interest to last longer than her lifetime.

² Rents on the Bridgewater estates at Whitchurch, ten miles to the east, increased by only a quarter between 1600 and 1636, and by another quarter between 1636 and 1642; but these estates had been rack-rented throughout this period, and there was comparatively little slack to take up in 1637.

³ Not many figures are available for comparison. In certain areas in Wiltshire, rents on new takings increased by something under a third between the decades 1600-9 and 1650-9.—E. Kerridge, article referred to above. On the other hand, in Norfolk and Suffolk arable rents rose sixfold between 1590-1600 and 1640-5.—J. Sprott, 'Agrarian Conditions in Norfolk and Suffolk, 1600-50' (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of London, 1935). Some rents in Warwickshire were trebled between 1615 and 1648 (M. Campbell, *The English Yeoman under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts*). Lord Brudenell of Deene doubled the fines and rents on his estates in Northamptonshire in 1609.—M. Finch, *op. cit.*

ments made by the commissioners themselves as to the state of the tenants whom they saw. If such comments were common form it is curious that similar complaints are not more frequently encountered in the earlier surveys.¹

The basic problem, however, will presumably remain unsolved until it can be shown conclusively that the yeomen and husbandmen who constituted the vast majority of the tenants on the Ellesmere estates at this time were receiving substantially more from their sales of crops and animals in the period before 1637 than they were paying out either in rack rents or in fines and reserved rents; only then can the word "prosperity" be safely used. In the meanwhile, it may be inferred that they were at least not impoverished in 1637, nor in fact would this be expected if, as suggested earlier, they had held on comparatively easy terms before 1637 which had enabled them to save the necessary sums to offer fines when the time came. So that whatever the fate of the gentry in the area at this time, rising or declining, there is at least nothing to show that the yeomanry and the lesser agricultural orders were experiencing hard times.²

In conclusion, it is suggested that the significance of this re-leasing of estates lies in the detailed evidence provided of the all-out effort by an absentee landlord to obtain the maximum immediate return from his estates prior to the Civil War. Clearly Bridgewater wanted large amounts of capital: hence the policy of re-leasing for heavy fines expressed in bargaining spread over at least three years, and possibly more. The calculation of fines did not fall into any simple pattern, because of the wide variations about the norm of the ten years' rate, but it seems sufficiently established that this was in fact the standard adopted. Further, whatever the detailed considerations leading to the final bargain, the fines in 1637 and after still contrast very strongly in size with those in the 1602 survey. Unfortunately the period of thirty-five years between the two surveys makes it difficult to trace leases in existence at both dates, but in the eleven cases where this is possible, six of the leases surrendered in 1637 were replaced by new leases bearing fines of ten times or more the original amounts. The reasons for these increases must remain conjectural, but one factor at least, operating to a greater or lesser extent with

¹ In addition to losses due to war, there were, of course, hazards due to the weather. According to Thorold Rogers, *The Economic Interpretation of History*, 1888, the five years 1646-51 were years of unbroken dearth. See also G. E. & K. R. Fussell, *The English Countryman: His Life and Work, A.D. 1500-1900*, on this point.

² For other regional studies which seem to show some evidence of agricultural prosperity before the Civil War, see M. Finch, *op. cit.*; E. Kerridge, 'The Movement of Rent, 1540-1640', *Economic History Review*, 2nd Series, vi, no. 1; J. C. K. Cornwall, 'The Agrarian History of Sussex, 1560-1640' (unpublished London M.A. thesis); F. Hull, 'Agriculture and Rural Society in Essex, 1560-1640' (unpublished London Ph.D. thesis).

others, may well be the profitability of farming in the area. Certainly the existence on the estates of substantial yeomen with ample capital resources seems a reasonable supposition. However, perhaps one of the most salutary lessons to be learned from this study of six years in the history of the Ellesmere estates is the danger of confident generalization on the basis of estate records of the period, and this is so not only in connection with the movement of rents and fines, but also with regard to their significance in the wider context of agricultural history before the Civil War. Much more needs to be known of the history of other estates about this time before that new history of agriculture in the vital hundred years before 1642 can be written.

Letter to the Editor

SIR,—I am interested in Mr Butlin's suggestion (AHR IX, 1961, p. 102) that the term 'open field' could well be discarded, for my own work on the field patterns of Kent would certainly support his suggestion.

'Open field' is a term that has been used far too loosely, to signify both a particular field pattern and a particular economic organization of agriculture; and from this duality of meaning has arisen confusion. The 'open-field' pattern was characterized by fields subdivided into unenclosed, intermixed strips, and the identification of this pattern in Kent has all too often led to the conclusion that 'open field' existed in the county in the sense of common-field husbandry. An 'open-field' pattern has been equated with 'common-field husbandry'. Mr Butlin pointed out that common arable fields were not always open, and, as E. Kerridge has shown (*V.C.H. Wilts.*, 1959, p. 46), open fields were not always commonable. For Kent there is abundant evidence of a strip pattern in unenclosed fields, but as yet there is no evidence of arable lands

commonable after harvest. It has been too hastily asserted that in Kent 'open fields' in the sense of common-field husbandry can definitely be perceived. There is no evidence, however, of 'common arable fields' as defined by Mr Butlin.

The unenclosed strip pattern of fields might be termed 'subdivided fields' rather than 'open fields', since the former possesses none of the implications of economic organization usually associated with the latter. Surely 'subdivided arable fields' should not be called 'common arable fields' until it is definitely established that they became commonable after harvest? A particular form of economic organization cannot be inferred from the field pattern alone: additional evidence is necessary. Field patterns may be suggestive, but they are not in themselves conclusive.

Yours, etc.,

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The Rural Economy of a Kentish Wealden Parish 1650-1750¹

By C. W. CHALKLIN

LANDHOLDING and farming in the Weald of Kent had several unusual features. This was largely because the whole region originally consisted of dense forest, and because the predominantly clay soil is rather infertile and difficult to work. For these reasons the arable land had probably been enclosed from the beginning of the settlement of the area in the eleventh century, and by the seventeenth century there was only a little open meadow and pasture. As in other parts of England once covered by dense forest, like central Suffolk, farms in the Weald were very small. Even in the eighteenth century there were no signs of large-scale consolidation. The fields, too, were smaller than those in other parts of Kent, and were usually surrounded by copses. Further, the farming reflected the harshness of the soil. Oats were the main crop, little barley was grown, and the profits came as much from the raising of livestock as from arable farming. The region was slow to adopt new methods, like the use of sainfoin and lucern after the Restoration, and oxen were in use as draught animals long after the rest of the county had replaced them with horses.

As elsewhere in Kent, nearly all land was freehold, in comparison with the general English picture in which copyhold was as widespread as freehold. Lambarde, writing in 1570, said of the Kentish farmers: "neither be they so much bounden to the gentry by copyhold or customary tenures, as the inhabitants of the western counties be, nor at all endangered by the feeble hold of tenant right, as the common people in the northern parts be; for copyhold

¹ The principal sources used in the preparation of this article were as follows. (a) MSS. in Kent Archives Office: Rochester probate inventories (1687-1733); Canterbury probate inventories (1700); Rochester will registers; Deeds and manorial rentals from the Knocker and Weller Poley MSS., and other collections; Tithe maps, 1842. (b) MSS. in Public Record Office: Chancery Proceedings and Masters Exhibits; Exchequer Special Commissions and Depositions by Commission; Rentals and Surveys. (c) Printed: W. Lambarde, *Perambulation of Kent*, London, 1826, p. 7 (1st edition, 1570); G. Markham, *The Inrichment of the Weald of Kent*, London, 1649; E. Hasted, *A History of Kent*, Canterbury, 1782; J. Boys, *A General View of the Agriculture of the County of Kent*, London, 1796; G. H. Garrad, *A Survey of the Agriculture of Kent* (County Agricultural Surveys No. 1), London, 1954.

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tenure is rare in Kent, and tenant right not heard of at all." Landholding was free of many of the controls placed on it elsewhere by an active manorial administration, for most manors existed merely as machines for the collection of rents. This was partly owing to the prevalence of freehold tenure, and partly because the land, being enclosed, did not require any joint supervision such as the manor sometimes provided in open-field areas. It was also owing to the geographical distribution of the manor, which was seldom a unit, and was usually spread in parcels over several parishes. In the Weald, where parishes were often very large, there were usually several manors in a single parish.

By taking one large parish it is possible to study the economic significance of these features in detail. The ancient parish of Tonbridge lay near the south-west corner of Kent, its southern border adjoining the county of Sussex. It was by far the largest parish in the county, covering 15,378 acres and measuring some five and a half miles from east to west and eight miles from north to south. The River Medway runs from west to east across the parish and has formed a belt of water-meadows varying from under half a mile to nearly a mile in width, crossed by many small streams. To the south the country is hilly, and except in the valleys the soil is poor. The land to the north of the Medway is flatter, but the clay is wet and heavy and difficult to work.

In the middle of the seventeenth century there were probably a little under 2,000 inhabitants in the parish. Between 600 and 700 people lived in the little market town on the north bank of the Medway, through which ran the important road from London to the Sussex ports of Rye, Winchelsea, and Hastings. During the next hundred years there was little change; although by 1750 the population of the town rose to nearly 1,000, and another little town of about 100 households had appeared near the Sussex border, at Tunbridge Wells, there was no perceptible increase in the rural population.

In prehistoric and Saxon times the parish had probably been wholly covered by woodland, lying within the great forest which covered the Weald of Kent and Sussex. In the early sixteenth century at least half the parish was still forest and heath, enclosed in four paled parks. During the next hundred years, owing to the pressure of a growing population, they were disparked and converted into farmland. There was a little encroachment by existing holdings, but the principal factor was the building of farmsteads in the forest or waste, and the gradual clearance of the surrounding land. Two farms at least represented the conversion of the old keepers' lodges into farmhouses, and the forest they had once protected into farmland. The greatest change took place in the park of Southfrith, comprising 5,000 acres. In the middle of the sixteenth century all except 100 acres was forest land. Yet by 1664 there

were fifty farms covering three-quarters of its area, the remainder being coppice woodland sold off every fourteen years. By this time the great process of land clearance over the parish as a whole was probably almost complete. Apart from the tracts of woodland still remaining on the Southfrith demesne, there were only a few scattered parcels left elsewhere in the parish.

As in the rest of the Weald, there is no evidence of open arable fields in the parish in the seventeenth century. There were, however, three open meadows surviving in 1650, lying beside the river. Although it is not clear whether the meadow was commonable after harvest, the parcels were not annually allocated among the owners. Eastmead, to the east of the town, included at least thirty acres. The seven holdings probably varied in size between fifteen acres and one acre and one yard. It was a shrinking meadow: in 1648 two and a half acres at the west end were described as "now divided from the mead, and enclosed with posts and rails at the two ends and one side thereof," and similar piecemeal enclosure was going on at the east end. By the 1770's it had ceased to be a common meadow. In the Common Mead near the west end of the parish parcels were probably smaller on the average; on the Tithe Map, surveyed in 1838, at least thirty-five parcels are shown, mainly rectangular, ranging from between two and three acres to a few perches. The other open meadow, Buddles Mead, lying on the north bank of the river between the Common Mead and the town, may have covered nearly 100 acres. Holdings probably again varied in size from a few acres to half an acre or less.

There was also some common pasture. At Nizells Hoath in the north-west corner of the parish eleven tenants of the manor of Dachurst had "common upon the heath there" in 1621. At Southborough, three miles to the south of the town, there was a common of at least 100 acres, on which the rights belonged to the freeholders of the manor. The remainder of the land was enclosed in smallish, irregular fields, surrounded by hedges or the copses which are still a striking feature of the rural landscape.

The farmhouses, usually isolated, lay normally in the lanes or on tracks several hundred yards off the main roads. Their site on the farm would appear to have been governed rather by the need for a regular supply of water than for a central position. Although not usually beside streams, one notices on later maps how often there are ponds adjoining, probably indicating the presence of a spring. Usually the fields of a farm lay together, rather unevenly, but occasionally they might be separated into two or three groups. Besides its barns and stables, the farmhouse had a garden, possibly a hemp plot, and an orchard about a half- or one acre in size. The messuages were of half timber, normally rectangular in plan, of two storeys with garret rooms in the gables.

There were four large manors in the parish, all of several thousand acres in size, a number of others dependent on them, probably little more than large farms, and at least three smaller ones not linked with them. As an example, the manor of Southborough covered about 2,000 acres in the south-west of the parish. Scattered parcels lay at Lodge Oak and Woodsgate, in the middle of the Southfrith demesne. Several hundred acres lay farther to the east in the parishes of Capel and Tudeley, and there were six acres of meadow in Hadlow parish, to the north-east of Tonbridge.

Nearly all the land in the parish, as in Kent as a whole, was freehold and leasehold, there being little copyhold land. Thus the manor of Southborough probably had only thirty-one acres of copyhold land, apart from twenty cottages held at the will of the lord. However, there is no indication that in the seventeenth century the distinction between freehold and copyhold land had much economic significance. Copyhold rents were trifling in amount, and had clearly become fixed by custom. In 1661 and 1714 thirty-three acres of copyhold land held of the manor of Southfrith paid a rent of only 6s. 8d. Fines for admission also remained constant: on a parcel of sixteen acres on the manor of Penshurst Halimote in an adjoining parish the fine and copyhold rent were both 6s. 8d. for the whole period 1563-1720. On the other hand, Kentish freehold tenure was burdened with the payment of a heriot. On the manor of Dachurst the custom was that "the freeholders do usually pay by way of a heriot upon every clear demise or death the best living good of every such tenant, and if the said tenant be not possessed of any such good, then the lord is to have 3s. 4d." A relief on descent or alienation was the custom on the freehold lands of some manors, as on the manors of Southborough and Sunningly. On the latter it was fixed at one year's rent. Thus the difference between freehold and copyhold land from the point of view of financial exactions was negligible: what the freeholder missed in terms of fines for admission he paid as heriots or reliefs on descent or alienation. In both cases the sums were hardly more than nominal.

It was the rents from leases of the manorial demesnes that were valuable to the lord, as they could be raised each time the leases expired. In 1625 the total annual value of the Tonbridge demesnes (including £66 13s. 4d. from the mill) was £1,777 16s. 8d. In contrast the quit-rents totalled only £7 4s. 5½d., and the copyhold rents, profits of the toll, fairs, and markets, the rents of the Shambles, and a few other special payments, were worth only £7 15s. 11d. On the manor of Southfrith in 1664 the copyhold rents were £2 13s. 8d. and the rents of the leasehold lands totalled £1,556 9s. 8d. The size of these rentals corresponded to the vast area of the demesnes. The Southfrith demesne was the largest, covering 5,000 acres, and the next big-

gest was the Tonbridge demesne, comprising 2,623 acres. Both had been largely converted from forest into farmland in the hundred years before 1650, and were geographical units. On the other hand, the farms on the demesnes of the manor of Dachurst (about 500 acres), and of the manor of Southborough (about 700 acres), were at least partly medieval in origin. Altogether, the demesne lands probably comprised about 9,000 acres.

Thus in 1650 three-fifths of the land in the parish was in the hands of four owners. The break-up of all four demesnes after 1674, by partition among heirs and by sale, profoundly affected the pattern of landownership in the parish. The Tonbridge demesne was divided into eight sections in 1674 and 1676, as the result of the failure of the male line of the lords of the manor. One share, comprising the Old Trench Farm (275 acres) was bought by a syndicate of eleven local people, mostly farmers, and was sold almost immediately to the tenant, James Walter, yeoman. Another large parcel was acquired by William Eldridge, yeoman, in 1677. Of the other six parcels, all except the largest (1,118 acres) had been bought by local gentry or farmers by 1750. Before 1674 the whole of this huge demesne had been in the hands of an absentee owner: by 1750 much of it belonged to local people, and part was owner-occupied.

The demesne lands of Southfrith were divided and sold because of financial embarrassment. The earl of Buckingham began to sell in 1701, and the process was still not complete in 1710. The mansion of Somerhill, the home farm (130 acres), the park (400 acres), and the Priory Mead (fifty acres) were bought in July 1701 by Thomas Deakins, Esq., of Putney, a mortgagee. They were finally acquired, in 1712, by John Woodgate, Esq., of Stonewall in the neighbouring parish of Chiddingstone, who moved to Somerhill. Another large parcel was bought by the brother of the steward of the manor and the trustee for its sale. Two local yeomen acquired 150 acres and twenty-seven acres respectively. The estate was broken up into parcels of all sizes, from farms of several hundred acres down to single fields. Gentry and yeomen, owner-occupiers and absentee owners, were all among the purchasers.

Of the two smaller demesnes, the Dachurst lands were divided into two parts in 1713 as the ultimate consequence of the death of the last male Skeffington in 1684. The property was later further partitioned. Financial difficulties led to the selling off of part of the Southborough demesne after 1695. Thus in forty years all the four great manorial estates were divided. The smaller local gentry, and the substantial farmers, were among the chief beneficiaries.

Before 1750 no new estates had appeared which could compare with these old demesne properties either in size or in geographical unity. Several large

estates had been built up by Tonbridge people in Tonbridge and the neighbouring parishes, but they were usually the accumulation of several generations and their lands were well scattered. One of the biggest belonged to the Children family, who had moved from the yeomanry into the gentry in the 1690's. Their property had been growing in the district since at least the middle of the seventeenth century. The will of Richard Children, made in 1743, mentions holdings totalling 1,430 acres, in fourteen parishes, all within a ten-mile radius of Tonbridge town. The estate of the Hooper family, who had been lawyers and scriveners in the town since the beginning of the seventeenth century, had been built up over a similar length of time. In 1743 it consisted of 650-700 acres, within a radius of four or five miles of the town. The largest holding was the Cage Farm (400 acres), which had once belonged to the Tonbridge manorial demesne. But although in 1750 there were perhaps as many as half a dozen properties as large, most estates probably consisted of one or two farms. On the freehold lands of the manor of Southborough in 1743, in a total given area of 1,230 acres, there were thirty-two owners and thirty-eight tenants. Thus on this manor, an estate comprising a single holding was the norm. Altogether, the ownership of land in the parish in 1750 was far more widely distributed than in 1650.

It is impossible to estimate at any time the average size of the Tonbridge farm. One can only draw a few general conclusions concerning the extent of the cottage economy, the difference between the size of farms on the freehold and on the demesne lands, and the tendency towards the consolidation of holdings between the beginning of the seventeenth century and the middle of the eighteenth.

On the manor of Southborough in 1621, out of a given area of 1,044½ acres, there were forty-six freeholdings. Their sizes can be tabulated as follows:

	<i>Under 10 acres</i>	<i>10-19 acres</i>	<i>20-49 acres</i>	<i>50-99 acres</i>	<i>100-150 acres</i>
Number of holdings	21	11	9	3	2
Percentage of holdings	45.7	23.9	19.6	6.5	4.3

Thus nearly a half were holdings of under ten acres, two-thirds were under twenty acres, and only a tenth were over fifty acres. Holdings of the nineteen tenants at the will of the lord were even smaller, "a cottage and a garden," or "a cottage and a parcel of the waste" being the usual entry. From the couple of entries in which acreages were given one might assume that they ranged from possibly under half an acre for the garden holdings to two or three acres for parcels of the waste. Thus the cottager with no more than a garden or pasture for a cow was a significant element in the rural economy. That he was

still important in the middle of the eighteenth century may be seen in the court rolls of the manor of Dachurst: out of seventy different holdings purchased or inherited between 1734 and 1763 probably eighteen, or about one-quarter, were holdings of two acres or under.

To the small freeholds in Tonbridge the leasehold lands show a striking contrast. Far larger were the newly cleared leasehold lands of Southfrith, in the survey of 1664. The fifty holdings totalling 4,065 acres may be grouped as follows:

	<i>Under 10 acres</i>	<i>10-19 acres</i>	<i>20-49 acres</i>	<i>50-99 acres</i>	<i>100-199 acres</i>	<i>200-320 acres</i>
Number of holdings	5	2	21	10	8	4
Percentage of holdings	10	4	42	20	16	8

A quarter were therefore large farms of over 100 acres, and all except 14 per cent were at least medium-sized holdings of over twenty acres. Although the evidence for the Tonbridge demesne is more scanty, it seems clear that the four parks had been converted not into farms of five or ten acres but into medium-sized and large farms ranging from twenty to 200 or 300 acres.

By the middle of the eighteenth century the freehold farms had become considerably larger. On the Southborough manor the average size of a holding rose from 22.7 acres in 1621 to 31.8 acres in 1743. This was largely owing to the amalgamation of several holdings of about ten acres or less. Thus the farm that George Hooper let in 1743 included a parcel comprising a half of a barn and four acres, another called Boxsons and Pickrells Grove, twelve acres called Westfield, and several other parcels called Bentham lands, all of which had been separately owned in 1621.

The increase in the size of farms is shown even more clearly by a comparison of the holdings on a large estate of the early eighteenth century with those on a property in about 1600. The lands on the earlier estate belonged to Sir George Fane of Badsell in Tudeley. They consisted of 1,245 acres in the parishes of Tudeley, Capel, Brenchley, Marden, and Tonbridge, and were held by thirty-nine tenants. Twenty-three tenants held 1,222 acres on the estate of Richard Children in 1743. The average size of the holding on the first estate was 31.9 acres, and on the second, 53.1. It is possible to see the consolidation taking place on an estate of about 2,500 acres, in 1725, which had belonged to Richard Goodhugh, gentleman. A holding of twenty acres in Hildenborough included "a platt of ground or staddle on which a messuage formerly stood, now taken down and carried away;" and in Brenchley another messuage on the estate was "now demolished and razed down."¹

¹ The influence of the Kentish custom of gavelkind, or partible inheritance, on the size of holdings and estates has been a subject of controversy. Gavelkind only came into effect if a man

We have already noticed the comparative infertility of the soil. Without artificial aids the crops would be poor: Gervase Markham wrote that "the good mould exceedeth not six inches in depth at the most, and therefore it wanteth convenient substance to nourish corn any long time, but will faint and give over after a crop or two." A further handicap was, and still is, the small size of the fields, with their surrounding coppices "which in unseasonable weather do keep both the sun and the wind from the corn, so as for want of that succour and comfort, it groweth and many times rotteth in the earth." But with careful manuring and management the land has always been capable of high production. Tenants were usually required by a covenant in their leases to rot down the stubble and other remains of the corn harvest and spread all the dung on the land. Marl and lime were the principal fertilizers. Marl could be obtained locally, in plenty, sometimes on the premises. In his lease in 1652 of a farm on the Southfrith estate Peter Mercer, husbandman, was permitted to dig for marl on his land, and use it on the property, but not to remove it without the landlord's consent. Lime on the other hand was brought from the North Downs, where it was burnt at the quarry. Probably the manner in which they were applied varied from farm to farm according to the nature of the ground and the views and resources of the landlord or tenant. The two or three leases that have survived containing clauses on this subject show that landlords were often careful to see that their tenants adopted some regular system. In his lease of 1739 Robert Williamson was not to plough or sow more than three times before spreading 250 cart-loads of marl, each containing ten bushels, or four loads or carriages of lime, each containing thirty-two bushels, or fifty loads of dung, on every acre; if he chose to marl he might not plough or sow six times before re-marling, or if he laid on dung or lime he should repeat the process after four sowings. On the other hand, on probably very different soil the lord of the manor of Southfrith in the lease of 1652 required Peter Mercer to lay on only fifty cart-loads

died intestate. In this case, while partition of individual holdings might take place, they were more often preserved intact by a settlement among the heirs. More usually property was bequeathed by will, in which the testator could dispose of his lands as he liked, as in other parts of England. He might either (i) leave all his land to one son, with only money bequests to the others, or (ii), if he held more than one holding, he might distribute them among his sons, or (iii) leave the property to them to inherit equally. The third method was the least common, and in the case of a single holding, the heirs normally tended to sell to one of themselves, or to an outsider, rather than make a partition. The practice of distributing holdings among the sons did undoubtedly help to reduce the size of estates. Yet a study of wills proved outside Kent showed that this method of bequeathing property was common in other parts of England and its use in Kent was probably not owing to the influence of gavelkind. It seems likely, then, that the custom was of little economic importance in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Kent.

of marl and twenty loads of lime or dung in the last three years of his lease.

Manuring was accompanied by a crop rotation. On the best soils of the Weald Markham recommended that two sowings of wheat should follow the marling; afterwards it should rest five or six years, "all of which time it will bear a very good and sweet pasture, well set with a white clover, or three-leaved grass, most batning and profitable, both for sheep and bullocks;" then the process should be repeated. In fact from the terms of the leases land would seem to have been often more heavily cropped. But landlords were at least concerned to see that, especially towards the end of a lease, part of the arable was left unploughed. On the Postern Farm in his lease of 1714 Augustin Taylor, yeoman, was to lay down one parcel called the Postern Heath with cow grass for four years before the end of the demise, and the adjoining Hempland field (six acres) for the last three years, and ten acres of arable with clover or cow grass in the last year but one, and ten acres more of arable in the last year. Often, too, the tenant was restricted in the amount of land that he could plough up at any time. His covenant might contain penal clauses against the ploughing up of meadow or pasture.

Despite the need to lay part of the arable down to grass, most farmers managed to have some arable under cultivation every season. This is shown by the surviving inventories, 1687-1733. Out of seventeen made for Tonbridge farmers between mid-April and the beginning of August, covering the period between the sowing of the spring corn and the harvest, only two do not mention corn on the ground. Thirteen of them give details as to crops, from which it is possible to estimate approximately the acreages under the various types of corn (Table A). Oats and wheat stand out as the chief crops; a little over half the land was sown with oats and a third with wheat. Barley, peas, and tares grew on the remaining one-eighth. Thus oats almost entirely took the place of peas and beans as a cattle fodder, and because of the predominantly clay soil there was no rye. There would appear to have been no wide differences between farm and farm: most farmers grew both oats and wheat and most more oats than wheat. While the average area sown was a little under twenty acres, about half the farmers probably had only one field for each crop, like John Polhill with two acres of wheat, three acres of barley, and three acres of oats; although larger farmers like William Snashall and Thomas Kenward, with forty and fifty-five acres sown respectively, may have had as many as ten fields under crops.

Inventories made during the winter show that the majority of farmers had wheat "on the ground," only about a quarter being without. On 7 March 1701 Richard Fulmer was found to have four acres of wheat, and on 3 December 1703 Jane Coife, widow, had seven acres.

TABLE A
THE ACREAGES OF ARABLE LAND CULTIVATED BY TONBRIDGE FARMERS, 1687-1720

Name	Occupation	Date	Acreages				
			Wheat	Barley	Oats	Peas	Total Acreage
Richard Curde	yeoman	2 May 1687	9	[1½]*	[18½]*	[2½]*	32
James Sharpe	yeoman	30 July 1687	3	—	6	—	9
Robert Foreman	—	9 June 1692	3½	1	4	—	8½
William Mercer	husbandman	14 July 1692	5	—	10	—	15
John Polhill	yeoman	27 May 1700	2	3	3	—	8
Joseph Puxty	tanner	7 May 1702	—	—	2½	6	8½
John Meopham	maltster	22 May 1704	1½	2½	—	—	4
William Snashall	yeoman	17 April 1705	16	—	16	4	36
John Jeffery	yeoman	21 April 1708	7	—	19	—	26
Thomas Kenward	yeoman	27 April 1713	18	—	37	—	55
John Meopham	yeoman	31 May 1714	2½	[½]*	[1½]*	—	4½
Thomas Hills	husbandman	22 June 1717	—	—	1	—	1
James Saxby	yeoman	27 June 1720	9	7	17	—	33
Total			76½	15½	136	12½	240½
Percentage of total sown acreage			31·9	6·5	56·7	5·2	Total 100·3%

* approximate figures, as the inventory gives only the total acreage of the spring corn.

The average area sown on Tonbridge farms (18·5 acres) was far lower than in that part of Kent lying outside the Weald. The average acreage in twenty inventories taken in the summer months on farms in north and east Kent in the year 1700 was 28·1. While there were eight farms with very small sown acreages (4 acres, 2 acres 3 roods, 8 acres, 3 acres 2 roods, 1½ acres, 1 acre, 1 acre, 1 acre 3 roods), the contrast with Tonbridge lay principally in the presence in the sample of four farms with over fifty acres sown (98 acres, 66 acres, 72 acres, 79 acres), and there were five others with between twenty-five and fifty acres. Probably the reason for the difference was partly that farms in these parts of Kent were larger than in the Weald: Boys, in *A General View of the Agriculture of the County*, 1796, said that the Weald was "parcelled out generally into small farms," compared with "the best cultivated parts of East Kent . . ." consisting of large farms. But considering the difficulties which faced arable farming in the Weald it is reasonable to conjecture that the average arable acreage on the Tonbridge farm was smaller in proportion than on farms lying outside the Weald. This is certainly the case today, the percentage of the land under wheat, barley, oats, beans, and peas for stock feeding being 20·7 on the high weald and 20·4 on the weald plain, compared with 31·3 on the chalkland of the North Downs and 27·3 in the arable fruit belt of east Kent.

There was a further contrast with north and east Kent in the crops under cultivation. Again there was almost no rye grown (under 1 per cent), and about a third of the land was devoted to wheat. But there was almost as much barley grown as wheat (about 32 per cent). Peas and beans (about 18 per cent) had replaced oats (about 15 per cent) as the major cattle fodder. The small quantity of barley grown in Tonbridge compared with these other parts of Kent finds a close parallel today. It is doubtless owing to the clay soil of the Weald.

A study of nine inventories made between August and December, before an appreciable quantity of the harvest had been consumed, offers a means of estimating very roughly the value of the crops grown in the parish. Of the arable crops, wheat was the most valuable, followed fairly closely by oats, while barley and peas constituted a rather small proportion. From inventories in which both the value and amount of the corn crop are given, one can deduce that (very roughly) wheat was normally worth about £1 a quarter, barley probably about the same, and oats about 10s. a quarter. Taking these three crops alone the percentage *yield* was as follows:

	<i>Oats</i>	<i>Wheat</i>	<i>Barley</i>
(approximately)	54·3	33·3	12·3

Thus oats comprised just over half the yield and wheat one-third. A comparison with their sown acreage suggests that the yield per acre for these crops was very similar.

Acreages of land under grass were rarely given in the inventories, so that there is no means of estimating the average amount of meadow land in use on the Tonbridge farm. But Table B brings out clearly the high value of the hay crop, it being worth almost as much as the oats and over twice as much as the barley. Of the artificial grasses Markham implied that clover was in use in the Weald when he wrote in 1649. Inventories which mention either (very rarely) acreage or more usually seed or fodder would seem to suggest that it was in common use in the parish at the end of the century. Thus John Children of Lower Street, 15 September 1687, had five bushels of clover seed worth £4 10s., besides his hay and clover worth £60. James Saxby, 27 June 1720, had four acres of clover as well as thirty-three acres of corn and twenty-two acres under grass. Tares we have noticed as occasionally in use. James Sharpe, husbandman, 30 July 1687, had three acres of buckwheat, a type of vetch (the only example). There is a single mention of rye grass, and a couple of references to cow grass, a wild species of trefoil; but their use was probably far less common than clover. Lucern and sainfoin do not appear, although they are known to have been grown in England not long after the Restoration.

Hops and fruit usually appear in inventories only when they have been harvested, and timber only when it has been felled. Probably as vines or trees with a minimum life (in the case of hops) of five years they were not regarded as personal estate.¹ It is impossible, therefore, to assess their importance in the agrarian economy of the parish. All farms, and many town houses, had orchards varying usually from one-quarter to half an acre in size, but there is a little evidence to show that some farms had orchards of several acres.

Only one reference to a hop-garden has been found before 1650. During the following hundred years deeds refer occasionally to hop-gardens and oasthouses. Those mentioned vary in size from one to seven acres. Thus a deed mentions "three acres lately planted with hops" near Southborough Common in 1653. In a lease from the earl of Westmorland to Richard Williamson, innholder, in 1737 of the Bull Inn and fifty-four acres, he was allowed to convert seven acres of pasture into hopground besides the seven acres already planted with hops. Many people grew them on a small scale,

¹ According to R. Burn, *Ecclesiastical Law*, iv, London, 1781, p. 242, grass ready to be cut for hay, and fruit on the trees were treated as part of the real estate, because they grew without man's assistance. On the other hand, corn was included in inventories, because it was sown. Hops should also legally have been entered; possibly their omission was owing to the fact that the plants remained in the ground for several years.

TABLE B
THE VALUE OF THE CROPS GROWN BY TONBRIDGE FARMERS, 1687-1733

<i>Name</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Wheat</i>	<i>Oats</i>	<i>Barley</i>	<i>Hay</i>	<i>Peas</i>	<i>Tares</i>	<i>Total</i>
			£ s. d.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	£	£ s.	£ s. d.
George Pawley	yeoman	8 Nov. 1687	40 15 0	60 0	40 0	26 0	14	—	180 15 0
John Children	yeoman	15 Sept. 1687	[17 0 0]	[8 10]	—	[4 0]	[1]	—	
			35 0 0	22 0	10 0	62 0	—	—	159 10 0
Walter Crouch	yeoman	1 Dec. 1692	7 10 0	6 0	—	7 0	—	—	20 10 0
Mercy Bristow	widow	30 Sept. 1699	23 0 0	9 0	5 0	—	—	1 10	38 10 0
Thomas Archer	husbandman	24 Sept. 1707	20 0 4	1 0	—	16 0	—	—	50 10 4
				[8 10]	[4]		[1]		
William Head	yeoman	24 Sept. 1707	17 10 0	[11 15]	—	7 0	—	[- 5]	36 10 0
Thomas Oliver	butcher	13 Jan. 1715	1 6 0	6 0	5 5	7 10	—	—	20 1 0
William Osbourne	yeoman	21 Nov. 1715	32 0 0	12 10	20 0	20 0	5	—	89 10 0
John Waite	—	14 Feb. 1733	47 0 0	46 5	—	21 10	5	2 4	121 19 0
Total value of crops			£241 1 4	£191 10	£84 5	£171 0	£26	£3 19	£717 15 4
Percentage of total value			33.3	26.7	11.7	23.1	3.6	0.6	99

mainly for home brewing. In the parish of Goudhurst, lying in the Weald fifteen miles east of Tonbridge, a terrier of 1714 listed thirty-one growers on thirty-seven acres of hopland; twenty-eight grew on an area of under two acres, and nine on less than one acre.

Probably a hop-garden of several acres was normally accompanied by an oasthouse; one of the covenants in the lease of the Bull lands just mentioned stipulated that if the earl of Westmorland provided sufficient timber Williamson should erect a hopkiln and provide the bricks and tiles for it, before next Michaelmas. Hop poles were another expensive item of equipment, for at this period two poles were used normally for each plant. Robert Rawlins, yeoman, 29 November 1728, was found to have hop poles worth £8 10s., his other husbandry tackle being valued at £15 12s. John Borne, 28 December 1723, had hop poles worth £10 16s., the rest of his implements being valued at £2 10s. and his total personal estate at £53 2s. 6d. Yet heavy capital expenses were matched by high profits: William Walter, yeoman (19 November 1713), who had "hop poles on the ground at Tonbridge and several other utensils belonging to the hopground and coachhouse" worth £24, had eleven bags of hops and three pockets weighing 27 cwt, worth £91 2s. 6d., out of a total inventory of £448 2s. 0d. This is the highest valued single item concerning crops in any of the surviving Tonbridge inventories.

At this period, as today, most of the woodland in the parish was coppice. The 1,214 acres of woodland on the Southfrith demesne in 1664 was all coppice wood, saleable at fourteen years' growth: probably this represented almost the maximum length of time that coppice wood was left before being cut. On the other hand three acres of woodland in the adjoining parish of Pembury was said to have been cut in about 1730 after only four or five years' growth. It was perhaps a rather poor investment: after fourteen years the Southfrith coppices produced only £2 10s. per acre. A similar low yield was received for nine acres of woodland in Pembury about 1730, for which the period of growth is not given:

	£	s.	d.
3½ cords of wood per acre @ 9s. a cord	1	11	6
400 hop poles per acre @ 5s. a hundred	1	0	0
½ load of hoops per acre @ 16s. a load		8	0
spray @ 4s. per acre		4	0
<i>Total yield per acre</i>	<u>£3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>

Returns came only after a long period, and a large acreage was needed for a good profit. None of the inventories mention timber of much value: most

often a farmer's felled wood was worth £2 to £3, and only two cases were noted where it was valued at over £10. Probably the copses which surrounded many of the fields provided just enough for domestic consumption.

Nevertheless, despite the comparatively low returns, it is clear from the covenants in the leases that timber was a valued product. In many wood was reserved to the landlord, as in the leases of the Halfields by the Weller family already mentioned. In others the tenant might take it under special conditions. The mature oaks, ashes, birch, or beech might be reserved to the landlord while the coppice was taken by the tenant. In his thirty-one-year lease of Cage Farm from George Hooper in 1733, John Simonds, yeoman, agreed that "as often as the coppices, underwoods, shaws, or hedgerows be cut he shall and will leave growing dispersedly upon each acre sixteen oaks or ashes good for stadles or wavers fit to grow and more." Other landlords attempted to ensure that there was at least some coppice partly grown at the end of the lease: John Wood, yeoman, in his lease of ninety-four acres at Cage Green was required to have growing at the end of his lease two acres of wood at four, three, and two years' growth respectively.

The reason for this careful preservation was its wide range of uses. It was the only domestic fuel. Though the use of sea-coal was not unknown in the district, the difficulties of transporting it were too great to allow its wide use. Much was converted into charcoal for heating in the remaining iron works and in hopkilns. William Hartnup sold "a great number of cords" from his wood in Pembury to a collier of St Paul's Cray, in north-west Kent; while the timber bought from Burchen Coppice by George Herbert, the local iron-master, was coaled on the spot, "as is usual in such cases." The general use of tiles and the development of brick building led to a further need for fuel, and there was a constant demand for fencing and for hop poles.

For a study of the livestock kept by Tonbridge farmers the inventories provide some interesting material. Of the forty-five inventories which have survived for farmers twenty-one were made in the winter and twenty-four in the summer. There was no significant difference in the number of sheep kept in the two seasons, which suggests that the great store of hay and oats kept was enough to obviate any wholesale slaughtering or selling off of flocks in the autumn. Only twenty-two farms, or just under half, carried any sheep; on these the distribution was as follows:

1- 9 sheep	4 farms
10- 19 "	3 "
20- 49 "	10 "
50- 99 "	4 "
100-199 "	1 farm (198 sheep)

Thus only one farmer out of forty-five had a large flock, and only one-third had a flock of twenty or more sheep. Wool is mentioned only four times, and always as a crop of small value, suggesting that it was not normally an important item even in the economy of the 50 per cent of the farmers who kept sheep. Probably, as the passage from Markham already quoted implies, the breeding and fattening of sheep were more important.

Oxen were probably still the main draught animals. The Tonbridge farms had from two to ten. George Pawley, 8 November 1687, one of the large farmers with crops in his barn worth £180, had eight working oxen. But horses, too, were used, as on the farm of Richard Bennett, husbandman, 1 September 1729, which had no oxen, but two horses valued with a waggon, two carts, and three harrows. Nearly all the inventories of farmers mention horses, two to five being the usual number, but they were probably more often used for riding and as pack horses than as draught animals.

Most farms had two or three cows. A number had between six and seven, one was noticed with ten cows, and another with nine. Normally, then, there were just enough to provide for the domestic requirements of milk, cheese, and butter. There are no signs that any farmer had a large surplus of these products for sale; the modern dairying industry of the area is a nineteenth-century development. On the other hand, breeding and the fattening of young cattle were important. Nearly every farm kept calves and young beasts, many having at least three or four and a few as many as eight. Sometimes there are references to "fattening beasts," and the frequent mention of bulls, bullocks, and heifers suggests the significance of breeding. Richard Curde, 2 May 1687, had eight oxen, five cows, four calves, four two-yearling bullocks, a bull, two heifers, and probably three yearling heifers.

The size of sheep flocks in north and east Kent was also fairly small. Only one farmer in the sample had over fifty sheep, a flock of 318 on a farm in Oare, near the Thames estuary, which lies, significantly, on marshland. There was little breeding or fattening of cattle, and less than half the farmers kept calves. The other main difference from the Weald was that horses were the draught animals, oxen being used only on the occasional farm.

'Husbandry tackling' was a substantial item in nearly every farmer's personal estate. Most farmers had one waggon and a few had two; nearly all had one or two carts, and two farmers had more; and there were about the same number of ploughs. Harrows were even more plentiful, three being the most common number. Yokes and tights, harnesses, and farming tools complete the picture.

It is difficult to throw much light on the marketing of the products of Tonbridge farms. Despite the small size of the acreages under crops the larger

farmers at least would have sold corn outside the district. Just before he died, (1 June 1704) George Walter had sold a load of oats at Bromley for £5 17s.; and a few days before his death, in about 1728, Thomas Hartnup's team fetched thirty-two bushels of clover seed from Brenchley, picked up eight bushels from his own house, and took them both up to London. Hops, too, may have been sold in London by the larger growers. Timber was another export. Wood was in demand both for building, for houses in the London area and ships at Chatham, and as fuel. In 1571 royal officials had bought twenty-nine tons of wood from the owner of Somerland Wood, probably for building in London, and intended to use the tops and lops for burning the queen's bricks at Greenwich, and about 1728 Thomas Hartnup sold "a great number of cords" to George Wyborne, a collier of St Paul's Cray. The sale of cattle which he had bred and fattened was yet another means of income for the Tonbridge farmer.

Thus a study of landholding and farming in the parish of Tonbridge between 1650 and 1750 reveals in detail most of the features of the rural economy of the Weald of Kent as a whole. In Tonbridge, as elsewhere in the Weald, although there was some common meadow and pasture, most of the land consisted of small, enclosed fields. The weak manorial organization and the small customary financial exactions hardly affected the tenure of land. Most holdings were small and the farming was mixed: while arable farming and the raising of cattle were the principal means of livelihood for most Tonbridge farmers, many also grew and sold some hops, fruit, and timber.

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Notes and Comments

PROFESSOR R. H. TAWNEY

The death of R. H. Tawney, which occurred on 16 January 1962, deprives the British Agricultural History Society of its most distinguished member and the Advisory Committee for *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* of its chairman. His fame as a historian whose writings have long since become established classics, and his personal quality as a great man in every sense of the word, need no trumpeting here. It may be long before we see his like again.

THE BRITISH AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
The December Conference of the Society was held jointly with the Association of Agriculture at the London School of Economics on 2 December 1961. The Chair was taken by

Mr Alexander Hay, General Secretary of the Association of Agriculture. The morning was devoted to a discussion of Problems of Sixteenth-Century Agrarian History led by Mrs Joan Thirsk, who was supported by Mr M. W. Barley, Mr G. R. Batho, Dr P. Bowden, and Dr A. Everitt. In the afternoon the conference heard papers from Mr E. L. Jones on 'The Changing Basis of English Agricultural Prosperity, 1853-73' and Mr D. J. Sinclair on 'The Development of Swedish Agriculture'.

ÉTUDES RURALES

The *École Pratique des Hautes Études* of the Sorbonne has issued two numbers of *Études Rurales*, the first French-language review devoted solely to rural problems in the field of the social sciences (April-June, July-Sept. 1961). The journal is designed to bring together a wide range of original papers dealing with France and to a lesser extent all western Europe and the Mediterranean basin.

The first number contains three papers concerned with the rural landscape, one with economic and social history, one with agricultural economics, and one with rural sociology.

The review is attractively produced apart from a rather insubstantial cover. It costs 28 N.F. for four quarterly numbers from Mouton & Co., N.V., Kerklaan 74, Rijswijk (Z.H.), Holland.

THE WALTER FRANK PERKINS AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY

Southampton University Library has recently published a catalogue of the Walter Frank Perkins Agricultural Library (292 pp., 45s.). W. F. Perkins is well known for his *British and Irish Writers on Agriculture*, which was first published in 1929. In 1946 he gave his substantial collection of agricultural books to the University of Southampton and requested that a catalogue of it be published. It was also a condition of the gift that all the items in the collection could be borrowed. The catalogue contains over 2,000 items, starting with the *Maison Rustique* of 1600. It is in the main a collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century books, and it is richest in eighteenth-century material. Not the least valuable part of the catalogue is a complete list of the quarto and octavo Board of Agriculture County Reports for England, Scotland, and Wales, and the statistical surveys of Irish counties published by the Dublin Society.

SOCIETY FOR FOLK LIFE STUDIES

A very successful conference to inaugurate The Society for Folk Life Studies was held at University College London from 6 to 8 September 1961. Over eighty people from all parts of Great Britain and Ireland attended and, at a general meeting held on 8 September, the Society was formally established. The following officers were elected:

President: Dr Iorwerth C. Peate (Welsh Folk Museum);

Vice-President: Mr Andrew Jewell (University of Reading);

Secretary: Mr J. Geraint Jenkins (Welsh Folk Museum);

Treasurer: Mr Stewart F. Sanderson (University of Leeds).

Membership is open to all individuals and institutions interested in the study of the traditional patterns of life both in rural and urban communities. Although various bodies such as the Folklore Society, the British Agricultural History Society, and several others are each interested in particular aspects of folk life and social history, this new Society to cover the complete field fulfils a long-felt need. It can serve as a focus for the activities of those individuals, amateur and professional alike, who take an interest in their native culture. In addition to holding an annual conference at various centres in Great Britain and Ireland in turn, the Society will also publish its own journal. This year's meeting will be held in the University of Reading from 7 to 9 September 1962. The theme of the Conference will be *Folk Life and Other Disciplines*, and among those who will speak are Professor E. G. Bowen on *Folk Life and Geography* and Professor Stuart Piggott on *Folk Life and Archaeology*.

Any person or institution wishing to join is requested to get in touch with the Secretary, c/o Welsh Folk Museum, St Fagans, Cardiff. The annual subscription is 25s. for ordinary members, 2 gns for institutional membership, and there will be a student subscription of 15s.

'THE AMATEUR HISTORIAN'

This quarterly journal, devoted to historical enquiry as a popular activity, is now published by the National Council of Social Service for The Standing Conference for Local History. The magazine offers ideas on methods of research, and indicates sources of information and background material to help amateur local historians in their work. An annual subscription to the journal is 15s. (inclusive of postage); single copies cost 3s. 6d. (plus 4d. postage). The Secretary to SCLH, 26 Bedford Square, London, W.C.1, welcomes enquiries about *The Amateur Historian*.

Book Reviews

E. JUILLARD, A. MEYNIER, X. DE PLANHOL, G. SAUTTER, *Structures Agraires et Paysages Ruraux. Un Quart de Siècle de Recherches Françaises*. Annales de l'Est, Mémoire N° 17. 188 pp. University of Nancy, 1957. *Géographie et Histoire Agraires. Actes du Colloque International organisé par la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Nancy*. Annales de l'Est, Mémoire N° 21. 452 pp. University of Nancy, 1959.

These two volumes record the proceedings of the international conference in geography and agrarian history held at Nancy in 1957. Both are concerned with describing and analysing the structure of different rural communities and the influence of landscape upon the various types. Volume I is particularly valuable because it summarizes in the first twenty-two pages the early generalizations made by Marc Bloch, Roger Dion, and other scholars on the main types of agrarian community. It then discusses the explanations that have been offered for the organization of the three main types, and concludes with a long bibliography of French works of local history that have contributed to this debate. It is interesting to observe differences in the approach of English and French scholars to these problems. Some bold generalizations, based on somewhat slender information, were made by the French in the 1930's, and these gave the impetus to the many local studies which followed. Before Marc Bloch died, he considered that the framework of generalizations he had constructed was ready to be dismantled and rebuilt. In England, in contrast, the detailed studies have been accumulating in the last thirty years, but without any attempt as yet at a classification of the main classes of agrarian community. For this reason, the first volume of these proceedings deserves close attention from English agrarian historians. Much of the discussion on the basic French types is relevant to England, for we too have the same three groups of communities: the classic open-field areas with

nucleated villages; the enclosed areas with dispersed settlements; and the areas with irregular open fields—in England they consist often of small, sometimes a multitude of small, open fields—with nucleated communities who are less firmly wedded to communal rules of farming, and who can enclose their fields with little commotion. The debate among French scholars on the origin of these types ends inconclusively, as we must expect, but it is a comprehensive survey of the many points of view that have so far been put forward. Moreover, the French have taken to heart Charles Parain's proposition that the communities we study are not fossils from the prehistoric past but living, changing organisms, organisms that can transform themselves overnight, if they so decide. No debate on the origins of agrarian communities could start from more reliable premises.

The second volume describes some excursions that were organized for the members of this conference, and concludes with a number of short communications on the social structure of various regions in eastern Europe, France, Belgium, Italy, Scandinavia, Spain, and England. Particularly instructive is the contribution by Mr G. G. Elliott on the organization of open fields in Cumberland, for it demonstrates the futility of discussing the open fields of England as though they were all organized on the same system. "In Cumberland," says Mr Elliott—and, we might add, in many other parts of the highland zone as well—"pastoralism based on extensive common wastes was the mainstay of the agricultural economy." The open fields were managed on a rotation that included long leys, lasting five years out of ten on the best land in Cumberland, and nine years out of twelve on the worst, and were "designed to give the maximum amount of grazing over a period of years." In short, this system and that operating in the open fields of the East Midlands were poles apart. Other contributions on England and Wales are made by Dr R. Hilton

on West Midland enclosures, and Mr G. R. J. Jones and Professor Jones Pierce on Welsh open fields and tribal land arrangements. To the agrarian historian, these volumes are worth their weight in gold.

JOAN THIRSK

LORD ERNLE, *English Farming Past and Present*, sixth ed. with Introduction by G. E. Fussell and O. R. McGregor. Heinemann and Frank Cass, 1961. cxlvi+560 pp. 50s. A new edition of Lord Ernle's classic is bound to arouse the interest and expectations of all agricultural historians. Briefly the present volume consists of a reprint of the fifth edition, published in 1936 and edited and revised by Sir Daniel Hall, to which is added a critical and bibliographical introduction, extending to a total of 122 pages, by Messrs G. E. Fussell and O. R. McGregor.

Lord Ernle intended his book to be "a consecutive history of English agriculture, written from a practical point of view, and tracing the influence of the progress of the industry on the social conditions of those engaged in its pursuit." It soon became the recognized standard work, and was for long invaluable both as a quarry for textbook writers and as a major source for students, although I believe it has not been so much used in recent years.

As a standard work it displays several obvious defects. Its balance leans heavily towards the modern period—only a third of the book is concerned with the centuries between Domesday and 1700—and the treatment of medieval and early modern developments is decidedly sketchy. Ernle concentrated on the subjects which were the dominating themes in English agricultural history in his day: the open-field system and its decline, enclosures, the 'agricultural revolution', and the decline of small owner-occupiers. The last was his especial concern, for he feared that the domination of large estates "might some day make England the forcing-bed of schemes for land nationalization," while an increase in peasant ownership "was socially, economically, and agriculturally advantageous." He failed to bring out the full diversity of English farming.

In concentrating on the open-field system of the midlands, he neglected the varied field systems and farming practices of other regions; he is insular: over the whole book there is little reference to Wales, Scotland, or Ireland; in the agricultural revolution he exaggerated the contributions of individuals and underestimated the flexibility of open-field farming; and it may also be complained that the agricultural labourer disappears from the scene for extremely long periods.

In his use of sources Ernle was erratic, to say the least. Maitland, Leadam, Thorold Rogers, and A. H. Johnson he consulted, but Vinogradoff, Tawney, Gonner, and the Hammonds he ignored. He relied very heavily on contemporary farming books, on Walter of Henley, Fitzherbert, Young, and the *Reports* of the Board of Agriculture. These he studied thoroughly and deployed to great effect, but, as Mr Fussell points out, he made little or no use of the local histories, topographical writings, diaries, and publications of record societies that were available in his time. In the later editions he failed to incorporate much of the most important new research, and his book, ill-balanced and defective in 1912, became even more out of date as the years passed.

Ernle's strength was in description. His writing was both elegant and lucid, and as Mr Fussell says, highly picturesque. His colourful accounts of farming life may still stir the imagination. He was less impressive in his analysis of the economic forces bearing on agriculture, and it was here that his book was always weakest. Nevertheless, one can still read him with interest and profit. The discussions of the enclosure movement of the eighteenth century and the decline of the yeomen, for instance, are still valuable and to a large extent still valid. On the subjects he studied thoroughly he is a competent guide; and if textbook writers who drew on Ernle have sent countless students astray, this is mainly because they took up his generalizations and ignored the qualifications with which he surrounded them.

The importance of the new edition, however, lies in the two introductions which, we

are told, are "not devotional exercises" but "a guide to the findings and direction of recent scholarship." It is the value of these guides, of course, that will decide those who already possess an old copy of Ernle whether an investment in the new edition is worth while. Here it must be remarked first that the introductions show the same bias that characterizes Ernle's book. While Mr McGregor takes sixty-seven pages to deal with the agriculture of the last one hundred and fifty years, Mr Fussell has only fifty-five pages for a survey which begins in pre-history and ends in 1815. Secondly, the general usefulness of the introductions would be much enhanced by an index of the writers and subjects mentioned; as it is, one must search over a number of pages to find a particular reference.

Mr Fussell boldly shoulders the herculean task of discussing in so limited a space the English agricultural history of the centuries prior to 1815. It cannot be said that the result is satisfactory. Clearly everything cannot go in, but the choice of subjects to be excluded is certainly extraordinary. There is, for example, no reference to H. L. Gray's book on *English Field Systems*, and although Professor Postan's work on the *Famulus* appears, his equally valuable discussions of the fifteenth century are absent. In the early modern period the new ground broken by Dr Hoskins and Mr Barley on rural housing receives no attention, Miss Finch's important work on Northamptonshire landowners is also absent, while Dr Kerridge's contributions merit only the bare mention of his name. And what is one to think of a discussion of recent work on the eighteenth century which omits such names as Chambers, Habakkuk, and John? Mr Fussell blandly dismisses as unnecessary any discussion of the eighteenth-century enclosure movement, but is it in fact true that an up-to-date account of this is "easily accessible"?

However, a more serious weakness pervades the whole of Mr Fussell's survey. No unifying theme draws together his remarks, unless it be the gradual improvement of farming techniques, and there is indeed a great

deal on ploughs. The lack of a theme emphasizes the general failure to give to population and price movements the central importance which they have assumed in recent writing. It is with the changes in demand for agricultural products and land, and the influence of differential price movements on land use and farming techniques that much of the most valuable recent work has been concerned, on the middle ages, the early modern period, and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Landownership and the agrarian structure are also awarded but scant attention. But it is precisely in the fields of population and price trends, and landownership, that the most striking advances have been made since Ernle was last in print. Mr Fussell's treatment is typified by his allotment of as much space to seventeenth-century gardening as to the controversy over the "rise of the gentry." On techniques Mr Fussell comes into his own, and one can only wish that his interests were less narrow.

If Mr Fussell may be charged with a neglect of landownership, this complaint certainly cannot be raised against Mr McGregor. For him landownership is at the core of the problems of English farming in the hundred years after 1815. His heart lies with the land reform controversy of the later nineteenth century, and he provides a provocative and acute analysis of the questions of aristocratic monopoly of the land, smallholdings, leases, and tenants' compensation. Beginning with a brilliant and tantalizingly brief account of Ernle's career—no "devotional exercise" this—Mr McGregor proceeds with a highly interesting account of the political background to *English Farming* and the author's motives in writing it. The relevance of this to the present edition is much reduced, however, by the statement that Ernle's "political convictions did not seriously distort his vision of the period discussed in Mr Fussell's Introduction," and that "in the new edition of 1936, edited by Sir Daniel Hall and now here reprinted, very little of Lord Ernle's original text relating to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries remains."

Mr McGregor is concerned basically with the conflict between the two functions of land: the feeding of an expanding urban population, and the maintenance of the political power and social prestige of landowners. This conflict he sees as "a major determinant of change in the Victorian period, and its resolution helped to shape twentieth-century developments." In his view questions of "rotations, implements, sheds, and middens" are of very secondary importance in nineteenth-century agriculture, and detailed local studies of these things "must lead directly into sterile antiquarianism." In brief, Mr McGregor's argument is that the landlord-tenant system of the nineteenth century failed to achieve either social justice or economic efficiency. To preserve their political power, landlords refused their tenants the security of leases, while the pitiable condition of the agricultural labourers formed the blackest indictment of the landed interest.

But in advancing his case Mr McGregor plays down some highly relevant points. For instance, there is the heavy investment by landlords in the middle nineteenth century in such important aids to efficiency as drainage and new buildings, investment which in fact yielded only a very low return. No doubt some landowners (although not all) refused leases for political reasons, but there is plenty of evidence, as Mr McGregor himself indicates, that tenants of reputable proprietors felt perfectly secure on annual tenancies and indeed were rarely disturbed. Moreover, as Ernle pointed out, the uncertainties of agricultural markets in the nineteenth century following on the shock to confidence given by the post-1813 price fall—the first serious fall in prices that the existing generation of owners and farmers had known—created a lasting distrust of leases. Far from feeling the want of leases, many farmers would have nothing to do with them, and English farming made very considerable technical progress without their aid.

The plight of the labourers was at bottom the consequence of a combination of high fertility and low mobility. The Dorset labourer

quoted by Mr McGregor hit the nail on the head: "I tell you what it is, Sir; we are starving each other; we be too thick in our place; the best of us can't earn what will find us bread for our children and ourselves, let alone the clothing and the rent; when we be gone 'twill be better for they we leave." When at last they flocked from an over-full countryside their wages began to show improvement. In general, one feels that Mr McGregor's concern with the political and social aspects of land reform leads him to underestimate the economic factors at work and to ignore the real advantages of the English farming system. In 1870, after all, English farming still succeeded in feeding the majority of a population that had much more than doubled since the beginning of the century.

The very full and detailed bibliography (including important works on Scotland and Ireland) which Mr McGregor provides for the period from 1815 is excellent. It cannot be expected that everyone will agree with his assessments of individual sources, but he has provided a comprehensive guide to the printed materials which will prove indispensable to students of modern English farming. The only omissions of importance which I noticed were Dr F. M. L. Thompson's valuable account of great estates in the papers of the first International Conference of Economic History, the chapters in the recent *Wiltshire V.C.H.*, Mr R. J. Battersby's thesis on market gardening, and the Final Report of the Tribunal of Investigation (Cmd. 2145, 1924). Two small final points are that the remarkable growth in the number of owner-occupiers during the last forty years and the great breach of the 1930's in agricultural policy do not receive quite the attention which they merit.

On the general value of the new edition two questions must be asked: does the Fussell-McGregor introduction succeed in revivifying Lord Ernle's classic as a standard text, and in any case is this the best way of doing it? To both questions the answer is No. For all its usefulness, the introduction forms but an imperfect guide to recent advances in Eng-

lish agricultural history, and the relationship between introduction and text is so tenuous that it cannot be pretended we have here a satisfactory substitute for an up-to-date standard work. We must have a new one-volume history of English farming in which the text itself is built upon the new lines of thought; but whoever seeks to stand in Ernle's place will certainly have to begin with this edition of the old masterpiece.

G. E. MINGAY

WAYNE D. RASMUSSEN (ed.), *Readings in the History of American Agriculture*. University of Illinois Press, 1960. xii+340 pp. \$6.50. It is in some respects a conservative estimate to say that the colonization of Europe and its agricultural development occupied 3,500 years. Part of the continent of North America was occupied by a variety of Stone-Age peoples when the white man first began to settle there some three hundred and fifty years ago. Today it is exploited as well as, if not better than, most of western Europe. The time factor of change has been reduced to one-tenth of its length in the Old World.

The variety of conditions—soil, climate, and elevation—is greater in the New World. There are no great deserts in Europe, nor any extensive areas of arid, waterless soil, with the possible exception of some parts of Spain. The climate of the United States includes the tropical south and the continental climate of the great plains, as well as the famous weather of California. As to elevation, the mountain ranges of America are higher and more extensive than those of Europe.

On their way west the pioneers met with all these varied conditions and overcame them. The methods adopted were as complex as the environment demanded, and were changed as advantage seemed to offer. The history of American agriculture is therefore noteworthy for the demands it must make upon anyone who attempts to describe all the successive events that the advent of the white man brought about.

There are several plans on which the attempt to tell this highly involved tale can be

based. The obvious one is to make of it a coherent narrative, little coherence as there may be in the successive happenings; but the writers who have already done this, such as Bidwell and Falconer for the north, and Lewis C. Gray for the south, closed their studies at the year 1860. There are a great many works dealing with smaller areas, and with different aspects of farming, both technical and economic. The changes in the past century have been even more rapid and sizeable than those of the previous two hundred and fifty years. This later period is covered by Dr Rasmussen in his *Readings*.

The make-up of the book is the familiar one of collecting significant extracts from contemporary documents, books, and (for the later dates) periodicals and other printed matter, and of introducing each extract by a commentary. The text and commentary here printed form a conspectus, as was the intention, of farming history in the U.S.A. It is a series of illustrative, descriptive sketches of the innumerable factors, technical and scientific, that must be combined to make a successful agriculture in any country.

I suppose it could almost be taken for granted that the first European colonists to arrive in America carried with them the notions of farming accepted and customary in their native countries. They might not have survived if they had not learned some lessons from the far less advanced natives. An Indian crop and system of cultivation are still in some sense the base on which the great American maize crop is grown. The Europeans made their contribution with new cereal crops, and by introducing horned cattle and horses. But significant as those (comparatively) far distant days were, it is in the last hundred and fifty years that the most marvellous progress has been made, and the whole of the continent brought into human use.

Agricultural societies for mutual instruction and aiming at 'improved' farming were formed in the U.S.A. at about the same date as they were in Europe, with the exception of the very early Society of Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture. Abortive attempts

to introduce the Norfolk four-course rotation were made late in the eighteenth century, but it was not suited to the soil and climate of the Atlantic seaboard. Tobacco, cotton, and sugar made the prosperity of the south, and Ruffin, amongst others, tried to formulate methods of treatment of soils worn out by a one-crop economy. Invention seems to have been a national characteristic of the Americans, or perhaps it was forced upon them by their environment. New designs of ploughs, the cotton gin, the reaping machine were the precursors of the mechanization of agriculture in that country. Scientific plant and animal breeding, the study of chemistry as applied to agriculture, all played their part in speeding up the rate of progress. Extracts from contemporary sources dealing with all these subjects, with the distribution of the land, the provision of agricultural education, indeed of everything that makes up the foundation of modern American farming, seem to be included in this admirable collection. Synoptic as this system is bound to be, the broad outline of progress of farming in the U.S.A. is here set forth. Would it be too much to look forward to a full-scale study of the subject from Dr Rasmussen's pen at some future date? His present enterprise indicates his ample qualifications for such a work.

G. E. FUSSELL

L. S. PRESSNELL (ed.), *Studies in the Industrial Revolution: Essays presented to T. S. Ashton*. The Athlone Press, 1960. x+350 pp. 42s.

The title of this *Festschrift* epitomizes Professor Ashton's own writings more aptly than it describes the contents of the volume. But it should not escape the attention of agricultural historians. Among contributions on early canals, the Wiltshire cloth industry, the Swedish iron industry, London bankers, the rate of interest, and the return to the Gold Standard in 1925, is to be found an essay by Dr A. H. John on the course of agricultural change, 1660-1760, which is well worth their attention. Ownership, tenure, and enclosure in the period between the Restoration and the

accession of George III have often been discussed, but our knowledge of the economic rather than the institutional history of agriculture in this period, of markets, of changes in prices and rents, and of the adoption of new techniques, remains imperfect. And it is this darkness which it is Dr John's concern to lighten. For grain, until the development of the canals and turnpikes, there were a number of regional markets, whereas the prices of other agricultural products everywhere were closely tied to those obtaining in London. Rents and wage rates also showed regional variations, but the evidence is still too scanty for adequate generalizations. Nor is the course of the movement of agricultural prices over the century easy to plot, though here a graph might have clarified the discussion. Dr John goes on to suggest that the new techniques based on the use of clovers, artificial grasses, and roots were adopted earlier and more widely than the textbooks state. As a result there was a remarkable increase of agricultural output, which, particularly in southern England, was stimulated from the side of demand as well, by the growing overseas market for grain. Then, in the middle of the eighteenth century, there came a distinct change. The long decline in food prices ended in 1762. From that date, under the stimulus of accelerated population growth, an increasing industrialism, and an improving system of transport, the upward movement of prices got under way. But agriculture did not respond to the demands made upon it, and this by diverting resources to industrial and commercial purposes may well "have been a contributory factor in launching England upon an industrial revolution." In this essay and in his more recent article on 'Aspects of English Economic Growth in the first half of the Eighteenth Century' (*Economica*, May 1961), which may well be read in conjunction with it, Dr John has most stimulatingly reopened discussion of the course of agricultural change between 1660 and 1760.

A second contribution of agricultural interest is the article by Professor J. D. Chambers on population change in Nottingham,

1700-1800. This is a case-study of a town with a growing population which decided not to enclose the surrounding common fields, and so, in Professor Chambers's words, "condemned itself to a period of unparalleled overcrowding and squalor."

Altogether this volume is a worthy tribute to Professor Ashton, who as scholar has made a unique and memorable contribution to the study of economic history in our generation, and as friend and counsellor has won the affection of many of us.

W. E. MINCHINTON

A. H. SMITH, *The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire*. English Place-Name Society, Vols. xxx-xxxv, 1961. xii+346 pp.; xii+322 pp.; xiv+278 pp.; xii+262 pp.; xii+222 pp.; xii+274 pp. 35s. each vol.

These six volumes have been sent for review and issued to subscribers as two trios, separated by several months. In some ways it is like reviewing the *Venus de Milo*; one knows that there is more coming along later. These volumes, the Preface tells us, are to be followed by a seventh. Although the Preface and book jacket mention only seven volumes, it seems from the fly-leaf as if there may be a Part VIII, a volume which is all index. No complaint! for the indexes to the county volumes with their thousands of major and minor place-names are one of the great services which the Place-Name Society has rendered to students of subjects like agrarian and local history, such an index being often our only available pre-Ordnance Survey gazetteer, especially for minor or lost names. A temporary, tiny substitute of three or four columns of township names is provided at the end of each of these volumes, as well as the usual key-map to townships and wapentakes. There are no distribution maps so far.

The historical introduction, the linguistic survey, the road-names, the river-names, and the systematic analysis of the elements and personal names are also to wait for Part VII. There is no explanation of this decision to send the cart out without the horse, and with

modern publishing conditions and the financial situation of learned societies under creeping inflation it is understandable that no date for completion is suggested. One can understand that an editor might want to take advantage of delays in order to have his Introduction as up to date as possible, but the decision to postpone the list of abbreviations and sources until Part VII is indefensible. These data have always appeared at the beginning of each county's volumes, and are necessary for a reader to make sense even of page 1 of Volume I where references like *YI*, *YD*, *YCh*, meaningful to those who may have laboured locally, must mystify those south of the Trent and some perhaps to the west and north. There can be no wait-and-see reason for denying this aid to readers at this stage. One cannot, for example, say whether Ogilby's *Britannia* was ignored, for there is no list of sources. But certainly his 'Celbey', between Aughton and Whiston, long a local topographical crux, is not even mentioned here. Nor is the township of Aston cum Aughton, correctly styled at 1, p. 158, given its proper name in the key-map and index; and 'Aughton' does not appear in the index in any form.

A reviewer has therefore neither index nor introduction from which he can begin to pass on to his readers any broad view of the historical and agrarian contents. It would have been interesting, for example, in the light of Mr Radley's article in this REVIEW IX, pp. 89-92, to explore the West Riding occurrences of *hollins* and cognate words, but as one cannot yet find them in an index, one would need to look in 139 separate townships in Volume I alone.

From the blurb on the jacket we learn that "the settlement and exploitation of the natural resources of the West Riding, the clearing of woodland, the drainage of marshland, and the reclaiming of moorland waste can be followed in the place-names and field-names." I quote in full since readers whose libraries throw away book-jackets or fail to preserve them under cellophane will not read these words.

A sample of the entries shows that the blurb is no overstatement. The first volume is not two pages old before we are in the Moors—not the moors of Haworth and Ilkley, with wind, prehistory, and heather—but the marshy moorland of Hatfield Chase, a 'heath-field' indeed: the barrier which pushed all north-south traffic well to the west and sent the great north roads flying west of York instead of the crowflight (Bawtry-Doncaster-York) which the railway can now take. Each of the volumes also has parishes which stretch up on to the Pennine tops and march with Lancashire and Derbyshire: here we reach Haworth (no Brontës yet in the place-names, only in the tea-shop names), with its Crag Quarries, Clough Hole, and Joshua Intake (but no Wuthering Heights). And there were Hollings and Hollins here (III, p. 262).

In a number of townships there are many

minor names which are printed in capitals. The usual practice, not departed from, I think, in the recent Derbyshire volumes, had always been to give a date and a source for each name quoted, even if the only source is the O.S. sheet. I cannot see the point of printing stark successive entries like RUSHBED TOP, SAND DELF HILL, THE SLACK, SOUTHLANDS (although again the Introduction may one day explain).

These criticisms will not, and are not intended to, deter anyone from buying these volumes or recommending them to libraries. Those who work in Yorkshire agrarian history just cannot do without them, and those counties which still lack a volume will envy Yorkshire, with all its Ridings in print even if not introduced and indexed yet.

M. W. BERESFORD

Books Received

- SIGURD ERIXON, *Svenska Byar*. Utan Systematisk Reglering. Nordiska Museet, Stockholm, 1960. xviii+266 pp., illus., + 87 maps in a folder. Kr. 120.
- A. G. DAVIS, *The University College Farm in the Agriculture of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. An Inaugural Lecture*. Oxford University Press, 1960. 44 pp. 4s.
- WALTER FIREY, *Man, Mind, and Land*. The Free Press of Glencoe, Illinois, 1960. 256 pp. \$6.
- PHILLIP O. FOSS, *Politics and Grass: the Administration of Grazing on the Public Domain*. University of Washington Press, 1960. x+236 pp., illus. \$4.50.
- GWYDDOR GWLAD, CYLCHGRAWN AMAETHYDDOL CYMRAEG. Rhif 4: Ebrill, 1961.
- Caerdydd, Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1961. 62 pp. 2s. 6d.
- STAFFAN HÖGBERG, *Kungl. Patriotiska Sällskapets Historia*. P. A. Norstedt & Söners, Stockholm, 1961. 330 pp., illus. No price stated.
- JAMES C. MALIN, *The Grassland of North America: Prolegomena to its History*. 4th edn. James C. Malin, Lawrence, Kansas, 1961. viii+486 pp. \$4.
- MORTON PAGLIN, *Malthus and Lauderdale: the Anti-Ricardian Tradition*. Augustus M. Kelley, New York, 1961. 184 pp. \$4.75.
- FRIEDA WUNDERLICH, *Farm Labor in Germany, 1810-1945*. Princeton University Press, 1961. xvi+390 pp. 68s.

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by DAVID M. WILSON

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The Field Systems of Breckland
by M. R. POSTGATE

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The Changing Basis of English Agricultural Prosperity,
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SCOTTISH FARMING

Past and Present

by

J. A. SYMON

IN *Scottish Farming* J. A. Symon, former Chief Inspector in the Department of Agriculture for Scotland, has provided the most complete account of this subject yet to appear. The extensive references cited in the text and the long chronological list of books relating to Scottish agriculture published down to 1850, given in an appendix, bear witness to the thoroughness of the author's research and add greatly to the value of the work as a source of information for students of history as well as of agriculture. However, the style of writing and the author's practical approach to the subject make the book of much more than scholarly interest.

After tracing the changes in agricultural practice from the earliest times, as shown in the progress from nomadic to settled pastoral and arable farming and then from mere subsistence farming to farming for profit, Colonel Symon deals in detail with such topics as land settlement, livestock, poultry and bees, the potato, farm implements, horticulture, and the co-operative movement. Throughout the work he places emphasis upon the social repercussions of changing agricultural methods and thus gives a fascinating picture

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Anglo-Saxon Rural Economy

A SURVEY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE AND A SUGGESTION

By DAVID M. WILSON

THIS paper is intended, first, to present a picture of Anglo-Saxon rural economy as it is at present revealed in the archaeological evidence. In the second place it suggests a research programme which might substantially further the archaeological study of the subject.

Archaeologically our knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon period depends largely on the material from thousands of graves excavated over the last two hundred years. These objects are a typologist's dream; with their Continental counterparts, they provided the basis for one of the most important archaeological books of this century, Bernhard Salin's *Die altgermanische Thierornamentik*.¹ By means of a minute typological study of the brooches and other objects from graves of the migration period, Salin was able to erect a chronology for European archaeology from the fourth to the ninth century. Salin's chronological system remains to this day the basis of migration period studies, and most major archaeological contributions to the understanding of this period have been on a typological base. Grave goods—swords, spear-heads, and brooches—to a large extent dominate research in this field today. For this reason one might almost say that any illumination archaeological material throws on Anglo-Saxon agricultural practice occurs in spite of the archaeologist, rather than because of his work, for ploughs and hoes are not found in graves and the excavation of settlement sites has, until recently, been much neglected. Most of the evidence quoted here has been found accidentally.

I shall divide my data into two groups: material and monuments. Under the first heading I shall examine the tools, etc., found in museums and collections; under the second I shall include all the physical remains of human activity revealed either by field survey or excavation.

MATERIAL

Of the primary tool of the farmer, the plough, remains are so scanty as to

¹ *Die altgermanische Thierornamentik. Typologische Studie über germanische Metallgegenstände aus dem IV bis IX Jahrhundert*, Stockholm, 1904.

be almost non-existent. From Thetford¹ and St Neots² come shares, and from Westley Waterless a share and what is possibly a coulter.³ All were found in middle or late Saxon contexts. Much has been made in the past of the introduction by the Anglo-Saxons of the heavy plough into England, but, as Payne has said, "Evidence for the development of British ploughs during the Dark Ages and the Middle Ages is scanty. This is less serious, however, now that we have the testimony of the early asymmetrical shares to confirm the evidence for the use of the fixed mould-board during the Romano-British period."⁴ The Thetford and Westley Waterless shares are probably the precursors of the Wingless 'pike' share used on the normal mould-board plough down to the early nineteenth century. I have little doubt that the mould-board plough was in use in Anglo-Saxon England, but this is practically impossible to prove. One or two indications are present, however.—

(i) At Jarlshof, Shetland, in a ninth-century Viking level, was found a worn pebble⁵ very much like those inlaid on the land side of the Tømmerby plough (a Danish mould-board plough, tentatively dated to the pre-Roman Iron Age).⁶

(ii) Asymmetrical ploughs are attested in Viking contexts in Norway⁷ and there seems no reason to doubt that the Vikings would have used them when they came to England.

Archaeologically, however, it is impossible to say whether the asymmetrical plough had a continuous history from the Romano-British to the Anglo-Saxon period, or whether it was reintroduced by the Viking invaders.

Other agricultural implements which survive in Anglo-Saxon contexts are mainly minor tools.

Scythe blades were found at Hurbuck, near Lanchester, Durham, in a

¹ *4000 Years of Norfolk Farming, An Exhibition at the Castle Museum, Norwich, Norwich, 1960*, pl. II.

² T. C. Lethbridge and C. F. Tebbutt, 'Huts of the Anglo-Saxon Period', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, xxxiii, 1933, pp. 145-6.

³ C. Fox, *The Archaeology of the Cambridge Region*, Cambridge, 1923, p. 300; Cambridge: Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.

⁴ 'The British Plough: Some stages in its development', *The Agricultural History Review*, v, 1957, p. 79.

⁵ J. R. C. Hamilton, *Excavations at Jarlshof, Shetland*, Edinburgh, 1956, p. 173.

⁶ P. V. Glob, *Ard og Plov*, Aarhus, 1951, fig. 89. Steensberg ('North West European plough-types of prehistoric times and the Middle Ages', *Acta Archaeologica*, vii, 1936, p. 254), who first drew attention to this plough, and most of those who follow him, have been extremely cautious in their dating of this plough (cf., for example, J. G. D. Clark, *Prehistoric Europe*, London, 1952, pp. 105 f.).

⁷ J. Petersen, *Vikingetidens Redskaper*, Oslo, 1951, pp. 175-80.

tenth-century hoard of weapons and tools.¹ The blades are straight and up to two feet long. The tang is in the same plane as the blade, but at right angles to it, protruding on the cutting side. On one of them the tip of the tang survives; it is upturned and was probably hammered into the handle to give greater security. The scythes were presumably of the long-handled type and were sharpened with whetstones, some quite large examples of which have been recorded.

In the Hurbuck hoard are a couple of picks, one double-ended and one single-ended, which may have had some agricultural application.

The shoe of a spade was found at Sandtun, Kent.² It is of square form and indicates that the blade of the spade was of wood. Manuscripts indicate shoes on both double and single-sided spades,³ and there seems no reason why the two types of spade should not have been used alongside each other in a manner that is documented in northern peasant communities in Europe in modern times.

A bill was found in the Westley Waterless hoard,⁴ and what is surely a pruning-knife at St Neots.⁵ It is perhaps interesting to note that sickles have not been found in Anglo-Saxon contexts.

A certain amount of consideration has been given to the crops produced by the farmers. But the investigation has been very localized and the results are barely of statistical value. Jessen and Helbaek's work, *Cereals in Britain* (Copenhagen, 1944) included some evidence from the Anglo-Saxon period. By taking impressions of grain left during manufacture on hand-made pots of all periods, Jessen and Helbaek produced the following results.—

On thirty-seven pots yielding results were found impressions of naked barley, hulled barley, oat, flax, and woad in the following proportions:

- 3 impressions of naked barley;
- 80 impressions of hulled barley;
- 14 impressions of oat (*avena sativa*);
- 1 impression of wild oat (*avena fatua*);
- 2 impressions of flax;
- 1 impression of woad.

Most of the examples came from pots found in Anglo-Saxon cemeteries in the Oxford and Cambridge regions. In fact only one pot was examined outside this region (it was found in Yorkshire) and this was one of the three

¹ D. M. Wilson, *The Anglo-Saxons*, London, 1960, fig. 11.

² *ibid.*, fig. 14.

³ E. M. Jope, 'Agricultural Implements', *A History of Technology*, II (ed. C. Singer, E. J. Holmyard, A. R. Hall, and T. I. Williams), Oxford, 1956, fig. 66.

⁴ Fox, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

⁵ Lethbridge and Tebbutt, *op. cit.*, p. 139 and fig. 3.

examples yielding naked barley. These results, therefore, may be true of only a small part of England. But in a general manner the results reflect quite closely the proportions found in prehistoric England.¹ This is a field that could be more thoroughly investigated and which might produce real results susceptible of statistical analysis. One negative result is of interest. No trace of wheat of any sort was found, although it was known at an earlier period (it was, for example, the most important grain in the Neolithic period), but this may be an accidental result.

So far all our knowledge of grain in Anglo-Saxon England depends on the analysis of grain-impressions on pots. The palaeobotanists have not yet turned their attention to the Anglo-Saxon period, largely, I am afraid, because the archaeologists have not yet provided them with the material.

Little is known from archaeological sources about the treatment of grain after harvesting. Granaries of some sort obviously existed, and Winkelmann has suggested that certain buildings at Warendorf served in such a capacity.² Neither threshing nor grain-drying has left any trace in the archaeological evidence. Querns have rarely been found—or rarely noted—in Anglo-Saxon contexts. However, quern fragments of basaltic lava have been recorded at Anglo-Saxon sites at St Neots, Huntingdonshire, at Thetford, and in Anglo-Saxon contexts at Canterbury, Crossgates, and Southampton. The lava was probably imported from Mayen in the Eifel;³ at the same time English stone must have been used in great quantity for this purpose.

The only known Anglo-Saxon mill was recently excavated at Old Windsor.⁴ It was a large, sophisticated water-mill with three wheels working in parallel in a leat cut across a loop in the Thames. The leat was three-quarters of a mile long, twenty feet wide, and had a maximum depth of twelve feet. The mill building itself was a substantial timber-framed structure and dated from the end of the Anglo-Saxon period. Little can be said concerning the typicality or otherwise of this mill: judging from the hundreds of examples recorded in Domesday—sometimes two or more in a parish—it must be presumed that it was exceptionally elaborate.

¹ It should be emphasized that these results apply only to the pagan Anglo-Saxon period, when there is an abundance of hand-made pottery. They must not be taken to apply to the whole period.

² W. Winkelmann, 'Eine westfälische Siedlung des 8 Jahrhunderts bei Warendorf, Kr. Warendorf', *Germania*, xxxii, 1954, fig. 13, 3-4.

³ G. C. Dunning, 'Trade relations between England and the Continent in the Late Anglo-Saxon Period', *Dark Age Britain*, ed. D. B. Harden, London, 1956, p. 232. Also found at Maxey, Northants, *Archaeological News Letter*, vii, p. 22.

⁴ Only published in note form in D. M. Wilson and J. G. Hurst, 'Medieval Britain in 1957', *Medieval Archaeology*, ii, 1958, p. 184.

There is no archaeological evidence of the fruits used or cultivated by the Anglo-Saxons, but it may be assumed that those present in Roman-Britain were still harvested in the post-Roman period. Applebaum records the following fruits in Romano-British contexts: cherry, plum, damson, bullace, apple, and mulberry.¹

Excavation has as yet yielded little information concerning animal husbandry in the Anglo-Saxon period. The only site in the south of England at which it has been possible to analyse the domestic animal bones, in a statistically acceptable form, is Cassington, a pagan Anglo-Saxon village near Oxford.² The results can be tabulated thus:

Ox	43 per cent
Sheep	12 „ „
Pig	29 „ „
Horse	8 „ „
Dog	8 „ „

In the north of England, the pagan Anglian settlement of Crossgates, near Scarborough, produced the following results:³

Ox	60 per cent
Horse	30 „ „
Pig	10 „ „
Sheep	a few.

The few animal bones from the Wykeham, Yorkshire, settlement site have been analysed, but are not yet published. Yeavinger, Northumberland, produced a majority of sheep/goat, but the analysis is not yet complete.⁴ The Old Windsor, Berkshire, site has produced a vast quantity of animal bones, but here again no analysis has yet been made. This evidence then is of little use. Until many more sites, concentrated in small regions, have been investigated, little purpose can be served by attempting to analyse these results. A few qualitative conclusions can be drawn. For instance, both at Sedgeford in Norfolk⁵ and at Crossgates in Yorkshire there is evidence that the size of cattle was well up to that of the Romano-British cattle. Results based on such a miserable statistical basis are not conclusive, but may indicate the

¹ S. Applebaum, 'Agriculture in Roman Britain', *Agricultural History Review*, II, 1954, p. 71.

² I am grateful to Mr E. M. Joep, one of the excavators of the site, for providing me with the results of his wife's work on these remains.

³ J. G. Rutter and G. Duke, *Excavations at Crossgates, Scarborough*, 1947-56, Scarborough, 1958, pp. 60-1.

⁴ Information from Mr Brian Hope-Taylor.

⁵ Information from Dr Peter Jewell.

retention of a high standard of animal husbandry in the post-Roman period. Horses all seem to be of a standard New Forest or Mountain pony size.

Comparison with continental animal analysis is extremely difficult. The Cassington results agree approximately with those from the Viking age town of Haithabu in North Germany,¹ but there is no real worth in such a comparison owing to the differing ecology of the two areas and the different character of the two sites. Ultimately continental animal analyses must be compared with results from similar areas and sites in Great Britain, but for the moment such comparisons are of coincidental value only, for they are not statistically acceptable.

REMAINS IN THE FIELD

An examination of the field monuments presents the agricultural historian with problems that are almost insoluble. Compared with the prehistoric and Romano-British periods, the Anglo-Saxon material is extremely sparse.

The most recent study of ancient fields, that of Colin Bowen,² is critical of much of the work of the last twenty or thirty years, and offers more suggestions for future work than concrete information on the form of fields in different periods. Bowen suggests that strip-lynchets are of Anglo-Saxon origin. A strip-lynchet is "a long, narrow, often prominent terrace. By definition they are always found on slopes but many were originally surrounded by other strip fields, either flat or ridged belonging to the same system. . . They differ from the Celtic fields by their attenuated proportions." A proportion of 1:50 in fields only three or four yards wide is not uncommon; although there are many exceptions of different form, strip fields are often open-ended. They tend to lie close to nucleated settlements, and where archaeological evidence is available, they appear to belong to the post-Roman period. In north Wiltshire, for example, strip-lynchets have been found overlying a filled-in Romano-British ditch, while at Blewburton, Berkshire, they lie over parts of an earlier hill-fort. In all known instances of contact with 'Celtic' fields the strip-lynchets are later.³

Estate, enclosure, and tithe maps give innumerable instances of strip-lynchets cultivated as strip fields as late as the nineteenth century. Other documentary evidence is sparse, and even the well-known and often repeated suggestion that strip-lynchets are mentioned in the laws of Ine appears to be false.⁴ Nevertheless there seems to be a strong likelihood

¹ W. Herre, *Die Haustiere von Haithabu*, Neumünster, 1960.

² *Ancient Fields*, London, 1961.

³ Most of this evidence is derived from Bowen, *op. cit.*

⁴ This hare was started by F. Seebohm, *The English Village Community*, London, 1883, and

that strip-lynchets were already being formed in the Anglo-Saxon period.

The only fields so far traced by excavation and proved by their associated finds to be of Anglo-Saxon date are certain drove-ways and pasture land excavated by Mr Addyman in January 1962 at Little Paxton, Huntingdonshire.¹ No traces of Anglo-Saxon plough marks, similar to those found on the Continent in contemporary contexts,² have yet been found in this country. Apart from the examples quoted here, there is no evidence of Anglo-Saxon field shapes in the archaeological material. The work of the committee of the British Association on ancient fields has given us a considerable amount of information about the physical appearances of fields; but, despite the large number of available archaeological surveys, few historians or archaeologists have tried to correlate the documents with the surviving physical features. There should be more attempts, for example, to follow up incidental material available in charters. Dr Finberg has given an example of the value of such work in his recent discussion of the Hallow-Hawling charter, in which he has been able to recognize traces of ancient pasture, and hints of other field boundaries.³ Such work is of necessity long-drawn-out, but in some cases may be well worth while to the agricultural historian. In the Highland Zone—and perhaps elsewhere—Anglo-Saxon shieling sites must be investigated. Mr Gelling's work on such sites in the Isle of Man may, when published, encourage similar work in Anglo-Saxon contexts.

The study of the actual agricultural settlements of the Anglo-Saxons also bristles with problems. A large number of small Anglo-Saxon domestic sites have been investigated in England, but few of them have been subjected to thoroughly scientific archaeological treatment. Since the war a handful of settlement sites have been investigated, but, with one or two minor exceptions, particularly the Crossgates, Scarborough, site,⁴ they have not yet been published in more than summary form. The key-site for a long time has been the village of Sutton Courtenay, which was excavated by E. T. Leeds between 1921 and 1937.⁵ Leeds was working under the most difficult conditions has been repeated ever since, up to Bowen, *op. cit.* Professor Whitelock's translation (*English Historical Documents*, I, London, 1955, p. 368) of the critical clause in the laws of Ine uses the word 'shares' instead of 'strips'. Miss Whitelock has kindly confirmed to me that Seebohm's translation 'strips' can no longer be accepted.

¹ Traces of Late Saxon ditches close to Little Paxton were recorded by T. C. Lethbridge and C. F. Tebbutt, 'Ancient Lime-kilns at Great Paxton, Hunts.', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, xxxv, 1935, pp. 97-105. This site is obviously worth re-investigating.

² e.g. T. Ramskou, *Lindholm Høje*, København, 1960, pp. 37-8.

³ H. P. R. Finberg, *The Early Charters of the West Midlands*, Leicester, 1961, pp. 184-96.

⁴ Rutter, *op. cit.*

⁵ Three reports of his excavations were published: *Archaeologia*, LXXIII, pp. 147-92; LXXVI, pp. 59-79; XCII, pp. 79-93.

tions; the site was being developed commercially and he was only able to investigate a single house at a time, after it had been uncovered by gravel-diggers. He was hampered by lack of money and time, and no criticism of his work should be read into any statement made here concerning the excavations. Leeds managed to examine thirty-three buildings, all presumably dating from the pagan Anglo-Saxon period. Small finds consisted largely of pottery, but an equal-armed brooch of silver was found in one hut, indicating that poverty in the village was not absolute. The buildings apparently fulfilled a variety of functions, weaving sheds, pottery workshops, etc. Ten or twelve houses were so badly damaged that no proper plan could be recovered. The typical building, to use Leeds's own words, was constructed in the following manner: "An excavation of varying size was made into the ground to an average depth of $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 feet, with a preference for a gravel floor where this was procurable. . . Above this was erected a gabled superstructure supported either by slanting poles secured to a ridge pole, as at Bourton-on-the-Water, or by a ridge-tree proper borne on a pole inserted some 2 feet into the gravel at either end of the excavation, either in the floor itself or in a recess cut into the bank, as was frequently the case at Sutton Courtenay. . . From the position of the holes intended to receive the lower ends of the rafters, the roof must have come down to the edge of the excavation, leaving no head-room against the sides of a mere tent-like structure."¹ The size of the Sutton Courtenay huts varied between ten feet and twenty-one feet in length.

Buildings of similar form occur at various sites in this country: Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire; West Stow, Suffolk; Witton, Norfolk; Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire, and West Row, Suffolk; Buckden and Orton, Huntingdonshire; Dunstable, Bedfordshire; Radley, Berkshire, and, possibly, Harston, Leicestershire, and Salmonby, Lincolnshire.²

¹ E. T. Leeds, *Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology*, Oxford, 1936, pp. 21-4.

² This list does not pretend to be complete. G. C. Dunning, 'Bronze Age Settlement and a Saxon Hut near Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire', *Antiquaries Journal*, xii, 1932, pp. 284-7; (W. Stow) Wilson and Hurst, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-90; (Witton) 'Medieval Britain in 1961', *Medieval Archaeology*, vi, 1962 (*forthcoming*); T. C. Lethbridge and C. F. Tebbutt, 'Huts of the Pagan Saxon Period at Waterbeach and West Row', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, xxxiii, 1933, pp. 133-7, and T. C. Lethbridge, 'An Anglo-Saxon Hut on the Car Dyke at Waterbeach', *Antiquaries Journal*, vii, 1927, pp. 141-6; (Buckden) Information from Mr P. Addyman; (Orton) T. D. Kendrick and C. F. C. Hawkes, *Archaeology in England and Wales*, 1914-31, London, 1932, p. 323; (Dunstable) Information from Dr John Morris; (Radley) Leeds, *op. cit.*, p. 21; G. C. Dunning, 'Anglo-Saxon Discoveries at Harston', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological Society*, xxviii, 1952, pp. 48-54; (Salmonby) Information from Mr G. Taylor, *per* Mr D. F. Petch, *cf.* D. F. Petch, 'Archaeological Notes for 1958', *Lincolnshire Architectural and Archaeological Society, Reports and Papers*, n.s., viii, 1959-60, pp. 19-22.

Two sites have produced agglomerations of such buildings: St Neots, Hunts., which produced eight houses of similar form and of ninth- or tenth-century date,¹ and Cassington, Oxfordshire. At Cassington (a hitherto unpublished site) a large number of houses of the same type as those found at Sutton Courtenay were excavated and no other form of house was found.² Houses of this form are well known on the Continent, where they are known as *Grübenhäuser* or *Grübenhütten*. They are known at various dates from the Iron Age to the Carolingian period in an area which stretches from Basel to the North Sea.³ Of these houses Tischler has said "their function as weaving huts, kitchens, store-houses, workshops, eating-places, and dormitories is well-known."⁴ As in England (at London and Canterbury) such huts are also known in continental towns (some have recently been excavated by Dr Winkelmann in the *Domplan* at Münster). They seem to have been a general utility type of house and are usually found, in their continental contexts, in association with other forms of building. The type site may be taken as Warendorf, near Münster in Westphalia, which was occupied during the late seventh and early eighth century.⁵ Seventy-five buildings were completely, and eight partially, excavated here, in an area of some ten thousand square metres. Nine types of building were recognized by the excavator. As well as the *Grübenhäuser*, there were also large rectangular buildings, ranging in size from 14 to 29 metres in length by 4·5 to 7 metres in breadth. All had side-entrances; some had a porch. Some houses had hearths and must have been dwelling-houses, but others were undoubtedly agricultural buildings, barns, byres, etc. Other buildings included barns, cow-houses, and covered stacks for fodder or grain. It has been presumed that the large dwelling-houses must have belonged to freemen and the smaller ones to serfs, an economic pattern which is paralleled elsewhere on German and Dutch sites. The long-houses have a long ancestry in western Europe and have continued in use until the present day in one form or another.

On the basis of the continental sites Raleigh Radford has suggested that

¹ Lethbridge and Tebbutt, *op. cit.* More houses have since been discovered here.

² Information from Mr E. M. Jope.

³ W. U. Gyan, 'Einige Karten zur Verbreitung des Grübenhäuser in Mitteleuropa im ersten nachchristlichen Jahrtausend', *Jahrbuch der schweizerische Gesellschaft für Urgeschichte*, 1952, pp. 174-97, and F. Tischler, 'Der stand der Sachsenforschung archäologisch gesehen', *Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission*, xxxv, 1954, p. 137, are the best sources for this material on the Continent. Most of the continental sites are listed or referred to here. The geographical extent of these huts has since been widened to include north Jutland, where an example was found at Lindholm Høje, cf. T. Ramskou, *Lindholm Høje*, Nationalmuseet, København, pp. 29 and 36.

⁴ Tischler, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

⁵ Winkelmann, *op. cit.*

Anglo-Saxon villages may have been of similar form. He suggests that the *Grübenhäuser* were used as utility sheds, but while he does not deny that they were also used for dwelling purposes, he is rather sceptical in his acceptance of such a function for them.¹

Evidence of larger houses in Anglo-Saxon England exists. All the sites are unpublished, but their details are fairly familiar to specialists. Two are royal sites: Cheddar and Yeavinger. The site at Cheddar, which is at present (April 1962) being excavated by Mr Rahtz, has so far produced two pre-Conquest buildings, one apparently of tenth- and one of eleventh-century date. Both are rectangular and are of considerable size. The eleventh-century building, however, is, at the time of writing, only partially excavated, but the earlier one appears to have been some eighty feet long. It is delimited by a sleeper beam trench, within which are post-holes set at an angle; the post-holes may indicate a first-floor hall, or a barn with a raised floor. The site was apparently the home of a religious community, or perhaps a royal manor, and is really atypical, as is the extraordinary royal residence at Yeavinger, excavated by Mr Hope-Taylor, with its massive timber hall and the lesser structures which surround it.² Rectangular long-houses were found at Thetford and portions of similar buildings have recently been excavated at Maxey, Northants., by Mr Addyman and at Sedgeford, Norfolk, by Dr Peter Jewell.³ The large rectangular house of the type found at Warendorf is thus shown to exist in England, but it is not clear whether such houses existed in all the humbler villages. At Cassington, for instance, Mr Jope has told me in conversation that he considers it improbable that there were any large long-houses; so many houses have been excavated, and such a large area has been investigated, that he thinks it unlikely that traces of long-houses would have been missed. There is really no reason why Anglo-Saxon villages should follow exactly the continental pattern: there seems to be no getting away from the fact that many Anglo-Saxons did live in rather miserable houses of the *Grübenhäuser* type, and I would suggest two alternatives: (a) that the 'manor house', or the larger houses, may have been placed at some distance from the main village, which consisted of *Grübenhäuser*; or (b) that many Anglo-Saxon villages really did consist entirely of poor peasants' houses and that there was never a richer house in them.

Certain loose ends remain, even in so scanty a material. A number of

¹ C. A. R. Radford, 'The Saxon Home. A Review and some Parallels', *Medieval Archaeology*, I, 1957, pp. 37-8.

² Summary report, D. M. Wilson and J. G. Hurst, 'Medieval Britain in 1956', *Medieval Archaeology*, I, 1957, pp. 148-9.

³ *Medieval Archaeology*, v, 1961 (*forthcoming*), and *Archaeological News Letter*, VII, p. 22; *Medieval Archaeology*, III, 1959, p. 298.

houses fall into neither of the two main categories. The 1961 excavation at St Neots, Hunts., produced various substantial, rectangular, timber-framed buildings, one possibly with a floor raised on joists; while at Buckden, Hunts.,¹ Mr C. F. Tebbutt has recently found a timber-framed house of boat-shaped plan (forty-six feet long, fifteen feet wide at the ends, and seventeen feet wide at the centre), which is described as "probably of Anglo-Saxon date." This latter type of house was also recorded at Thetford, and among its many obvious parallels are the Danish Viking houses of the Trelleborg type.² Whether these houses are of an agricultural character is at present not clear: those at Thetford were almost certainly town houses. They represent a greater capital investment than the *Grübenhäuser* and are obviously closely related to the more substantial rectangular long-houses. It is interesting that at Thetford,³ St Neots, and Buckden, *Grübenhäuser* were also found. There are a number of indications that *Grübenhäuser* were not universal. The pagan Anglo-Saxon huts at Crossgates, for example, can hardly, according to the published section of hut 55,⁴ be catalogued under this heading. But information concerning this and other similar sites is vague.

It should be emphasized that more and more attention is being turned to the problem of Anglo-Saxon houses at the moment, and the next few years should produce a considerable body of evidence. When more material has been published it should be possible to compare these houses in detail with their continental counterparts, particularly with regard to the ecology of the areas compared and to the comparative chronology of the various sites. I sometimes wonder whether it is possible to compare Sutton Courtenay with Warendorf, when one has a central date in the late fifth century and the other in the late eighth century, and when one is on sand and the other on gravel!

THE USE OF MANUSCRIPT ILLUMINATION

An extension of the archaeological method is to use manuscript illustration as a source for agricultural practices and implements in the Anglo-Saxon period. It is a source which has often been used uncritically by both archaeologists and historians. One of the illuminations most frequently used by agricultural historians is the wheel-ard in the *Aratea*, British Museum manuscript Cotton Tiberius B. v.⁵ Kendrick, in his art-historical discussion of

¹ Information on both sites from Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments, the Ministry of Works, and Mr P. Addyman.

² P. Nørlund, *Trelleborg*, København, 1948, pp. 69-104.

³ *Archaeological News Letter*, II, 1949-50, p. 119.

⁴ Rutter and Duke, *op. cit.*, fig. 9.

⁵ F. G. Payne, 'The Plough in Ancient Britain', *Archaeological Journal*, CIV, 1947, pl. ix.

this manuscript,¹ has said: "The English book (i.e. Tiberius B. v) is not taken directly from the antique, but was copied by the Saxon artist from a Carolingian manuscript of the late ninth century that is known to have been at Canterbury in the late tenth century and still survives (British Museum, Harley 647)." As an example of the artist's sources Kendrick discusses the Aquarius figure in this manuscript. "It is," he says, "a classical figure with garments in the antique fashion; and, though the dress is in fact inaccurate and drawn with a certain Winchester licence, it is clear that the Saxon artist was nevertheless reproducing with reasonable faithfulness the French model before him." Might not the same apply to the plough illustrated in the same manuscript? Although it was painted by an Anglo-Saxon artist it is unlikely that he had a plough in front of him when he painted the picture; he most probably used as a model a plough from a book available in his scriptorium. The plough has no mould-board, and instead of saying that it provides evidence for the use of the wheel-ard in tenth-century England, it might be fairer to say that such a plough would be most suitable for the lighter soils of the Mediterranean world (whence its model may have come) than for the heavier soils of north-western Europe. It is possible that the plough is indeed English, but such sources must be used with great caution. These dangers have already been pointed out by Payne, following Miller,² but they cannot be too strongly emphasized, for manuscript sources such as this are still used for this purpose. Further, it is dangerous to rely on the detail in such illustrations. Even Payne has fallen into this trap;³ he criticizes Steensberg's interpretation of the draught animal depicted with the plough in the Caedmon manuscript as a "pair of pigs," but he himself says that no yokes are shown in this manuscript. He complains also about the position of the driver in another manuscript and has failed to comprehend the general compositional problems of the artist. Economic historians often fail to take into account artistic licence in their discussion of manuscript illuminations. Much ink has been spilt in discussing the absence of a mould-board from Anglo-Saxon drawings of the plough, but, with the exception of that depicted in British Museum manuscript Cotton Tiberius B.v, no plough has been drawn in sufficient detail in an Anglo-Saxon manuscript to emphasize this feature. After all, a mould-board is a difficult object to depict in a formal linear drawing.

How far is it possible to use manuscript evidence in this way? It seems probable that simple tools (spades, scythes, hoes, etc., even the harrow in the Bayeux tapestry⁴), which appear in these sources may be used to indicate, in

¹ T. D. Kendrick, *Late Saxon and Viking Art*, London, 1949, p. 23.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 103.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁴ F. M. Stenton (ed.), *The Bayeux Tapestry*, London, 1957, pl. 12.

a cautious fashion, the type of tools used in Anglo-Saxon England, for such objects can be drawn from memory. A complicated machine like a plough, however, is not easy to draw from memory. Such objects should therefore be treated with caution when they appear in manuscripts. But even with simple tools we must be careful; is it possible, for example, to trust the pruning-hooks portrayed in Bodleian manuscript Junius A. vi, when it is realized that the labourers seem to be pruning vines in a period when English vineyards were apparently rather rare?¹

An example of a possibly genuine picture of an Anglo-Saxon agricultural implement occurs in the British Museum MS. Harley 603. This manuscript is a copy of the famous ninth-century Utrecht Psalter, which was written on the Continent and based on an eastern Mediterranean prototype. Mr Jope has pointed out that the short-handled scythes in the Utrecht Psalter were replaced in the eleventh-century manuscript by long-handled scythes. He suggests that this is an indication of the change-over from one type of scythe to the other between the ninth and eleventh centuries in Western Europe.² All that can be said, however, is that there is a likelihood that the Anglo-Saxon copyist of the eleventh century was accurately depicting the type of scythe in use in England at that period. The scythe which appears in the Utrecht Psalter may be no more than the type of scythe used in eastern Europe and copied faithfully by the scribe.

A SUGGESTION

Lastly we must consider the investigation on a small regional basis of areas of settlement. No thorough archaeological investigation of the area surrounding the houses in an English village has yet been undertaken. The nearest approach to such an investigation was Dr Finberg's study of Withington,³ a valuable exercise, which went about as far as it could go without the use of excavation and other similar methods. It should be possible to follow up this type of work, in specific cases, by archaeological means, which would entail the adaptation of methods at present being used in Scandinavia.

The concept of 'total archaeology' has not been adequately canvassed in this country. By 'total archaeology' is meant the thorough and complete examination of a unified area, a parish for example, by excavation. Such an examination investigates not only the obvious individual features, but examines them in relationship to each other. Methods such as these are being

¹ According to Roach Smith, only thirty-eight vineyards are recorded in Domesday.—C. R. Smith, 'The archaeology of horticulture', *Collectanea Antiqua*, vi, 1868, p. 93.

² Jope, *op. cit.*, p. 96 and figs. 61 and 62.

³ H. P. R. Finberg, *Roman and Saxon Withington*, Leicester, 1955.

used in Sweden by Dr Märta Strömberg, and to a more limited extent in Denmark by Mr Viggo Nielsen. Dr Strömberg has started to examine and excavate completely the parish of Hagestad in Skåne. Working with geographers, geologists, historians, and other scientists, on a site which is archaeologically well documented, her aim is, if I may freely translate, "to recover the settlement history of Hagestad from the Old Stone Age to the Middle Ages."¹ It is obvious that such a method, if used in England, would only in very rare cases reveal a specific historical phase in an area, as most sites are palimpsests of different agricultural systems. But if the right site were selected such an investigation could be of especial value in the Anglo-Saxon period where documents can help us.

If an Anglo-Saxon or medieval investigation is to be undertaken, the historian and archaeologist must first agree on a promising site. Before a spade is put in the ground the area should be subjected to a thorough archaeological and historical examination. First, the historian should thoroughly analyse the relevant documents. This analysis should be on the lines of Dr Finberg's survey of Hallow-Hawling, and should take into account *all* documents, including tithe and enclosure maps and the existing deeds. After this survey has been completed, the archaeologist should carry out an intensive field survey of the site so that as many as possible of the places mentioned in the documents—field boundaries, quarries, ponds, cottages, woods, etc.—may be traced. If the historian and the archaeologist (together, preferably, with some uncommitted outsiders) can agree that enough evidence has been produced to justify further investigation, then the money must be raised to explore the site thoroughly. After the area has been mapped, every physical feature should be examined, starting with those mentioned in the documents, by archaeological methods. The archaeologist should work with a geologist and use all possible modern scientific aids to excavation, such as pollen-analysis, dendrochronology, and resistivity surveys. When every field boundary and bump in the ground has been investigated in relationship to its neighbours, when any settlements, cemeteries, barrows, and the like, have been completely excavated, the topsoil should be removed by bulldozer to find ancient features which have been levelled. Much will obviously be found from many periods, but if the initial work has been good enough it should be possible to produce for analysis, say, an excavated Anglo-Saxon village and its field-system.

¹ M. Strömberg, 'Österlensk fornbygd', *ALE, Historisk tidskrift för Skåneland*, 1, 1961, p. 21. This is a semi-popular article; the first of a series of scientific progress reports on this work will be published in the forthcoming issue of *Meddelanden från Lunds Universitets Historiska Museum*.

This sounds like an ideal programme, but if sufficient imagination is displayed by those in authority, it should not be difficult to realize. Mr Nielsen has investigated prehistoric field systems in Denmark with very little money and time at his disposal. But his investigations have tackled limited problems and a programme more like that of Dr Strömberg should be initiated—financed perhaps by a foundation or by a firm or corporation developing land. Dr Strömberg reckons that it will take her about five years, excavating nine months of the year, to complete her programme. Besides her own services and those of various academic assistants, which are given free by the University of Lund, she has to employ a certain amount of full-time labour. Cannot we finance a similar scheme from a University in this country, breaking away from the idea that excavation is a part-time occupation and putting the resources of many sciences into one archaeological project at a time?

This ideal programme—for such it is—could contribute substantially to many branches of economic and social history, but I think in no field could it be more helpful than in that of agrarian history.

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I must acknowledge help and advice from Professor Dorothy Whitelock, Docent Märta Strömberg, Dr Peter Jewell, Martyn Jope, Rainbird Clarke, Brian Hope-Taylor, Gale Sieveking, Peter Addyman, Dennis Petch, Margaret Morris, and Rupert Bruce-Mitford.

Notes and Comments

THE BRITISH AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The annual conference of the British Agricultural History Society was held from 11–13 April 1962 at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. On the first evening a paper was given by Mr B. M. Camm and Mr P. E. Graves, of the Cambridge University Farm Economics Branch, on changes in East Anglian farming as seen from the results of the farm management survey. The following day the conference was taken on a tour of village ports of the southern Fenland by Miss Edith Whetham and Dr Peter Eden. In the evening Mr D. M. Wilson of the British Museum gave a paper entitled 'The archaeological evidences of Anglo-Saxon rural economy'. The conference con-

cluded on Friday morning with two papers, the first by Dr Peter Eden, of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, entitled 'Small houses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Cambridgeshire: an essay in classification', and the second by Mr R. B. Smith, of Leeds University, on 'Landownership and Social Structure in the West Riding of Yorkshire in the earlier sixteenth century'.

At the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday morning, Mr R. V. Lennard was elected President of the Society. The meeting expressed its appreciation of the services of Sir Keith Murray for the previous three years. Professor Edgar Thomas was re-elected Treasurer and Mr J. W. Y. Higgs,

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The Field Systems of Breckland

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I

FIELD patterns are among the more permanent and obvious features of the rural landscape. Since Parliamentary Enclosure overtook all but a few scattered remnants of the former open-field cultivation these patterns have become more stereotyped and regional variations less apparent. To the agricultural historian, however, the distribution of regional variations in former field systems is of interest, raising, as it does, the question whether similar patterns are genetically linked by a common racial origin or whether these convergences are a response to a similar natural and economic environment.

The work of Meitzen and Bloch on the Continent was matched in this country by that of Gray, which provided the first comprehensive account of the variations in English field systems.¹ Gray's interpretations of the general patterns and terminology remain valid, but since his work appeared in 1915 several decades of detailed regional studies have provided a sounder basis for comparative work on the *modus operandi* of his regional types of field systems. It was inevitable that, in the light of later knowledge, many of his conclusions and generalizations should lose their validity. Not the least important development has been the increasing recognition of the influence of environment on field patterns, in contrast to his wholly ethnic explanations.

Breckland provides an opportunity to test Gray's theories of a general East Anglian system in a limited but distinctive region. Breckland is one of the regions in Britain whose characteristic environment justifies its recognition as a 'pays', in the sense of a region that does not conform to any administrative division but which "is recognized by its inhabitants as having a unity of its own, based upon its physical and cultural endowments."² A precise delimitation of Breckland is difficult since geographical boundaries are seldom precise and there is always a transitional zone of indeterminate width between regions. This is certainly true of Breckland, which covers an area of c. 250 square miles in south-west Norfolk and north-west Suffolk, although the Fens provide a sharp demarcation of its western limits.

¹ A. Meitzen, *Siedlung und Agrarwesen der Westgermanen und Ostgermanen, der Kelten, Römer, Finnen und Slaven*, 1895; M. Bloch, *Les caractères originaux de l'histoire rurale française*, 1931, second ed. 1952; H. L. Gray, *English Field Systems*, 1915.

² E. G. Bowen, 'Le Pays de Galles', *Trans. and Papers Inst. Brit. Geogr.*, xxvi, 1959, p. 1.

Any consideration of the man-made landscape of Breckland must be undertaken with an appreciation of the natural environment and of the limitations which it imposed. A combination of porous basal chalk and a low annual rainfall, which is less than the average potential evaporation during the growing season, causes an aridity that makes the region marginal for cultivation. This situation is aggravated by geological and pedological conditions. A complex series of glacial 'tills' overlies the basal chalk, and their increasing thickness and change in lithological characteristics towards the margins of the region are reflected in the increasing fertility of the soil. The most striking feature of the drift geology of Breckland, however, is the remarkable sand pall, caused by the decalcification of the underlying chalky Boulder Clay, which attains a depth of 8-15 feet in the south-west of the region. This increases the coarse sand component of the surface soil to more than 60 per cent, which has been considered to be the limit of cultivation where the rainfall is less than 30 inches per annum.¹ Under these climatic and edaphic conditions it is not surprising to find that Breckland provides what has been called the nearest approach to steppe conditions in the British Isles.² It is against this background of extensive heaths, which characterized Breckland before the advent of the Forestry Commission and which provided an environment that was marginal for arable cultivation, that the development of the regional field systems should be appreciated.

The field systems of Breckland must be regarded initially in the context of a general East Anglian system which has raised many problems in terminology because of its apparent complexity and lack of uniformity. The pioneer work of Gray was accepted until Dr Allison resolved some of the inconsistencies in his conclusions by a closer study of the situation on the light soils of western Norfolk.³ Gray postulated a haphazard distribution of cultivation strips, of no standard size, throughout the open arable land of individual townships. As the strips of individual owners tended to be concentrated in one part of the arable land, instead of being scattered throughout fields, as in the Midland three-field system, and since there was no regular tillage plan, Gray argued that strips of winter and summer corn and fallow land lay intermingled. Sown parcels were hurdled off from the flocks until 'shack' time and grazing facilities were provided by foldcourses, or strictly defined areas of the open arable land, heath, and pastures where grazing was the sole right

¹ E. J. Russell, 'The Reclamation of Waste Land', *Jour. Royal Agric. Soc.*, LXXX, 1919, p. 117.

² W. G. Clarke, 'The Breckland Sand-Pall and its Vegetation', *Trans. Norf. and Norwich Naturalists Soc.*, x, 1914-19, p. 130.

³ K. J. Allison, 'The Sheep-Corn Husbandry of Norfolk in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Agric. Hist. Rev.*, v, 1957, pp. 12-31.

of a particular flock, irrespective of the ownership or occupance of the soil. The fold also enhanced the fertility of the soil and its function is described in a seventeenth-century treatise.¹ "A foldcourse is a liberty to erect over a fold within a certain precinct of ground for ordering ye sheepe of ye fould and tathing ye land therin. And also to feede ye sheepe within ye same precinct att all sesons of the year as tyme out of mind hath bin accustomed."

The extensive employment of wattle hurdles postulated by Gray appeared unnecessarily complex and Dr Allison offered an alternative explanation. While agreeing that individual holdings were concentrated, he suggests that a series of 'shifts' or compact areas were set aside for the cultivation of a particular crop in northern and western Norfolk. Thus a three-course rotation overlay the haphazard distribution of strips and ensured a uniformity of cropping practice that was essential in order to procure a compact block of fallow for the summer grazing of the flocks. Clearly, with this arrangement, individual holdings in any one year might consist of predominantly fallow land, in which case the occupiers were compensated for the loss of productive capacity by the owners of foldcourses. As Dr Simpson acknowledges, this solution is almost certainly correct and applied to western Suffolk as well as to western Norfolk.²

Dr Allison also noticed what Gray had failed to recognize, that the light soils of western Norfolk were cultivated in some places on an infield-outfield system similar to that found in other parts of the country. It was with these conclusions in mind, some complementary and some contradictory, that the field systems of Breckland were investigated from three points of view—the visual pattern of the open fields, the cropping system, and the tenurial arrangements.

II

The main unit of arable land in Breckland was the furlong, usually known as the 'stadia' or 'quarentina'.³ These were allotted to 'precincts' or arbitrarily defined areas of the open field that were commonly bounded by highways or

¹ British Museum (=BM) Add. MS. 27,403 (undated, seventeenth century).

² A. Simpson, 'The East Anglian Foldcourse: Some Queries', *Agric. Hist. Rev.*, vi, 1958, pp. 87-96.

³ The earliest references to 'quarentinae' in Breckland that have been discovered were at Herringswell in 1304.—E. G. C. Livett, 'Some fourteenth-century documents relating to Herringswell, Suffolk', *East Ang. Notes and Queries*, II, New Series, 1903-4, pp. 121-4; and at Merton in 1308.—MSS. in possession of Lord Walsingham at Merton Hall, Norfolk (=Merton MSS.). Some idea of the size quarentinae might attain is given by a report that men ploughed straight for 12 furlongs at Northwold during the Middle Ages, mentioned by Sir Philip Shippam in 1671, *Norf. Arch.*, xxii, 1929, p. 176.

other salient topographical features. These primary and secondary subdivisions provided a guide to the location of strips and were not equivalent to the Midland field and furlong since they varied considerably in size, they referred to arable and pasture alike, and they had no significance for the cultivation of the land. Where the term 'field' occurred it was generally synonymous with a furlong. Thus, although fields and precincts coincided in 'Estfyld' at Icklingham in 1459 and in 'Westfyld' and 'Estfyld' at Narford in 1473, the 40 fields at Mildenhall in 1618 and the 10 fields at Croxton in 1327 were clearly equivalent to furlongs.¹ Some surveys, such as those of Tostock in 1494 and Sturston in 1597, base the primary subdivision of the open fields on 'quarentinae'² and an interesting revelation of the comparative unimportance of fields in Breckland is afforded by a comparison of two surveys of Sporle with Palgrave. In 1598 there were two fields in this township, but by the early seventeenth century the same furlongs were allotted to four separate fields.³

The 'quarentinae' were divided into 'pecia', which were more variable in size than the Midland 'seliones' but which averaged three roods at Merton in the fourteenth century.⁴ Extreme fragmentation of the land is confirmed by the 1,826 'pecia' that were scattered through the 18 furlongs of Wangford in 1542 and the 10 furlongs at Methwold in 1545, which contained more than 2,500 'pecia'.⁵

Presentments before the manorial court of Icklingham in the seventeenth century for ploughing up 'meer baulks' indicate the presence of ancient boundaries between land parcels, while the larger 'meeres' that were mentioned at Methwold in 1595 served both as locational features and as access paths.⁶ Together with the banks, ditches, and 'doles' that demarcated property, precinct, manorial, and township boundaries in Breckland, these 'meeres' must have been conspicuous features in the barren and open landscape of Breckland during the Middle Ages.

In appearance, therefore, the open fields of Breckland were similar to those of the rest of East Anglia, as described by Gray, and this pattern tended to remain constant throughout the Middle Ages, for there was little pre-Parliamentary enclosure in this region, in contrast to the claylands of central

¹ West Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmund's (=WSRO), MS. E3/10/9.9; Norwich Public Library (=NPL) MS. 11,353; Public Record Office (=PRO) MS. DL 43/9/6/17 Jas. 1; BM. Add. MS. 34,560, ff. 35 et seq.

² WSRO. MS. 645/2; PRO. MS. E 123/26, ff. 319-22.

³ NPL. MSS. 20,876 and 20,877. ⁴ Merton MSS.

⁵ NPL. MS. 4071; PRO. MS. DL 43/7/29 15 Eliz.

⁶ MSS. in the possession of Lord Iveagh at Elveden Hall, Suffolk (=Elveden MSS.), Box Icklingham/F.5 and 29/G.23; PRO. MS. DL 43/7/30 35 Eliz.

Norfolk and Suffolk. Piecemeal enclosure, however, together with the preliminary processes of the consolidation of sufficient strips to justify such action and the eradication of intervening grass baulks, was not entirely unknown in Breckland during this period. Consolidation took place by private exchange or purchase, but, as the inclusion of 14 strips within one close of arable land at Tostock in 1561 indicates, it was not necessarily a preliminary to enclosure.¹ The destruction of intervening baulks is indicated by the numerous references to "two or three strips now plowed together" or to parcels of land "sometymes dyvers pieces" that occur in many of the early surveys relating to Breckland parishes.² A notable example was the destruction of 'meres' that accompanied the desertion of Kilverstone in 1592.³ Whether enclosure concerned open arable or heathland, however, the final, and usually the most difficult, obstacle to be overcome was the removal of common grazing rights. This was usually accomplished by the preliminary conversion of common field land to 'half year' land, making it subject to common grazing only during shack time, and finally conversion to 'whole year' land that was held in severalty throughout the year. In 1432 the prior of Binham procured a deed ensuring that no parishioner would "lay claime, require, or insist upon any right of Commonye" over his lands in Swaffham,⁴ but even when common rights had been abolished enclosure was not necessarily ensured. In 1285 200 acres of heathland were removed from the common grazing of Kilverstone, and the townsmen of Kenninghall in 1616 purchased the lord's sheepwalk "and so made their lands whole year lands"—but in neither case did permanent enclosure result.⁵ The main reason for the slow pace of piecemeal enclosure in Breckland was the opposition of manorial lords, usually the main foldcourse owners, who resented any encroachment on their grazing rights. Sir William de Gray gave licence to one of his tenants at Merton in 1630 "to inclose another little pightle from the shack of my sheep,"⁶ but such consent was rare, and frequent presentments, fines, and verdicts in manorial courts that "no manne owght to inclose eny gronnde in purlui of the lords shepys course"⁷ reveal the general opposition to this practice.

It is clear, however, that enclosure, although impeded, was not prevented by the opposition of landlords. In 1630 several enclosures were permitted at Swaffham "provided they allow the lord's sheep in during shack time"⁸ and

¹ WSRO. MS. 553/39.

² e.g., Kennett and Kentford, WSRO. MS. 1563, and Eriswell, Elveden MS. 32/K.120.

³ PRO. MS. E 134/35 Eliz./24 East.

⁴ NPL. MS. 9524.

⁵ F. Blomefield, *A Topographical History of Norfolk*, 10 vols., 1739, I, p. 543 and p. 220.

⁶ Merton MS.

⁷ BM. Add. MS. 34,689.

⁸ NPL. MS. 24,072.

complete enclosure must have been facilitated by this preliminary conversion to half-year land. That enclosure did take place within the open fields of Breckland is indicated by references to "terras inclusas" among tenurial documents.¹ These closes were usually less than 5 acres in extent, but at Thetford, in 1549, 120 acres were described as "duas pec. inclusas de terra."² The mention of crofts within the open field, as at Fornham in the fifteenth century and at Methwold in 1575,³ is a further indication of the gradual progress of piecemeal enclosure, and by the early seventeenth century arable closes were a feature of many Breckland townships. The demesne land at Eriswell in 1652 included six arable closes of from 20 to 50 acres in extent and the lord of Ixworth in 1627 possessed 123 acres "inclosed in ye feeld" and 221 acres "lying open in ye feeld."⁴

Piecemeal enclosure, together with consolidation and the abolition of common rights, continued in Breckland throughout the eighteenth century. Thus, while part of the demesne holdings at Eriswell in 1768 comprised scattered strips, there were also 10 compact blocks of from 20 to 90 acres each in extent, while at Elveden, in 1706, 88 acres of glebe land "in above six score pieces" were exchanged for two contiguous parcels of 44 acres each.⁵ Doubtless the process of final enclosure was similar to that described by Kent: "Wherever a person can get four or five acres together, he plants a white thorn hedge round it . . . which is consented to by a kind of general courtesy from one neighbor to another."⁶

Pre-Parliamentary enclosure in Breckland, however, was the exception rather than the rule, and the examples cited above are but isolated instances. By the end of the eighteenth century the general distribution of land holdings in Breckland was little altered from the pattern that had prevailed during the Middle Ages. At Lakenheath in 1774 one holding was distributed between the three open 'fields' in a ratio of 117:126:127, and a complaint was filed there in 1813 that the greater part of one estate lay "in open lands, in very small parcels scattered throughout the parish."⁷ Many authorities have made the mistake of ignoring the retarded development of the Breckland landscape by including the region within their generalizations concerning the whole or part of Norfolk and Suffolk. Tusser referred to Suffolk as a

¹ e.g., Great Hockham in 1599, NPL. MS. 18,713.

² Elveden MS., unpublished collection for a history of Elveden by the Rev. George Burton (=EHC, 1740).

³ BM. Add. MS. 34,689; PRO. MS. DL 43/7/29 15 Eliz.

⁴ PRO. MS. DL 43/7/29, 15 Eliz.; BM. Harl. MS. 368, f. 171.

⁵ Elveden MSS. 24/J.16 and 29/M.30.

⁶ N. Kent, *A General View of the Agriculture of Norfolk*, 1796, p. 22.

⁷ Elveden MSS. 69/O.71 and 9/C.24.

"typical enclosed county" and J. Scrutton claimed that enclosures in that county "seem to have been completed in the sixteenth century, if not earlier."¹ Dr Thirsk has recently expressed the opinion that by 1760 the bulk of unenclosed land in Suffolk was waste and common, while both Slater and Gray, referring to Norfolk, stated that Enclosure Awards after 1750 show little remaining arable.²

As Dr Allison has shown, the 'Good Sand' region to the north of Breckland was largely enclosed during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but this generalization cannot be extended to include all the light soils of western Norfolk. Blomefield recognized that the half of Guiltcross Hundred towards Thetford was "sandy and open" while the other half was completely enclosed by 1736, and W. E. Tate came nearer the truth of the situation in Breckland in his statement that, of 54 West Suffolk Enclosure Awards, at least 43 related to the enclosure of open arable land, compared with 6 out of 30 East Suffolk Enclosure Awards.³ Arthur Young remarked that Suffolk must be one of the earliest enclosed counties but that there were some large tracts that were still open.⁴ Most of these must have lain within Breckland. Thus, by the end of the eighteenth century, Breckland provided a greater contrast to the surrounding country than it had at any previous date. De la Rochefoucauld, leaving "the immense stretches of fallow land" in Breckland, found that, north of Swaffham, "all the fields are enclosed and well cultivated."⁵ In central Breckland, where the economy was based on the folding of sheep over the open arable and heathland, the medieval pattern of open fields was emphasized by the strict maintenance of baulk-lined strips.⁶ The existence of a cattle-rearing economy in central Suffolk is reflected in the enclosed pastures of Bardwell and Badwell Ash on the borders of Breckland, where two farms of over 200 acres each were entirely enclosed by 1730 except for two small pieces "which lye in an open field a great way from the rest of ye estate."⁷

¹ Tusser, 'Comparison between Champion County and Severall' from *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandrie*, ed. Mavor, 1812, p. 212; J. Scrutton, *Commons and Common Fields*, 1887, p. 285.

² J. Thirsk and J. Imray, *Suffolk Farming in the Nineteenth Century*, Suffolk Record Society, 1, 1958, p. 20; G. Slater, *The English Peasantry and the Enclosure of the Common Fields*, 1907, pp. 213-14.

³ W. E. Tate, 'A Handlist of Suffolk Enclosure Awards', *Proc. Suffolk Inst. of Arch.*, xxv, 1951.

⁴ A. Young, *A General View of the Agriculture of Suffolk*, 1804, p. 38.

⁵ F. de la Rochefoucauld, *A Frenchman in England*, 1784, being a translation by S. C. Roberts, 1933, p. 217.

⁶ A Court Leet verdict at Icklingham as late as 1793 ordered that "all Meer Baulks which have been plowed up shall be laid down again."—Elveden MS. Icklingham/F.30.

⁷ WSRO. MS. E3/10/10.5.

The first Enclosure Award relating to open arable land in Breckland was that for Hilborough in 1768.¹ By 1801 only 19 Breckland parishes had been enclosed, involving just over 40,000 acres, or less than 25 per cent of the total area.² The main bulk of enclosure in Breckland occurred between 1800 and 1817, when 26 Acts were passed, compared with the 19 Acts before and the 6 Acts after this period. This concentration can be ascribed to the economic conditions that prevailed during the Napoleonic Wars when the improvement of arable land was at a premium. Through the widespread enclosure of wastes, commons, and open fields at this time more land was brought into cultivation, and new, isolated farmhouses appeared in Breckland with such contemporary names as Waterloo Farm and St Helena's Farm.³ By 1820 the post-war depression in agriculture had set in and the tide of Parliamentary Enclosure was ebbing. The Act for Larling in 1816 was the only one for Norfolk in that year, and the 4 Acts passed for Breckland parishes after this date were all subsequent to the General Enclosure Act of 1845.

A total of 114,471 acres were dealt with by 49 Parliamentary Enclosure Awards in Breckland. They seldom stated the exact area enclosed, however, but detailed the total area of the parish concerned in order to obviate any outstanding claims for common grazing over land that had already been enclosed. Thus, at Northwold, 550 of the 4,500 acres that were allotted were described as "Ancient Inclosures," as were 643 of the 5,647 acres allotted at Eriswell. However, the small amount of pre-Parliamentary Enclosure in Breckland ensured that the area affected by the majority of these Acts approximated to the total area of the parish, and it is noticeable that the parishes where this approximation was closest, and therefore where pre-Parliamentary Enclosure had been least effective, all lay in central Breckland.⁴ It was common for both open arable land and heathland to be included within the terms of reference of Breckland Enclosure Awards, in contrast to East Suffolk. According to W. E. Tate, 56 Suffolk Acts prior to 1801 referred both to open arable and heathland, while 36 related to common and heathland alone, the former being commonest in West Suffolk and the latter in East Suffolk. Nevertheless, as late as 1843, there were at least 8,000 acres of commons still remaining within 13 parishes of central Breckland.⁵

¹ All Enclosure Awards mentioned are kept by the Clerk of the Peace, Norwich.

² In England as a whole 2,142 of the total 3,996 Enclosure Acts before 1835 were passed before 1800.

³ 1½ miles south-east of Stanford and 1 mile north-east of Mildenhall.

⁴ Gooderstone, Bridgham, Larling, and Thetford all had over 95 per cent of their land allotted by their respective Enclosure Awards, while less than 40 per cent of the marginal parishes of Coney Weston, Barnham, Northwold, and Hockham were affected.

⁵ BM. State Papers, Reports and Accounts, XLVIII, p. 467.

Also, although enclosure was a major formative influence in the Breckland landscape, the report of the Commissioners for Eriswell in 1800 that it was "not necessary to make fences, only to lay the Common Fields into Brecks, without Fences," besides reflecting the practical difficulties of enclosing these light soils, also suggests that the visible effects of the process were less obvious in Breckland than elsewhere.¹

III

Although the pattern of open-field cultivation in Breckland was similar to that described by Gray for East Anglia as a whole, the management of these lands revealed distinctive local characteristics. Dr Allison described the 'shift' system of cultivation and showed it to be the only method compatible with the operation of foldcourses. Also, by varying the number of shifts, a greater flexibility in the cultivation of the land was permitted, so that a less exhausting rotation than that of two crops and a fallow might be adopted. A shift system was practised in Breckland at least as early as 1338, when 8 shifts existed at Thetford.² The court order at Ingham in the fifteenth century that "all tennts and Inhabytants within the said manor owght to forbere the werkyng of ther lande eny yere where the lords course or fould shall chance to be the same yere" is indicative of a similar system, for clearly such land would then lie within a fallow shift.³ Notes appended in the seventeenth century to a terrier of Wangford taken in 1542 detail:

"Brakie fields were sown in A.D. 1643, which doth containe parts of Thankles furlonge, Middlebank furlonge, Downbanckes, Tanfield furlonge, and Grangemere furlonge. 419 acres.

"Whitefields were sown in A.D. 1644, which doth contayne other part of Thankles furlonge, part of Middleweysty, Cowpit, Downtale, and Garling furlonges. 407 acres.

"Sandys Shifte sowne in A.D. 1645, which doth conteyne Sleane furlonge, Garling furlonge, Wronglond, Longwronglond, and Middleweysty."⁴

Clearly these notes refer to shifts in the common field.⁵ The fact that different dates were decreed by Court Leet verdicts for the entry of grazing animals into the rye and barley stubbles also indicates that these crops were sown in different shifts, otherwise the application of grazing rights would have been

¹ Elveden MS. 39/K.109.

² NPL. MS. 121, unpublished account by W. G. Clarke of the Thetford district.

³ BM. Add. MS. 34,689. ⁴ NPL. MS. 4071.

⁵ Shifts were also mentioned at Rushford, Ixworth, Stanford, Harling, Methwold, Elveden, and Mundford in the period 1550-1670, NPL. MSS. 121 and 9995, Elveden MS. EHC, 1740, Hist. MSS. Comm. Rept., 1221, BM. Harl. MS. 368, fo. 171, PRO. MS. DL 43/7/29.

impracticable.¹ Shifts clearly represented a cropping system which was independent of quarentinae limits, for Thankles, Garling, and Middleweesty furlongs lay within two separate shifts at Wangford in 1643-1645, while at Fornham in the fifteenth century 'Karledon' field contained 16 acres of rye and 56 acres of wheat and probably included parts of two separate shifts.²

The enumeration of the precincts of most Breckland townships in multiples of three³ indicates that a three-course rotation was common, but the intensity of cropping was adapted to local conditions, as is shown by a survey of Elveden in 1616.⁴ "The six shiftes and felde of Elden . . . are used to be tyllid and eared as follows, vid; every year one of the said Feldes newly broken up and sowne with wynter corn and is called one year land, and the same felde the next year shall be sowne with somer corn and is then called two year land and the next year shall be broken up one other felde for wynter corne and pte of the said two year land shall also be sowne a third year and is then called three year land, and then it shall lye lay until all the felde have been sowne in the like fashion and so every year one feld is newly broken up and beene always in tylthe the two felde and part of the third feld and there are always three felde in laye londe and part of the fourthe, upon which laye felde the Foldcourse have their contynuall feed and have been anciently accustomed." Little more than one-third of the arable land of Elveden was cultivated, which supports the contention that most of the arable land in Breckland lay fallow during the later Middle Ages.

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Breckland farms continued to be let "according as the shifts of the fields and enclosures shall then fall in course"⁵ and details of shifts at Elveden in 1750 and at West Wretham in 1741 were little altered from those prevailing in the seventeenth century.⁶ Even where consolidation of ownership had taken place, the same system of cultivation was practised on compact farm units. Rushford Farm was divided into 5 equal shifts held in severalty in 1730, as was Merton in 1775.⁷ Nor did consolidation necessarily result in any intensification of cropping, for at Tottington, in 1833, one tenant was required "to lay out all the

¹ In 1699 the entry date for the rye stubble was September 5th, and September 29th for the barley stubble.—Elveden MS. 29/K.53.

² NPL. MS. 4071; BM. Add. MS. 34,689.

³ Eccles had 3 fields in 1586, NPL. MS. 4079; Wangford had 18 stadia in 1542, NPL. MS. 4079; Sporle with Palgrave had 3 fields in 1598, NPL. MS. 20,877; Brandon had 6 fields in 1584, WSRO. MS. E13/11; Carbrooke had 6 fields in 1549, NPL. MS. 6689; and Wilton had 9 fields in 1635, NPL. MS. 18,262.

⁴ Elveden MS. EHC, 1740.

⁵ e.g., Timworth in 1800, WSRO. MS. E3/10/18.15.

⁶ Elveden MS. EHC, 1740; NPL. MS. 18,019.

⁷ WSRO. MS. 613/292; Merton MSS.

arable land into five equal parts, not more than two parts to be corn grain or pulse in any one year."¹ However, although the traditional method of farming by shifts remained constant in Breckland, there is some indication of the general expansion of land under the plough in the eighteenth century. Thus the six shifts of Elveden covered 1,980 acres in 1616 and 2,307 acres in 1750, while Quanwater and Crannow Fields measured 34 and 118 acres at Eriswell in 1652, while their respective areas in 1818 were 96 and 257 acres.²

Besides the shift system of agriculture, a further regional characteristic of Breckland field systems was the existence of a form of infield-outfield system that has long been recognized as a method of cultivating marginal land. Gray's theory that this system was of 'Celtic' origin has been disproved and it is now considered that some duality in cropping practice was the natural result of the change from a shifting to a permanent agriculture.³ Dr Allison, however, considered that the infield-outfield system on the light soils of western Norfolk was a comparatively late development. The original field system prevailed here until the seventeenth century, although modified to some extent during the sixteenth century by the cultivation of small heathland intakes after the flocks had been folded on them. Eventually these temporary intakes were enclosed as brecks and tilled in regular rotation until, together with the heathland, they were finally enclosed as a periodically tilled outfield and the open arable land was enclosed as a permanently tilled infield, partly as a result of the abuse of customary cropping practices, which made the operation of foldcourses increasingly difficult, but mainly as an attempt to increase crop production. Dr Simpson, however, suggested that the cultivation of heathland intakes beyond the open field had been known before the sixteenth century and, in fact, "as long as there had been flocks to make periodic cropping possible."⁴

Although many parallels can be drawn with the infield-outfield system of other parts of the country, there is evidence that the Breckland system contained factors that have not been recognized elsewhere and that this region cannot be included within generalizations made about the light soils of Nor-

¹ Merton MSS.

² Elveden MSS. EHC, 1740; 22/H.13; and 27/J.15. Allowance must be made for the generalization of the earlier measurements owing to the imperfection of contemporary surveying methods and also to discrepancies arising from the possible use of a local acre. Thus, at Mundford in 1769, 87½ 'commonfield' acres = 65½ statute acres.—NPL. MS. 20,584.

³ H. Uhlig, 'Old Settlement and Field Structures, a Common Heritage in the Cultural Landscape of Western and Central Europe', *XIXth Internat. Geog. Cong.*, Symposium on *The Morphogenesis of the Agrarian Cultural Landscape*, Stockholm, 1960, p. 9. This work includes a comprehensive bibliography on the origin of regional field systems.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 94.

folk. Elsewhere a dual division of the arable land into an intensively cropped infield and periodically tilled outfield 'intakes' from the waste has been recognized, but in Breckland it is possible to recognize a tripartite division of the same area.¹ This system, which might be called the infield-outfield-breck system, is based on the dual rotational practice in the cropping of certain shifts within the open field, resulting in an infield and an outfield, while the 'outfield', as recognized elsewhere, is represented by 'brecks' taken in from the heath. In other words the 'infield' is represented in Breckland by an infield and an outfield and the 'outfield' by brecks. This duality of cropping within the open field is evident at Croxton in 1327, where 'Suthfyld' and 'Hangedeles' field contained quarentinae that were designated both as 'Infeldlond' and 'Utfeldlond', while Stanford in 1560 contained 6 'Outfield Shifts', that were cropped in rotation with not more than two successive crops off each, and 4 'Infield Shifts', one of which was left fallow each year.² Furthermore, the 'Shift Landes' that were detailed at Wangford in 1625 were cultivated only once in a minimum of three years, and as they were said to abut the 'High Fildes', they probably represented the outfield land.³ Apart from this direct evidence, there are further indications of two different rotations in the open fields of Breckland prior to the sixteenth century. The correlation of 'infield' and 'every year land' is too facile since the latter may refer merely to land that has been removed from shackle rights.⁴ However, land recorded in 'Leymere Everyerelond' and 'Crosathe Way Every Yeare Feild' at Icklingham in 1459 were definitely recorded as infield land in 1586, so that this assumption may be valid in this case.⁵ A valuation of this township in 1556, which valued 'land' at 1s. per acre and 'Every Yeare Land' at 5s. 4d. per acre, also suggests a duality in the cropping arrangements of the open field.⁶ The distinctiveness of Breckland field systems is further exemplified by plotting references to 'infield' and 'outfield' parcels found in seventeenth-century conveyances of land at Icklingham on a contemporary manorial map.⁷ It should have been possible to plot a rough boundary between the infield and the outfield, but in practice it appeared that this boun-

¹ Where variations in terminology occur, they have been correlated as far as possible with this regional model. Thus, shifts in the open field are sometimes known as 'brecks' and heath-land intakes as 'outfield land'.

² BM. Add. MS. 34,560, ff. 35 et seq.; Townshend MS., Garsett House, Norwich, quoted by A. Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 94. ³ NPL. MS. 4071.

⁴ The Enclosure Act for Worlingham in 1799 is entitled "An Act for dividing and allotting the Whole Year or Every Year Land" and the Act for Icklingham in 1813 mentions "Infield or Every Year Land."

⁵ WSRO. MS. E 3/10/G.4; Elveden MS. Icklingham/G.10.

⁶ WSRO. MS. E 3/10/G.2.

⁷ Elveden MS. Icklingham/F.340.

dary was an arbitrary one that disregarded quarentinae limits and which may even have fluctuated, since the same land parcels fall into both categories at different dates. Nor was the infield land at Icklingham necessarily that immediately surrounding the village and the outfield that farthest away, since in 1702 and 1813 the former was recorded over half a mile from the village, and in 1786 the latter appeared immediately west of the village street.¹ It appears, therefore, that these connotations applied solely to the intensity with which the land was cultivated, regardless of its location.

One example of the infield-outfield system has been recognized in Breckland at West Wretham where, in 1611, there were "... belonging to the said lords of the manor of West Wretham seven Breaks or Shifts of arable lands called Outfield which are folded in course every year with the Flock of Ewes there, and they contain in all about Four Hundred Acres of land."² These outfield brecks appear to be intakes from the heath, but their alternative designation suggests that they were, in fact, equivalent to the outfield shifts noted at Icklingham, Stanford, and Wangford, since they represent the major part of the arable land and were cropped in rotation. If they had been heathland intakes, the original arable land of West Wretham would have been limited to 116 acres. Since the 1,842 strips of arable land at Wangford in 1542 covered over 800 acres,³ this discrepancy between townships similar in size is too obvious to be overlooked. It may be explained, however, by regarding the 400 acres of brecks at West Wretham as outfield shifts in which the engrossing of smallholders' strips had progressed to the extent where demesne land dominated nearly the whole of the outfield. As would be expected, less consolidation of ownership had taken place in the inherently more fertile infield. The origin of the West Wretham system, however, cannot be finally elucidated until further evidence is forthcoming for tenurial arrangements prior to 1600, but the fact that one of the brecks was "formerly called Grenegate furlong" may be indicative of an earlier system.

Apart from the evidence of two different rotations in the open field, the existence of the third element, that of brecks, is indicated by such field names as 'Rytesbreche' and 'Le Breche' at Fornham in the fifteenth century, while 43 acres were "inclosed by hege and dyche next Brakehyll" at Carbrooke in 1549 and a 'brake piece' called 'Sandelpitte next the comon pasture' was mentioned at Great Barton in 1566.⁴ The process of such reclamation was

¹ Elveden MSS. Icklingham/C.28, Icklingham/G.77, Icklingham/G.10.

² NPL. MS. 10,687, see J. Saltmarsh and H. C. Darby, 'The Infield-Outfield System on a Norfolk Manor', *Econ. Hist.*, III, 1935, pp. 30-44.

³ NPL. MS. 4071.

⁴ BM. Add. MS. 34,689; NPL. MS. 21,195; WRSO. MS. E 18/154/1.

recorded at Kilverstone in 1592, where evidence was given that one farmer "some fifty yeres ago did plowe upp and sowe with corne xii acres or ther aboute of heth groune adjoyning a fyld called Smythfyld," while a 'Newe Fyelde' was "newe plowed into the shepecourse and warren" at Methwold in 1575.¹ Little reclamation of heathland occurred in Breckland during the Middle Ages, however, largely because of the opposition to "plowing the lords hethe"² that prevailed under manorial custom, and for this reason it is likely that the 400 acres of Brakes at West Wretham and the 800 acres in 19 brecks at East Wretham in the seventeenth century³ were outfield shifts in the original arable land and that true brecks were comparatively small in extent during this period.

Evidence for the field systems of Breckland becomes more conclusive for the eighteenth century, and it is clear that the cultivation of infield and outfield shifts by rotations of differing intensity still persisted. Grass layers, however, had replaced fallow shifts, and this resulted in further local differences—as at Icklingham in 1730, where "such as is Barley land is to be plowed and sowed three years in succession then lay the same two years for summer tilling, Rye and Oats land to take two crops only and then lay the same three years."⁴ At Merton in 1775 recently reclaimed land was divided into five shifts and the 'old arable' into four shifts, while the infield lands at West Tofts, Roudham, and Barnham were cropped on five-course and the outfields on six-course rotations at the end of the eighteenth century—the difference in each case representing a higher proportion of seeds.⁵ Even enclosure did not obscure the regional cropping arrangements of Breckland, for dual rotations were imposed by covenanted leases on enclosed farms. Thus the 'demised land' at Icklingham in 1854 was cropped on a four-course rotation, while only one-sixth of the 'outshift' land was to be cropped in any one year.⁶

Although the distinction between infield and outfield land remained at the end of the eighteenth century, the brecks had developed from being mere appendages to the remainder of the open-field land until in some cases they exceeded it in area. Thus East Hall Farm at Mundford in 1771 contained 23 acres of enclosed infield land, 136 acres of dispersed outfield land, and 315 acres of 'brake' land, while Hilborough in 1769 contained 581 acres of infield

¹ PRO. MS. E 134/35 Eliz/24 East; PRO. MS. DL 43/7/29 15 Eliz.

² e.g., at Icklingham in 1573, Elveden MS. Icklingham/F.19.

³ NPL. MS. 10,071.

⁴ WSRO. MS. E 3/10/9.22. A similar adaptation to local soil conditions may have occurred at Sturston in 1561 and Kilverstone in 1591, where 'barley lands' are distinguished from the remaining arable.—WSRO. MS. E 3/10/9.22, and PRO. MS. E 134/35 Eliz/East. 24.

⁵ Merton MSS.; WSRO. MS. E 7/10/9; NPL. MS. 6722; WSRO. MS. 654/2.

⁶ Elveden MS. Icklingham/J.83.

land, 626 acres of outfield, and 940 acres of "brakes and old warren."¹ At Kentford in 1767 320 acres of heathland were described as "newly inclosed" or "heath broke up," while 7 brecks of 25 to 100 acres each were formed at Icklingham between 1716 and 1764.² Between 1795 and 1840 the economic conditions that prevailed during the Napoleonic Wars resulted in the reclamation of c. 20 per cent of the existing Breckland heathland.³ It is likely, however, that this formation of new brecks merely represented the extension of the area over which transient cultivation was practised, and it is significant that, at a time of relative prosperity, the Tithe Surveyors should record the utilization of 11 of the 16 brecks at Elveden, or 593 of the total 815 acres, as 'heathland'. Therefore, although the area of brecks had increased considerably, the relative intensity of cultivation of the various components of Breckland field systems had changed little since 1600.⁴ This is suggested by the values attached to the various categories of land at Mundford in 1769, where infield land was rated at 3s. to 8s. per acre and outfield land at 2s. to 2s. 6d. per acre, little more than the open heathland at 2s. per acre.⁵ The intensity of cultivation of the outfield probably varied with soil conditions and individual management, but the estate of the duke of Grafton near Thetford was said "to resemble most of the farms in this neighbourhood . . . the more valuable and fruitful parts have been made so at the expense of a thorough coat of clay . . . and admit of the 3-shift husbandry, while the rest is quite open and lies 4 or 5 years before it comes again under the plough."⁶

While the comparative intensity of cropping of Breckland infields and outfields remained fairly static prior to enclosure, there is some evidence that more intensive farming in the late eighteenth century led to the enclosure of infield land and the transformation of some of the outfield into infield. These processes are exemplified by the details of Hilborough and Barnham given below.⁷ The enclosure of the infield had been completed at Barnham and its progress was marked at Hilborough by the number of half-year and whole-year closes. If these are included within the area of infield land, this is dis-

¹ NPL. SM. 18,262; Hilborough Enclosure Award.

² WRSO. MS. 339/6; WRSO. MS. E 3/10/10.

³ Obtained by comparing W. Faden's maps of Norfolk and Suffolk, 1783 and 1795, with the Tithe Survey of 1837-1846 of Breckland parishes.

⁴ Some idea of the size brecks attained is given by the following details taken from the Tithe Awards; Elveden—Marman's Grave Breck 145 acres, West Gooch Breck 176 acres; Bodney—Frisky Breck 272 acres, Old Part of Warren 341 acres; Weeting—Lodge Breck 123 acres, Glebe Breck 104 acres.

⁵ NPL. MS. 20,584.

⁶ *Annals of Agriculture*, VII, 1786, p. 1.

⁷ A. Young, *op. cit.*, 1804, p. 332; Hilborough Enclosure Award.

	BARNHAM	HILBOROUGH
	<i>acres</i>	<i>acres</i>
Infield Arable Land	381	581
Outfield Arable Land	2,626	626
Breck or Old Warren	—	940
Half Year Closes	—	186
Whole Year Closes	—	237
Heath and Sheepwalk	1,735	420

proportionately high in comparison with the outfield land, but it may be accounted for by an encroachment of the former into the latter area by an extension of the land that was more intensively cultivated—a process of expansion that is further reflected in the extension of outfield shifts into the heathland. A similar process is evident at Mundford in 1772, where one estate contained 218 acres of infield land, 199 acres of outfield land, and 157 acres of brecks.¹ Further evidence for more intensive cropping in Breckland during the eighteenth century emerges from a comparison of cropping arrangements at Elveden in 1616 and in 1725.² In 1616 the ratio of cropped to fallow land was $2\frac{1}{2} : 3\frac{1}{2}$, but by 1725 the arable land had been reorganized into 5 shifts in which corn and turnip crops dominated layers by 3 : 2.

The infield-outfield-breck system in Breckland throws some light on the development of field systems in general. Dr Uhlig has suggested that a settled agricultural community develops by the selection of the best land over which shifting cultivation was formerly practised. This becomes the permanently cultivated and manured infield, while the remainder of each township's land continues as a periodically cultivated outfield. A similar process is recognizable in Breckland. A single infrequent rotation was still practised over all the arable land at Elveden in 1616 and at Linford in the seventeenth century, which was consequently all equivalent to outfield land and represents the survival of a practice that had disappeared elsewhere.³ In other parishes, the infield had been formed out of the outfield, and a third class of land, the brecks, was evident in some places. This tripartite division, as Dr Allison has shown, was not recognizable in the 'Good Sand' region in the seventeenth century, but further investigation may well reveal a similar genesis of the field systems there. More intensive cultivation, in response to increasing population or the increasing profitability of corn production consequent

¹ NPL. MS. 13,720.

² Elveden MS. EHC, 1740.

³ Elveden MS. EHC, 1740. This system is paralleled by current practice in the Hebrides, where the sandy 'machair' soils are too unstable for permanent tillage and can only support 'outfield' crop rotations.

upon improved facilities for inter-regional trade, would be reflected in the first instance not in the formation of new brecks but in the spread of infield rotations into the outfield. By the early seventeenth century a more intensive infield rotation had spread over all the open fields of the 'Good Sand' region, and no duality in the cropping arrangement of the open field was evident; hence the brecks became recognized as the outfield. In Breckland, however, there was no marked expansion of population in the Middle Ages and therefore no real incentive to intensify cultivation, which was, in any case, retarded by the poverty of the outfield soils. The boundary between the infield and the outfield fluctuated according to the current demand for crop production, and by the seventeenth century there were signs that the more favoured villages were approaching the situation in the 'Good Sand' region, where all the arable land was cultivated on a rotation of two crops and a fallow. The process by which the original nucleus of infield land absorbed the outfield, which in turn absorbed the heathland, has already been described, and it is fortunate that the development of the Breckland field systems, which may represent a genetic model with a wider application, was retarded until documents were sufficiently abundant to make clear their main features.

A definite infield-outfield system remained in the central parishes of Breckland until their final enclosure, which instead of obliterating, merely fossilized their distinctive pattern. Thus, at Wereham and Caldecote, the privately enclosed infield is represented by small irregular fields, the outfield is divided into the large, regular enclosures left by the Parliamentary Surveyors, and the brecks beyond are, even today, separated from the open heath only by a grass baulk or conifer shelter belt.

IV

Gray, in his reconstruction of an East Anglian field system, considered that "among such haphazard fields and precincts we should not expect to find an equal distribution of the parcels of various holdings." He therefore postulated a concentration of the parcels of one holding in a certain area of the arable land of individual townships. He ascribed this concentration to an original East Anglian unit of villein tenure, the 'eriung', which was unlike either the compact Kentish 'iugum' or the scattered Midland 'virgate', but which approximated to an intermediate form.¹ A consolidated unit of tenure arose from the formation of a large number of petty manors and small freeholders that followed the Danish influx.² 'Gavelkind', or partible inheritance,

¹ The 'eriung' was known after the fourteenth century as the 'tenementum' or the 'plena terra'.

² In this respect he agreed with F. W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 1907, pp. 307-8.

caused a disintegration of these units, but this process was interrupted by the superimposition of a Norman manorial system.¹ The 'eriung', therefore, neither completely consolidated nor scattered, was the result of arrested development at some stage in the decay of an earlier compact unit.

Gray's opinion, however, that a tendency to concentration of individual holdings was logical in a haphazard field system is difficult to accept as there is no apparent reason why the removal of the definite boundaries of a three-field system should ensure this distribution. Similarly, Dr Allison's statement that "since the rotation of spring corn, winter corn, and fallow was not based on fields or furlongs, it was not necessary for a man's strips to be equally distributed between the different parts of the open field . . . the strips of a tenant's holdings were consequently not widely dispersed," appears to be a 'non sequitur'. Accepting that a shift system of agriculture prevailed in Breckland, it would seem more logical for one man's strips to be distributed among the various shifts so that, in any one year, he would have an adequate proportion of each crop—precisely the same justification for the wide distribution of a Midland tenant's holding.

Both Gray and Dr Allison used documents relating largely to the 'Good Sand' region, but samples taken from the larger holdings in several Breckland townships are sufficient to belie the general theory of concentration. Elveden in 1617-18 is a case in point.²

	<i>Holding</i>				<i>Area of Shift</i>
	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	
	<i>acres</i>	<i>acres</i>	<i>acres</i>	<i>acres</i>	<i>acres</i>
Melfield Shift	35	22	142	95	329
Ingham Shift	83	26	204	136	462
Cross Shift	78	28	204	153	481
Old Elden Shift	60	23	163	118	389
Little Pit Shift	67	13	110	79	258
Drymere Shift	53	18	151	117	379

An account contemporaneous with this survey and from the same source records that the tenants of Elveden "have many several lands lying among the said Demesne lands in each and every of the six shifts and feldes," and this was probably an original situation since it is unlikely that such a dispersion represented an intermediate stage between the concentrated 'eriung' form and the final consolidation that culminated in enclosure. That such a dispersal dates back at least to the thirteenth century is indicated by the distri-

¹ In this respect he agreed with F. Seebohm, *The English Village Community*, 1883, pp. 176-8. ² Elveden MS., EHC, 1740.

bution of the demesne holdings of the bishop of Ely at Feltwell in 1277:¹

Suthfeld	40½ acres
Portegate Feld	121 acres
Estfeld	140 acres
Mickleberedfeld	217 acres
Lowerkehilfeld	173½ acres

As in the case of cropping arrangements, it would appear that Breckland retained an earlier tenorial system for longer than on the more fertile soils to the north. In the 'Good Sand' region Dr Allison found that holdings were almost entirely concentrated by the sixteenth century, which may have misled some authorities into interpreting this situation as a reflection of original conditions. Gray found that an estate at Shropham, on the north-east margin of Breckland, was concentrated in one part of the arable land by the eighteenth century, which he considered unlikely to be a recent development as this would involve a transitional phase between an original dispersion and final enclosure. Evidence relating to Breckland, however, suggests that this is exactly what has occurred and that, as has been shown, piecemeal enclosure was preceded by the consolidation of the strips of one holding. This process, however, had not progressed far in Breckland by the eighteenth century, and the wide dispersal of the units of individual holdings evident there may represent an original system which further investigation will show to have also preceded the concentrated holdings that existed in the 'Good Sand' region in the sixteenth century.

While it was an advantage, however, to possess lands in each of the various shifts of the open field, ease of management and access provided an obvious incentive to consolidate land parcels within individual shifts and quarentinae. This process became increasingly evident in Breckland during the seventeenth century and is exemplified in the number of strips within certain quarentinae at Sporle with Palgrave in 1598 and in the early seventeenth century.²

	1598	Early 17th century
Ryvettsbite Furlonge	7 strips	3 strips
Netherparkehowefurlonge	13 „	4 „
Overparkehowefurlonge	9 „	2 „
Shortefurlonge	20 „	2 „
Foxondeale Furlonge	29 „	6 „

These details clearly indicate consolidation, a conclusion that is supported

¹ F. Blomefield, *op. cit.*, 1739, II, p. 188.

² NPL. MSS. 20,876 and 20,877.

by frequent references to "two or three strips now plow'd together" in Field Books of this period and the destruction of 'meeres' at Sturston in 1597.¹ At Methwold in 1649 the demesne arable land included 8 parcels of between 15 and 71 acres in extent, each of which were said to lie between two 'meeres'.² Eleven further parcels, however, were only 3 to 9 acres each in extent and were interspersed with land belonging to Christ's College, Cambridge, and to the Rectory, which suggests that corporate bodies were among the more conservative of landlords and delayed the process of consolidation the longest. Marshall noticed that, in the eighteenth century, glebe lands were frequently the last to be enclosed.³

It was left largely to Parliamentary Enclosure Commissioners to reorganize the tenurial arrangements of Breckland parishes, and while their task was complicated by the wide dispersal of individual holdings, it was considerably simplified by the pattern of ownership that prevailed in Breckland at the end of the eighteenth century. The whole region was dominated by a few large estates, divided into one or two tenant farms, whose size was partly the result of economic necessity on these light soils. Young found five estates in Norfolk Breckland with rentals of over £10,000 and one of over £25,000, while in Suffolk Breckland there were 4 estates with rentals of over £5,000 and 30 of over £3,000, compared with the average rental of £20-£100 on the "strong, wet loams" of the central part of the county.⁴ At the end of the eighteenth century 14 Breckland landlords owned a total of 54,637 acres in 15 central Breckland parishes, which were divided between 27 farms averaging over 2,000 acres each in extent.⁵

It was the large landowners who were responsible for Parliamentary Enclosure in Breckland, and there is no doubt that they were favoured at the expense of smallholders in the Awards. It was only in the marginal parishes that occupiers of 50-100 acre holdings held a sufficient proportion of the land to oppose the passage of an Enclosure Act, but even here, they merely delayed the final award.⁶ Comparisons between the claims delivered to the com-

¹ e.g., at Kentford in 1563, WSRO. MS. 339/8, and Norton in 1593, WSRO. MS. 553/43; PRO. MS. E 134/38/39 Eliz. Mich. 9.

² PRO. MS. DL 43/7/30 C.1.

³ W. Marshall, *Rural Economy of Norfolk*, 1787, I, p. 8.

⁴ A. Young, *A General View of the Agriculture of Norfolk*, 1804, p. 17.

⁵ From details in the works of Arthur Young, the *Annals of Agriculture*, and various estate papers.

⁶ E. G. Hunt, 'Landownership and Enclosure', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2nd Series, XI, 1959, p. 56, and J. Lavrovsky, 'Parliamentary Enclosure in the County of Suffolk', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, VII, 1937, p. 49, found that 32 per cent of Leicestershire and 51 per cent of East Suffolk were held in holdings of 5-100 acres—sufficient to delay the passage of Enclosure.

missioners and the details embodied in the awards reveals the extent to which major landowners in Breckland were favoured by enclosure. At Great Cressingham, W. J. Chute claimed for 1,114 acres and received 1,259, while three small freeholders of 251, 272, and 103 acres received 212, 199, and 67 acres respectively. Furthermore the compensation granted for rights of 'sheep-walk and shackle' also favoured the major landowners. At Roudham and East Harling 449 and 388 acres were awarded on this pretext, amounting to one-quarter and one-fifth of the sum total of the two allotments concerned. Not so extensive, but equally favourable to manorial lords, were grants made for their 'right of soil'. The unfavourable bias against commoners is reflected also in the inadequate compensation they received for the loss of common rights. Young noted that the 6 acres allotted at Northwold were subject to inundation, "the land that would have suited the commonable messuages has been allotted to the great proprietors."¹ At Bridgham, Methwold, and Croxton the poor allotments were several miles from the village. Encroachments on the waste within a period varying from 20 to 40 years prior to Enclosure were also regarded as part of the waste, so that the 'squatters' responsible for them were deprived of compensatory allotments, while manorial lords benefited from an extended right of soil. H. G. Hunt found that enclosure in Leicestershire was accompanied by a steady transfer of land from small to large landholders and there is no doubt that this also occurred in Breckland. There were 70 families at Hockham on the eve of its enclosure in 1795, but only 10 received allotments under the Award. A constant theme in the history of landownership in Breckland is the concentration of land in ever fewer hands, a tendency marked by the consolidation of holdings in the sixteenth century and the engrossing of large estates in the eighteenth. This process is exemplified by the situation at Rushford where 15 freeholders each held from 15 to 40 acres in 1242, whereas the whole parish formed only a part of one farm in 1730.² The falling population in Breckland between 1821 and 1841 was largely a result of the loss of common rights on enclosure, coupled with the effects of the agricultural distress that succeeded the Napoleonic Wars, while, as Lavrovsky concluded, the commutation of tithes led to a further diminution of the area owned by the peasantry.

V

The field systems of Breckland provide a valuable insight into the development of field systems on poor land in general. Because of their retarded de-

¹ A. Young, *op. cit.*, 1804, p. 147.

² NPL. MS. 121, unpublished account by W. G. Clarke of the Thetford district.

velopment, retaining as they did their medieval form until the advent of Parliamentary Enclosure, they enable a comparative study to be made of the conditions that may have existed in comparable regions at an earlier date. The peculiar adaptation of the infield-outfield system in Breckland is one that could only have been recognized by the detailed study of a limited and distinctive region, and the value of such local studies lies in the corroborative or contradictory evidence which they provide for the more generalized conclusions of earlier authorities.

NOTES AND COMMENTS (*continued from page 79*)

Secretary. Three members of the Committee—Professor M. W. Beresford, Mr G. E. Fussell, and Mr Alexander Hay—retired, and the meeting elected in their place Mr T. W. Fletcher, Mr W. E. Minchinton, and Miss E. H. Whetham. The chairman of the executive committee, Mr Harwood Long, presented the executive committee's report for the previous year. He explained that membership had risen from six hundred and three to six hundred and thirty-one. He also explained that during the coming months the executive committee would consider the preparation of an index for the second five volumes, and that plans were being made for an issue of a volume of reprints from the AGRICULTURAL HISTORY REVIEW along the lines of those issued by the Economic History Society. The Treasurer, in presenting his report, explained that the balance brought forward was £157 as opposed to £112 the year before, but it had been necessary to transfer £100 from reserve. He explained that the executive committee

had thought it desirable to increase the cost of single numbers of the journal to non-members from 12s. 6d. to 17s. 6d. and back numbers to members from 7s. 6d. to 12s. 6d. It was also proposed to raise the cost of advertising in the journal from £4 to £6 for a half page and from £8 to £12 for a whole page.

At the meeting of the executive committee held later in the day, Mr Harwood Long was re-elected chairman.

FUTURE CONFERENCES

The December conference of the Society will be held jointly with the Association of Agriculture at the London School of Economics on Saturday, 8 December. The main paper will be given by the President, Mr R. V. Lennard, on 'Agrarian History: Some Vistas and Pitfalls (with special reference to medieval England)'. The annual general meeting and conference will be held at St Mary's College, Durham, from Wednesday, 3 April to Friday, 5 April 1963.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

David M. Wilson, M.A., F.S.A., is assistant keeper of the department of British and Medieval Antiquities, British Museum, and author of a volume entitled *The Anglo-Saxons* (1960).

M. R. Postgate, M.A. (London), a research student at Churchill College, Cambridge, is

preparing a doctoral thesis on the field systems of Cambridgeshire.

E. L. Jones, B.A., D.Phil., a research student at Nuffield College, Oxford, has completed a thesis on high farming in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The Changing Basis of English Agricultural Prosperity, 1853-73¹

By E. L. JONES

MOST historians are familiar with the essential topography of English agricultural prosperity—or adversity—during the nineteenth century. This comprises a peak during the Napoleonic wars, a deep trough for twenty years thereafter, another peak rising steeply from 1837, after which the line dips once or twice during the 'forties, sags at mid-century, rises in a booming curve through the 'fifties and 'sixties, until it crashes down some time in the 'seventies. To the more sophisticated the line begins to rise again, a little, from 1894.

This stark outline, treating agriculture more or less as a single entity, owes most to the work of Lord Ernle, which for years was slavishly followed.² A renewal of interest in nineteenth-century agriculture is now evident, and, as Marc Bloch would have put it, we are again keeping faith with Ernle by striving to modify his findings. The single line, firm but very generalized, with which Ernle drew the depression of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, has already been split into two divergent paths, representing the fortunes of cereal growers and livestock producers, by Mr T. W. Fletcher.³ Similarly, two or three regional studies have suggested that the depths of the depression after 1815, which Ernle described so vividly, were plumbed only in restricted localities and for only two or three short spells. The topography of this depression is likely to be re-shaped at the hands of the next serious student to treat it as a whole.

The most conspicuous hump in the line is formed by the period from the early 1850's to the early 1870's. These years are usually passed over lightly as a time of prosperity, and in marked contrast to the succeeding period as one of prosperity for the grain grower. My intention is not to try to invert this period into one of depression, for although the accounts of prosperity could be made much more precise than they are at present, its general character is

¹ I am indebted to J. R. Bellerby and J. W. Y. Higgs for commenting on a draft of this paper, which was read at the December 1961 conference of the British Agricultural History Society.

² Most notably *English Farming Past and Present*, 1912.

³ T. W. Fletcher, 'Lancashire Livestock Farming during the Great Depression', *Agric. Hist. Rev.* IX, 1961, pp. 17-42, and 'The Great Depression of English Agriculture 1873-1896', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2 ser., XIII, 1961, pp. 417-32.

plain. Mr J. R. Bellerby's figures of farmers' incentive income, obtained by deducting estimates for net rent, wages, and interest on occupier-capital from an estimate of the total factor income of agriculture, and therefore showing the reward for management and risk, are:

in 1851	£21.4 million
in 1870-3 on average	£43.9 million

Incentive income per man-week per farmer:

in 1851	£0.514
in 1870-3	£1.038

Incentive income relative to that for industrial occupations:

in 1851	49.5 per cent
in 1870-3	77.3 per cent ¹

These statistics cannot be used to show the differing experience of various groups of producers, although the different trends might be elucidated by a study of contemporary farm accounts.

My intention here is to examine the agricultural basis of this overall rise in the prosperity of the farmer. Ernle, I think, tended to overemphasize the rôle and prosperity of the cereal grower during the years in question, although he did recognize the growing importance of livestock. Not every subsequent writer has remembered this caveat, and some have depicted the period primarily as one of prosperity for the specialist grain producer. I think it fair to say that the 'fifties to the 'seventies form a sort of base period in the minds of agricultural historians and agricultural economists, as the persistence of the term 'Golden Age' would suggest, when the wind was set fair for arable England. A heartening number of writers do mention that there were far-reaching changes in the pattern of agricultural production at this time—"down corn, up horn," as Ernle said²—but this movement is overshadowed by the swing towards livestock production during the Great Depression, and its implications have not been much explored.

¹ J. R. Bellerby, 'National and Agricultural Income 1851', *Economic Journal*, LXIX, 1959, p. 103.

² R. E. Prothero (Lord Ernle), *The Pioneers and Progress of English Farming*, 1888, p. 106. See also J. H. Clapham, *An Economic History of Modern Britain*, II, p. 278; J. R. T. Hughes, *Fluctuations in Trade, Industry, and Finance*, 1960, p. 224; William Ashworth, *An Economic History of England: 1870-1939*, 1960, pp. 47-8. On the other hand O. R. McGregor has recently asserted that rotations were "unalterable" and "majestically though profitably insensitive to shifting market demands."—Introduction, Part II, p. cxviii, to Lord Ernle, *English Farming Past and Present*, sixth edition, 1961.

I

The expression commonly used for the agriculture of the mid-nineteenth century is 'high farming'. The economic and technical connotations of this term have often been confused. I prefer to restrict high farming to the economic sense in which it was used, loosely, by Caird and those who agreed with him, that is, the increase of inputs to farming in supposed attempts to offset falling prices by an increased output. In the technical sense, which is perhaps the commoner and with which we are concerned here, high farming is an extension of mixed farming, that is of any system which interlocks the growing of cereals and the keeping of either or both sheep and cattle. This was epitomized by the Norfolk four-course system, with its close-knit cycle of fodder and grain crops, its arable flock, and its yard-fed bullocks. What high farming adds—and here I prefer to use Philip Pusey's alternative term 'high feeding'¹—is intensity of operation, the feeding of purchased oilcake to the livestock on a lavish scale, to produce both meat and dung; the latter, with purchased artificial fertilizers, in turn lavished on the arable land to promote high yields of grain, and of fodder crops for the stock. The greater the scale of feeding farm-grown and bought-in fodder and the heavier the applications of farm-produced and purchased fertilizer, the more the saleable produce and the more manure for the next round of cropping, that is, the higher the farming. This was the 'expanding circle' which Mechi advocated.²

Dr A. H. John has drawn attention to William Ellis's description of East Anglian farming in the early 1740's as having shown "many elements of what was subsequently called 'high farming'."³ Turnips were sown before barley and fed to fattening cattle, which returned so much dung that the yields of barley were on the increase. Mixed farming of this type will undoubtedly be found to have been a development of the seventeenth century, when the requisite root-break and hay from rotation grasses became available. An increased yield of grain was usually held to be the *raison d'être* of such systems. This was the case in the 1840's, when Pusey stated that the practice of fattening cattle on arable farms was continued "not from a view to profit in the sale of meat, but for the production of dung, and the consequent increase of the corn crop."⁴ To Pusey the liberal feeding of oilcake to stock for the sake of extra manure for the land under cereals was the "great distinction of English agriculture, and constitutes what is called high farming" and what he

¹ Philip Pusey, 'On the Progress of Agricultural Knowledge during the last Four Years', *JRASE*, III, 1842, p. 205.

² J. A. S. Watson and M. E. Hobbs, *Great Farmers*, 1951, p. 90.

³ A. H. John, 'The Course of Agricultural Change, 1660-1760', in L. S. Pressnell (ed.), *Studies in the Industrial Revolution*, 1960, p. 146, n. 1.

⁴ Pusey, *loc. cit.*, p. 205.

called alternatively high feeding. The principle was worked out in different ways, typically in the eastern counties by the winter-feeding of oxen bought-in at the autumn fairs, but in the southern counties, where a feeding-house of cattle was a rarity, by giving supplementary oilcake to sheep hurdled on turnips.

On soils derived from chalk, limestone, or sands, high feeding possessed great advantages for the cereal grower. Such soils tend to be very deficient in potash, and although easy to cultivate are 'puffy' and need to be consolidated. Before, and indeed long after, adequate supplies of imported potash became available (from the Stassfurt mines in 1861) and while the only consolidating implement was a light roller, these needs were met by a hurdled flock. Potash was transferred from the subsoil to the topsoil in the dung of sheep fed with turnips, the roots of which had tapped the subsoil supplies of potash. Moisture was retained in the soil in dry seasons in the crumb structure built up by the treading of the sheep in the fold. Sheep and bullock dung acted as the nitrogenous fertilizer and provided humus, which the one course of 'seeds' did not fully supply, for the course of wheat in the Norfolk-type rotations which predominated on these soils.¹ Clearly, the richer the feeding of livestock, the better the dung and the heavier the crops of grain which might be expected.

II

For a score of years after the Crimean war the price of wheat, apart from short-term fluctuations, showed no tendency to rise. There was now a large import every year. On the other hand the general level of prices and the prices of livestock products in particular rose with little pause.² This rise in the value of livestock products compared with the value of wheat became marked from 1857 and could not but affect the working of high feeding systems in which livestock and cereal enterprises were nicely combined. The proportions of cost to be ascribed to, and of profit accruing to, the meat- and grain-producing enterprises are the subjects of contemporary assertions which are not easy to evaluate, the more so because the nature of high feeding varied according to locality and changed as the balance between the prices for grain and livestock products shifted. Nevertheless an arrangement in chronological order of the statements as to the profitable end of high feeding

¹ Viscount Astor and B. Seeborn Rowntree, *Mixed Farming and Muddled Thinking*, n.d., pp. 55, 58.

² W. T. Layton and G. Crowther, *An Introduction to the Study of Prices*, 1938, p. 75, n. 1. I am indebted to Dr A. H. John for a copy of his graph of wheat, barley, and beef prices from 1816 to 1870.

sheds some light on the changing relation between grain and livestock production.

Until the 1850's it was held that the cost of stall-feeding oxen through the winter was not recovered from the sale of fat-stock in the spring, but only by charging the grain enterprise for the dung which had accumulated from the beasts. This, and the fact that wheat was stall-fed on a wide scale only when it was exceptionally cheap, as in 1835-6, suggests that before the Corn Laws were repealed wheat production was not so unprofitable as many of the producers claimed. It is probable that fatstock prices were inadequate to cover the purchase of store beasts and oilcake, and leave a profit, and that stall-feeding in many areas was only practised because in addition the price of wheat was high enough for it to pay, in effect, a good sum for the rich bullock dung. The differential of 1d. per lb. more for meat in spring than in autumn, of the days when the supply of beasts fattened on summer grass was much in excess of those winter-fed, had disappeared. The meat and hides of stall-fed oxen were directly profitable only when farm-grown fodder was used as a substitute for expensive purchased feed.

In the Welsh Marches it was worth while to winter stores on turnips and straw "chiefly for their manure," although this was not common practice. It was usual in eastern England. Lincolnshire farmers were prepared to winter other men's beasts on straw free of charge, although the stock-owner had to provide the oilcake, simply in order to acquire the dung. On thin, arable soils in Norfolk and on Lincoln Heath the dung was needed to turn the straw crop into good manure, and as C. S. Read added, "on the poor chalk hills, the hungry greensands, and the thin stonebrash, high farming is as necessary as in West Norfolk."¹ According to Clarke's essay on Lincolnshire farming in 1851, "*the Grounds of the present practice of consuming the Straw with Oilcake given to Beasts on light Arable Farms . . . are . . . simply the natural infertility of the land and the expectation of bountiful crops from the ample investment of capital in manures.*"²

Equally, the dung seems to have been the justification for feeding extra oilcake or grain to sheep hurdled on turnips on the chalk uplands, where according to Pusey the effect was "distinctly seen along the line where the hurdles had stood in the following crop of barley, marking the efficacy of high feeding," while in east Berkshire one farmer would give another his turnip crop if the latter would put his sheep in to consume it in the field.³ The heavy demand for manure for hop-growing alone justified the generous feeding of

¹ C. S. Read, 'Farming of Oxfordshire', *JRASE*, xv, 1854, p. 258.

² J. A. Clarke, 'Farming of Lincolnshire', *JRASE*, xii, 1851, pp. 398-9.

³ Pusey, *loc. cit.*, p. 206; James Caird, *English Agriculture in 1850-51*, 1852, p. 100.

cattle in parts of Kent.¹ The conversion of their straw into manure kept up the practice among Nottinghamshire farmers even when meat prices were low: "they calculate," wrote Corringham in 1846, "how they shall use the greatest amount of cake, which they regard as an indispensable in good farming—at the least possible loss; for as prices both of beef and mutton have of late been, they must necessarily incur a loss if they expect their remuneration from the livestock, instead of from the land," and he repeated Pusey's aphorism that as in Lincolnshire cattle were "machines whereby to make manure."²

In Cumberland, by way of contrast, the farmer who fed cattle "reckons it an unprofitable season if any part of his profit requires to be charged to the dung-heap,"³ but the basis of the Cumberland feeding system was the swede and not costly oilcake. In more easterly arable areas, where a farmer might buy several hundred pounds' worth of oilcake each winter but sell his bullocks in spring for £1 or £2 per head less than they had cost the previous autumn, stall-feeding was only practised as an adjunct to cereal production.⁴ In 1851 the four principal farmers of Borough Fen, Northamptonshire, who were lavish feeders of oilcake, agreed that two-thirds of its cost were returned by the manure from cattle and only one-third from the sale of beef, one-third by the manure from sheep, and two-thirds from the mutton.⁵ It was this sort of ratio which led Pusey to regard the production of plenty of rich manure as "the whole object of all feeding."⁶ While Protection lasted, the price of cereals covered losses on meat production by stall-feeding; afterwards they did not, yet mixed farming as a whole continued to be profitable.⁷

In 1851–52, 1858, and the mid-sixties wheat was cheap enough to be fed to bullocks and pigs on a large scale, in the hope of a compensating return from fatstock. The prices for fatstock were high when the price of wheat was low. In this situation, the receipts from grain and livestock products helped to balance one another, and in 1864 when grain prices were low and prices for stock and wool high a correspondent in the *Farmer's Magazine* observed that in consequence the farmer's "business position would be about an

¹ G. Buckland, 'Farming of Kent', *JRASE*, VI, 1846, p. 273.

² R. W. Corringham, 'Agriculture of Nottinghamshire', *JRASE*, VI, 1846, pp. 20–1.

³ W. Dickinson, 'On the Farming of Cumberland', *JRASE*, XIII, 1852, pp. 256–7.

⁴ Philip Pusey, 'Some Introductory Remarks on the present State of Agriculture as a Science in England', *JRASE*, I, 1840, p. 18; A. Huxtable, *The 'Present Prices'*, 1850, p. 13.

⁵ W. Bearn, 'On the Farming of Northamptonshire', *JRASE*, XIII, 1852, p. 71 (dated 23.2.1851).

⁶ Pusey, 1842, *loc. cit.*, p. 207.

⁷ This was stated categorically by T. J. Eliot, *The Land Question . . . as illustrated by twenty-three years' experience on the Wilton House Home Farm*, n.d. [1884], especially p. 37.

average one."¹ The complementary nature of the two groups of enterprises is revealed by the unusually frank account of a farmer as to the effects of the bad harvests of 1856 and '57 in Scotland. Sprouted grain was fed to the stock and potatoes were sold for seed instead of human consumption, so that on balance profits were almost if not quite what they might have been had the harvests been good.² The inverse movement of the prices and profitability of grain and sheep is further borne out by C. S. Read's comments on the relative fortunes of sheep farmers on the Norfolk heaths and grain growers on the dearer-rented Norfolk soils. It was held at the time a distinct advantage of mixed farming that when grain prices were poor, the crop or some part of it could be fed to the fattening stock.³

It is noteworthy that in the East Lothians oilcake and grain were fed liberally when grain prices were good in the early 1840's, were sharply curtailed when grain and stock prices were low at mid-century, and fed freely again in the mid-1860's when grain was cheap but stock fetched a good price.⁴ In 1858 oilcake was being fed in Norfolk on a scale which grain prices did not warrant.⁵ In other words, in the 1850's and '60's prices for livestock products were sometimes high enough to induce high feeding regardless of unremunerative prices for grain. Low grain prices of course meant low feed costs. As P. H. Frere noted in 1860, "whereas of old the bread consumer had to pay in part for the supply furnished to the consumer of meat, now, each kind of produce must in the main defray its own cost of production," and at times the production of meat became the mixed farmer's chief aim.⁶ The manure from stall-feeding was thought of as devoted not to the wheat crop, as it had been in the past, but to the roots as further feed for the livestock. There are plenty of signs that this new relationship was widely recognized by the mid-1860's.⁷

This account has been somewhat simplified for the sake of clarity: the

¹ 'The Present Position of the British Farmer', *Farmer's Magazine*, 3 ser., xxv, 1864, p. 207; see also 'The Causes of the Decline in the Price of Corn', *Farmer's Magazine*, 3 ser., xiii, 1858, p. 251.

² A. Simpson, 'High Farming with Profit', *Farmer's Magazine*, 3 ser., xviii, 1860, p. 239.

³ 'The Present State and Prospects of the Farming Interest', *Farmer's Magazine*, 3 ser., xxv, 1864, p. 193; C. S. Read, 'Recent Improvements in Norfolk Farming', *JRASE*, xix, 1858, p. 271.

⁴ R. S. Skirving, 'Ten Years of East Lothian Farming', *JRASE*, 2 ser., i, 1865, pp. 105-6.

⁵ Read, *loc. cit.*, p. 287.

⁶ P. H. Frere, 'On the Feeding of Stock', *JRASE*, xxi, 1860, pp. 233-4.

⁷ See e.g. J. Coleman, 'The Breeding and Feeding of Sheep', *JRASE*, xxiv, 1863, p. 623; 'Oilcake and Grain for Cattle', *Farmer's Magazine*, 3 ser., xxv, 1864, p. 216; H. Evershed, 'On Sheep', *JRASE*, 2 ser., i, 1865, pp. 332-5; 'Are the Present High Prices of Stock Likely to Continue?', *Farmer's Magazine*, 3 ser., xxx, 1866, p. 104. The opposite view taken by J. J. Mechi in 1867 and quoted by T. W. Fletcher, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2 ser., xiii, 1961, p. 422, is exceptional, as Mechi's views tended to be.

proportions of profit due to grain and livestock cannot be learnt in detail since few farmers could make the distinction themselves. A Norfolk farmer told Sir Daniel Hall early this century that "it is impossible to show that any single operation on a farm pays by itself, it is the whole system taken together which succeeds or fails," and in the early days of cost accounting, as Hall agreed, this was not an entirely unreasonable position, because decisions as to how to apportion costs and receipts in the Norfolk system are necessarily very arbitrary.¹ Nevertheless, a general change in the profitable base of high feeding systems from about 1850 does seem to be indicated.

III

The long-term movements of product prices had been foretold by Caird as early as 1849, although he had exaggerated their immediacy.² Caird expected the price of grain (except malting barley, of which the British sorts were superior) to fall as imports increased, while with the growth of population he anticipated that prices for butcher's meat, dairy produce, vegetables, wool, and hides would rise. In consequence, he advocated turning attention to green crops which could be fed to livestock, partly for the saleable products and partly for manure to increase the yields of the grain crops. Caird was by no means the only one to recognize this trend, which became a source of general comment,³ but he was the most constant in stressing the need to adjust the pattern of mixed farming to meet it. He returned to the topic in 1868 and pointed out how accurate his prognosis had been. "Since 1850 the price of bread on the average, has remained the same," he wrote, "while that of meat, dairy produce, and wool has risen fifty per cent. . . This and the steadily advancing barley, to which I then referred, is the true explanation of increasing rents and agricultural prosperity, notwithstanding increasing receipts of foreign corn."⁴ Professor Clapham came to the conclusion from

¹ A. D. Hall, *A Pilgrimage of British Farming 1910-1912*, 1914, pp. 83-4.

² *High Farming, under liberal covenants* . . . 1849, pp. 6-7, 25-6.

³ See e.g. 'On the Peculiarities of the Management of Farms', *Farmer's Magazine*, xxii, 1850, p. 396; 'The Wool Trade and Meat Trade—foreshadowing the change that must be made in our Agricultural System', *Farmer's Magazine*, 3 ser., iii, 1853, pp. 8-9; C. S. Read, 'Farming of Oxfordshire', *JRASE*, xv, 1854, p. 256; 'Shall we cultivate corn or cattle?', *Farmer's Magazine*, 3 ser., xix, 1861, p. 411; H. S. Thompson, 'Agricultural Progress and the Royal Agricultural Society', *JRASE*, xxv, 1864, p. 35: "The breeding and feeding of livestock have thus become such profitable operations that the growth of corn, as a sequence to stock-farming, has also become profitable, even at present prices." A Cumberland Landowner, *A Few Hints to Landowners & Cultivators, Horn or Corn. Which pays best*, 1873, *passim*; T. Farrall, 'A Report on the Agriculture of Cumberland, chiefly with regard to the Production of Meat', *JRASE*, 2 ser., x, 1874, p. 429.

⁴ J. Caird, *Our Daily Food*, 1868, p. 33.

price data in the *Economist* that the rise in wholesale prices for meat and dairy produce was nearer 40 per cent, although it was calculated in the '70's that the price of beef in the Metropolitan market advanced 58 per cent and that of mutton 85 per cent between 1853 and '73.¹ Obviously the lowest of these figures is large enough to have brought about very considerable changes in the structure of agriculture. Caird's analysis in 1878 is probably the best formulation of his oft-repeated views and deserves to be quoted at length. "Thirty years ago," he says, "probably not more than one-third of the people of this country consumed animal food more than once a week. Now, nearly all of them eat it, in meat or cheese or butter, once a day. This has more than doubled the average consumption of animal food in this country. . . The leap which the consumption of meat took in consequence of the general rise of wages in all branches of trade and employment, could not have been met without foreign supplies, and these could not have been secured except by such a rise in price as fully paid the risk and cost of transport. The additional price on the home-produce was all profit to the landed interests of this country."² Before considering further the nature of these changes, it is worth examining how the disturbance in the relative values of farm products has usually been treated.

The accident of the long-delayed date when national agricultural statistics were first collected has imparted a somewhat false sense of discontinuity in agriculture about 1870. Many authorities take 1870 as the first year in which the statistics are reasonably complete and reliable, and many of them start with this date when tracing the development of present-day agriculture. As a result, the early 1870's are often made to appear as the high-water-mark of the 'Golden Age' as regards cereal acreages and production. The increased concern with livestock production from 1873, or '75, or '79 (the utter lack of agreement about the onset of the Great Depression in agriculture itself suggests that the change was not sudden, but part of a cumulative process), has thus been exaggerated at the expense of the more gradual, but fundamental, shift in the pattern of farming from the 1850's. That the alteration in the balance of prices could be and was met by adjustments within mixed farming systems, and only at comparatively late dates by a switch to the grassland production of livestock, has tended to conceal the extent of the transition. The years 1870-73 might more properly be regarded as marked by the final wave, apart from the brief surge in 1878, of high prices for grain and hence big acreages of cereals.

¹ J. H. Clapham, *op. cit.*, II, p. 278; J. A. Clarke, 'Practical Agriculture', *JRASE*, 2 ser., XIV, 1878, p. 476.

² James Caird, 'General View of British Agriculture', *JRASE*, 2 ser., XIV, 1878, p. 289.

Some recent writers, notably M. Olsen and C. C. Harris in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* for 1959,¹ deny the growing emphasis on livestock as the profitable end of farming during the 1850's and '60's, and stress the importance of wheat. Their conclusions are based largely on the post-1866 acreage statistics, which cannot of themselves reveal which were the most profitable enterprises in close-knit farming systems, nor even which products were destined for sale and which for farm consumption, nor point to the considerable year-to-year changes in output per acre. The acreage statistics seem to have diverted attention from changes in production which took place without correspondingly large changes in land use. Since there was no clear increase of rotation grass and only a steady, slow expansion of permanent pasture during the '70's, the growing importance of livestock has been minimized.² Yet the value of the gross output of United Kingdom agriculture, as recalculated from E. M. Ojala's figures by T. W. Fletcher, was

	1867-69	1870-76
Arable products	£104.17 million	£94.99 million
Livestock products	£126.76 million	£154.87 million ³

Earlier estimates of cereal acreages collected by Lawes and Gilbert⁴ and Drescher,⁵ and the figures of 'British corn sold' from 1849 to '72 given by Hasbach⁶ show that the peak of arable expansion in the early 1870's was a temporary upswing after a contraction which had begun to set in during the later '50's. The increase in the total cultivated area of England and Wales which is usually said to have occurred between 1851 and '71 is not necessarily inimical to the view that the cereal acreage, especially the wheat acreage, was at its peak in the mid-1850's. In 1868 Lawes and Gilbert referred to "the

¹ 'Free Trade in "Corn"', in LXXIII, pp. 145-6, 165-8. For another account based on the acreage figures and minimizing the importance of livestock before the mid-1870's see J. T. Coppock, 'The Changing Arable in England and Wales 1870-1956', *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, L, 1959, pp. 122-3.

² It was generally agreed in the 1860's that most of the increased production of meat came from turnips, clover, or sainfoin on land where intervening grain crops were taken, and not from grass. See e.g. 'W. W. G.', 'The Outcry about Meat', *Farmer's Magazine*, 3 ser., XXVIII, 1865, p. 134.

³ T. W. Fletcher, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2 ser., XIII, 1961, p. 432.

⁴ J. B. Lawes and J. H. Gilbert, 'On the Home Produce . . . of Wheat, 1852-3 to 1879-80', *JRASE*, 2 ser., XVI, 1880, Table V.

⁵ L. Drescher, 'The Development of Agricultural Production in Great Britain and Ireland from the Early Nineteenth Century', *Manchester School Econ. & Soc. Studies*, XXIII, 1955, Graph 1, p. 155.

⁶ W. Hasbach, *A History of the English Agricultural Labourer*, 1920, p. 255, quoting *Statistical Abstracts Report*, XX, 1858-72.

general opinion . . . that the area under wheat has diminished during the last 15 or 20 years," and agreed that this was the case, especially in Scotland and Ireland.¹ All the signs point to a contraction of the wheat acreage in the less suitable northern and western areas, including parts of England, during those years, while there is additional confirmation that arable clays in England were being laid down to permanent pasture in the mid-1860's, as might be expected from the movement of wheat prices.² Olsen and Harris, taking the opposite view, say that "from the attention lavished on the repeal of the Corn Laws one might assume that all that was important in British agriculture ended in 1846. But it would be more appropriate to say that the downfall of British agriculture began, not in 1846, but in 1873."³ Disregarding the emotive word "downfall," it can be shown that after the Repeal the altered relative value of wheat and livestock products, due to imports which prevented a rise in the price of wheat, the growth of population, and rising real incomes of which an increasing proportion was spent on livestock products, led to considerable modifications in the structure of farming.

IV

Greater production of livestock was attained primarily by increasing output from arable farms. In the 1850's and '60's stall-feeding and yard-feeding of cattle was intensified in mixed farming regions, and spread into districts such as the dairying parts of Cheshire and Gloucestershire, where it was hitherto unknown, on to chalk and limestone uplands where until the 1840's sheep had been almost the only stock, and into parts of Cornwall and Cumberland where the entire dependence had previously been on grain.⁴ The spread of mixed farming and high feeding from its original homes in eastern England and on the chalk and limestone uplands was stimulated by the development of artificial fertilizers which were important to the root-break, and by the completion of a railway network by which oilcake and artificials could be carried quickly and cheaply all over the country. It was soon realized that yard- and stall- or box-feeding enabled more and better manure to be collected, and fatstock to be produced in more rapid succession than did feeding

¹ J. B. Lawes and J. H. Gilbert, 'On the Home Produce . . . of Wheat', *JRASE*, 2 ser., iv, 1868, pp. 365, 390.

² Anon., 'On the Price of Butcher-meat, and the Increase of Home Supplies of Cattle and Sheep', *Jnl. of Agric.*, xxv, n.s., 1865-6, p. 362; W. J. Moscrop, 'A Report on the Farming of Leicestershire', *JRASE*, 2 ser., ii, 1866, p. 326; H. Evershed, 'Agriculture of Staffordshire', *JRASE*, 2 ser., v, 1869, p. 268, and 'Agriculture of Hertfordshire', *JRASE*, xxv, 1864, p. 283.

³ Olsen & Harris, *loc. cit.*, p. 168.

⁴ L. de Laverigne, *The Rural Economy of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, 1855, p. 185; Read, *loc. cit.*, p. 222; L. H. Ruegg, 'Farming of Dorsetshire', *JRASE*, xv, 1854, p. 412.

in the fields. A further impetus to high feeding came from the high prices of the Crimean war, which prompted the conversion of large acreages of the remaining remote downland, which could not be reached economically with the dung cart, to arable land fertilized by folded flocks.¹ The extension of systems involving hurdled sheep and stall-fed cattle did not, however, mean the end of fattening on the better permanent pastures. Lavergne was exaggerating the trend of the times when in 1855 he bade "adieu, then, to the pastoral scenes of which England was so proud."²

Nevertheless, the increased importance of livestock on arable farms is obvious. This is brought out neatly when the principal items of expenditure and receipts for a 'mixed soil farm' of 590 acres in East Suffolk and a 'heavy land' arable farm of 230 acres in West Suffolk are compared for the periods 1839-44 and 1863-67. Both farms show the trend, and taking them together between the two periods receipts from wheat fell slightly, whereas receipts from barley, peas, oats and beans, cattle, sheep, and pigs all rose markedly. The bill for feed for livestock nearly trebled and became the largest single item of expenditure in the latter period.³

Since the price of wheat did not fall catastrophically until the late 1870's, the joint production of cereals and meat was favoured in the meantime: if the grain enterprise were *given* the manure from the livestock, it could pay its way. On the other hand there were serious obstacles in the way of increasing the grassland production of livestock. Pasture of a sufficient quality to fatten stock was too scarce to provide the whole supply of meat for which there was a demand and could not in any case have provided an all-year-round supply. The three- or four-year leys which contemporaries were able to sow were said to be only half as productive as the 'artificial' feeding on arable farms.⁴ As Frere argued in 1860, the additional supply had to come from feeding in the stall or the yard, and the cost of this would "*regulate the cost of the whole supply*."⁵ As grain-growing could no longer bear the cost of stall-feeding for the sake of the manure, 'artificial' feeding had to be made directly profitable, and with existing methods this meant that the price of beef would gradually have to rise. But as long as receipts from mixed farming as a whole were adequate, only the economically more astute farmers, in districts where grass grew well, would lay land down to grass and specialize in what were becoming the most profitable farm enterprises, finishing cattle and sheep on

¹ See e.g. J. B. Spearing, 'On the Agriculture of Berkshire', *JRASE*, xxi, 1860, p. 16.

² Lavergne, *op. cit.*, pp. 54, 187.

³ Royal Commission on Agriculture, *Particulars of . . . Farm Accounts*, 1896, pp. 167-8.

⁴ 'The Outcry about Meat', *Farmer's Magazine*, *loc. cit.*, p. 135.

⁵ Frere, *loc. cit.*, p. 234.

pasture with oilcake.¹ High feeding was not inflexible, since high inputs of oilcake were justified by reasonable prices for either grain or fatstock even if the price of the other happened to be low. The system was sufficiently viable, economically and technically, for the emphasis on the various products to be altered within wide limits before the grassland production of beef became a more attractive proposition for the arable farmer.

It might be expected that the increasing profitability of livestock would have led to a marked numerical increase of cattle and sheep. This, however, was offset by severe losses among breeding ewes in hill flocks during the hard weather of early 1860, by losses and liquidation sales in the summer droughts of 1864 and 1868, and by the rinderpest among cattle in 1865-66, which drew attention firmly to the short supply of fatstock. The demand for meat continued to grow, with the supply unable to keep pace.² In 1865 it was thought that meat would have become scarce sooner "had it not been for the war with Russia in the Crimea, which caused corn to rise to a high price, and capital therefore to flow back into the hands of farmers, which enabled them to hold their live stock and increase it, instead of forcing it into market half-grown and half-fat at certain seasons that they might meet their fixed expenses."³ Prices and costs favoured the expansion of sheep more than cattle production, but diseased turnip crops and consequently dear feed were alleged to have brought about a decline in the average weight of sheep. It seems likely that cattle were retained on free-draining land where sheep might have brought greater financial rewards because they were more efficient at converting straw into manure. On upland farms the quantity of straw was embarrassing and the insistence of landowners that it should not be sold off the farm was thought a great nuisance.⁴ Contemporaries were divided as to whether or not sheep numbers rose during the '50's and '60's; the most cogent among them argued that a rise was taking place.⁵ The official agricul-

¹ W. H. Heywood, 'The Comparative Profit from Making Cheese or Butter, Selling Milk, or Grazing', *JRASE*, 2 ser., 1, 1865, pp. 342-3, considered grazing even more profitable than milk-producing. Country milking received a tremendous impulse, much of it lasting, when the rinderpest of 1865-6 half-emptied the London cow-houses, but the milk was diverted from the less profitable business of cheese or butter making and no great increase of cows was necessarily involved.—J. C. Morton, 'Town Milk', *JRASE*, 2 ser., IV, 1868, pp. 95-7.

² On the increased demand and high prices in the fatstock markets see Robert Herbert, 'Statistics of Livestock for Consumption in the Metropolis', *JRASE*, XIX, 1858, pp. 496-500, and annually thereafter.

³ 'The Outcry about Meat', *Farmer's Magazine*, *loc. cit.*, p. 134.

⁴ Clement Cadle, *On the Management of a Breeding Herd of Cattle, on an Arable Farm...*, 1863, pp. 3-4.

⁵ W. Wright, 'On the Improvements in the Farming of Yorkshire', *JRASE*, XXII, 1861, pp. 129-30; J. D. Dent, 'Agricultural Notes on the Census of 1861', *JRASE*, XXV, 1864, p. 321.

tural statistics for England and Wales between 1867 and 1875 show a rise of approximately 21 per cent in cattle numbers, some of which may have represented recovery from the plague of 1865-66, although a negligible increase in sheep. Earlier maturity, with a quicker turnover of stock and perhaps heavier killing-out weights of cattle, probably increased the quantity of meat marketed still further. The capital value of the livestock of the U.K. increased almost 80 per cent between 1853 and 1878 according to Caird.¹

Prices moved strongly against wheat in the mid-1860's and at that time the poorer clayland arable was laid to grass in many districts. Much opinion was as yet against this expedient, although that enthusiastic M.F.H. the duke of Beaufort remarked prophetically in 1861 that "the next generation will have much more grass to ride over than the present."² The change was slow. Many farmers regarded the wheat crop with an almost mystical reverence, and in public, at least, many of them took the price of wheat to be the index of agricultural fortunes. Frere in 1860 remarked, in rather muddled language, that "though all are conscious that we can no longer rely on the corn-crops for paying the rent, perhaps none of us have been able sufficiently to throw off the trammels of custom and association, which led him to look for profit first to the stack rather than to the stall."³ A reason which was put forward in 1873 for the persistent emphasis on arable cultivation was that returns came in to the arable farmer throughout the year; "in short, he can as it were, live from hand to mouth on a comparatively less capital. It is not so however with a general stock farmer, who has necessarily to lie [sic] out his capital for extended periods."⁴ Most farmers were in any case conditioned to act by the knowledge that a greater physical production of grain and meat could be obtained by feeding stock on arable farms than on grass, and they therefore sought the most profitable combination of stock and grain production.⁵ In 1866 it was noted that "the fact that grass will pay, and pay much better for manure applied, than corn at its present selling price, is as yet recognized by a limited number of the agriculturists of the country;" the same observation had been made in 1858, another year in which grain prices had been especially low.⁶ Capital and manure continued to be spent on the ploughland at the expense of all but the best pastures. All except the supreme fattening pastures and the dairy pastures of Cheshire, which were properly drained

¹ Caird, 1878, *loc. cit.*, p. 290.

² James Stratton, *A History of the Wiltshire Strattons*, n.d., p. 79 n.

³ Frere, *loc. cit.*, p. 219.

⁴ A Cumberland Landowner, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁵ See e.g. 'Stock versus Corn; or rather the most profitable conduct of farming', *Farmer's Magazine*, 3 ser., XXIII, 1863, p. 142.

⁶ Moscrop, *loc. cit.*, p. 337; H. Tanner, 'The Agriculture of Shropshire', *JRASE*, XIX, 1858, p. 38.

and fertilized with bone dust, seemed to contemporaries less profitable than they might have been, through continual mowing and depasturing by dairy cows and young growing stock which took more out of the land than they returned in manure. Such pastures were thought to be in a gradually deteriorating state.¹

Conversion of arable land to permanent pasture was probably delayed by the rise of grain prices to a peak in the early 1870's, but by this time informed opinion was in favour of fattening stock on grass and finishing the beasts with oilcake. This ensured that the pastures were adequately manured, and besides being a cheaper mode of production than yard- or stall-feeding enabled the fatstock to be sold in June or July, when the price of beef was higher than at the end of summer. "The great difficulty," as it was seen in February 1872, "is in making a beginning. The routine of years, possibly handed down for generations, cannot be broken through without a pang; but such pangs seldom outlive the first favourable balance-sheet, and it may be confidently stated that for some time past the farmers who have made most money are those who have paid as much attention to the improvement of their grass as to the growth of fine crops of corn or roots."² Even later the trend was on occasion reversed for a brief spell, but the successive peaks of wheat and barley prices and acreages were lower and lower in the '70's and were looked on as transient. For example, at Aldbourne, Wiltshire, where in 1878 "corn growing superseded the making of meat," this was regarded as "a state of things which cannot last long,"³ and indeed it did not last, for this was where Henry Wilson allowed a large acreage to go down to grass for the stock in which he was dealing, and where as a result the hamlet of Snap was eventually deserted.

There are signs that the growing profitability of mixed farming and the weakening position of the specialist cereal grower was not without influence on the size and type of farm holdings. The census returns of 1851 and '61 show a decrease of 6,132 farms below 300 acres, and an increase of 229 in those between 300 and 1,000 acres, for the ten very diverse counties for which figures are available for both dates. This change was explained as the engulfing of the smaller holdings, which had been occupied by men of little capital, "who were very much dependent upon corn crops for their living, and, at the

¹ Anon., 'On the Price of Butcher-meat', *loc. cit.*, pp. 363-4; J. C. Morton, 'On the Management of Grass Lands', *Jnl. of the Bath & West Soc.*, XIII, 1865, pp. 62-4, 68-9.

² H. S. Thompson, 'On the Management of Grass Land. . .', *JRASE*, 2 ser., VIII, 1872, p. 179.

³ *Agric. Gazette*, N.S. VIII, 18.11.1878, p. 463, quoted by F. M. L. Thompson, 'Agriculture since 1870', *V.C.H. Wilts.*, IV, 1959, p. 97.

present prices of grain . . . not having stock to back them up, cannot make farming remunerative."¹ In Cumberland in 1874 the growing number of livestock was attributed to the improved quality of the pastures more than to the increased acreage of grass, although many clayland farms which a few years earlier were heavily cropped to afford a precarious livelihood had been drained and converted into good grazing farms.²

V

High feeding had been so much extolled as the salvation of the farmer at mid-century (even Fred Vincy in *Middlemarch* was supposed to have written on the 'Cultivation of Green Crops and the Economy of Cattle Feeding')³ that the shift of advanced opinion in favour of grassland fattening by the early 1870's comes as some surprise. According to Clapham, although lease covenants were in practice winked at, cropping changed in no essential way between 1850 and 1886.⁴ But the agitation for more flexible rotations was so strong in this period that had lease covenants been so uniformly a dead letter, there would surely have been major cropping changes. In 1863 the [London] Farmers' Club was discussing how to meet the growing demand for meat and wool, "without materially disarranging our order of management, so objectionable to land-agents."⁵ The summer droughts of the following year and of 1868, when the root-crops were severely damaged, brought home the need for freedom to amend cropping plans to meet contingencies of this sort,⁶ quite apart from the desirability of tailoring rotations to suit the trends of prices. The agitation against cropping restrictions, although perhaps as Professor Ashworth claims in part a rationalization of antagonism to the continued political influence of landowners,⁷ was underpinned by genuine economic considerations. It seems that the growing incentive to produce livestock could account for much of the uneasiness in landlord-tenant relations, in particular the demands for freedom to alter cycles of fodder crops and to insert catch crops of cereals, according to the swaying state of the markets, and for more livestock housing, without which no big increase of stock was possible.

With rising livestock prices as the attraction, fodder crops were at first extended at the expense of grain. On the clays the mangel acreage increased throughout the 1850's, but by 1865 farmers in many clayland districts were

¹ Dent, *loc. cit.*, pp. 323-4.

² Farrall, *loc. cit.*, p. 407.

³ George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, 1947 edn., p. 889.

⁴ Clapham, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 275-6.

⁵ 'Stock versus Corn', *loc. cit.*, pp. 142-3.

⁶ J. C. Morton, 'Some of the Agricultural Lessons of 1868', *JRASE*, 2 ser., v, 1869, pp. 54-5.

⁷ Ashworth, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

finding it cheaper to feed stock on purchased grain than to grow roots.¹ In Worcestershire in 1867 mangels were still being extended on the clays, "from the high price of meat," and it was observed of Cumberland in 1874, that "the majority of skilled agriculturists do not go in solely for producing wheat; they would much rather sow the land with oats and barley than forgo the turnip crop, which is now looked on as the mainstay of arable farming."² But in the drier eastern counties, where roots, although more difficult to grow, occupied a larger proportion of each farm than in the west, the root-break had come to be viewed with a jaundiced eye by the mid-1870's. By that time, as Lawes showed, stock could beyond doubt be fattened more cheaply on grain and cut-straw than on roots. The insistence of landowners that 25 per cent of the farm acreage must be kept under roots, according to the dictates of the four-course system, was a source of some bitterness.³

VI

The retention of mixed farming systems in which livestock were replacing grain as the most profitable elements had in the 1850's and '60's been a reasonable adaptation to prices, which favoured now the one side, now the other, while gradually swinging farther and farther to the livestock side. Mixed farming was less well suited to the conditions of the '70's. The fall in the price of wheat was uneven and the temporary peak of the Franco-Prussian war period dissuaded grain-conscious farmers from a wholehearted change to fatstock production on grass, but after 1873 hesitation in following the trend of the previous twenty years evaporated. However, the persistence so late with cereal growing under the shelter of mixed farming and high feeding must have intensified the distress when bad harvests and the landslide in grain prices occurred at the end of the '70's. Until then, since mixed farming's strength lay in stabilizing income through the sale of several commodities, short-term, out-of-phase fluctuations in the prices of its various products could be accommodated. The collapse of grain prices and thus one whole side of the system was needed to effect the break-up of mixed farming. Even so, as has been shown from the income tax assessments, the rise in rent between 1851-52 and 1878-79 had been greater in the pastoral north and west and in the grazing counties than in the arable east of England. Indeed,

¹ P. D. Tuckett, 'On the Modifications of the Four-course. . .', *JRASE*, XXI, 1860, p. 262; H. Evershed, 'On Sheep', *JRASE*, 2 ser., I, 1865, p. 335.

² C. Cadle, 'The Agriculture of Worcestershire', *JRASE*, 2 ser., III, 1867, p. 452; Farrall, *loc. cit.*, p. 407.

³ F. Clifford, 'The Labour Bill in Farming', *JRASE*, 2 ser., XI, 1875, pp. 123-4, and citing J. D. Lawes in *JRASE*, 2 ser., IX, 1873, pp. 373-4.

in arable districts, especially on the chalk and sands of the drier counties where grass does not thrive and leys are difficult to establish, and above all on the poor clays where expenditure by landowners may have been highest, there may have been a fall in real rent over these years.¹ This is a final indication that profits from livestock rather than grain had become increasingly the basis of agricultural prosperity. The structural changes in English agriculture during the Great Depression, which made livestock production far more prominent than cereal growing, had been foreshadowed by the transformation of mixed farming.

¹ Clapham, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 278-9; Caird, 1878, *loc. cit.*, p. 315.

Letters to the Editor

SIR,—Your reviewer of *English Farming Past and Present* is entitled to the view that the history of land-holding either is or is not an important part of the history of agriculture, but in taking a generally unfavourable view of a book, he should not depreciate it for things it should not or could not contain. There are three items under the last heading that call for comment.

The book has little to say on Wales, Scotland, and Ireland—true enough. Its title is "*English Farming* . . ." How our fringe Celts would rage had these countries been included in a work with this title, and one of the editors a McGregor!

Moreover, I suspect that the reviewer has been either very fortunate, or but little acquainted with publishers and their inevitable delays, and that he has forgotten the printing strike. I think there is no reference to John's *Land Tenure* and the papers of the First International Conference on Economic History because they had not been published when the two introductions were written, and that the book, after the usual and unusual (the strike) delays, was brought up to date by the simple

publishers' device of putting the current date on it.

I remain, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
GEO. ORDISH

SIR,—I would like to add to Mr Jeffrey Radley's examples of the use of holly for sheep-fed in winter by pointing out that it was regularly used in High Furness in Lancashire. Thomas West in his *Antiquities of Furness*, 1805, pp. 40-1, describes the practice in the early Middle Ages and goes on to remark that "this custom has never been discontinued." Clumps of holly trees, he says, were carefully preserved long after other woodland had been cleared, and mutton thus fed "has a remarkable fine flavour." Another occurrence of the name *hollin* in place-names may be found in *The Beetham Repository*, 1770, *Cumberland and Westmorland Antiq. and Archaeolog. Soc.*, Tract Series, 7, 1906, p. 104.

Yours faithfully,
JOAN THIRSK

*Department of English Local
History, Leicester University.*

Book Reviews

H. C. BOWEN, *Ancient Fields*. British Association for the Advancement of Science.

N.D. 80 pp., 5 plates, 5 line figures. 7s. 6d. This account of ancient field systems is the outcome of the first three years' work of the British Association's Research Committee on Ancient Fields, written by the Honorary Secretary. The first chapters deal with the way in which these fields are formed, and with some, but not all, of the problems related to their study. They are followed by a chapter describing some of the methods used in their investigation; and by appendices setting out the nature of the information which is required to make a full record of the existing remains. Another appendix drawing attention to some urgent problems is useful, but by no means exhaustive.

This small book shows how much archaeological information can be obtained by the careful and critical observation of surface features, without necessarily having recourse to excavation. Within its confines, Mr Bowen clearly and concisely points the way for further research. The text is supported by some excellent line drawings and by some splendid photographs, of which Plate IV (taken by Dr St Joseph) is particularly noteworthy. Two points, however, have been insufficiently emphasized. It is not made clear that the 'fields' dealt with in this account are in fact areas of land with readily identifiable boundaries, and it must not be overlooked that other types of land division probably existed. Secondly, the difference between fields occurring on varying geological terrains is not always drawn sharply enough, Mr Bowen confining himself mostly to a description of those on downland.

Britain is remarkably rich in this type of antiquity, which can provide, in places, a sequence of field patterns going back to the Bronze Age. The complexity and variety of the problems involved in their study is amply demonstrated by the selective bibliography contained at the end of the book. But on look-

ing more closely at this bibliography, the gaps in our knowledge become more painfully obvious. This is particularly so with Romano-British sites, but let it be hastily added that this is not the fault of Mr Bowen. It is more the fault of archaeologists who pick sites which will show quick returns for their labour, rather than indulge in the wearisome, foot-slogging investigations, often perhaps profitless, which the study of fields demands. Britain has yet to see the complete examination of any Romano-British settlement, including its fields, in a manner attempted for some later sites. Mr Bowen has rightly drawn attention to the problem of villa fields, but he might with equal justification have mentioned other specific cases, although, to be fair, they could be included under some of his general headings. How, for instance, was land outside some northern forts divided, particularly during the fourth century, when they are known to have been occupied by farmer-soldiers? What were the arrangements, official or otherwise, in force outside towns, and is it possible to link these in any way with the nearest villas? It is perhaps worth mentioning that most surveys of fields near towns have attempted only to show the existence of centuriation, a form of land division which was extremely rare in Britain, as Professor Richmond has pointed out.¹ If this scarcity could be realized, and centuriation forgotten for the time being, some progress with this problem might be made. Until then the full economic picture of Romano-British towns will continue to elude us. In many respects, this applies just as much to the settlements of other times. If we are to understand them fully, they must be examined *in toto*, and it is to be hoped that Mr Bowen's book will encourage and stimulate the archaeologists and historians of all periods to achieve this end.

Such criticisms as have here been made are relatively minor ones, prompted for the most part by the restricted space allotted to Mr

¹ Richmond, I. A., *Roman Britain*, p. 128.

Bowen. A far more serious criticism will be levelled at him if he does not go on to produce a complete, comprehensive study of the subject, together with at least some of the answers to the questions which he himself has asked. Like *Oliver Twist*, the reader of this book will ask for more.

J. S. WACHER

A. W. B. SIMPSON, *An Introduction to the History of the Land Law*. Oxford University Press, 1961. viii+276 pp. 25s.

For over thirty years Sir William Holdsworth's *Historical Introduction to the Land Law* has ranked with the great texts of the modern law schools. It was first published hard on the heels of the sweeping law reforms of 1925, and was designed to present those reforms in a historical perspective as the only way of illuminating what would otherwise be inscrutable law.

Since Holdsworth's first edition, a generation of law scholars and practitioners has matured. What was novel in 1925 is now familiar and well worn; the immediate need for a historical text as Holdsworth saw it has passed. But new needs have taken its place, as advances in economic and social history, of which agricultural history is a part, have generated an eclectic demand for associated studies.

Mr Simpson's book was prepared to serve much the same purpose as Holdsworth's text. As a law textbook of first rank it will do that, and it will do much more besides. His lucid style, free of unnecessary technical terms, will be easily understood by the historian unfamiliar with the niceties of legal concepts, and will ensure the book a catholic appeal.

Unlike Holdsworth, the author treats selected topics as a series of separate chronological studies. Consequently the outlines of his perspectives are sharp, and are not blurred by a laborious regard for the contemporaneity in the development of the law as a whole.

To the social historian Simpson's review is a reminder that the history of the land law is not a theme apart, but is itself a vital feature of the social scene. Legal tradition, rigidly

conservative, in an emergent social and economic order precipitated a conflict which was resolved over the years by the legists shutting themselves away from the real world into a cave of shadows where the fictitious antics of Doe and Roe, and Messrs Fairclaim and Shamtitle keep them company. Only slowly do the shadows merge into substance: Simpson can refer to the Settled Land Act, 1882, as "the only really radical legislative interference with the law of property which the nineteenth century produced." Delay is all the more remarkable since the legislative reforms which could have dispelled the fictions and the need for them had been hammered out generations before by the reformers of Cromwellian England.

This new legal history reminds us again how far the precise concepts of the law are removed from the looser thought of the social and economic histories. How many accepted works would have to be rewritten if in conformity with the lawyers' thought they were required to refrain from mentioning the ownership of land in a day when, at most, a freeholder is seized of a fee or a seignory? Agrarian histories, to take a further example, make familiar references to the Statute of Merton 1235, and the confirmation of the lord's right of approval of the commons subject to the rights of the commoners; but the refinements of the law have limited the common rights so protected to rights in gross bestowed by special grant from the lord of the manor.

Mr Simpson in the main keeps to the great highways of his subject: tenures, estates, alienation, and perpetuities. No agricultural historian can afford to be ignorant of these cardinal themes of the law. But it is in the hedgerows of legal history that the agriculturist finds more evidence of familiar things. To this lesser, collateral world belong the doctrine of waste, the sale of manorial works, estovers, customary and improved leases, and tenant-right.

When, by his treatment of common rights as a form of profits, the author ventures a brief visit to the hedgerows he tempts us to ask for more. Fortunately the arrangement of his text

is sectionalized to a degree which facilitates the tacking on of additional topics. We hope in some later edition he will do this, and leaving the highways, so well known to him, will search the hedgerows for his new chapters.

D. R. DENMAN

V. H. GALBRAITH, *The Making of Domesday Book*. Clarendon Press, 1961. xii+242 pp., illus. 35s.

It is now twenty years since Professor Galbraith first assailed John Horace Round's thesis that Domesday Book was an accidental and belated postscript to the Conqueror's great survey of England. To Round the object of the survey was to produce the supposed Original Returns, which marshalled the tenurial and agrarian details by vill and hundred, and which proved so cumbersome that they had to be reduced, tentatively and tardily, to the compass of Domesday Book. The second volume, or Little Domesday Book, figures in this theory as an experimental essay, abandoned in favour of Great Domesday's more stringent plan, whilst the *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis* displays the scope of the Original Returns, and Exon Domesday remains an enigma. Round's hypothesis was readily accepted, not least, although Professor Galbraith refrains from saying so, because Round's excellent scholarship was matched only by his malice in controversy, and it continued to command respect after his death.

It is, however, a vulnerable hypothesis, and Professor Galbraith has demonstrated its weakness. Its principal fault is that, although Round himself insisted that we could best understand why Domesday Book was made if we could discover how it was made, he assumed that there was an orderly purpose behind the survey that was concealed by the documents we now possess. The purpose that he chose, a new and just assessment of the geld, was an anachronism, but even that failure of historical sense mattered less than the necessary assumption that a survey of this size and thoroughness was undertaken to produce a report in an inconvenient and un-

wanted form. No matter how unwieldy the hundredal returns would have been, Domesday Book in its present form would be even less useful for assessing geld. Professor Galbraith's approach is precisely opposite to Round's: he assumes that Domesday Book was made deliberately to a careful plan, and that it was written for the Conqueror in his lifetime. The allied manuscripts, from Little Domesday and Exon Domesday to the monastic documents from Kent and elsewhere, fall into a coherent pattern behind the great book, while the whole thesis can now claim powerful support from the discoveries made at the Public Record Office in 1953, when Domesday Book was rebound.

Professor Galbraith reverses a good deal more than Round's primary assumption. To him the Original Returns were not hundredal surveys but documents like Little Domesday and the Exon Domesday, arranged by tenants-in-chief and not by vills, and representing the first stage of the recensions that the Treasury wished to see. The features of its handwriting and arrangement from which Round argued that Little Domesday was a first draft are those that now convince us that it is a fair copy. On the other hand, although Exon Domesday is both an elaborate compilation and the source of another manuscript (either the relevant part of Great Domesday, or a fair copy like Little Domesday) it cannot be described as an abstract of the hypothetical hundredal material, because it does not read like an abstract. Its phrases are leisurely and experimental, the work of men who were more anxious to be thorough than to be lucid. When we turn to the Kentish material, the hundredal rolls twirl even further from probability. They are unlikely to have been rolls in any case, but all other commentators have assumed that the Domesday commissioners must have begun with some large *gatherum* of facts which they painfully reduced to sense. Professor Galbraith uses the Domesday Monachorum and the other Kentish surveys to illustrate one of his most striking suggestions: that, on the contrary, the commissioners probably used their formal sittings to

compile a skeleton brief of lands and tenants which they rearranged by fiefs and then augmented with manorial statistics and other matter.

The rôle of the hundred juries is therefore reduced to their witness upon some simple matters of fact, and some more complicated testimony about right and seisin. The larger towns must have presented peculiar difficulties, as there was no simple formula to which their tenurial pattern could be related, and the position of the returns for the principal south-eastern towns in Little Domesday, and of the more summary accounts of the Devon boroughs in Exon Domesday, may reflect the additional time that was needed to deal with them. How the commissioners came by their figures of manorial stock and values, once they had made their first brief, is an open question still. Professor Galbraith thinks that "sitting tenants and their manorial staff" may have provided them; he has no great faith in the priest and the reeve and the six men of the vill, and it is true that if "si potest plus haberi quam habeatur" were answered honestly it would be a matter for steward and reeve and not for reeve and labourers. It would be a great advance in our understanding of the inquest if we could free the commissioners' open sessions from the burden of collecting details of tenure, claims, stock, and value at the same time. On the other hand, although the formidable nature of the survey once seemed a large obstacle to accepting at its face value Little Domesday's statement that the *descriptio* of England was made in 1086, the palaeographical and diplomatic evidence now make it plain that the work was finished by the summer of 1087. We need more evidence on the commissioners' activities before we decide that they could or could not have followed a particular course; and we may yet find it.

It is very difficult to interpret Domesday Book, but the prizes are worth any effort. Professor Galbraith's work has brought them all much closer: he may, indeed, be said to have won some of them himself. Domesday Book is one of the great facts of our history; an un-

paralleled monument to the skill and energy of the Conqueror's servants, and to the administrative traditions of the Old English state. The information that it contains is astonishing, but the historical significance of the manuscripts is not to be measured by their contents alone. Professor Darby's *Domesday Geographies* point to one profitable way of exploiting the great survey, but they have also opened questions which only such enquiries as Professor Galbraith's can answer. If we can discover how Domesday Book was made we shall not only discover why it was made, but shall also enormously increase our knowledge of eleventh-century England, enriching our picture of "how it was peopled" with that last and most rewarding discovery: "with what sort of men."

GEOFFREY MARTIN

ALAN HARRIS, *The Rural Landscape of the East Riding of Yorkshire, 1700-1850*. A study in historical geography. Oxford University Press for the University of Hull, 1961. xvi+136 pp. 25s.

This clearly composed book deals with a century and a half of landscape changes in the East Riding of Yorkshire, a period which the author claims to be "the most formative" in the long history of the countryside. More than a half of the area of the East Riding was still in open fields at the end of the seventeenth century, and it is probably true to say that the enclosure of these lands and the accompanying technical and social changes represent the most radical transformation of this countryside since the clearance of the primitive forests of the Wolds that began before the Bronze Age.

The author begins with an outline of the East Riding's physical geography, describing the natural regions whose features are clearly written into the agrarian history of the area. The rest of the book is made up of three long chapters representing three cross-sections in time of the East Riding. The first, entitled "the Old Order," presents a detailed picture of farming in the various regions of the Wolds, Holderness, the Siltlands along the Humber,

the Vale of York, and the Jurassic hills, at the beginning of the eighteenth century. This makes most attractive and refreshing reading because it draws so many details from a wide variety of primary sources. The second period picture deals with the changing countrysides of the eighteenth century. The last section reviews the agriculture of the East Riding about the middle of the nineteenth century, when the revolutionary changes of the enclosure movement are ended and the pattern of present-day farming is clearly established.

The student of agricultural history cannot fail to find many interesting points in this book. Mr Harris produces a wealth of evidence on the variations of field patterns in the east Yorkshire townships in the early eighteenth century. At Kirby Grindalythe the open fields lay in pairs along the wide valley that runs through the chalk wolds. Some of the wold settlements farmed with an 'infield-outfield' system, and in certain villages as many as seven outfields have been recognized. At Burton Pidsea in Holderness there were two large open fields, divided from each other by a line of ancient enclosures of unknown age. At Burton Agnes, a village of the Jurassic hills whose lands stretch on to the Wolds, the fields on the bare wold-top remained open long after the lower lands had been enclosed. And so one could continue with illuminating details from the local scene, details that are the most essential part of our studies.

In the later parts of the book Mr Harris discusses the various kinds of hedging materials, and the plans of the red-brick, pantiled farmhouses that arose away from the clustered villages at the beginning of the nineteenth century. With the help of an air photograph he shows how the making of a park at Sledmere transformed the geography of a village. Emigration from wold villages in the 1840's, the custom of boarding large numbers of unmarried labourers in the spacious farmhouses of the chalk country, the techniques of using bones as a fertilizer, and the disappearance of the "old-fashioned Holderness shorthorn that was famous for its great size and profuse milk yield," all come under

review in this excellent book. The work is illustrated by nearly forty line maps, many of them drawn from material in the archives that the author has used so thoroughly. This is historical geography in the best sense of the word, in that the author is a trained geographer and a competent historian.

R. MILLWARD

PHILIP WRIGHT, *Old Farm Implements*. A. and C. Black, 1961. xvi+96 pp., illustrated. 25s.

Mr Wright, the son of a Suffolk farmer, is an Essex parson, who has been collecting old farm and farmhouse implements since his youth. In his book he describes his collection with the help of photographs and drawings. Although he does not pretend to have written a history of farm implements, he has, nevertheless, performed a useful service; because too often collectors allow vital information about the age, place of origin, and function of their implements to go unrecorded.

Most of Mr Wright's implements are East Anglian, and his collection is fairly comprehensive. One of his rarer tools is a mechanical seed broadcaster made in 1780. It is a modification of the seed fiddle; but instead of fiddling the sower turns a crank handle, which is attached by finely made bevel gears to a revolving plate on to which the seed falls.

As well as describing the uses of his implements, Mr Wright also recalls some of the rural customs and crafts practised in Suffolk before the first World War. In his descriptions of the old farm labourers of that time performing their work, he evokes the authentic flavour of farm life in the days before mechanization.

M. A. HAVINDEN

J. GERAINT JENKINS, *The English Farm Wagon: Origin and Structure*. Pub. by the Oakwood Press for the Museum of English Rural Life (University of Reading), 1961. xii+248 pp.; 58 illus. 42s.

English 'Folk Life', for want of a better term, is a subject not well endowed with textbooks, and such an authoritative and comprehensive

work as this is therefore doubly welcome.

For many years museums have been erratically collecting material of the countryside; ploughs, smocks, and craftsmen's tools. But although this equipment may have a sentimental value or be curiously contrived, it rarely has an intrinsic value of its own. These material objects are only fully useful in reconstructing the past daily life of the countryside in so far as information is recorded about their background history. Unfortunately, this information is vanishing as rapidly as the objects themselves, and there is considerable urgency about the gathering for future generations of such information as now remains. Such was the plight of the English farm wagon a few years ago. One realized that there were 'regional variations'. But as to what these variations were, their geographical distribution, and the reasons behind them, no one knew. A museum professing to collect within its county preserved a wagon which now proves to have come from four counties and 160 miles away. Perhaps one should be grateful that it was preserved, for at that time very few large specimens were being collected by our museums. As this work now published progressed, selected wagons were collected by the Museum of English Rural Life, and that Museum (as shown in Appendix IV of the book) has now preserved twenty-one wagons. Another twenty-one are to be found in other English and Welsh museums.

In the course of the survey on which the regional part of this book is based, Mr Jenkins investigated nearly 600 wagons, with the assistance of organizations such as the National Farmers' Union, the Rural Industries Bureau, and regional museums. These examples, the last sad remnants of a past era of transport, stood axle deep in weeds and rubbish in out-of-the-way corners of farms, with flaking paint and rotting planks.

The book is usefully written in two parts: "Origins" and "Structure." In the former, the evolution of the four-wheeled wagon is discussed and its relation to other wheeled transport; the evolution of wagon-building techniques is dealt with in a section thought-

fully produced and of considerable interest; and the geographical distribution of wagons throughout Europe leads to the consideration of such factors as topography, economics, cultures, and field patterns.

Then follows a detailed and comprehensive section on the building and construction of an English farm wagon, ending with a complete classification of Box and Bow wagons. All 28 types are described in detail and illustrated by photograph. The four appendices list measurements, features of construction, wagon types county by county, and a catalogue of wagons in museums.

For the first time we have a complete and dispassionate survey of the English farm wagon. It may well prove to be, in a more real sense than the colloquial, the "last word" on the subject, for few wagons now remain outside museums. This work also demonstrates clearly that folk life is not a subject worthy only of amateur dabblers. It is a serious discipline worthy of proper attention, and one hopes that other universities may be stimulated, along with our museums, to devote more time and energy to the study of other aspects of rural material before it is too late.

FRANK ATKINSON

MARGARET BEATTIE BOGUE, *Patterns from the Sod; Land Use and Tenure in the Grand Prairie, 1850-1900* [Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library, xxiv, Land Series I]. Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, 1959. 328 pp., maps. \$2.50.

The problems of landownership, tenure, and use are of vital importance in developing the agricultural history of an area or of a nation. This intensive study of large landholdings in eight counties of east central Illinois casts light upon all of these problems. Many more studies of this nature must be made before a definitive history of American agriculture can be written.

British historians will find the study similar to some of their studies in so far as the size of the area covered is concerned. However, the study deals with the settlement and development of a new, raw land. The author's pur-

pose is to trace significant changes in land use and ownership in the eight counties from the frontier period to the 1890's, to investigate the reasons for the gradual growth in tenancy, and to analyse major conflicts in economic interests among different groups of landowners.

The original patterns of landownership grew out of the sales of federal, state, county, and railroad lands. The great majority of purchasers bought small tracts which they farmed themselves. However, many investors bought large tracts. Some of these investors rented their lands to small farmers, while others turned their estates to cattle raising. During the period after the Civil War, some of the large holdings, particularly those devoted to cattle, disappeared, as land was drained and otherwise improved. New holdings of large size developed gradually as farmers and business men invested in farmland for the purpose of renting it. As the land was improved and more intensive agriculture was undertaken, rents increased. In many respects, both owners and tenants found that the tenancy system met their needs.

By the end of the nineteenth century the region was gaining a reputation as one of the richest agricultural areas in the United States. Its lands commanded high prices on the real-estate market and much capital had been invested through eastern loans placed by loan agents.

This brief indication of the approach to and conclusions of the study under review is incomplete unless one indicates the thorough, scholarly manner in which the problems have been approached and the conclusions drawn. The study is an outstanding contribution to the history of American agriculture.

WAYNE D. RASMUSSEN

R. F. HUNNISETT, *The Medieval Coroner*. Cambridge University Press, 1961. xiv+218 pp. 30s.

The office of coroner was established in English counties in September 1194, in the boroughs from 1200, and in the franchises during the thirteenth century. As 'keeper of

the pleas of the crown' the coroner was a specialist in sudden death, and as time went on became more so as his regular duties were confined to holding inquests on dead bodies, receiving abjurations of the realm by felons in sanctuary, promulgating outlawries, hearing appeals, the confessions of felons, and the appeals of those who wished to save themselves by 'turning king's evidence' and were called approvers (*probatores*). The coroner's procedure was to attach witnesses and suspects, to value and safeguard property which might later be forfeited, to record details. He might have to conduct some four or five abjurations of the realm every year, and there is an excellent discussion of this well-known practice, but other work made greater calls on his time and could be unpleasant. To Mr Hunnisett's many examples may be added the viewing in 1316-17 (a famine year) of 71 dead bodies in Maidstone gaol, where twenty years later four men were hired for a week at 6d. a day each and a bonus to clear out the *camera secreta* with wooden forks and scoops by the light of candles.¹

Originally the coroner served as a check upon the sheriff; but the sheriff was also a check upon the coroner, and never ceased to be the more important functionary. Though both in the thirteenth-century heyday were drawn from the *buzones* class, it seems that after c. 1300 when the knighthood qualification for the coroner was waived, the office tended to attract those who were striving to rise in the world. In 1382 we see an Oxfordshire coroner walking behind his plough (p. 142), in 1424 a Leicestershire coroner was 'advanced' to be under-sheriff (p. 196). Such men were of diminished account beside escheators, assessors of taxes, and J.P.s. Yet there were some to desire the office and its opportunities for extortion, and here and there great families like the Pelhams of Sussex number coroners among their forbears.

Mr Hunnisett has written a valuable and much-needed monograph in the best traditions of Public Record scholarship, scrupulous, comprehensive, and strictly institution-

¹ Lambeth Court Roll Collection, Nos. 659, 665.

al. To historians the evidential value of coroners' rolls may be as important as knowledge of the office itself, and it would have been useful to have a list of those in print, and also an ordered bibliography of work already done on the subject. But these are minor matters. There is a select glossary of legal terms, and a good index.

F. R. H. DU BOULAY

EDMUND RUFFIN, *An Essay on Calcareous Manures*, ed. by J. Carlyle Sitterson. Oxford University Press for Harvard U.P., 1961. xxxvi+200 pp. 34s.

It is always an advantage to have an easily accessible and comparatively cheap reprint of a book written by a farming pioneer. By so much is this one the more welcome, although I suspect that a student's reading of such works is often limited to the editor's introduction, which can usually be relied upon to give an authentic summary in modern language. Original copies of early American publications on the theory and practice of farming in the U.S.A. are difficult to come by in this country, where their main interest can be little more than the measure in which the American writers depend upon the theories and methods detailed in the European literature.

There are nevertheless certain specific orthodoxies relating to the subject that are familiar enough. The unwisdom of the one-crop economy of the early settlers in the south, who at first depended very largely upon continuous cropping with tobacco as an economic necessity, or, if the term is preferable, as a cash crop, is one of these. The accepted consequence was declining fertility until the returns became so small that the farmer was forced to cultivate a fresh area, possibly farther west.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the tidewater farmers of Virginia were finding it difficult to make a living because of falling yields. Ruffin began his working life on a declining plantation, but although he then began the series of agricultural experiments that was to play a large part in the rehabilitation of the area, it was only after he had failed to

carve out a political career that he returned to his plantation work in 1826.

Soil exhaustion had by then become so widespread in Maryland and Virginia that yields of maize had fallen to ten bushels an acre, and of wheat to no more than six, the latter being the level to which production on the open fields of thirteenth-century England had often approximated. Even when the crops are cultivated for subsistence only, such yields are appallingly low.

Ruffin's first attempts to restore the fertility of his lands by the accepted methods of crop rotation, including an occasional clover crop, and the use of organic manures, failed dismally. He therefore began a series of chemical analyses of his soil, and carefully observed the natural ecology, or the weeds that flourished on land that had temporarily fallen out of cultivation. From these observations and tests he came to the conclusion that soil acidity and lack of calcium carbonate were the causes of the declining yields. So early as 1818 he began to dig marl and use it as a fertilizer at the rate of 125 to 200 bushels an acre. The result was so successful that he continued the process on a larger acreage with the same satisfying returns.

These results were described first in an essay in the *American Farmer* of 1821. Later Ruffin expanded his theories and experiments in the book here reprinted. He had read the early agricultural chemists, Home, Kirwan, Dundonald, Davy, and he was acquainted with some English and French farming textbooks, but he had little specific chemical skill—as he would have been the first to acknowledge. It would be too lengthy a task to follow the course of his experiments, observations, and the arguments he based upon them—that is indeed no less than the contents of the book—but clearly both his example and his writings had marked effects upon the restoration of a measure of prosperity to these lands during the three decades that preceded the outbreak of the American Civil War. He was a formidable partisan of the south, and his was the hand which, under orders of course, fired the first shot at Fort Sumter.

Ruffin's book described his theories, their practical effects, the methods and cost of digging marl, the use of gypsum, and the quantity and cost of the calcareous manure that ought to be applied. It was a complete handbook, and though the subject was by no means new in the world—Pliny had discussed the use of marl, and both marl and lime figure largely in the subsequent literature—it was a novelty in Ruffin's countryside, and his example and precept had remarkable results there. He was in the strict line of agricultural improvers.

G. E. FUSSELL

F. J. FISHER (ed.), *Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England, in honour of R. H. Tawney*. Cambridge University Press, 1961. [vi]+236 pp. 30s.

It is a happy thing that this volume of essays appeared, if somewhat belatedly, and with a surprising number of misprints, in time for the *doyen* of English social, economic, and agricultural historians to read it. The variety of the contributions bears eloquent testimony to the width, if not in all cases to the depth, of that great mind: each one can trace its ancestry to some topic illuminated by Professor Tawney himself. Christopher Hill reappraises the connection between protestantism and capitalism; Maurice Beresford writes on enclosure; Joan Thirsk on rural industries; Lawrence Stone on Robert Cecil's fruits of office; D. C. Coleman on a Restoration financier; Ralph Davis on England and the Mediterranean; Robert Ashton on Charles I's relations with the City; and G. E. Aylmer and D. H. Pennington on the finances of the nation. In his introductory essay, Professor Fisher attempts the daunting task of drawing the net round this varied haul, and aptly comments that "Unanimity is scarcely a characteristic of those whose work owes most to Tawney's influence. . . His influence has been exercised through more varied channels and at a more profound level. . . And even those who reject his views most vigorously find themselves answering, rather than ignoring, the questions which he has raised."

The most controversial, and not the least fascinating, essay is Mr Hill's. Happily this is not the place for an extended critique of his delicately poised abstractions. But it is perhaps a pity that, for the vague and inadequate term 'puritanism', he has substituted the even vaguer and more inadequate term protestantism: for it is only on its ultimate fringes that the latter really merges with capitalism. It may well be that in the last resort protestantism is a challenge to authority and a "religion of the heart;" but if that is the whole story, only a tiny fraction of the people of England, Holland, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, north Germany, and Huguenot France were ever 'protestants'. Who shall say, moreover, that there was no *authority* in Knox's Edinburgh or Calvin's Geneva? Or that the un-capitalist anglicanism of Whitgift and Hooker was not essentially protestant? And in the whole dispute on capitalism and religion one wonders, at times, whether puritanism did not owe a good deal more to capitalism than the other way about.

For readers of this review, the invidious task of selecting from the remaining essays is fortunately resolved by their subject matter. Only two relate specifically to agrarian topics. In view of Tawney's abiding emphasis on English agricultural interests, from his first major book *The Agrarian Problem* to his most controversial paper *The Rise of the Gentry*, one could have wished for more. But if the dishes are few, one can be grateful for their substance. Professor Beresford writes, somewhat indigestibly, on the debate on enclosure by agreement, and traces the tale from the reluctant concessions of Tudor statutes to the "benevolent neutrality of the Hanoverian Enclosure Acts." He is not concerned solely with official views upon the rival claims of "habitation *versus* improvement," but with the changing temper of public opinion at large. In this change he traces not only an admission that enclosure need not entail depopulation, but "a concession to the realities of variety in local agrarian practice; an aspect [*sic*] of faith in the market mechanism and a distrust of regulation; finally, a search for an

administrative device whereby enclosure could be 'Regulated'." He justly stresses the inevitability of the movement, but the conclusions drawn from the decline in vocal opposition to it are perhaps too sanguine.

In 'Industries in the Countryside' Mrs Thirsk breaks more original ground. Concentrating her attention on the clothing and knitting industries of Suffolk, Wiltshire, Kent, Westmorland, and the north-west corner of Yorkshire, she aims, not to describe the nature and organization of rural employments, an occupation for a lifetime's research, but to explain their location. Brushing aside the familiar—perhaps wearisomely familiar—explanation in the presence of local supplies of raw material, adequate streams, and good communications with markets, she seeks "in an analysis of the farming economy and, more particularly, the social structure of the local community some of the circumstances which favoured the growth of rural industries in one region rather than another." In each of the areas described, society consisted of populous communities of small farmers, either freeholders or secure tenants, pursuing a pastoral economy, based either on dairying or breeding, in districts where commons were extensive or farmland was early enclosed, where manorial organization and co-operative farming were weak, and where partible inheritance was prevalent. In Dentdale and Garsdale, the inhabitants specifically stated in 1634 that as a result of excessive morcellation of holdings due to gavelkind tenure, they could not maintain themselves apart from their industry in knitting stockings. In parts of Hertfordshire, Westmorland, Suffolk, the Midlands, and the Weald of Kent, population was also increasing very rapidly at this time, and the need for by-industries to eke out the dwindling incomes of the poor was acute. (Incidentally, a Chancery case relating to a Hatfield clothier in James I's reign shows that the Hertfordshire cloth industry was perhaps not so moribund as Mrs Thirsk suggests.) A thesis so wide-ranging in its implications as that developed in this brief essay is bound to raise questions and provoke criticism; but it is as im-

portant for what it suggests as for what it proves. Certainly it applies to other rural employments, such as many types of woodcraft, as much as to the local examples of clothing and stocking knitting adduced by Mrs Thirsk.

ALAN EVERITT

ELIZABETH MELLING (ed.), *Aspects of Agriculture and Industry (Kentish Sources, III)*. Maidstone, Kent County Council, 1961. viii + 150 pp. 6s. 6d.

The Archives Office of the K.C.C. is to be congratulated on continuing its admirable and very modestly priced series of source books. The present volume ventures boldly into economic territory, and will be valuable to both amateur and professional historians. It is edited by Miss Melling with the same skill and discretion as the first two. The only small criticisms which may be offered are that it perhaps over-emphasizes the wealth and scale of Kentish farming, and that a few archaic or mis-spelt place-names might have been modernized or corrected ("Godington" on p. 12 should be Godinton, "Linstead" on p. 15 Lynsted, "Cossenten" on p. 23 Cossington, "Barnham" on p. 61 Barham, "Milstead" on p. 86 Milsted). The industrial section of the book covers such topics as iron-smelting, clothing, paper-making, brewing, fishing, and copperas manufacture. It specifically excludes rural and urban crafts like the blacksmith's, carpenter's, wheelwright's, potter's, and tiler's. These, one hopes, may form the subject-matter of a subsequent volume in the series, for they were of great importance in the rural economy of well-wooded counties like Kent.

As is fitting in a county where farming is still the staple industry, agriculture, with 90 pages, occupies the bulk of the volume. In the first section, agrarian information from twelve probate inventories (1565-1729) is printed, providing a detailed picture of the husbandry of a sheep farmer of Sheppey, a gentleman of Aylesford, a market gardener of Sandwich, several tenant farmers on the Downs, and yeomen of Charing, Cranbrook, Barham, Bromley, and Otford. Perhaps the most inter-

esting inventory is that of John Toke of Godinton Place, ancestor of Nicholas Toke, a great Kentish character of the seventeenth century, already familiar to agricultural historians through his *Account Book*, edited for the British Academy by Miss E. C. Lodge in 1927. The next section of the book is based upon the archives of the Filmer family, and illustrates such matters as crop rotation, fruit growing, digging marl, and hiring labourers; it includes a lengthy extract from Sir Edward's farming accounts. In the two concluding sections are printed a series of leases, covenants, and 'particulars' of tenant farms; an extract from the hop accounts of Richard Tylden, squire of Milsted in 1743; and a specification for an oast house to be built near Hadlow in 1714.

In her introduction, the editor has several points of interest to make on the Kentish system of landholding—if system is the word. Kent was not a county of vast or compact aristocratic estates, like some of the Midland shires. For the most part it was, and is, a county of small parishes, small fields, small farms, small manor-houses, and relatively small gentry. The typical agricultural units were the smallholdings of husbandmen, the farms of yeomen-freeholders, and the modest estates of ancient gentry like the Oxindens of Deane, the Twysdens of Roydon Hall, and the Filmers of East Sutton Place. The pattern of landholding was exceedingly complex, and was in constant flux as a result of gavelkind inheritance and frequent intermarriage between minor local landowners. Manors bore no relation to parishes; their lands often lay intermingled with one another; many of them possessed detached portions in Weald or Marsh; and the estates of the gentry were usually scattered in small parcels over several parishes. And if anyone supposes that early enclosure necessarily resulted in neatly rounded farms, ripe for capitalist exploitation, he should glance at the maps on pp. 72 and 75.

The truth is that until the end of the eighteenth century the rural economy of Kent was characterized by two apparently opposing

tendencies: far-reaching enterprise, and intense conservatism. So early as the sixteenth century, many Kentish farmers were responding with remarkable enthusiasm to the challenge of expanding markets. Towns in the North of England and the Netherlands were furnished with Kentish wheat; maltsters and fruiterers of London were supplied with barley from Thanet and apples and cherries from Hartlip and Teynham. Cattle were driven from Wales and Yorkshire to be fattened on Romney Marsh; hops were dispatched from Canterbury by way of the North Sea to Stourbridge Fair; and beer was exported from Sandwich to slake the thirst of Flemish burghers.

But enterprise and specialization were not the whole story. The areas of the county whose economy was fully geared to metropolitan or foreign markets were relatively circumscribed, and strictly capitalist farms resembled scattered archipelagoes surrounded by a sea of peasant husbandry. In the face of eighteenth-century improvements, moreover, as Miss Melling shows, the county remained curiously unresponsive; while even on the estates of yeomen and gentlemen advanced methods operated in essentially conservative conditions. Georgian gentry like the Tyldens and Filmers still devoted to the care of their woods and farms the same old-fashioned personal attention as their Caroline forebears. They were neither absentees nor *fainéants*, and the gulf between them and their labourers was not yet unbridgeable. The squire's wife at Milsted Court still went hop-picking with Poll Croyden and Old Goody Dutnal in George II's reign; many Kentish labourers still lived "in the house," in semi-feudal style, in the days of Queen Victoria. These conditions were not peculiar to Kent; but their continuance in a county so populous and apparently 'advanced' may seem surprising. The explanation seems to lie in the peculiar social conditions of the county. Kent was, after all, a sea-girt peninsula, and there were probably few shires whose society was more deeply rooted and inbred, or where the force of kinship was more powerful. Until the nineteenth

century there was very real truth in the old adage, "in Kent they are all first cousins." One of the minor and forgotten curiosities of Victorian historiography is a volume of essays compiled by a farming club in East Kent, in which a few dozen local yeomen traced their history back to Tudor and Stuart husbandmen or gentry, and analysed their bewildering interrelationships with neighbouring farmers. They were evidently much more than a club, they were a family: and they were intensely proud of their local descent.

ALAN EVERITT

J. D. CHAMBERS, *The Workshop of the World*. Oxford University Press, for the Home University Library, 1961. viii+240 pp. 8s. 6d.

Professor Chambers's survey of British economic development between 1820 and 1870 follows that by Professor Ashton of the period from 1750 to 1830 in the same series; it maintains the same high standard in lucid compression and wise judgement of the matters to be included in so small a volume. His eight chapters deal successively with a general survey; machine industry and transport; agriculture and the corn laws; foreign trade and fiscal policy; banking, credit, and joint stock enterprise; years of crisis; population and the growth of towns; and labour in the 'industry State'. The twenty small pages devoted to agriculture and the corn laws provide an intelligible and balanced account of the major controversies and changes of this half-century and on the same scale could hardly be bettered, save in the use of figures. For Professor Chambers throws figures into the text of this and other chapters with no indications of their widely differing degrees of reliability and accuracy. On p. 86 he tells his reader that "the import of beef was only 9 per cent of consumption and of mutton 7 per cent" with no qualifications as to date or the probability of the estimate; and on the next page he tells us that rent abatements and remissions between 1878-9 and 1893-4 were 22.6 per cent for England and Wales as a whole and 18.5 per cent for Scotland, in precisely the same way

as he gives on p. 175 the population figures from the decennial census. Such misuse of statistics is all the more regrettable since it is at this elementary level that readers should surely be made aware both of the importance of quantitative evidence and of the pitfalls which it contains.

EDITH H. WHETHAM

M. K. ASHBY, *Joseph Ashby of Tysoe*, 1859-1919. Cambridge University Press, 1961. 298 pp. 25s.

This is the story of a man "born into poverty, to a family which had sunk almost to disgrace, of illegitimate paternity," who "not only came to have a well-furnished mind and to discharge many offices with faithfulness and influence, but also, a greater achievement, to confront life happily." Joseph Ashby worked throughout his life to better the lot of his rural neighbours; and if he never achieved actual fame, his influence was both lasting and immense. Yet the whole of his life, except for the last few years, was spent in a tiny, secluded Warwickshire village.

The village of Tysoe has been best known hitherto for its ancient Red Horse cut in a hillside. Of this the book tells little: only that, on enclosure, it was "penned up within the hedges, without even a footpath to it. The old Whitsun Games were never held again." Some account of surviving legends and customs, connected with this monument, or of memories of these, would have been a welcome addition to this valuable collection of rural lore. But perhaps with the penning up of the Red Horse its legends died.

Miss Ashby writes a fine rhythmical prose. Sometimes, in descriptive passages, it approaches poetry. "Around every apple tree grew sweet violets, white or pink or blue. Whiteness in violets was like Sundayness in a frock; it made them sacred, saintly." Joseph himself appears to have had this gift, or so it would appear from two lyric fragments quoted. His hymns are rather less interesting, being Wesleyan in flavour, and following too closely the inimitable Charles.

Joseph Ashby started work in the fields at

the age of nine, on Saturdays and during school holidays, scaring birds in the field and helping his mother to glean after harvest. A most interesting and detailed account of this latter process is given. It is also interesting to learn that at Tysoe, before the advent of the mechanical reaper, it was the women who reaped by sickle and the men who followed behind to tie the sheaves and set them up in shucks.

At eleven years old Joseph Ashby left school and started his apprenticeship as a farm labourer—under two masters. The first, a shepherd called John Makepiece, had ugly tales to tell of times when “there weren’t no Methodists, nor no Quaakers neither, to stop ‘em ‘aatin’ and tell ‘em to look to the sky.” This shepherd, too, “would watch—and hold Joseph’s arm so that he must watch too—a fight of cats and rats in the barn, or a hawk after little birds, a weasel circling a fascinated rabbit, and never show an impulse to save the weaker creature. When the little drama reached its deadly end, his grasp on Joe’s arm would tighten oddly and he would give a little cluck-cluck of satisfaction.”

The second master, Jasper the carter, thought John’s tales “beant fit for a bwoy’s ears;” and when all three worked together at lambing time it seemed to the boy that Jasper, rather than John, was the good shepherd of metaphor. “He looked the part and acted it too; he would handle tenderly the ‘poor-doing’ lambs, whereas John would sometimes surreptitiously finish their little lives.”

Among the older labourers with whom he worked, memories lingered of the enclosure of 1796 and of its effects. At a time when it is fashionable to decry the so-called evil effects of the enclosure movement, it is salutary to come across the following passage. “Enclosures would have done good if ther had been justice in ‘em. They give folks allotments now instid o’ ther rights—on a slope so steep a two-legged animal can’t stand, let alone dig.” In the old days you could walk all through the parish and all round it by the balks and headlands and cut wood on the waste, if there was any. “And what can you do now, Jasper?”

asked Lynes. “Make a farmer mad and you be done.” Again, the contemporary view that enclosure brought more employment, at any rate temporarily, is not supported by evidence from Tysoe. “The labourers of Tysoe had hopes that at least enclosures would bring incidental opportunities: they would be employed to plant the hedges and drain the fields, but gangs of men accustomed to the new jobs were brought in by the larger owners. There was work for a few men on the roads for which the Commissioners had provided, enough to prevent any rise in the number of men on the round, but not enough to reduce it.” On the other hand, the right to gather wood on the wastes had been, for many years, of little worth, since with the growth of population there was not enough wood to go round. Now with enclosure “the poor were well compensated for their right to cut non-existent wood; the earl of Northampton and his heirs were put in charge of land whose rent would be spent on coal for them.”

The “good shepherd” soon gained an ascendancy over Joseph, and it was he who first influenced Joseph towards Methodism. Joseph Ashby’s forebears had been Quakers but his mother was ‘church’. It was only when Joseph Arch came to Tysoe, in the course of his campaign for higher wages, that Joseph Ashby was to realize the moral courage of the Primitive Methodists as well as their comprehension of social problems. As with the Tolpuddle Martyrs, what was remarkable was their restraint in revolt. Thus a local preacher proclaimed: “Men are not equal. No! but they are brothers! Our neighbours on the farms and in the great houses be lucky and selfish and proud, and they expect you and me to put up with a lot of nonsense, but they be our brothers. Bitter in our hearts we are, but we can remember it; they and we be brothers.”

During the nineties Joseph Ashby conducted a tour which combined propaganda for the Local Restoration League with a survey of rural conditions. Some of his findings were used by Hasbach in his *History of the English Agricultural Labourer*; and his work sheets

were used as the model of an investigation made by the Ministry of Agriculture during the First World War.

The sort of data collected were details of: smallholdings; wages of farm labourers; condition and rent of cottages; changes in population; membership of thrift associations; pauperism; machinery and its effects on labour. What emerged were the extraordinary local variations. To quote one instance: "In adjacent villages, wages would differ by two shillings a week, that is, by nearly twenty per cent, without any difference in demand or supply; in villages further apart though with similar circumstances there could be a difference of four or even five shillings—almost fifty per cent."

The passages quoted above will show that this book contains information of the greatest interest to the agricultural, as well as to the local, historian. It is beautifully narrated, and the central character emerges as of iron will and integrity, but at the same time kind, gentle, and lovable. Although in many ways a child of his period, one last quotation may illustrate that in the training of children he was ahead of his time. "When a little daughter persistently took what was not hers, for no reason whatever so far as he could make out, he would not let my mother punish: 'We will leave ill alone when it is such a mystery.'"

H. A. BEECHAM

CLARICE S. DAVIES (ed.), *A History of Macclesfield*. Manchester University Press, 1961. xiv+404 pp. 21s.

Dr Davies's book, published to celebrate the seven hundredth anniversary of the granting of a borough charter to Macclesfield, is a salutary reminder that agricultural history is not confined to the countryside, but may also be sought in the archives of towns. Original documents relating to the town have fortunately survived in exceptional quantities, and Dr Davies has used them skilfully in the difficult task of producing a narrative acceptable both to scholars and to local patriots. Surrounded by the Royal Forest of Macclesfield, the town depended in the later Middle Ages

almost entirely on the various branches of the traffic in cattle, horses, and sheep. It is clear from the charter that the burgesses of 1261, with their open fields and commons (which survived into the early nineteenth century), owned many head of livestock. Two hundred and fifty years later, when Wolsey's commissioners were enquiring about the enclosure of the Forest, the economic links between town and country persisted as strongly as ever. After the passage of a further quarter-millennium the common lands, of which the enclosure was completed in 1804, were proving a source of local wealth in the form of coal, stone, and brick-earth, and a large copper-works had been built on an authorized encroachment from 1758 onwards. Dr Davies concludes (p. 98) that Macclesfield, "despite the industrial revolution, was in the nineteenth century still a town with many farms contained within its boundaries and many people who worked on the land . . . [today] there are still farmers in the borough and some of them sell their produce in the market." The mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of Macclesfield are to be congratulated on their good fortune and commended for their civic spirit in commissioning the compilation and publication of this handsome and reasonably priced volume.

W. H. CHALONER

A Bibliography of the History of Wales. Prepared by the History and Law Committee of the Board of Celtic Studies of the University of Wales. University of Wales Press, 2nd edn, 1962. xviii+330 pp. 45s.

For a generation the first edition of this bibliography, edited by R. T. Jenkins and William Rees, has guided those venturing to explore the history of Wales, but increasingly its deficiencies became obvious. Now, after a prolonged period of gestation, a second edition has appeared. In the first there were about 1,600 entries, in the second there are over 3,500. This increase is accounted for partly by contributions to the subject since 1931 and partly by the insertion of works published before that date previously omitted. Unfor-

tunately, all the information contained in the first edition is not reproduced in the second. Some entries have been deleted and others have been condensed and there is no editorial indication of the policy adopted.

The new edition follows almost exactly the broad plan of the old, so it is possible to assess in a rough and ready manner the shifts in historiography. Between A.D. 400 and 1500, the changes are fairly slight, with 411 entries in the new edition compared with 332 in the old. The great increase in entries occurs from 1500. The medieval entries total one-fifth of the 1931 edition whereas they account for only one-ninth of the 1962 edition. And the increase is particularly marked in the sixteenth century where the number increases from 108 to 304. In both cases the largest number of entries is concerned with the period since 1789 where the proportion has remained very approximately the same at about one-quarter while the number of entries has increased from 435 to 856. One factor in this increase has been the result of the insertion of more recent entries in time and period. Neither of the dead-lines whether of date of publication up to 31 December 1958 nor of entries to 1914 have been strictly observed. Consequently the coverage of the period since the First World War is very uneven.

One of the problems faced by the bibliographer of Wales is to decide where to draw the line. For many purposes and many periods the history of Wales is treated as part of the history of a larger area. In the volume under review, the problem has been solved in different ways by the various contributors. In the section on Ancient Wales to A.D. 400 over 70 entries deal with General Prehistory and Roman Britain, whereas in the section dealing with the period since 1789 only very limited reference is made to general works and most of the entries deal specifically with Wales. This unevenness of treatment is not entirely happy since it results in substantial omissions. Charles Hadfield, *British Canals* (1953) and T. S. Willan, *English Coasting Trade 1600-1750* (1938) and *River Navigation in England 1600-1750* (1936) are all

books dealing with developments in Wales in a larger context which do not find a place in this new bibliography.

For the student of agricultural history, a comparison of the entries in the various sections reveals the nature of the interest in the subject. Unfortunately, the index is not very useful as a subject index—there should have been two indexes of names and of subjects instead of one—and there is no entry under 'agriculture' earlier than the eighteenth century, and the subsequent entries, like those under 'enclosure', are purely random items. A search through the entries is therefore necessary. For the period between 1039 and 1500 this shows that almost all the new work done since 1931 has been contributed by one man, Professor Jones Pierce of Aberystwyth. Since almost all these articles have been published in Welsh periodicals, it is most useful to have the references drawn together in one place. Prof. Jones Pierce is largely concerned with the institutional changes, with commutation and the decline of the tribal system, during his period. By contrast the section on land and the landed gentry 1500-1603 shows how much activity there has been in this period since 1931. Of the source entries, 14 out of 16 have appeared since that date and of the secondary works, 11 out of 12 have been published since the first edition. And all these 11 are by different hands, so that here there is no single dominating figure. Interest concentrates on the course of husbandry and on the gentry and not on institutional changes. Since it is often said that the Welsh are a peasant people, it is a pity that the general works which head this section are all concerned with the 'gentry controversy'. It may well be that Mildred Campbell's *The English Yeomen* (1942), Joan Thirsk's *English Peasant Farming* (1957), and W. G. Hoskins's *The Midland Peasant* (1957) would be better guides for further work.

And with 1600 interest in Welsh agriculture appears virtually to end for two centuries. The seventeenth century is a dark age and almost no new work has been done since 1931 on the eighteenth. For the period since 1789

we have the work of Mrs Margaret Davies and Dr Dorothy Sylvester on field patterns, and some work has also been done on rural industries, but the main concern has been with social conditions in the countryside, with Professor David Williams's *The Rebecca Riots* (1955) as the most substantial and distinguished contribution. This analysis makes abundantly clear the fact that much needs to be done before the history of agriculture in Wales can be written as a consecutive story. Thus a subsidiary purpose that a bibliography such as this one serves is to indicate the gaps in our knowledge.

This bibliography reveals the changing nature of historical writing in Wales. In the past the gifted amateur and the eisteddfod essay have made a real contribution, but these days have gone. The recent death of Bob Owen is a symbolic event, marking the end of an era. The new historians are the professionals, the university teachers, whose contributions have grown considerably in recent years. This makes imperative the need for a supplement to this Bibliography to be prepared for publication in the 1960's, to take note not only of the works omitted from the

present edition but also of the considerable body of writing since December 1958.

W. E. MINCHINTON

PATIENCE PENNINGTON, *A Woman Rice Planter*, edited by Cornelius O. Cathey. Oxford University Press, 1961. xxxiv+446 pp., illus. 48s.

The publishers show literary judgement in reprinting this attractive period piece. Patience Pennington, whose real name was Mrs Pringle, was a widow who gallantly attempted to keep the family estates solvent by rice planting in South Carolina. This book records her experiences from 1903 to 1906. The interest of agricultural historians may be lessened by the fact that the Carolina rice industry was then in the last stages of economic decline, a process which no lone woman could halt. But it is as a picture of social conditions among the rural negroes, and of the relations between them and white planters when both could still remember slavery, that the book has historical interest. Besides this, the artless charm of the writing has all the graces of a leisured age, which only such reprints can now recapture.

G. B. MASEFIELD

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