The Professor A.G. Davis collection was donated by his son. Professor Davis worked at Wye College from 1948-1955.

Pages	Origin	Date	Author and subject
1-7	Typewritten transcript of a letter	1706	To Mr T. Jones, Llanio, near Lampeter, Cardiganshire (never sent)
8	Handwritten extract from *Agricultural; Science* IV	June 1912	Hall A.D, and Russell E.J., 'On the Causes of the Hugh Nutritive Value and Fertility of the Fattening pastures of Romney Marsh and other Marshes in the S.E. of England'
9-12	*The Farmers Weekly* pp30-3	10 June 1949	'The Land Commission Decides: Leave it to the Farmers'
13-22	*The journal of the Ministry of Agriculture* LVII, pp322-7 plus illustrations	7 October 1950	G.H. Garrard, 'Romney Marsh'
23-4	*The Farmers Weekly* pp88-9	15 October 1954	'From One Damp Place to Another'
25-8	Typewritten manuscript	Unknown	G.H. Garrard 'The Romney Marsh Problem'
29-35	Address to the Association of Applied Biologists Meeting at Wye College	24 September 1951	A.G. Davis, 'Romney Marsh Pastures'
36	Newspaper cutting	1949	Justices of the Peace Act
37	Newspaper cutting	Unknown	Corporation Seal
38	Newspaper cutting	Unknown	William F. Deedes, 'Romney Marsh Under Threat of Nationalisation'
39	Newspaper cutting	Unknown	New era of prosperity for Romney Marsh

The following letter was written about the year 1706, but was not sent on account of its extraordinary length and expense of its postage.

To Mr. T. Jones, Llanio, near Lampter, Cardiganshire.

Dear Brother,

I have already sent you some few hints for the management and improvement of your farm, founded, not capriciously in my own imagination, but upon observations of similar practices here in England, where the farmers not contenting themselves with a bare and idle subsistence commonly by their activity and prudent management grow rich upon their farms. In this letter I shall enter upon another subject, and treat it in another manner i.e. I mean to give you a short account of this Marsh, and of the method of grazing practised here as far as I am able to collect, leaving it to you to make such reflections and applications from the narative as you shall think proper in anything that may suit your purpose with regard to the management of your own stock.

To begin then: Romney Marsh is a large track of level ground formerly covered by the sea, and is nearly twenty miles long, and about nine broad; besides several inlets up the country of considerable extent. The land in general is rich but in different degrees; it is chiefly in pasture and is stocked almost entirely with sheep. It is all divided into inclosures, which are of two sorts, viz. dry fence with posts and rails and water fence made by ditching both of which as well in the making as in the repairs, are attended with very heavy expense. In a certain corner of some of the fields especially where there are two or more adjoining occupied by the same person, is a fixt pound made with posts and rails, of about the size of your Byarth within which are two or three pens (Hockey) one less than the other in the proportion of $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ with a communication by a small gate from one to the other for the convenience of pounding and turning off or dividing their sheep according to any quantity. There is also a pond or watering place in every field. Everything is rated by the acre and the fields are called according to the number of acres they are supposed to contain. The rents of the land at this are in general from 20s. to 35s. per acre, but some prime fatting pieces so high as 40s. or even 50s. per acre and the Tenant pays all water scots for the public sewers up to 2s.6d. an acre (all above which is accounted for by the Landlord in the rent) and he keeps the fences (if they so agree) in repair. The few acres that are ploughed let from 40s. to £3 per acre. The marsh is but thinly inhabited because very few labourers are required and many of the occupiers live at a considerable distance some even so far as twenty miles and more. Formerly it was reckoned unhealthy but now it is not so owing, I believe, chiefly to their present method of grazing. So late as about thirty years back they suffered the grass (to grow long and rank, thinking they could never have too much grass) for their flock which thereby harboured the dews, and rendered the place aguish and unhealthy; but now, they find that sheep do not require a long bite: they have found by experience that they do not thrive so well upon coarse long grass: that they do much better by nipping it as it springs. They therefore keep more stock upon the land and feed it as close to the ground as they can without starving their sheep whereby the land carries more stock; the ground can harbour no dews, and the country is become much more healthy. The graziers reckon themselves now to be the best sheep graziers of any in England and I believe they have some claim to that title. If their business lies near about home, they generally keep a servant to look after it under their direction; but if it lies at the distance of but a few miles, which some of it at least most commonly does, or if they do not chuse to trouble themselves with a servant for that purpose they can employ a man whom they term a looker, to look after their stock and they themselves attend occasionally. The looker is paid at this time at abour the rate of 8d per acre per annum, (since double that sum has been given). He has a house at an easy rent; has the keep of a cow at a moderate charge, has all the fat of the dead sheep and the lamb skins if he lambs them and has the privilege of keeping a horse upon his master's ground gratis and is paid besides for whatever work he does upon the land; all which enables him to live in a comfortable manner and with a few other privileges and if prudent, he can even save money. His business

is to ride about ground, which he generally does once a day i.e. in the forenoon, to see whether there be any sheep fallen into the ditches, and whether the fences is anywhere broken down: he also counts the sheep and sees whether any of them is ailing or has been struck by the fly. He has always a dog with him, which they call a sheep dog, which is a kind of mixture between the cur and the greyhound in about the second remove. If he wishes to catch a sheep he rides after it, points it out to his dog and as soon as ever it is caught he dismounts, and takes the dog off. If it is struck by the fly, he takes out his shears, which he always carries with him as a carpenter does his rule, clips off the wool at the places, cleabses it of the maggots, puts a little tar, turpentine or some composition upon the place, and turns it agoing. If any be dead, he returns after he has gone his round, carries it home before him, flays it, takes off the fat for his own use, and throws the carcase to his hogs: but if it be a fatting sheep, he is more careful; he takes off as much as he can of the in and outside fat, then he cuts the carcase into small pieces, stews it in a large kettle or copper for three or four hours, and when cool, he takes the scum to melt down with the other tallow, and gives the liquor to his hogs. This tallow fetches him about 4d or 4½d per pound. He also attends and assists his master in everything with regard to the stock, that is done upon the land. One man can look after from three to five hundred acres of land or more, and very frequently looks after land for several different masters at the same time and if any of them live at a considerable distance he perhaps has a bed in his house to accommodate them, or else they put up at some public house in the neighbourhood as it may be most convenient. As to the graziers themselves it they have a tolerable parcel of business, they are generally in easy circumstances, though not very rich and live chiefly in villages or towns in the style of private gentlemen, keeping no more servants about them than what is absolutely necessary for their family use. They hire their land of different owners in any parcels, and at any distance, neither the compactness of their business, nor the distance being any object with them. If they live near they ride over their ground attended by their looker perhaps once or twice a week or perhaps not so often taking difference parts of it at differert times as other business, or their own pleasure may incline them, in order, perhaps to remove their stock from one field to another, or to draw off fat sheep for market, or to do, or rather see done, whatever else may be thought necessary according to the time of the year. In general they have not much to do and what is done they always do before dinner. In short grazing, where one has money at command and can get a tolerable parcel of good land at a moderate rent, is the prettiest and most gentlemanlike business of any that I ever met with, his business being always done on horseback and may be consdiered as little more than a morning's ride. But it must be observed that it is not every one who is capable of being a good Grazer as their business is to make the most they can of their grass, it requires a man of sense and judgement to do that to the most advantage, whether we consider it with respect to the grazing of their land, or to bring their stock to market with the quickest return and greatest profit, but the evil of it is, that it is exceedingly difficult to get land for it requires almost as much interest to get at, as it would be to procure a place at court, and besides, of late years it is become so excessively dear as to be hadrly worth the hazzard of using.

Having premised thus much concerning the Marsh and its inhabitants, in order to give you a general idea of the country and of their manner of living, I shall now proceed to give you some account of their method of grazing. I mean so far as my knowledge of the business can go, which you may suppose must be rather limited from the very different nature of my profession. I think the proper time to begin the subject is their riding time, or, as they call it putting to i.e. when they turn their rams to the ewes, which commences invariably about the 12th or 14th November. But here you must observe that till this time the rams are always kept separate from the ewes: that the old sheep and the worst of the one yearlings, which they call refuse are culled off either for sale as lean stock or for fatting, and at the proper time the rest of the ewes are disposed of upon the land ready for the rams. This being done, and having chosen out some of their finest rams, i.e. those that have the largest carcase, bear the thickest and finest wool, have the smallest and cleanest heads, i.e. heads free from wool and are upon the whole of the straightest and handsomest make, they turn them amongst the breeding ewes, allowing after the rate of one ram to forty ewes. They reject such as have thin, loose, or flabby wool or are slender, and long sided, or are coarse or large boned, or remarkably long legged. Their aim is depth of carcase straightness of make, and somewhat short legged. They do not always ride their own breed of rams, because they allow that by continuing in the same kind their flock will dwindle

and degenerate, to prevent which they once in every three years at the most, cross the breed, as they call it, that is, either exchange rams with their neighbours, who are most noted for having good ones, or else buy fresh rams one of another, at from two guineas and an half to about five guineas, or hire some for the riding season at from one to two guineas and an half per ram. If they do not hire sufficient for their whole stock, which they seldom do on account of the expense, they put their hired rams to the best of their ewes, selecting from ten to twenty according to the extent of their business to save ram lambs from for they save their ram lambs chiefly from the hired ones in order to make a cross but not invariably so. When they save their ram lambs which they generally do about once in three years, or perhaps not so often, or oftener, just as they may have occasion, they mark off with Tyver (nod coch) as many of their very best ewes as they mean to save ram lambs from, observing in this selection the same rule with respect to carcase the thickness and the fineness of the wool, smallness of the head, and straightness of make as they had before done in the selection of their rams. All the ram lambs of these ewes they save till about the Michaelmas following when they cull and save the best of them and knot the rest, by which particular care in the raising of their rams they can improve a breed of sheep in a few years to almost any degree they please. But here however there is a certain degree, with regard to the fineness of the wool, beyond which they do not choose to go, because the wool staplers will not allow them accordingly in price. The small graziers never breed any rams, but always hire. The rams are allowed to ride a month, but at the end of the first fortnight they change over their rams, i.e. they drive the rams of one field into another and bring back the rams of that field into the first, so that if any of the rams should prove faulty, which is sometimes the case they may not miss of having lambs. When the riding season is over they take off the rams and turn them into a small field of good pasture to recover themselves. With regard to the refuse of the rams and of the ram tags (yearlings) for they keep nearly as many more as they want, they either sell them, or hire them out, or knot them The operation of knotting or gelding them which is done either about Michaelmas or in the spring, is as follows: having pounded those which they mean for this purpose, they get some long hemp and twist it of about the thickness of one's little finger: they then tie it to two strong pieces of sticks, one at each end of about the length of five or six inches, then one man turns the ram upon his back and the man that does the operation, having lackered over the twisted cord with a little tar, ties it with a single knot about the neck of the ram's purse as far from the body as he can, then clapping one stick under his feet and having the other in his hands, he pulls with his main strength till he hears the strings of the animal snap; he then ties the string a second time round the purse still pulling it with his main strength and fastening it with a double knot, the operation is finished with his lifting up the ram by his tail. I believe they generally cut a piece of the skin from the tip of the purse, that if any matter should run it may have vent. There is very little danger in this operation, and in about three weeks the purse drops off, and the sheep is turned to fatting. This business is done either in the autumn or the spring, just as it may best suit.

After having removed the rams from the ewes, the next business of the grazier with regard to his breeding stock is to lay them on the land as he means they should remain for the winter. The proportion for the winter is about three on an acre or perhaps not quite so many, as the land may be for goodness; and in the summer about five or more according as the summer may turn out for grass. Sometimes indeed, when they wish to clear off a field, or when the grass is, as they call it, running away, they stock much harder for a little while from such fields as are overstocked, for their object is, to make the most they possibly can of this grass. But here you must observe that the marsh land is considered as of two different degrees of goodness - the breeding land which is the general quality of the marsh and is supposed to be not sufficiently good to fatten, at least

in so short a time as some other lands will, and the fatting land, which are the prime pieces and very rich. The Best of the breeding lands will do to bring the sheep forward to a certain degree of fatness, after which they are removed to the best lands to what they call finish them where in a few months they become sufficiently fat for the butcher. They lay their fatting stock very lightly in Winter about 2 or 2½ and in the Summer, from 3½ to 4 or 5 on an acre according to the Summer or the goodness of the land, and in such a manner that the ground may be neither so bare as to prevent them from thriving, nor so full of grass as to be too long and rank for them. It is not every Grazier that has a sufficient quantity of fatting land for his growth of stock. Some have more than a proportion, and there are some few who have none at all. They that have none sell off about Michaelmas their old sheep, and all their wether lambs and the refuse of the Ewe Lambs; but some keep their lambs till the Michaelmas following, when they are one yearlings, or as they are here called Tags, and then refuse and sell them. They that have some fatting land but not enough, generally sell the refuse or worst of their old sheep and lambs only and keep the best of both for their own fatting; and they that have more than a proportion of fatting land buy them in. There are also a great number of old sheep especially and refuse Tags, Wether and refuse lambs, bought up at this time of the year by the Farmers from the uplands of East Kent. These farmers breed but few or no sheep themselves, they therefore come down to the Marsh and buy up as many as they can well keep on their stubble Meadow and Pasture land in the Winter and the old sheep they fatten by folding them on their Turnip land of which they frequently have a considerable quantity. Their method of folding sheep upon turnips which is a very good one and which I would wish to recommend to you, is different from what I have seen in the inland Counties: There they set up their hurdles (slantwise, with a forked prop behind them), quite across the field removing about a hurdles length, or sufficient for the day's allowance every day till they have gone over the whole field. But in East Kent they actually fold them i.e. they make a large fold according to the number of sheep they mean to put in, then they turn in the old sheep which they mean to fatten and when they have eaten up what was within the fold they remove it about one hurdle's length, or perhaps not quite so much, as they can eat it up, giving them a fresh allowance daily, and so continuing to remove till the whole is eaten up. They have also another fold behind for lean stock to eat off the stumps, which are pulled up for them by a forked instrument made for that purpose. This is a neat and useful way, for by this means the sheep do not run about to waste their fat and their manure, which is the best of any is regularly laid on the ground, and the land afterwards is sure to bear a good crop. When the turnips are finished they sometimes finish them by feeding them in the same manner with Spring tares and oats. The hurdles which they have for this use, are made very slight and chiefly of willow poles, and such kind of stuff. In the Inland Counties they are made with stakes and binders. I have seen them in Oxfordshire fold their sheep in the Spring upon their Wheat, removing it daily as they eat off the blades; and here in the Marsh they that have any plough ground generally turn their sheep upon it in the Spring of the year; but they do not fold them. They suffer them to run over it at large. They say that their treading settles the earth and makes the wheat to tiller or branch out the more from the stem and their manure undoubtedly mends the soil; but to return from this description to Grazing.

The Ewes go with lamb 21 weeks; they therefore begin lambing about the 16th or 17th April. For about a fortnight before that time the looker goes about ground twice a day, i.e. in the mornings and evenings to see that all is right, and that none of the Ewes have mislaid, i.e. turned on their backs and cannot get up, which being heavy with lamb sometimes do. If they find any in that situation they help them up otherwise they would swell and die by their long and unsuccessful struggles to rise. In about a week or ten days before lambing begins they pound their Ewes, and all their other sheep and turning them on their backs clip off the wool, clean or foul, from their off tails and surrounding parts, which clippings they afterwards wash and lay out to dry and which are called and sold as locks at inferior price from the fleece wool. When lambing begins the looker, or some other person who has been used to the business is constantly on the land during lambing time, i.e. from about 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning till about 9 or 10 o'clock at night. In eight or ten days from the commencement of lambing the first cutting of the lambs takes place, cutting them down to those of about three days old, and they are ear-marked and tailed at the same time. The second cutting is in about eight or ten days after; the third about the end of lambing and possibly there may remain a few to be cut after lambing is over. If any of the lambs die in lambing time the lamber

takes another lamb out of the twins to put to the Ewe and to induce her to take it he flays the dead lamb cutting the skin off at the head and drawing the skin of the neck and also of the legs without cutting in these places in order to fix the skin on the living lamb by drawing his head and legs through these parts. Having done this, they take the liver of the dead lamb and rub it on the head of the other to which and to the skin the Ewe smells, and from a similarity of smell she is induced to take it for her own. After being on for a day or two the skin is taken off and both the Ewe and the lamb are quite reconciled to each other. If the Ewe should be obstinate, which is sometimes the case, they are kept in the Pound close for a day or two, till they are reconciled to each other. The Lamber has both the lamb skins and the carcase of those that dies, the latter of which he gives to his hogs. After lambing is over the sheep are laid on the land so many per acre. The twin lamb ewes being put into the best keep and laid on fewer acres than the rest, to supply them more copiously with milk. The ewes that have proved barren after lambing are put forward on fatting land along with the old ewes that were set on at the Michaelmas before, and the yearling wethers in order to get them marketable as soon as possible.

Soon after lambing is over they begin to draw off their old sheep that were set on to fatting the Michaelmas before. They are generally sent, some in the wool, and some out of the wool, as the Season advances, to the London market which is about 70 miles off by Drovers who make that their employment, they are nearly a week in going travelling at about the rate of 14 miles a day and are consigned to some particular salesman in Smithfield market, sending a few at the time i.e. from half a score and upwards according the the extent of their business or the sheep may be in fatness. Some weekly some once a fortnight, or month or perhaps more, as circumstances may require and the conditions of the sheep will allow. The salesman receives them off the drover at some place in the neighbourhood of London. He has them to the next market at Smithfield, two of which are held weekly i.e. on Mondays and Fridays; he sells them to the Carcass butchers and writes by that day's post to the owners informing them to whom he has sold them and at what price, and deducting expenses of droving and selling which comes on the whole to about 1/- a head. The Grazier draws for the money which is paid at sight, so that he himself has no trouble whatever in the business. There are other small markets on this side of London called as the lower markets where they sometimes send their fatting sheep i.e. Tunbridge, Maidstone and Rochester. In these markets the Drovers are the Salesmen, who take and bring home the money to their employers, and if any of the sheep tire on the road they sell and account for them. Of late years several Sheep Markets have been established in the neighbourhood of the Marsh where, although the Grazier very commonly but not always attend themselves, yet they do not Sell their stock for although they are generally good judges of the weight at the end, but employ another person for that purpose, who attends there as Salesman and on whose judgement as well as on their own they depend as to the average weight of the sheep. He sells them to the Butcher and pays the money to his employer deducting for his troubles threepence a head for selling, and threepence for the pens where they stand at Market, so that the Grazier does not take the trouble of selling even his own stock, excepting a few at home to the neighbouring Butchers but trusts almost entirely to the judgement of others. Having about a fortnight previously washed their sheep in a washing tub, they begin shearing about the 20th June, and in about a fortnight after their sheep shearing is over they shear their lambs, and soon after that they wean them, which is frequently done by exchanging the lambs of one field and putting them into another field, the ewes of which of course, will not take them, and then return them in about a week or ten days to where they were before, when their Dames will have forgotten them, But others take off the Ewes from the lambs and put a very considerable number of them together in a poor field for about a week in order, by spare keep, to dry up their milk, when they return them or some others to their lambs, which by that time have forgotten them (see next leaf) About the latter end of August or beginning of September the Grazier send up their lambs to the Farmers that live on the upland, who put them on their stubble, meadows and pasture lands, and also on Turnips which they raised for that purpose and which are hurdled off for them a little at a time. At first they do not take freely to the turnips, for about a week they will almost starve before they take to them; but when they become accustomed to them they will thrive and do well. The farmers generally give them some bean or pea straw and sometimes hay, particularly in hard weather, to nibble at and to prevent them from Scouring.

They are kept by the farmer at from 2 to 4 or 5 shillings per score per week till the beginning of April, which is about 30 or 32 weeks, when they are again brought down to the Marsh; and in the Summer when the grass is sufficiently grown the Graziers takes in the barren and fatting cattle of the farmers while their meadows are laid in at a certain price per head, so that the one party is particularly convenient and useful to the other. The Farmers breed but few or no sheep themselves. Those who do not choose to keep lambs for the Graziers come down to the Marsh and buy up as many as they can well keep upon their stubbles and other lands in the Winter, and the old sheep which they buy up for that purpose, they fatten on their Turnips in the manner already described. The grazier begin to forward their two yearling wethers for fatting in the Spring and they become fat from about Michaelmas to Christmas or early in the Spring following, when they are sent to market a few at a time as already detailed relative to their Barrens. About Michaelmas and before they put the Rams to the Ewes the sheep are again Pounded. Their Mouths are examined, and the old Ewes, i.e. those which have borne lambs three different seasons, and the ordinary ones are culled off either for sale or for fattening, and the rest kept forward as store sheep for breeding. Their lean stock of whatever kind the Graziers generally sell themselves enquiring one of another who wants to buy or to sell without having any regular Market or the upland Farmers come and make such enquiries and buy them from off the land. In Summer it is always a rule with them to eat off their grass as close as possible by Midsummer, because at that time it being thorough ripe, it afterwards grows coarse, hard and insipid, and the stock do not care to eat much of it, nor do they thrive upon it when grown too coarse as it sometimes does in favourable Summers they mow or what they call brush it off, for if they do not they say that it hurts the land. After Midsummer there is no danger of its running away and that growth being young they are glad to have a stock of it for a plentiful winter's keep. Having laid his sheep as he wishes them to remain for the Winter the Grazier has little more care about them till the Spring than occasionally to ride about the ground to see how things are, which perhaps may not be above once in a month especially if he lives at a distance unless there should be snow or a hard frost when the Sheep are apt to run off the land over the ditches, or some very bad weather, or his land should be overlfown, or wet, in which case he is obliged to remove his stock. Upon the whole in Winter he stays pretty much at home, and his chief business after putting to time, except upon the above occasions is to draw off some fat stock for Market. There I may as well close the account for the business here after will bring us to putting to time again with which I commenenced the subject and which therefore need not be repeated, consequently I have only to add that I am my dear Brother,

Yours very affectionately,

D. Jones

New Romney Kent

1706

Certain omissions from the letter.

(It is not certain exactly where these extracts should come in).

- for although they are generally good judges of the weight of a fat sheep they will not soil their clothes by entering with the Butcher into the Pound to handle them but employ etc.

At the time of shearing the Grazier generally attends himself or some one for him to Pitch Mark the sheep before they are let loose from under the hand of the Shearer which is done with Tar mixed up with Lamp Black to a thickish consistence. They mark the ewe t gs on the fore quarter of the off side and the wether tegs on the leg of the same side. The one lamb ewes are marked on the fore quarter of the near side: the two lambs ewes on the middle, the three lamb ewes being the old sheep are marked by turning the marking iron sideways so as to be read upward either o. the leg or mid side and the wethers on the leg of the same side. The Rams are marked with two marks, one on the fore quarter and the other on the leg and they are numbered 1, 2 etc. according to their excellence. By making use of these distinctions they always know the sort and age of every sheep in their flock. The ewe and wether lambs are also marked again on the off side the one on the fore quarter and the other on the leg. They tyver their sheep according to their own fancy, having also a regard to the age and size of the sheep, some on the shoulder, some on the back, some on the rump either length or crosswise, and some on the neck just behind the head. The rams are generally numbered on the middle of the off side, their wool is sold by the sack see below. If they run short of breeding ewes, which will some times happen they continue the best mouthed of their old ewes one year longer.

They keep a register of all their stock, noting down the number of the whole, and in what field, - the number of ewes and lambs in each field - when removed - when taken out - how many of each have died - what their skins sell for - when any are sold, the price they are sold for and to whom. The number of Bullocks they take in from the Farmers and at what per head per week - the price they sell their wool at and the number of Packs - Their rent, - their assessments and their other expenses, with every other particular relative to their business during the course of the whole year; and by casting up the .. tor and Creditors side they know to a farthing the profits or loss of every year, and which they generally calculate from Michaelmas to Michaelmas and if they buy in any sheep or Bullocks they set down the price they buy in and that which they sell out at. The pack of wool consists of 24lbs or 4 drafts of 61 lbs each the odd 1 lb being an allowance for the weight of the Pitch Mark. 1s. per lb is equal to £12 per Pack. 15d is £15 per Pack, etc. and so many shillings and pence being so many lbs per pack.

To regulate the price of Labour
by the price of Wheat Hereford Journal

per quarter	per bushel	wages per day s	d
40	5	1	3
48	6	1	6
56	7	1	9
64	8	2	0
72	9	2	3
80	10	2	6
Beyond 80 per quarter		3	0

Hall A.D. Russell E.J. On the Causes of the High Nutritive Value & Fertility of the Fattening Pastures of Romney Marsh & other Marshes in the S.E. of England.

Jn. Ag. Sci IV - IV June 1912.

"Romney Marsh which with the adjoining Walland and Denge Marshes forms a single area extending about 20 miles E & W and 10 miles or so broad. Romney M proper is of pre-Roman origin while adjoining M. have all been "inned" within historical times. In the main Romney M. is occupied by sheep during summer months, but only the ewes are wintered on the low land, the lambs being taken to the uplands and brought back in spring to be fattened out. Cattle are less seen, though a certain number of bullocks are brought & eat off the rough grass before the grazing season has started. ---- The Pevensey level is occupied almost exclusively by cattle"

"Most of the marshes occur at the mouths of existing rivers & their soils appear to have been formed out of the mud & silt brought down. During the process the course of the river has often changed, for example, the river Rother which now flows out at the western extremity of the Romney M. not many years ago ran practically through the middle of it"

The formation of shingles & silting on the landward side has been the process of building the M. but this does not explain the presence of old stumps embedded a few feet below O.D. line rooting in a thin bed of blue clay below. Deeper still are found alluvial deposits.

No parallel conditions which led to this forest growth are now apparent.

THE QUESTION WAS: "CAN PRIVATE OWNERS MEET FARMING NEEDS

THE LAND COMMISSION DECIDES: LEAVE

Farming Requirements Are Measured: Minister Is Told The Industry Can Itself Supply Them

THE Agricultural Land Commission today makes known to owners and occupiers of nearly 60,000 acres of Romney Marsh, in Kent and Sussex, the results of the first large-scale survey affecting land ownership and farming needs to be made under the Agriculture Act, 1947.

The Commission had to consider whether "full and efficient use of the land was being prevented by lack of works or equipment and to say what, in particular, if anything, would be needed in the way of additional labour, houses, drainage works, hard roads and fixed equipment." It had to express an opinion whether the needs of the area could be met without the Minister of Agriculture exercising his powers under the Act to take over the land.

In its draft report to the Minister, the Commission decides against State ownership.

Nor are any very revolutionary changes suggested. Some recommendations are made on work which might be done by public and local authorities and landowners to assist farming development—on housing, drainage, water and electricity supplies and the provision of farm equipment—and a ley farming system with a minimum of 20,000 acres of tillage is suggested. But the Commission states that "all the recommendations . . . can reasonably be expected to be put into effect by the owners, lessees and occupiers in Romney Marsh, and we do not consider it is necessary for the Minister to exercise his powers of compulsory purchase or hiring . . ."

LEY FARMING SYSTEM RECOMMENDED

The survey was made under Section 84 of the Act, which provides that before proceeding with the acquisition of land, the Minister must refer to the Commission, for report, the question whether "the conditions are fulfilled as to which the Minister must be satisfied before acquiring the land."

The Marsh was referred to the Commission as an area calling for "urgent consideration." During the war there was a big switch-over from pastoral to arable farming and at the peak period the arable acreage approached 17,000 acres. Excellent results were obtained, and the fundamental question before the Commission was whether it was in the national interest that the future agricultural economy of the area should be based to a large extent on arable farming, or mainly on the grazing of sheep and cattle.

Highly Fertile Land

This had previously been considered, so far as the Kent part of the Marsh was concerned, by a conference of local authorities and farmers, who had urged that agricultural development should be directed to the provision and maintenance of upwards of 20,000 acres under arable cultivation.

The report gives a detailed picture of the Marsh country.

It notes the high fertility of much of the land—built up after reclamation by material brought down from the hills or deposited by the sea—and the fact that a complicated geological history has resulted in considerable variation in soils even between one field and its neighbour. The best fatting pastures, occurring on the most productive soils, fatten from 6 to 10 sheep per acre in summer and on the most famous even more. On the other hand, there is rough grazing land, on shallow soils, carrying two sheep or less per acre in summer.

"There is no doubt that, taken as a whole, Romney Marsh area is inherently very fertile and is capable of producing not only the finest grass, but also arable crops comparable with those of our best silt lands," the report states. "Indeed, although it cannot be regarded as good farming practice, we ourselves found instances where land had been cropped continuously since 1940 without the use of fertiliser and without apparent reduction in yield."

Arable Change

The report deals at length with the drainage of the Marsh, and the Commission says that it was impressed by the high standard of efficiency achieved by the catchment and internal drainage boards. It finds only two areas where the drainage is not as satisfactory as it might be, and in these the catchment boards already have proposals for their improvement in hand.

The part which arable farming may take in the future of the Marsh is set against the historical farming background of the area. The Commission points out that up to 1939 the conception of the area as one of permanent pasture was broadly correct, but "undoubtedly there has always been a nucleus of arable land which has expanded or contracted according to the economic conditions of the time and which reached its lowest figure in the great depression of the early '30's."

But for a long time before 1939 sheep farming was the principal system. The Commission records that the chief of the four grades of pasture on the Marsh—the fatting pasture—is regarded by many graziers as almost sacred, "and it may be true that no complete explanation can yet be given why one pasture will fatten 12 sheep to the acre and another near-by will not." Herbage of these pastures is mainly perennial ryegrass, crested dogs' tail, rough stalked meadow grass and wild white clover.

The traditional system of sheep farming, it is pointed out, depended for its success on the profitability of wool and meat, and difficulties were experienced when the price of these commodities declined during the 1930's.

Figures are quoted to show the considerable increase in cropping achieved in the area during the war. On the other side of the picture is a reduction in the sheep population due in part to a reduction in the grazing area and in part to the dispersal of sheep from the Marsh under the threat of invasion in 1940. In that year some 85,000 sheep, or nearly 40 per cent., were sent to other areas as a result of Government intervention.

"The increase in arable acreage," the Commission says, "is an indication of the resource and courage of the agricultural community . . ." and it goes on to refer to the exceptional difficulties in which the war-time farming of the area was carried on. "In spite of these difficulties and uncertainties," the Commission adds, "the agricultural community continued to farm the land and in fact succeeded in increasing the arable acreage more than four-fold."

The Human Factor

Regarding the suitability of the soil for a wide range of crops, the report gives a list of a great variety already being grown, including all of the principal farm crops, various crops for seed (vegetables, grass, clover), and market garden crops ranging from sprouts to asparagus. The prominence of seed crops, to which the Marsh seems to be well suited, is particularly noted.

In answer to the question, "How best can Romney Marsh make its contribution to food production?" the Commission states:

"We have considered this from the practical point of view, bearing in mind that the nation's resources of labour, material and capital goods are not unlimited, and any proposals that we put forward must be capable of early realisation. Furthermore, we have felt it necessary to pay some regard to the human element. Whatever proposals we make, farmers and farm workers will in the last resort be responsible for producing the food from the land, and there would be no point in recommending a system of farming which would require specialist knowledge which is not generally available or a large increase in the number of farm workers which it may not be possible to attract into the area."

The Commission does not, however, subscribe to the view that the best long-term use of the area is a reversion to sheep farming on pre-war lines. It would not, in its opinion, be the full and efficient use of an area so inherently fertile as Romney Marsh. "A balanced system of stock and crops will give more food than a system of pastoral farming, however good the stock farming may be . . . the present trend in the Marsh is already towards a system of ley farming with a balance between crops and stock, and in our view the development is likely to continue."

Sir Frederick Burrows, chairman of the A.L.C., on a tour of the area. Former president of the National Union of Railwaymen and ex-Governor of Bengal, Sir Frederick is the son of a Herefordshire small-holder. He has served on the Hereford A.E.C. and on the Wye Catchment Board.

Dairying Snags

As for dairy farming, there is theoretically no reason why the fine Marsh pastures should not support it, but the Commission, while acknowledging this, points to the practical difficulties—bleak and exposed conditions, the tendency of pastures to tread in winter, lack of buildings and equipment and piped water supplies. Public water supplies are needed, but "dairy farming would call for a much more elaborate and expensive system than would otherwise be necessary."

The Commission adds on this subject that even if it were reasonable to expect the Marsh farmer to change over to this type of production, it is doubtful whether it would be possible to attract into the area enough labour to make dairy farming on a large scale a practical proposition.

On arable farming, including market gardening, the Commission refers to the arable farmers who have migrated into the Marsh and adopted an arable system of the fenland type—farmers who have disregarded traditional methods and are "undoubtedly producing up to a very high standard."

But although the Commission accepts its immediate advantage if carried out on suitable soils and with the necessary technical and practical skill, it does not feel for a number of reasons that it can be recommended for general adoption. One of a number of factors discussed is that of soil—the soils of the area are not uniformly good or of the same structure, and on the lighter soils "blowing" and disease (eel-worm or "take-all") might become a problem. The labour problem is also considered, and lastly the Commission takes account of the effect a high arable policy would have on the sheep population.

Ley System

"As the Marsh is virtually the home of a hardy breed which has some export value," the report says, "we consider the system of holding a balance between stock and crops is, on the whole, safer as a long-term policy."

Ley farming is regarded as the system best suited to the needs of the Marsh as a whole to ensure its full and efficient use.

"Not only," says the Commission, "is it a logical development of the change-over effected during the war years, . . . but it is in fact already being practised by a number of Marsh farmers. The ley system is adaptable and is reasonable in its demands on the scarce supplies of labour and materials. It will not only enable the Marsh to make its appropriate contribution to the tillage acreage, . . . but will ensure the maintenance of fertility by the periodical resting

OR SHOULD ROMNEY MARSH BE TAKEN OVER BY THE STATE?"

IT TO THE FARMERS

of the land under grass and also the maintenance of stock-carrying capacity."

Moreover, ley farming can be varied, it is pointed out, to suit local conditions. On the second-class soils a policy of ley farming would "not only yield an increased production of tillage crops, but the subsequent ley would carry more stock than the original pasture." Some tile drainage would be needed, but it is anticipated that such pastures would not be among the first to be ploughed and there would be time to undertake the work where necessary.

Fatting Pastures

The Commission enters a contentious field when it comes to deal with the ploughing up of fatting pastures. It recognises that there would be a natural reluctance to do this, but it would not, in principle, exclude them from a ley system, since they "occur on the best soils and would produce the best arable crops."

It is not suggested that all fatting pastures should be ploughed up—and good reasons are given for excluding some—but there are said to be extensive areas of land "which cannot be regarded as being fully and efficiently used at the present time."

The opinion of some farmers is recorded that "after ploughing and cropping the best pastures, they cannot be returned to grass with success and to produce pastures as good as the original." The Commission says that there is, however, evidence to show that the practice of seeding direct without a nurse crop is very satisfactory and that with this system a first-class pasture can be obtained in an area of relatively low rainfall such as this more quickly than by undersowing.

On the maintenance of stock numbers under a ley system, the Commission makes these points:

"Although we recommend that a further 2,500 acres of grassland, including some fatting pasture, should be ploughed because it would be making a greater contribution to the nation's food supply under the plough than by grazing sheep, this is not in our view incompatible with the continuance of sheep farming on the Marsh. We are of the opinion that the loss of this amount of pasture need not result in any considerable fall in the number of sheep.

"The normal practice is to use the best pastures for fattening mature sheep, and these pastures are well managed and in good condition. The second-class pastures are grazed with breeding ewes and growing sheep; growing sheep are heavier in their demands on phosphates from the soil and there appears generally to be insufficient attention given to the need for making good the resultant loss of phosphates on these second-class pastures. We formed the view, and, indeed, had evidence, that quite often the first-class pastures have been unduly favoured at the expense of the second-class, and that the stock-carrying capacity of the latter could be substantially improved by ploughing, cropping and re-seeding.

Fertiliser Needs

"Under a ley system, most of the second-class pastures would, in fact, come under the plough in due turn. Meanwhile, production from these pastures could be increased by the application of fertilisers, in particular phosphates, which would not only increase stock-carrying capacity, but would be reflected later in the higher yields from arable crops. There are in addition poorer pastures on some of the light land soils whose stock-carrying capacity could be considerably improved by direct re-seeding with the application of appropriate fertilisers.

"The full use of all accommodation for wintering stock; the proper use of young pastures with mixed stock; the improved stock-carrying capacity of the new leys as compared with some of the older pastures; a policy of re-seeding direct some of the poor light-land pastures; and the application of more fertiliser to existing old pastures should enable meat production in the Marsh to be maintained at about its present level, whilst the increased tillage acreage would lead to a direct increase in the national food supply.

The needs of the area for a system of ley farming are detailed in the report district by district and farm by farm. The Commission's general conclusions are, in brief:

Size and Layout of Holdings: The Marsh is generally suitable for mechanical farming and large units have advantages. It is not felt, however, that the present layout can be said to be preventing full and efficient production

Labour and Housing: Some 90 additional farm workers will be needed—50 to make good the existing deficiency and 40 to meet new demands. (It had been suggested prior to the survey that as many as 1,000 more workers would be wanted for the full farming development of the area.) The Commission gives the figures as the minimum needed and points out that the question arises whether this additional labour can be attracted into farming in the Marsh.

Additional labour, it is suggested, should be housed wherever possible in existing towns and villages where basic services are available and where there is some community life. The need for better transport is emphasised. Locations for 67 new houses are listed.

Buildings: "The Marsh as a whole is short of farm buildings," the Commission says. "To provide full sets of farm buildings on traditional lines . . . would be unduly extravagant in labour and material. Nor is it necessary; for it is one of the merits of the system of ley farming with sheep as the principal livestock that its demands for fixed equipment are modest."

Farm Storage

While it does not underestimate the advantages of cattle yards in maintaining fertility, the Commission does not regard them as essential to a ley system on the lines suggested. The main need, it is stated, is adequate accommodation for implements and for the storage of harvested crops, seeds, fertilisers, etc., and this is shown by a list of farms whose building needs are detailed (45 implement sheds and 30 stores).

Roads: The building of four miles of new farm road and the improvement of some existing road is recommended.

Drainage: The Commission is impresssed by the high standard of efficiency achieved by the catchment and internal drainage boards. There are only two areas where, it is said, the drainage is not as satisfactory as it might be, and in these proposals for improvement are in hand.

On the rush problem, usually attributed to bad drainage, the Commission says: "We found that rushes were often flourishing where the water table was some feet below the surface and we formed the opinion that their presence is not necessarily a sign of bad drainage. The eradication of rushes is a matter of some difficulty, for even after successive ploughing they will appear in a re-seeded ley." Frequent mowing is recommended: the rushes may still remain an eyesore, but they will thus be considerably weakened and detract little from the feeding value of a pasture.

Water Tables

One of the most interesting recommendations in this section is that advantage should be taken of the controlled drainage on the Marsh to investigate the relationship between the water level and various types of soil and crops.

The report states: "Although the two Catchment Boards maintain a water level generally satisfactory to both the grazier and the arable farmer, this level has been determined empirically over a period of years. No attempt is made to vary it to suit a particular type of soil or a particular crop, and indeed there is little or no scientific evidence on which such variation could be made. We feel that in Romney Marsh, where drainage is so much under man's control, there are facilities for conducting experiments. The information so gained would be of considerable scientific and practical value. Work on these lines has, we believe, already begun in Holland and we recommend that consideration should be given to the possibility of undertaking similar experimental work in Romney Marsh in which the drainage engineer, the scientists and the farmer could co-operate."

Water Supplies

Water and electricity: There are many farms without a pipe water supply. Wells often have a brackish water and tend to fail—there are numerous farms where at some period every year water has to be carried. The area is "probably no worse off than many other rural areas," but the need is recognised as a serious one, and a detailed plan is put forward.

Lack of electricity is not, in the Commission's opinion, hampering "full and efficient" land use, but it is hoped that supplies will be speeded up. Reference is made to the practice of the area electricity board to demand a lump sum as a capital contribution when a farm is connected, "and this falls heavily on the agricultural community." A system to spread the contribution over a period of years is suggested.

Future planning: Urban development has been restricted in the main to poor land, "but there is evidence of encroachment on some of the better land." In one district the Commission noted that some very good land was being used as a camp site—"indefensible when the need for food production is so important and when there is land so poor or so affected by existing urban development as to be of little long-term agricultural value."

"Sewer brushing" on the Marsh. The Commission finds that rushes on pasture are not necessarily a sign of bad drainage. It is suggested that practical experiments should be carried out to test different water tables in varying soil and cropping conditions.

One of the top-grade fatting pastures grazing sheep from Mr. G. H. Finn-Kelcey's flock. Farmers are reluctant to plough up these pastures, but the ploughing of some is recommended. It is suggested that most of the second-class pastures should come under the plough in due turn.

—AND THIS IS THE MARSH

A Romney Survey in Pictures

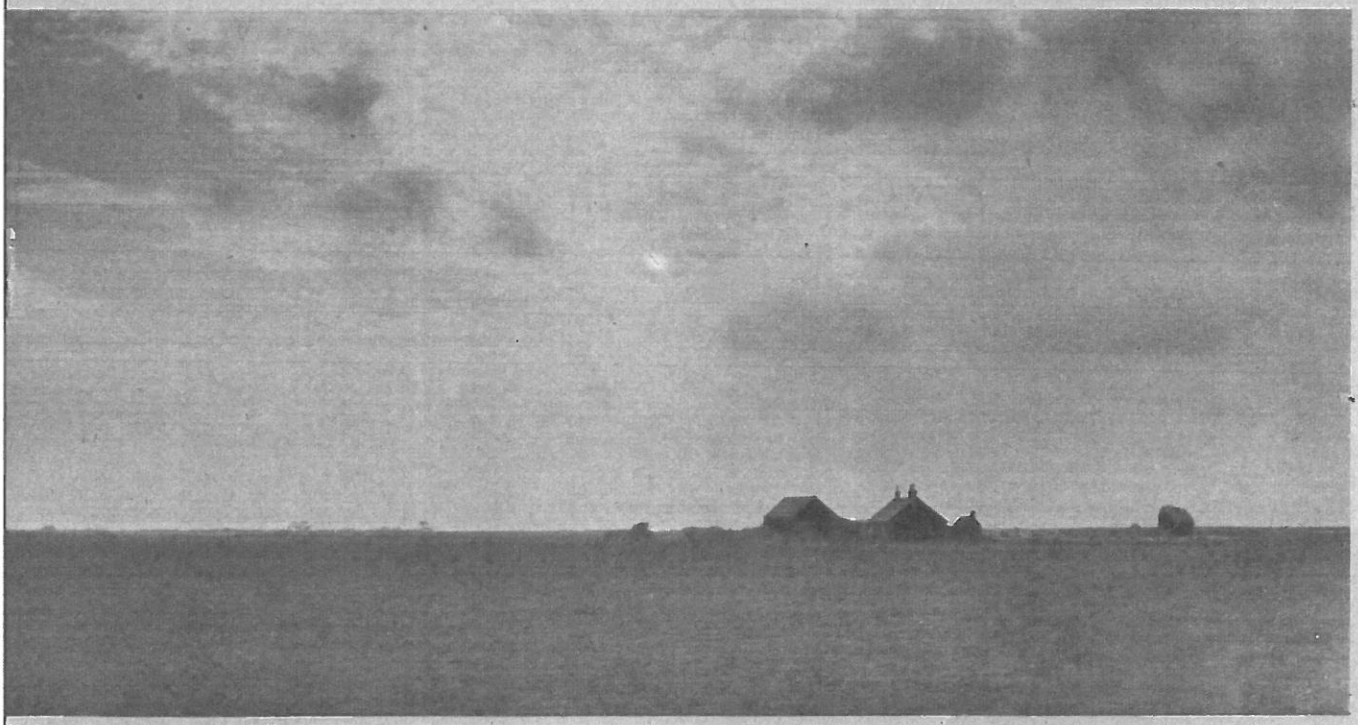
THE Agricultural Land Commission, after its survey of Romney Marsh, recommends in its draft report to the Minister that the area should remain in private hands. These pictures give a glimpse of this area of nearly 60,000 acres, the home of the famous Kent or Romney Marsh sheep, where, on the richer soils, there are some of the finest fatting pastures in the world, carrying up to ten or more sheep to the acre in summer. Romney Marsh was the first area to be surveyed under the provisions of the Agriculture Act which enables the Minister to take over land if he can be satisfied that full farming needs are beyond the capacity of local authorities and private owners.

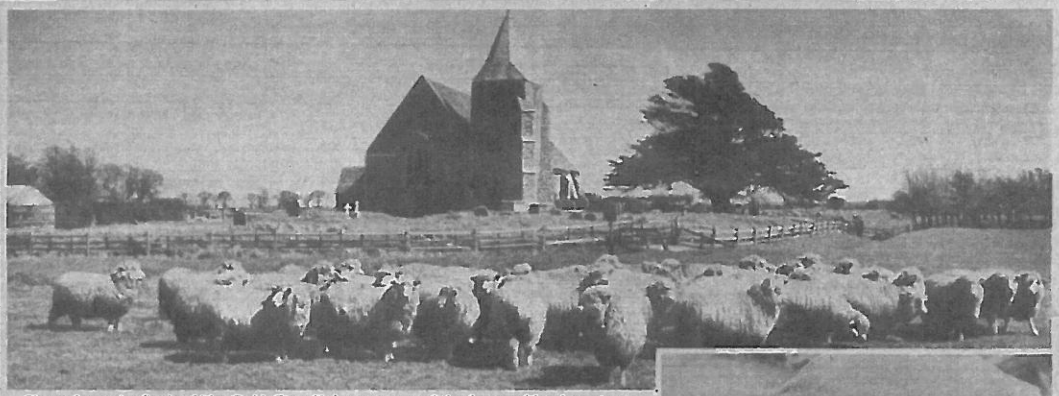
Before 1939 sheep farming was the chief system on the Marsh. The breed, said to be of Flemish origin, is very hardy, gives a good clip, has a good big frame and grazes pastures evenly. Here is a fine specimen being shown by Mr. Fred Kingsnorth, shepherd with Mr. R. Burgess, at Midley.

(*Above*) Members of the Commission, with local officials, inspecting drainage by the old military canal during the survey. The Commission found that there were only two areas where drainage was not as satisfactory as it might be. (*Below*) Romney farmers attending a local N.F.U. meeting at New Romney to consider representations to the Commission.

(*Left*) Mr. George Huggett, head looker (shepherd) with Mr. Dennis M. Clifton, Appledore. (*Above*) Mr. Douglas Paine, of Lydd, a big arable farmer on the Marshes, with his foreman.

Arable workers take lunch on the Marsh in scattered hamlets. Local authorities ar of providing houses for farm workers now They are congratulate

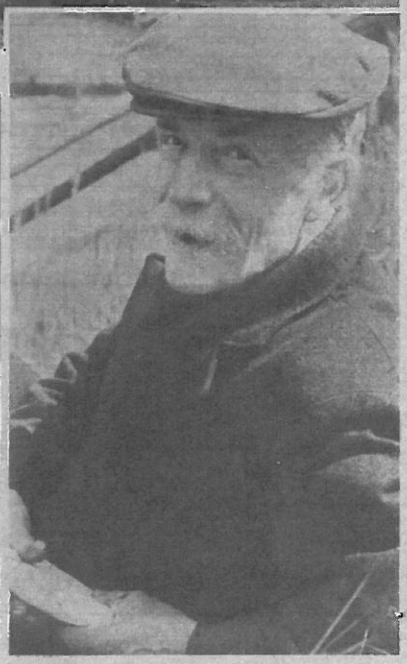




Sheep from the flock of Mr. G. H. Finn-Kelcey on one of the famous Marsh pastures at Old Romney.

Most of the Marsh population is housed in villages or ..., the Commission states, energetically tackling the task ... living in the Marsh but under unsatisfactory conditions. ... on the progress they have made.

(*Above*) Mr. R. Burgess, of Old Cheyne Court, Midley, with his brother Frank, a sheep and wheat farmer on holiday from Australia. (*Right*) Mr. James Sellings, 71, who travels to his work on the Marsh daily from Hastings.



ROMNEY MARSH

G. H. GARRAD, O.B.E., N.D.A.
Formerly County Agricultural Organizer, Kent

ROMNEY MARSH, which came into the limelight recently as the first area to be investigated by an Agricultural Land Commission under Section 84 of the Agriculture Act, 1947, is an area of roughly 59,000 acres (92 square miles). Of this, 50,000 acres are agricultural land lying mainly in Kent, but part is in Sussex. It has a coast line extending from Hythe southwards to Rye, and is bounded on the landward side by the Royal Military Canal. This canal starts at Hythe and passes in a south-westerly direction along the base of the hills at Lympne, Bilsington, Hamstreet and Appledore, to join the River Rother at Iden Lock, near Rye, a distance of about 21 miles.

The Canal was completed in 1812 on the orders of Pitt at a time when Napoleon had an army of 100,000 men encamped on the other side of the Channel and a flotilla of gunboats at Boulogne threatening our shores. It is 90 feet wide and was 18 feet deep. Its stated purpose was " to impede the progress of an enemy, in the event of a landing being effected on this shore". It was laid out in echelon, so that guns firing from emplacements at the angles could sweep it effectively. The canal has since served as a very useful drainage channel, both for the upland slopes on the west side and the Marsh on the other side.

There was a time when the Marsh was undrained and the inhabitants suffered from ague, but today most of the Marsh is dry and sound for carrying sheep, even in the winter, although the whole of it is flat and the bulk of it lies below high water spring tides. The lowest part—the Dowels area of about 650 acres in the neighbourhood of Appledore—is 10–11 feet below sea level and is drained by pumping the water out of its main drainage channel into the Royal Military Canal. The level nature of the Marsh and the fact that most of it lies below high water level create considerable problems of drainage and sea defence. The cost of constructing and maintaining the sea walls is considerable. The fields are divided by dykes of various depths which carry off the water into the "sewers", and the sewers run the water either into the Canal or into the sea, flood gates opening and shutting according to the state of the tide. Most of the water discharged into the canal throughout its length from Iden Lock to West Hythe flows north-eastward and enters the sea at low tide through a specially constructed waterway known as the Canal Cut which reaches the foreshore half-way between Hythe and Dymchurch. There are seven different points where drainage water from the Marsh is discharged into the sea.

Between the canal and the coast the land is almost level, so there is extremely little fall on any of the numerous watercourses or sewers which intersect it. The height of the water in these drainage channels can be regulated by control sluices at all times of the year. In very wet seasons the water is passed out to the sea as quickly as possible, but in dry weather it is conserved. On the main watercourses there are about 70 points at which the water levels can be controlled, and a large number of smaller controls on the private watercourses which are operated by individual farmers. At the end of each winter these controls are operated with the object of trapping the last of the winter flow, so retaining water in all watercourses at levels which experience has found to be most suitable to the type of farming practised along the length of the watercourse.

ROMNEY MARSH

There are very few hedges in Romney Marsh, so that for the sheep grazier the watercourses have to serve at least three purposes—drainage channels, to provide drinking water for the stock, and to take the place of fences. The average annual rainfall is only about 25 inches in most of the area, and the grazier likes to keep the level of the water in the dykes as high as possible during the summer in the belief that by so doing he will provide the pastures with a plentiful supply of moisture for maintaining the growth of grass. The arable farmer, on the other hand, prefers a lower level of water in the dykes so that his crops can develop a deeper root system. Thus sometimes there is a conflict of opinion between the grazier and the arable farmer as to the best water level to be maintained in the dykes.

Romney Marsh is popularly thought of as an area of permanent pasture grazed by Kent or Romney Marsh sheep, but there has always been some arable land in the Marsh, the amount fluctuating according to the economic conditions of the time. The depopulation of the Marsh is said to have begun with the Black Death (1349); up to that time it was mainly under the plough. Much of it was again ploughed up at the time of the Napoleonic wars, and again about 1850–60 when corn prices were high. After that it returned to pasture, but even in the great depression of the early 1930s about 10 per cent of the land was arable. Between 1939 and 1948 the arable acreage increased nearly fourfold—from 4,657 acres to 17,538 acres, and 40 per cent of the Marsh is now under the plough.

Grass and Sheep Nevertheless, Romney Marsh is best known for the richness of some of its pastures and for the number of sheep they carry. The Marsh graziers recognize four grades of pasture :

Grade I. Fatting Pastures. These occur on the most productive soils and fatten from 6 to 10 sheep per acre in summer. On some of the most famous of these pastures even higher numbers can be fattened.

Grade II. Breeding Pastures. These are found on soils slightly inferior to and normally heavier than the fatting pastures. They support from 4 to 6 sheep per acre in growing condition in the summer.

Grade III. Breeding Pastures. These are found on still poorer soils which are either too heavy or are too light for optimum moisture retention. They carry from 2 to 4 sheep in summer.

Grade IV. Rough Grazing Land. These very shallow soils carry two sheep or less per acre in summer.

There is a small area of fatting land to be found in almost every parish. Dr. J. K. Dubey of Wye College (see the May, 1933, issue of this JOURNAL) found that practically all the fatting pastures are on a soil formation where the surface layer to a depth of 10–20 inches is loam or silty loam; the texture becomes heavier with increasing depth but is never very heavy, and at 2–3 feet (occasionally 4 feet) it becomes lighter again. The high fertility of these soils is very largely due to the fact that their texture facilitates a perfect natural drainage.

Most of the breeding pastures are found on heavy soils where the water drains through with difficulty so that the land is rather wet. They are also found on light soils which are unable to retain sufficient moisture and are therefore rather too dry.

The rough grazing land occurs on very shallow soils, and includes the shingle of Dungeness. The soil is either very wet or excessively dry.

The quality of the pasture in Romney Marsh in some cases shows a remarkable variation within small areas, and it is a common experience to find a fatting pasture surrounded by breeding pastures. Fatting pastures always

receive the first consideration at the hands of the grazier; and if at any particular time the sheep stocking of a fatting pasture requires adjusting (up or down) it is dealt with accordingly, even though other pastures have to suffer in consequence. Such preferential treatment in management, extending over many years, has doubtless had an influence in the improvement of some pastures and the deterioration of others.

The Marsh pastures vary considerably in the composition of their herbage. On the best fatting pastures more than 90 per cent of the total herbage may consist of four species of plants only—perennial ryegrass, crested dogstail, rough-stalked meadow grass, and wild white clover. A typical pasture botanically examined by Dr. Wm. Davies was found to contain 53 per cent perennial ryegrass, 20 per cent crested dogstail, 13 per cent rough-stalked meadow grass, 5 per cent wild white clover, and 9 per cent other species of plants. The percentage of clover, even on the best fatting pastures, is never very high. Generally speaking, the better the pasture the higher the proportion of perennial ryegrass. The lower the grade of pasture the smaller is the percentage of the above-mentioned four species of plants, until on the poorest breeding pastures these species may form between them less than 10 per cent of the herbage, and there may be as many as thirty or forty different other species present.

The best grass owes much of its virtue to the traditional methods of management. An old test of a well-grazed pasture in Romney Marsh is to throw a sixpence as far as you can and then go and pick it up again. If you cannot find it, the pasture is not being grazed hard enough.

In summer the Romney Marsh is probably more heavily stocked with sheep than any other area of similar size anywhere else in the world. But at the end of August or at the beginning of September it is customary to relieve the pastures of some of the sheep by sending the lambs away, either to be sold in the autumn lamb sales at Ashford, Lyminge, Maidstone and elsewhere or to be wintered until April on the uplands of Kent, Surrey and Sussex or further afield. The breeding ewes and wether tegs, however, remain in the Marsh, and even in the winter the pastures are not really being rested from sheep; they are stocked up to their capacity, usually at the rate of about 2½ sheep per acre. In the autumn one likes to have a fair covering of grass on the pastures to provide winter food for the sheep.

The rams are not put with the ewes until the beginning of November, as lambs are not wanted before the grass begins to grow in April. Normally the ewes receive no artificial food, except in deep snow or hard frost; then shey may get some bean straw or hay. The Marsh is an open, treeless, thelterless area, exposed to the south-westerly gales from the Channel and the piercingly cold northerly and easterly winds in the spring, yet the ewes lamb in the open and the only protection they are given is the shelter of a few straw-thatched hurdles. In the lambing field they may receive a few whole beans, broadcast over the pasture; it would require too many troughs to trough-feed them.

In May, when the grass gains on the ewes, the lambs and tegs which have been wintered away are brought back to the Marsh. In June, if there is a surplus of grass, a few bullocks may help out the sheep, the idea being to graze the land closely until the longest day (June 21) to prevent the grass "running away". The sheep are sent to Ashford market as they get fat. Most of these fat sheep never see any food other than grass from the day they are born to the day they are killed.

Romney Marsh is the home of the famous Kent or Romney Marsh breed of sheep. There is no other breed of sheep that will put up with the

rigorous conditions, though several other breeds have been tried. Moreover, the Kent sheep is a good grazing sheep; it spreads itself well over the ground and is hardy. It produces a good clip of demi-lustre wool : the ewes average 8 or 9 lb. of unwashed wool, the tegs about 7 lb., and the lambs 1½lb. Shearing is late in the Marsh, and it is customary to shear the lambs as well as the ewes. Wool has always been a very important source of revenue to the Marsh grazier, and at one time land used to be let on wool rents; that is to say, the rent varied with the price of wool. The favourite cross with the Kent ewes is a Southdown ram—the same cross as is used in New Zealand in the production of "Canterbury lamb".

Kent sheep have been exported all over the world. New Zealand and Australia, where they are known as "Romneys," have immense flocks of them. They are also very popular in the Argentine, Brazil, Chile, Patagonia, the Falkland Islands, North America and South Africa. At one time the Falkland Islands had an illustration of a Kent sheep on their postage stamps. In recent years Russia has been buying the breed steadily.

One of the worst features in Marsh grazing used to be the heavy sheep losses. It was said that a man lost the whole of his flock every seventeen years, i.e., 6 per cent per year. The sheep died mostly from a disease locally called "struck," which is in the same group of diseases as blackquarter, parasitic worms and blowfly maggots, but these troubles are now more easily controlled—struck by vaccination, parasitic worms by phenothiazine, and maggots by DDT dips.

The farmer who has a farm on the neighbouring uplands as well as in the Marsh can transfer cattle and sheep from one to the other as required. Some years ago estates adjacent to the Marsh often had some marshland belonging to the estate, and it was customary for the farmers to have on the Marsh, say, 10 to 30 acres of pasture land. But of recent years, when these estates have been sold, the marshland has been disposed of separately, and in most cases has fallen into other hands. There are still a few upland farmers, however, who also farm land in the Marsh, some miles away. Such farmers are dependent on a "looker" or shepherd to look after their sheep for them. The looker is paid by the acre for "lookering" the stock twice a day, to see that none get in the dykes, or gets "cast" or fly-struck. He is also expected to spud the thistles and cut the "emmet casts" or ant-hills.

Diversity of Arable Cropping

Coming now to the arable farming in the Marsh, there is a great diversity of crops grown. "Fresh land," i.e., land newly ploughed out of permanent grass, is often so strong that it is not safe to put corn on it for the first few years after ploughing. So crops like mangold seed, beet seed, turnip seed, blue peas, long-pod beans, potatoes, etc., are grown. Later on heavy crops of corn can be taken, but stiff-strawed varieties have to be chosen. The soil is generally too rich to grow good quality barley.

A serious handicap on the Marsh has always been the shortage of labour. There are nearly 50,000 acres of agricultural land in Romney Marsh and the existing labour force is only 1,250, of which 850 are permanent, i.e., 1 worker for every 40 acres, excluding the farmer and family labour. In years gone by the steam ploughs did wonderful work in the Marsh, and there were a number of sets located there. A lot of the land is heavy, but if it can be ploughed directly after harvest and wheat sown before the ground gets too wet, a heavy crop is assured. Nowadays, heavy caterpillar tractors have taken the place of the steam tackle. Labour-saving machinery of all kinds is essential because of the labour shortage.

ROMNEY MARSH

The June 3, 1949, returns for the eleven Kent parishes which are entirely in Romney Marsh—namely, Burmarsh, Dymchurch, Newchurch, St. Mary's, Brenzett, Snargate, Brookland, Ivychurch, Old Romney, Lydd, and New Romney—provide a general picture of the farming in Romney Marsh today.

Acreage of Crops	*acres*
Wheat	3,176
Barley	511
Oats	1,238
Other corn	56
Beans and peas for stock feeding	610
Potatoes	2,313
Turnips and swedes	111
Mangolds	322
Sugar beet	157
Cabbage, kale, etc.	135
Linseed and flax	487
Orchards	111
Small fruits	25
Vegetables for human consumption (other than potatoes)	2,172
Other crops	1,191
Temporary leys for mowing	1,657
Temporary leys for grazing	1,381
Permanent grass for mowing	1,178
Permanent grass for grazing	17,255
Total Acreage	34,086

Livestock	*No.*
Cattle	4,045
Sheep	87,593
Pigs	1,170
Poultry	34,874
Horses	236
Workers	
Regular men	688
Regular women	156
Casual men	243
Casual women	115
	1,202
No. of Holdings	313

The acreage of vegetables for human consumption includes blue peas 951; green peas 149; broad beans 166; French and runner beans 146; brassicas 187; carrots 118; parsnips 43; turnips 53; onions 53; asparagus 42; and smaller acreages of spinach, beetroot, lettuce, etc.

A number of crops are grown for seed, including beet, mangolds, swedes, spinach, carrots, runner beans and dwarf beans. To prevent cross-fertilization between the seed crops of beet and mangolds, the Marsh is zoned: mangold seed may be grown only in the part of the Marsh north of the Appledore–New Romney Road, and beet seed may be grown only in the part of the Marsh south of this road. Kent wild white clover, Kent indigenous perennial ryegrass and cocksfoot are also grown as seed crops.*

It will be noticed that out of a total area of 34,086 acres in the above-mentioned eleven parishes, 15,653 (47 per cent) are arable. Of these 15,653 acres of arable, 4,925 acres (31 per cent) are under corn, chiefly wheat, and 4,485 acres (30 per cent) are under potatoes or other market-garden crops. As regards livestock, there are 470 sheep for every 100 acres of grazing pasture (as compared with 506 before the war). There are 313 holdings of an average size of 110 acres each, and 844 regular men and women workers, i.e., less than three per holding, excluding the farmer and family labour.

The change-over from sheep and grass to a system of mixed farming which has taken place since 1939 has been fraught with great difficulties. The traditional system of sheep farming made very small demands on labour and fixed equipment and none at all on machinery. There are very few buildings in the Marsh for housing implements or anything else. Many of the farmers and their workers had only a very limited experience of arable farming or knowledge of how to use a plough. Moreover, some of the fields are as far

* An article on Kent indigenous perennial ryegrass appeared in the October, 1949, issue of AGRICULTURE.

as two miles from a hard road, and the bridges over the dykes dividing the fields from one another are only strong enough for the passage of a flock of sheep and would not bear a tractor or heavy implements.

Besides all these handicaps, throughout the war Romney Marsh was in the front line of defence, and all agricultural operations were carried out under very considerable difficulty. In the spring of 1940, when there was an immediate threat of invasion, hurried preparations were made to flood a large portion of the Marsh with sea water, and orders were received to remove all the sheep from that area. This was at a time when the ewes were unshorn and their lambs unweaned. Within three weeks, 65,500 sheep were shorn and dispatched by train to other parts of the country. The main bridges over the dykes and sewers were then blown up. Throughout the war Romney Marsh was under almost continuous air raids and towards the end flying bombs. The area lay in the direct line of travel of the flying bombs from the Boulogne-Calais launching sites to London and more flying bombs fell in the Marsh area than anywhere else in the whole country.

The activities of our own Service Departments in this front line area inevitably rendered farming operations still more difficult. And yet, in spite of everything, the Romney Marsh farmers, with the help of War Agricultural Executive Committee labour and machinery, not only carried on but increased their arable acreage nearly fourfold and succeeded in growing heavy crops. It was a wonderful achievement.

The Agricultural Land Commission, as the result of their investigations, decided that ley farming is the proper system for general adoption in Romney Marsh to ensure full and efficient use of the land for agriculture, that in the national interest the tillage acreage should be not less than 20,000 (it was 17,500 acres at the time of their investigation) and that the acreage under temporary grass at any one time should be something like 5,000 (it was 3,654 acres at the time of their investigation), making a total arable acreage of 25,000, which is approximately 50 per cent of the total agricultural area.

The Commission made certain recommendations regarding the provision of new roads to the less accessible areas, more houses for the additional labour force that will be required, and the building of implement sheds, stores, cattle yards, etc. They concluded their report thus: " We consider that all the recommendations we have put forward for work to be carried out and fixed equipment to be provided for the full and efficient use of the land can reasonably be expected to be put into effect by the owners and occupiers in Romney Marsh, and we do not consider it is necessary for the Minister to exercise his powers of compulsory purchase or hiring."

The result of the investigation is a well-merited vindication of what the Romney Marsh farmers have done and are continuing to do of their own volition.

Harvesting tick beans for seed

Photos: *John Topham*

Summer spinach being cut for seed

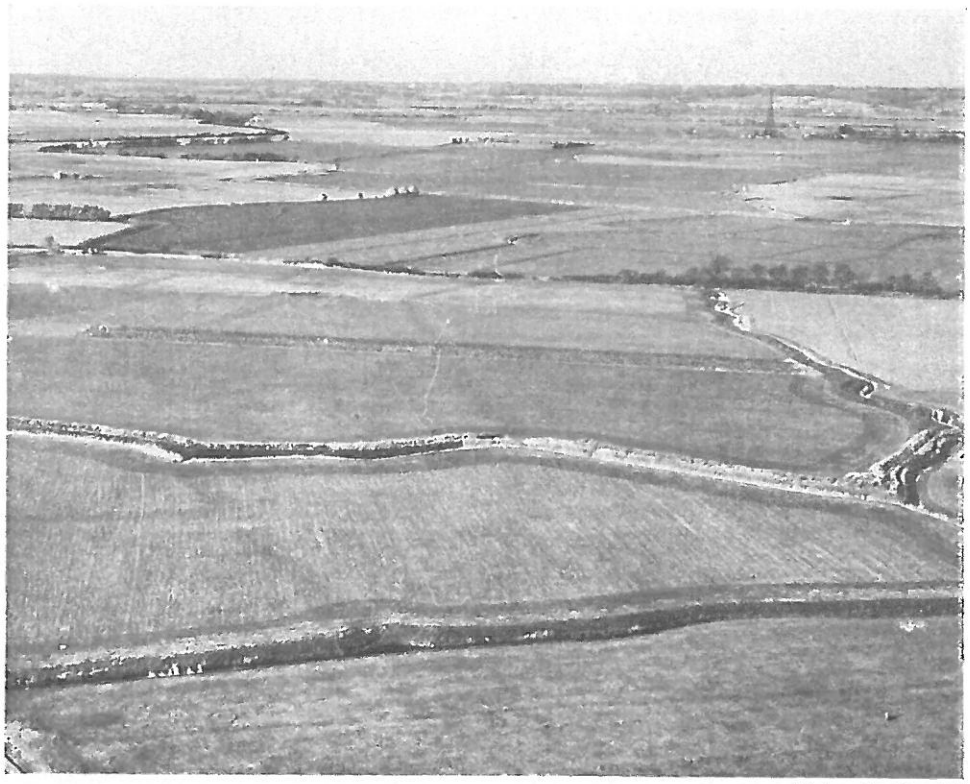


Photo · *Aerofilms, Ltd*

Romney Marsh from the air

Photo : *Mustograph*

A flat expanse of the Marsh with the little church at Fairfield showing up as a prominent landmark

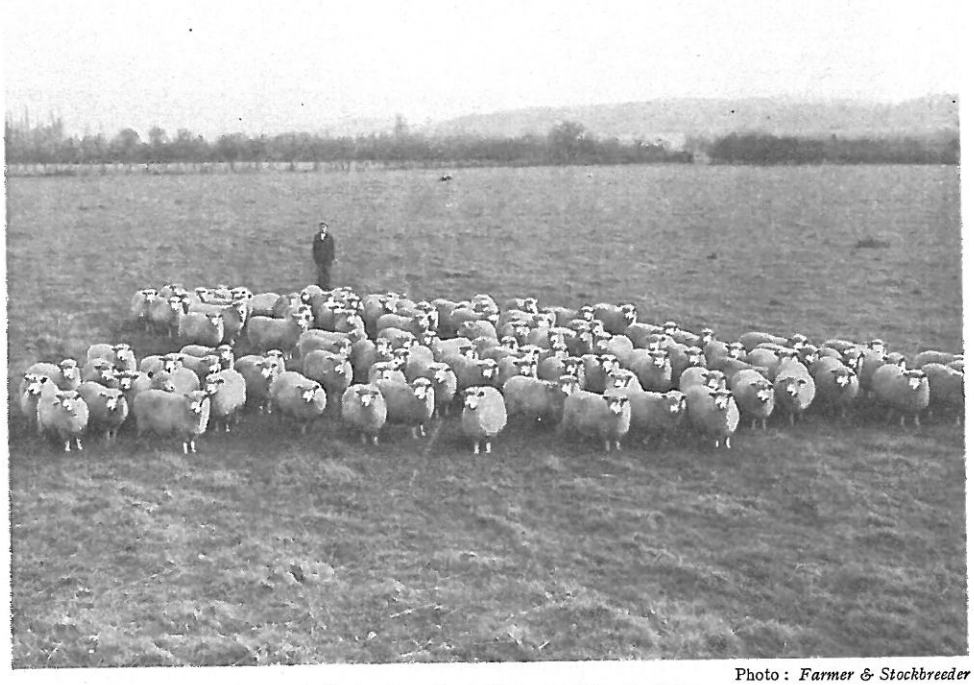


Photo : *Farmer & Stockbreeder*

A flock of pedigree Romney Marsh sheep

Photo : *John Topham*

An R.A.F. airfield handed back to sheep pasture

Photo : *Sport & General*

In the spring of 1940, 65,500 sheep were removed from the Marsh to other parts of the country

The Royal Military Canal at Appledon

Part of a good seed crop of wild white clover

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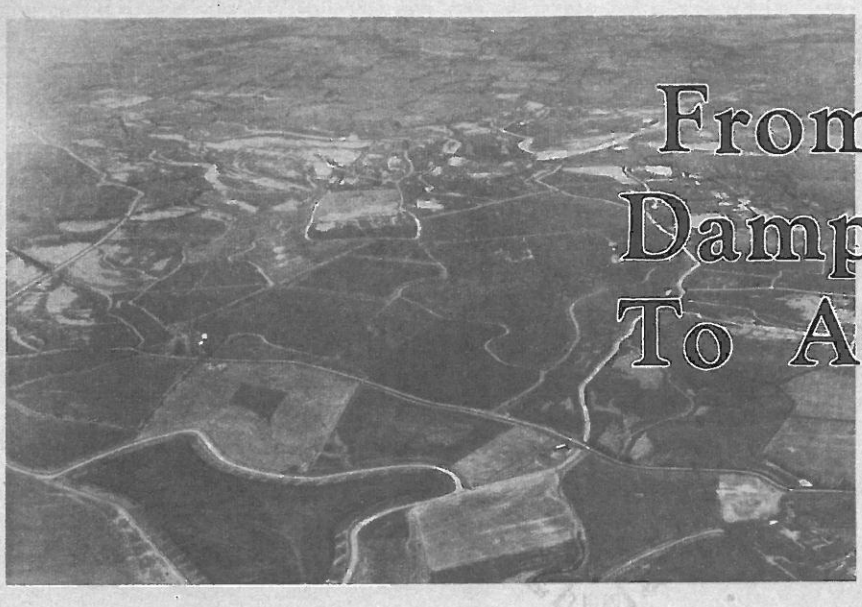


From One Damp Place To Another

(Left) Willow Farm stands out in marked contrast to the surrounding flooded land in this aerial picture taken early in March this year after a fairly dry winter. Before the drainage was tackled there was no difference. The three fields showing a little surface water are being tile drained. (See *diagram below.*)

This is the pump house which contains a 6-in. centrifugal pump capable of about 1,000 gallons a minute driven by an 18 h.p. diesel engine. On the far side of the house are two pegs. When water reaches the top of the longer one Mr. Frith starts pumping and keeps on until the smaller one shows. This takes about 10 hours with about 5 gallons of diesel oil.

A group of Lincolnshire farmers who have settled on the fringe of Romney Marsh are applying their traditional fen drainage system with excellent results. How one of them has transformed 250 acres of "four months land" into a first class arable holding is described here

By ANTHONY PARKIN

IN recent years many farmers have left the Lincolnshire fens and taken holdings in other parts of the country. Most of them have been waging a battle against potato eelworm which they have finally given up. They go chiefly to the sort of land they understand—to Kent's Romney Marsh, for instance, where a number have settled since the war. And the first thing they look to on their new farms is the drainage.

There is a colony of Lincolnshire men farming on Shirley Moor, just north of the Marsh proper, several of whom have already applied the fen system of drainage to their land, much of which had previously been waterlogged for the greater part of the year. It is a job worth doing, for the land is good—but it's as flat as a floor.

Planning these schemes for them is a farm water consultant, Mr. W. J. Jones, of Cranbrook,

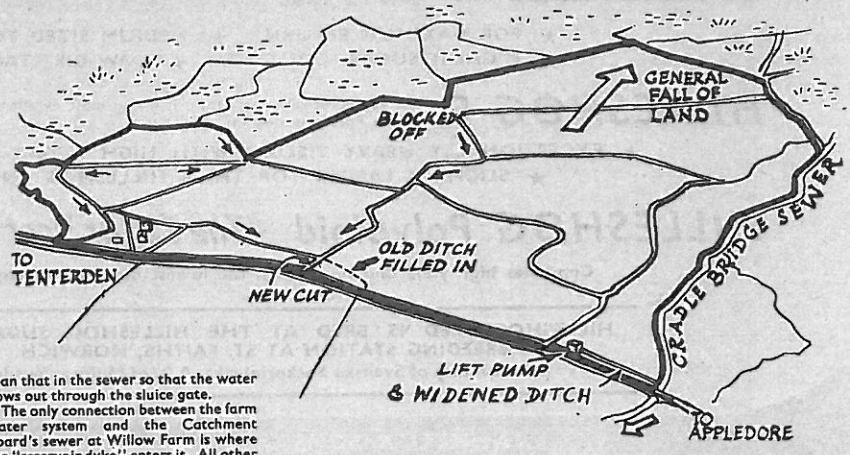
Continued on page 89

HOW IT WORKS

The diagram on the right shows how the new drainage works. Previously, the water "percolated"—it was no more—out to the Cradlebridge Sewer at the top of the farm. But as the sewer water, as often as not, was at a higher level than the water in the dykes, water frequently flowed in the reverse direction just when it was least wanted. The result was that for most of the year the farm was waterlogged.

The new scheme reverses the flow of water, bringing it to a point to the left of the pump. Work involved cutting a new dyke to connect up with the roadside dyke (foreground) which was widened considerably. The pump lifts the water from the left to the right of the pump making the water level in the right-hand "reservoir" dyke higher than that in the sewer so that the water flows out through the sluice gate.

The only connection between the farm water system and the Catchment Board's sewer at Willow Farm is where the "reservoir dyke" enters it. All other connections between dyke and sewer have been blocked off.



From One Damp Place To Another

Continued from page 87

and some of the results he has achieved are startling to anyone who has not seen how well the system works in the fens.

The principle lies in taking the water to one point on the farm and from there lifting it, by means of a pump, into another section of dyke from which it flows through a sluice gate into the main "sewer" (the Catchment Board's waterway). Pumping straight into the sewer is not allowed. In many cases the re-planning of a farm's drainage involves casting out altogether the traditional method and sometimes draining against the fall.

This was the situation in the case of Mr. Jim Frith who came from Long Sutton in 1949 to take the 250-acre Willow Farm, Reading Street, near Tenterden. The drainage scheme which Mr. Jones planned for him and which was executed a couple of years ago has turned what was a "supervised" farm when he took it into a high-yielding arable holding with high corn, potato and beet yields.

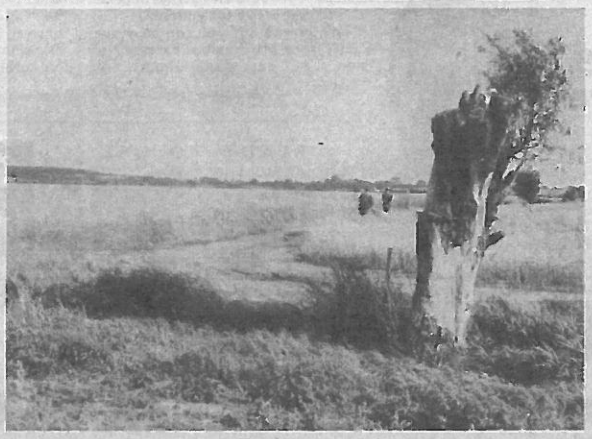
Flooded Potatoes

Before the work was undertaken, Mr. Frith could not get on most of the land during the winter. One year he had 20 acres of potatoes flooded from October until the following spring when about a quarter of the original tonnage was harvested. Winter corn always had to be patched in the spring—and, in 1951, he had not one seed of anything sown on April 16.

The cost of the scheme, including the installation of a 6-in. pump, was £900, of which the Ministry, by a farm drainage grant, will pay half. So, for less than £2 an acre, Mr. Frith has transformed his holding from "four months' land" into a first-rate arable land on which the water table can be regulated at will.

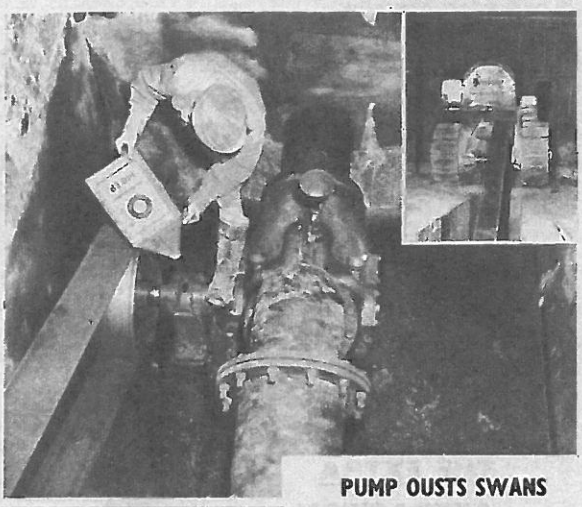
This scheme was a good deal cheaper than many, as the dykes on Willow Farm were not in too bad a state. Normal costs vary from about £10-£20 an acre, of which the Ministry will pay half in approved cases.

Increased yields, lower labour demands and cutting of losses would enable Mr. Frith to recover the cost of his drainage in a year. Even the most expensive scheme would pay for itself in one rotation.



(*Above*) This field carried a heavy level crop of Atle this year. "There never used to be anything in the middle," commented Mr. Frith. "We've had a lot of rain this year and I haven't seen a sign of water in the fields."

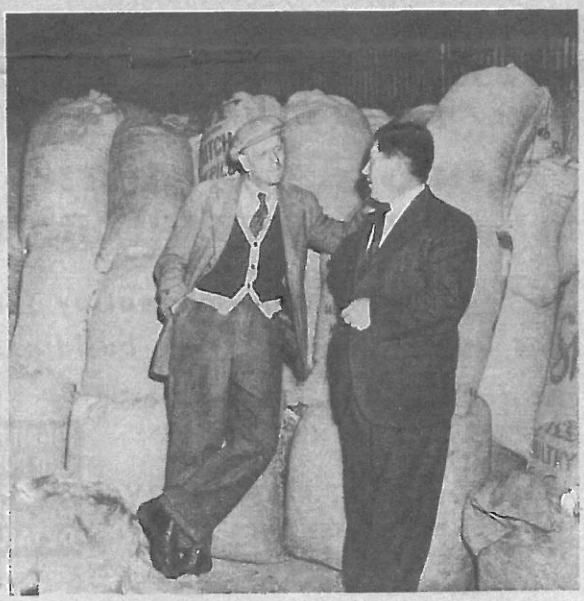
(*Below*) Lifting potatoes is now a much easier and more certain job than it used to be. And sugar beet dirt tare is well down. As well as 50 acres of potatoes and 20 of sugar beet, Mr. Frith has 60 of wheat and 30 of barley.



PUMP OUSTS SWANS

(*Above*) A similar scheme, also planned by Mr. Jones, is draining 450 acres on Mr. Dennis Clifton's Chapel Bank Farm, adjoining Willow Farm. Some of the water is taken two miles to the pump. The 12 in. pump is powered by a crawler tractor (see *inset*) on the principle that when the land is wet enough to need draining it is too wet for a tractor to be on it, but this is to be replaced by an electric motor. The farm used to be so badly flooded in winter that parts of it were entirely cut off. "I've seen 200 swans out there in the meadow," said the pump man, Johnny Johnson, seen here with the 4,000-gallon-a-minute pump. This year the farm, together with Mr. Clifton's other land, won the Ashford farm contest.

(*Below*) Mr. W. J. Jones, the man who planned the scheme, discusses the improvements on Willow Farm with Mr. Frith (left). Behind them is an example of its results—part of a 2-ton-an-acre crop of Capelle.



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Extracted for T.E.Williams.

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The Romney Marsh Problem

by

G.H. Garrad
(Kent Education Committee)

Some Statistics of Romney Marsh.

The Ministry of Agriculture's 4th June Returns show that there are more sheep in Kent than in any other county with the exceptions of Yorkshire, Northumberland and Devon, and that a quarter of all the sheep in Kent are in Romney Marsh in the summer months. Romney Marsh comprises all the land on the seaward side of the Royal Military Canal running from Hythe to Rye, and comprises 50,000 to 55,000 acres of land, i.e., about 85 square miles.

The following figures for the whole of Romney Marsh, plus the parishes of Appledore, Ruckinge, Kenardington and Stone (which are partly in the Marsh), which have been supplied by the Ministry of Agriculture give a good idea of the farming of the Marsh.

	1914	1930	1935
Acreage.			
Rough Grazing	2,871	5,195	5,289
* Permanent Grass	44,059	41,473	44,354
Arable Land	8,991	5,615	5,976
Total Acreage	55,921	52,283	55,619
* Including Returns for Hay	2,961	1,138	4,960
Horned Stock.			
Cows and Heifers	1,278	1,538	2,008
Other Cattle 2 years or over	1,596	1,270	1,458
ditto 1 to 2 years	1,113	1,307	1,921
ditto Under 1 year	516	644	1,068
Total Horned Stock	4,503	4,759	6,455
Sheep.			
Ewes kept for breeding	52,338	50,301	61,792
Other Sheep, 1 year or over	84,485	76,242	66,523
ditto Under 1 year	59,624	52,491	71,602
Total Sheep	196,447	179,034	199,917
Lamb Average per ewe	1.14	1.04	1.16
Sheep per 100 acres of Permanent Grass	445	432	451

In the past 12 years the largest number of sheep in Romney Marsh was in 1933, when there were 223,120 sheep on June 4th, or 505 sheep per 100 acres of permanent pasture (excluding rough grazings). The lowest was in 1924 when there were 162,890 sheep, or 422 sheep per 100 acres of permanent pasture. The average figure has been 445 sheep per 100 acres of permanent grass. In the winter the Marsh only carries about one-third of this number of sheep.

The acreage of arable land in the Marsh, which had remained fairly stationary at about 9,000 acres before the War, was 10,625 acres in 1924. It fell steadily to 4,665 acres in 1931. Since then it has risen slightly, the increases being 82 acres in 1932, 299 acres in 1933, 168 acres in 1934, and 762 acres in 1935. The area of arable land on June 4th, 1935, was 5,976 acres.

The lamb average per ewe, arrived at by dividing the number of "sheep under 1 year old" by the number of "ewes kept for breeding," as disclosed in the 4th June returns, was highest in 1934, with 121 lambs per 100 ewes and lowest in 1927 with 102 lambs per 100 ewes. The average over the last 12 years is 108 lambs per 100 ewes. This is a very low figure and deserves careful examination. The average number of lambs per 100 ewes put to the ram is lower still, for some of the ewes (probably about 5 per cent), would have died between the time they went to the ram in the autumn and the date of the 4th June Returns and there is reason to believe that some graziers have included their barren ewes in the category "other sheep 1 year or over" and not in the category " ewes kept for breeding". On the other hand a few lambs are sold fat before June 4th.

It will be noticed, in comparing the figures for 1930 and 1935, that the number of ewes and the number of lambs has increased but the number of other sheep 1 year old or over has decreased. The probable explanation of this is that an increasingly larger proportion of the sheep are now half bred Southdown x Kents, which are quicker-maturing sheep than the pure Kents, and consequently a larger proportion of them had been sold as fat lambs or one-year-old wethers and a much smaller proportion left over as 2-year-old wethers.

It seems at first sight rather surprising that with such good land as there is in Romney Marsh the grazier should be retaining some of his wethers until they are two years old before he sells them fat to the butcher and should be content with such a small output of lambs as he normally gets from his breeding ewes.

Classification of Pastures and Soils.

The Marsh graziers recognise three grades of pasture - fatting land, breeding land and rough grazing land. There is some fatting land to be found in every parish. The fatting land, it is commonly said, will fatten 6 to 12 tegs per acre in the summer, but this statement means very little because the number of sheep that a pasture will fatten in a summer depends largely on the condition of the sheep when they are put into the pasture and the length of time they are kept there.

In their Survey of Romney Marsh Soils (see the Wye College Journal 1932) Messrs. L.W. Cole and J.K. Dubey, of Wye College, discovered that practically all the fatting pastures are on a soil formation where the surface layer to a depth of 10 to 20 inches is a loam or silty loam, the texture becomes heavier with increasing depth but is never very heavy and at a depth of 2 to 3 feet (occasionally 4 feet) it becomes definitely lighter again. Their high fertility is very largely due to the fact that their soil texture is such that there is perfect natural drainage.

In the majority of cases, breeding pastures are found on heavy soils where the water drains through with difficulty so that the land is rather wet. They are also found on light soils which are unable to retain sufficient moisture and are therefore rather too dry. Breeding land will keep from 3 to 6 sheep per acre in a growing condition during the summer, whereas the rough grazing land carries two or fewer sheep per acre. The rough grazingland occurs on very shallow soils; it includes the shingle of Dungeness. The soil is either very wet or excessively dry.

The texture of the surface soil in Romney Marsh in some cases shows a remarkable variation within small areas and it is quite a common experience to find a fatting pasture surrounded on all sides by breeding pastures. Fatting pastures always receive the first consideration at the hands of the grazier and if a fatting pasture at any particular time needs stocking with more sheep or less sheep it is dealt with accordingly, even though other pastures have to suffer in consequence. Such preferential treatment in management, extended over many years, has doubtless had an influence in the improvement of some pastures and the deterioration of others.

The Romney Marsh pastures vary considerably in the composition of their herbage. On the best fatting pastures more than 90 per cent, of the total herbage may consist of four species of plants only, namely, perennial rye grass, crested dogstail, rough-stalked meadow grass and wild white clover. On the poorest breeding pastures these four species may form between them less than 10 per cent of the herbage and there may be as many as 30 or 40 different other species present. A typical fatting pasture, botanically examined by Mr. Wm. Davies, a member of Professor R.G. Stapledon's staff at the Welsh Plant Breeding Station, Aberystwyth, was found to contain 53 per cent. perennial rye grass, 20 per cent. crested dogstail, 13 per cent. rough stalked meadow grass, 5 per cent. wild white clover and 9 per cent. other species of plants. The percentage of clover, even on the best fatting pastures, is never very high and some graziers are of opinion that too much clover is detrimental to the sward, encouraging the growth of moss in winter and adversely affecting the growth of grass during the summer.

The variation in the texture of the soil in the Marsh is considerable, but generally speaking as one proceeds from the sea coast towards the interior the texture of the soil becomes progressively heavier until at Newchurch and to the north of Newchurch the soil is very heavy indeed.

The Summer Grazing.

The Romney Marsh grazier deals with the summer flush of grass, in May and June, by buying additional sheep or by bringing home stock that he had put out to keep for the winter. It is common experience that home-bred tegs will fatten more quickly than those that are purchased. In buying store wether tegs in April and early May he has to compete with the fruit grower who is wanting sheep at the same time for stocking his grass orchards. The cut-throat competition between these two classes of buyers results in both having to pay high prices as the demand always exceeds the supply.

Similarly in the autumn, when the supply of summer grass is falling short, both the Marsh farmer and the owner of grass orchards have to dispose of some of their sheep or else put them out to keep and the effect of both of them trying to sell their sheep at the same time is to lower prices. At this period the supply exceeds the demand and the sheep which cost perhaps 43/- in the spring, average only about 46/- from September to December. Last year sheep were actually sold in the autumn for less money than they cost in the spring.

Thus graziers buy tegs in the spring when market prices are high and such sheep as they have not succeeded in fattening are sold in the autumn when market prices are low. The tegs have to be kept throughout the summer for about 3/- per head and the value of their wool - say 5½ lbs. of washed wool at 8d. per lb. Many of them will not fatten on grass that has been over-stocked in April and early May - as is often unavoidable when large numbers of sheep are brought into the marsh at the beginning of April - unless the grazing is supplemented by hand feeding.

Could the flush of summer grass be dealt with in some other way? It has sometimes been suggested that the Marsh grazier might buy ewes with lambs instead of store wether tegs, but there are very few ewes and lambs on the market in the spring for him to purchase. Moreover, he already keeps as many ewes as he can and to buy more and put them on his land would be taking a risk of spoiling his own home-bred sheep.

Should he turn more of his grass into hay instead of into mutton? The Marsh farmer has little use for more hay than he grows already. Some of those who have tried it say that the hay is inferior in quality to hay from temporary leys and that haying a pasture will spoil it for grazing during the following winter and summer. In many agreements haying is prohibited on the better pastures under a penalty; it is, nevertheless easy

nowadays to return to the land in the form of artificial manures plant food that has been removed in a hay crop.

Would it be a good plan to cut some of these pastures for the seed of wild white clover and indigenous perennial rye grass? The difficulty here is that the grass is likely to grow too strongly and to swamp the wild white clover so that there is not enough clover seed obtained to pay for the expenses; it is only on the new pastures that one can get a heavy crop of wild white clover seed. A heavy dressing of basic slag in the previous autumn should stimulate the clover and so increase the seed crop and in any case there is a rapidly growing market for seed of a leafy long-living strain of indigenous perennial rye grass off good old permanent pastures which might be catered for by the Marsh grazier.

If the new system of converting short leafy grass into artificially-dried hay with an analysis as good as a concentrate proves to be an economic proposition, this may ease the problem. The capital outlay of a large Drying Plant is, of course, very heavy but so too is the outlay involved in buying a number of store sheep. A Drying Plant capable of drying 5 monthly cuts off 100 acres of grassland may cost £1,000, but the same amount of money would be required to buy sufficient sheep in the spring, say 500 tegs at 40/- each, to graze that acreage. The main difference would be that at the end of the summer the Drying Plant would have depreciated whereas the sheep would have increased in value. The question of grass drying is discussed in detail in section 13.

Romney Marsh Pastures.
by A.G. Davis

Address to the Association of Applied Biologists Meeting at Wye College 24th September, 1951

Romney Marsh has a fascinating attraction for visitors whatever their interests may be. Traveller, historian, antiquarian, geographer, pedologist, drainage engineer, sociologist, ecologist, artist, holiday maker, farmer and politician - all will find much to interest them. In addition to this happy band there is the agrotologists who from far and wide make a pilgrimage to Romney Marsh in order to inspect the world famous pastures. These pastures are famous because of their capacity to carry and fatten a large number of sheep, year after year and in fact are reputed to be as old as the memory of man.

By no means all of the Marsh is pasture land. Today some 36% of the land is in tillage crops, one third of which is in corn, one third in potatoes and other market garden crops and the remainder in a variety of crops. In fact the variety of crops grown is surprising and numbers over 30 including vegetables for seed such as runner beans, spinach, lettuce, bulbs etc. Prior to the Black Death (1349) arable farming was widely practised, yet, prior to the last war and for more than a century the Marsh was reputedly a grass and sheep country. The intervening period is associated with smuggling wool to the Continent, raiding and pillage by the French and the prevalence of the "ague" or malaria.

Before the war many farms were entirely grass and sheep, they possessed little or no machinery, labour was, apart from the looker and shepherd non existant. War time ploughing and post war policies have drastically altered the conditions and coupled with re-building and new building of houses, the farming picture is now one of great diversification, ranging from the traditional Marsh man with his permanent pastures to the intensive arable as carried out by new comers from the Lincolnshire fens.

My interests are the pastures and as I have said they are of great repute.

The pastures are not however all first class - far from it. The grazier and his shepherd ~~or "looker"~~ recognizes different types of pasturage, fattening pastures, first and second class breeding pastures and rough grazing land. Botanically the fattening pastures are very largely perennial ryegrass and wild white clover, whereas the breeding pastures although containing these two species also have varying amounts of Agrostis vulgaris, crested dogstail, rough and stalked meadow grass, Yorkshire fog, Meadow barley grass, sheeps fescue and miscellaneous weeds. The rough grazings are not exactly a botanists paradise yet there are quite a number of species including rushes. The fattening pastures are to be found on the better soils i.e. belonging to the Finn or New Romney Series (Harrison 1934). This painstaking study has not received the recognition that it merits.

This intimate relationship as between the soil complex below and the botanical composition and feeding quality of the sward above is not, I fear, fully appreciated by the grassland enthusiast and is in addition, I suspect, over emphasized by the soil specialist. My early training under Stapledon laid great emphasis on management as the all important factor in pasture production yet I must readily admit that an afternoon on Romney Marsh in the delightful company of Mr. Furneaux leaves me with a full appreciation of how little is known about the sward underneath. Even so, there is no doubt, none whatever, that the management of the best pastures largely determines their outstanding quality and contrawise the poor management of the remainder of the pasture is reflected in their failure to give maximum production. Now this is a very long story, long because it has been repeated over so many years but I will endeavour to summarize it in as few words as

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possible. The best pastures receive expert management in that young stock are rarely if ever allowed into the fields only mature stock, in the past, 4 tooth wethers or old ewes, now an increasing proportion of 2 tooth wethers and old ewes which remove negligible amounts of lime and phosphorus in their bones; the rate of stocking is continually adjusted according to the amount and quality of the herbage offering thus the swards is neither over nor undergrazed.

The fertility of the soil continues to be increased with the heavy stocking and this cycle of fertility of the return of the dung and urine to the soil and its eventual use by the ryegrass and clover is aided by the rapid removal of the droppings such that they do not pollute the ground. So far as I am aware a study of this subject has not been made on the Marsh. Evidence from elsewhere points to the importance of earthworms in helping to make available the nutrients in the dung for the plants and undoubtedly there is a very high earthworm population on these fattening pastures.

The maintenance of a perennial ryegrass wild white clover sward where moisture is fairly near the surface (combined with a fertile free working soil) provides the most productive herbage under such grazing conditions and this balance of ryegrass and white clover probably cannot be improved. Biologically the conditions are ideal for both species for the sward is never under nor overgrazed and thus neither species is permitted to ~~over~~ dominate the other.

As regards the management of the breeding pastures and rough grazings, these are sacrificed in the interests of the fattening pastures, ~~after~~ being either overstocked as in winter or understocked in early summer and therefore providing just those conditions which produce relatively poorer pastures. Or in other words neither the pastures nor the land is being fully utilized.

In the past heavy stocking both of the fattening pastures and the breeding pastures was attended by heavy mortalities, the grazier reckoning to loose ~~one seventh~~ 6 per cent of his flock annually. Modern science has enabled the causes of these mortalities to be prevented, provided always the advice of the vetinarian is rigorously applied. Because it is an extensive subject about which I am not qualified to speak, I am not going to discuss it except to state that the production and maintenance of these fine old pastures was achieved at a high price i.e. the heavy mortalities due to intestinal parasites, lamb dysenterarary, pulpy kidney and "struck" which the shepherd was powerless to prevent.

The grazier is the first to acknowledge the contribution of the chemist and vetinarian to his present day achievements in maintaining and fattening extensive flocks on these pastures. What then have we other members of the scientific fraternity to offer him?

Even the politician has steped in and out again with the Land Commission which found that the Marsh farmer was in the face of many difficulties, making a creditable success of his farming. True they recommended the adoption of the ley system of farming which incidentally the war and post war conditions have forced farming to adopt elsewhere in Britain.

This is all to the good in so far as it goes and the arable farming of the Marsh is of a very high standard yet we are loathe to admit that ~~over~~ nearly 30,000 acres or three fifths of the Marsh remaining in permanent grass and rough grazings is pulling its weight in the national effort. Allowing for a reputed 8000 acres of fattening pastures - a figure which seems a little optimistic, we are left with nearly 22,000 acres which could produce more if it were in leys under good management. Just exactly what the potential is we do not know but here on the College farm our leys have given 6-7-8 and even 900 lbs. of liveweight increase per acre and we venture to suggest that on the Marsh 1000lbs. could be achieved.

Stocking records now being kept by Marsh graziers will tell us how true are our forecasts. To take the plough around the Marsh raises many problems such as winter stocking, stock proof boundaries, tile drainage, water levels, accessibility of fields and so forth. It is important therefore to see the whole grassland problem fitted into the farming pattern without over emphasising its contribution to Marsh farming such has been the case in the past with the fattening pastures.

The difficulties of the problem as a whole must not be over emphasised nor the speed of undertaking the easier faclets of the work magnified. Its biological nature is all too apparent from the known waywardness of man at the top to the relatively little known soil complex below.

Be that as it may remarkable examples of pasture improvement have been and are being achieved at high elevations in the west and north in the face of tremendous difficulties poor thin acid soils, heavy leaching rainfall, inaccessibility, steep topography, poor drainage, winter feed problems, economic difficulties and hosts of other mitigating factors. Many of these are non existant on the Marsh and I just cannot and will not admit that a very large acreage of the Marsh pasture is incapable of great improvement. Mr, Furneaux has lucidly described the soil conditions for maximum growth. If in addition we add the fact that the soil structure is most highly developed under a sward, in particular a vigorous sward all we have to do is to provide a vigorous productive sward. To begin with, that is a simple technical task, correct timely cultivations, adequate drainage where necessary, generous manuring, up to date seed mixtures with leafy strains, rotational grazing, mixed stocking and full utilization of the herbage produced.

It is in the management that the real difficulties arise. In the first place the traditional system of grazing and its effect upon the fattening pastures would be altered and tradition will only give ground in the face of economics. Secondly the existing peak of grass production in May - June would be increased and so add to the present difficulties of the Marsh grazier in buying and drafting in enough sheep to deal with the grass when prices of store sheep are at their highest. The sheep economy of the Marsh is by no means insular, lambs are wintered away and large numbers of tegs are bought on to the Marsh every Spring to deal with the grass. Even farmers with land both on and off the Marsh enabling them to winter their lambs on the uplands, also buy in tegs for fattening.

Thirdly spring growth is not conserved as hay or silage for winter feeding and there are good reasons for this practice. I must not however develop the difficulties.

The obvious solution, is of course to increase the tillage area (including vegetable seed production for which the area is well adopted) and carry the same head of sheep on the improved swards. The Land Commission with access to all facts and opinions has advised an acreage, a minimum acreage of 20,000 in tillage. This if the pastures be improved means carrying more sheep. Earlier lambing, an increase of the lambing percentage and drafting fat lambs away for slaughter merits every effort to put it into practice despite the severity of the March weather.

If I have strayed from the title of my address, I have done so only because of the complexity of the subject. If I appear to have offered advice to the Marsh grazier I shall at least be in good company for many have fallen into that trap. Our suggestions are not confined to only the Marsh. There is a very large acreage adjacent to Romney Marsh where the pastures are indifferent and could be improved to give us more lamb mutton and meat.

The farmer in the face of economic circumstances will adopt that system of farming which suits him best, and already a number of Lincolnshire farmers have commenced intensive arable farming and market gardening, but in view of an increasing world food situation and an extensive investment by the Exchequer in agricultural education, research, and advisory services it is our bounden duty to help him fill the national larder, not only with bread and potatoes but also with mutton and beef.

The time at my disposal does not permit me to discuss the truth, sacredness or fallacy of the reputed inability of the ley to replace the high quality of the best fattening pastures. on the Marsh. So far as I am aware no experiments have ever been initiated to test the point. Any efforts that can be spared to help the Marsh grazier should be directed to improving the relatively large acreage of poorer grassland. Of the best fattening pastures I will conclude my address by stating that they are mighty fine.

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Their Task Is Ended

MAGISTRATES NO LONGER.—Left to right: Mr. C. E. Link, Mr. A. M. Wraight, Major M. Teichman-Derville (who serves for another year), Major C. F. Krabbe and Mr. F. J. Francis

CASTLE WILL BE FLATS

Thanet hotels closing

OSS of several of its leading hotels is alarming ıdstairs.

ın the Council approved the ıl to convert the Kingsgate Hotel into residential flats. Noon said: "The number s Kingsgate Castle takes is le but when added to have lost by three other els having closed down. goes into several

t goes their spend- suggest the Coun- everything to

asking Margate in in a meeting P. about possi- n.

From England Goes This Ancient Right

Marsh Has Elected J.P.s For 489 Years

BY three o'clock on Saturday the last and most precious right of the common man of Romney Marsh—the right to elect his judges in a court of law—passed for ever from the Realm of England.

One man verged on tears and others were deeply moved when this ancient privilege was taken from its last stronghold —the centuries-old Corporation of the Bailiff, Jurats and Commonalty of the Liberty of Romney Marsh.

Since 1462 the people of Romney Marsh have elected yearly at Michaelmas four men as Justices of the Peace and Coroners for the Liberty where the marshmen, by Royal Charter, were so long a law unto themselves.

By the Justice of the Peace Act, 1949, which came into force on Monday, this jealously guarded right was abolished.

PROTEST

Now all four of the J.P.s must go. Major C. F. Krabbe and Mr. F. J. Francis of Dymchurch will no longer judge the people who have elected them for the last 30 and 27 years.

The Corporation is protesting to the Clerk of the Peace for Kent that Dymchurch, the biggest community in the Liberty now has no resident J.P. New county justices have been appointed in their places.

At the last court on Saturday there was no business except to pass the accounts and later in the great hall the J.P.s said farewell to Hythe solicitor, John Edward Chapple, their clerk for over 20 years.

For him there was a silver salver inscribed with a great seal of the Corporation. Bought with half the proceeds of a barrel of palm oil washed up on the shore—the Corporation's only income—and subscribed for by the Justices, it was handed over by the Bailiff, Major Max Teichman Derville. "It comes from us with our very best wishes for the future and we hope it will long be a remembrance to you of your good friends in Romney Marsh."

Major Krabbe recalled that in John Chapple's years as clerk not one of the Bench's decisions had been overruled or challenged.

THEY ASK WHY

Thanking the Bailiff, Mr. Chapple said, "I will say that this Bench can hold its own with any Bench with which I have been connected. They are thoroughly good lawyers and anyone that comes before this Bench need have no qualms that he will not receive perfect justice."

His words only confirmed the burning question in the minds of the Commonalty. Voiced by Jurat Mrs. Mildred Link of Newchurch, "Why has this most democratic method of electing J.P.s been taken from us?"—it stays unanswered.

Immortal Corporation Keeps Its Seal

Petition From Council

MINDFUL of the dignity of centuries past, the Corporation of the Bailiff, Jurats and Commonalty of Romney Marsh refused to allow the Romney Marsh Rural District Council to use its ancient seal.

HIGH HALDEN

...TH CLUB.—In the style of ...w Flitch, a trial was the seventh Harvest ...morial Hall, on and Mrs. K. H. and Mrs. D. ...ed the tradi- ...\ cheque for ...ng the Fes- ...tions was ...r to Mrs. ...he Parish ...t as the ...ovide a ...ieen of ... drew ...rs. F. ...r pre- ...Iome" ...rs. J. Corke ... was ...ction ...men's ...y the ...(pro- The ...ising ...ater- ...eryl Mrs. ...hort ...oun- ...Irig. Pen- ...s re- ...e of ...y. ...im- ...ent 29, ... of ...om He ...for ...ilty said ...man ...mps Mrs. ...the ...l be ...ney gift ...0 is ..., re- ...g of ...urch ...the ...poned ...the ...re

The Council was allowed to use the ship and the church which appear on the seal but not the words "Sigillum Commune de Rumney Marsh. AN 1665."

At the annual meeting of the Corporation, Capt. J. C. Allnatt, chairman of the rural council, petitioned the Corporation for the use of the whole seal and said the latin inscription meant "The common seal of Romney Marsh, year 1665" and told the Bailiff, "There can be little meaning in these words so far as your Corporation is concerned today and the seal itself is in great danger of falling into disuse and decay in future years."

NO BETRAYAL

The rural council, said Capt. Allnatt was the publicly elected body which did represent the marsh and should use a seal which could be said to be the common seal of Romney Marsh.

Bailiff, Major Max Teichman Derville, said the Corporation was not an arm-bearing authority so there did not seem to be any objection to the council using part of it but not the whole. The Corporation still existed and would carry on and they could not have two authorities using the same seal.

"We should, indeed, be betraying our trust if we permitted it," he said.

IMMORTAL

Later in the meeting, the Bailiff said he seemed to have heard a lot of talk about this being the last meeting of the Corporation. It was far from the case. In the Justice of the Peace Act there was a saving clause that nothing should affect the election, appointment or function of a member of the Corporation, except the appointment as a J.P.

By that saving clause the continuance of the Corporation was once again preserved and would continue to exist, but with only one proper source of revenue, the right of wreck of the seashore of the Liberty.

Cease to exist the Corporation should not. As Richard Hooker said, "Corporations are immortal; as we are alive in our predecessors, so they, in us their successors do still live."

RUCKINGE

MEMBER of an old ...

Romney Marsh Under Threat of Nationalisation

By WILLIAM F. DEEDES

"THE world, according to the best geographers," wrote Barham in "The Ingoldsby Legends," "is divided into Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Romney Marsh."

Towards this "fifth quarter of the globe," the Marsh's 50,000 acres, which comprise one-twentieth of Kent and some of the richest pasture in the Kingdom, the Socialist Government are now casting a speculative eye.

Last month the Agricultural Land Commission began a survey there. They are to advise the Minister of Agriculture whether Romney Marsh should be taken over by the State, in accordance with Section 84 of the Agriculture Act, which provides for "acquisition of land by the Minister to ensure full and efficient use thereof."

What does full and efficient use mean? Principally more plough—perhaps as much as 20,000 acres of arable, compared with a pre-war average of 3,000 acres, and a peak of 17,000 acres during the war. This, in turn, would mean more agricultural workers, more houses, and perhaps some more roads.

Agriculturally it might appear that the Government have chosen well for an experiment in land nationalisation. Self-contained, not yet "exploited" in the modern sense, and apparently rich in arable potentialities, this plain looks like a planner's paradise.

Psychologically the Government's choice may prove a less fortunate one. Romney Marsh farmers are not by nature ideal characters for an exercise in Socialist bureaucracy.

From Caesar to Hitler

IN its comparatively short life—by geological standards—above the English Channel, Romney Marsh, the Achilles' heel of England, has faced the threat of many invasions. For centuries its first enemy was the sea—a formidable one until at least the 16th century.

It is not certain what the Romans found when they landed there or thereabouts in 55 B.C., but a great part of what now forms Romney Marsh was still under the sea. Most of Romney Marsh proper (24,044 acres), Walland Marsh (17,215 acres), Dengemarsh (4,049 acres) and Guldeford Level (3,585 acres) were then Romney Bay. A thousand years later William the Conqueror landed a few miles away.

In the 19th century Napoleon's threat to this quarter of England led to the construction of the Royal Military Canal. That still runs 20 miles between Hythe and Rye, roughly marking the inland boundary of the Marsh.

Again, in 1940, while the Battle of Britain was decided overhead, there was talk of flooding Romney Marsh as a defensive measure. As students of the German "Operation Sea Lion" will know, the Marsh was one of the first invasion objectives.

World-famous Sheep

THIS latest threat comes from the rear. There are signs that it will be as stoutly resisted as any of its predecessors.

The fertility of Romney Marsh, which has for centuries enabled its farmers to breed sheep with a world-wide reputation—sheep that, in some places, can be fattened 12 or more to the acre—may be attributed to two main causes:

1. The marsh alluvium; rich deposits of marine and river silt, which the waters left behind, and decayed forest from the uplands.

2. Centuries of close sheep grazing by farmers who have always had a deep-rooted relationship to the soil they have farmed.

The Marsh's 50,000 acres are not uniformly rich. Outlands and indifferent land account for perhaps 10,000. Of the remaining 40,000, between 6,000 and 7,000 are fatting land. Borings suggest that all these fatting fields, though scattered, have an identical geological stratum.

The history of Romney Marsh's fertility is partly therefore the story of its battle against the sea. The Marsh is a product of the final stage in the creation of the English Channel.

The Romans left abundant traces of their occupation in the region but

not, alas, much account of their activities. A good deal of the early Marsh reclamation, however, was certainly achieved by them, with characteristic resourcefulness. The sea defences they built on the coastline, involving great feats of engineering, stand to-day.

Reclamation had made great progress by the 13th century. At that time a series of terrific storms battered the Kent coast. The worst, in 1287, swept away old Winchelsea, then an island, and neighbouring villages. Old Winchelsea was never again to emerge from the sea.

In the upheaval the River Rother was diverted from Romney, then a port and now land-girt; and its mouth reappeared where it is to-day, near Rye. The sea returned as far inland as Appledore.

It was not till the 19th century that the sea was beaten, but the Marsh's western approaches were dry by 1562. From that date at least most of Romney Marsh as we know it to-day was farming land.

A Spell All its Own

IT is not necessary to be an antiquary, a naturalist, a poet or a resident to fall under the spell of Romney Marsh. To this generations of holiday visitors to its playground, on the coast at Dymchurch, will testify. They say that those who go to live there never leave, and the long history of some of the marshmen's families suggests that it is true.

Macaulay once libellously described it as "that dreary morass, Romney Marsh." Its inhabitants claim for this plain a beauty as well as a richness without equal in England. Certainly it has distinction; a character, subtle and hard to define, but very compelling. Perhaps its long life under the sea accounts for the impression of many visitors that they are travelling in a foreign land.

It must not be thought that its evolutionary progress has made the Marsh farmers relentless opponents of development. According to some, it is fair to add, development in the Marsh has been backward.

The fact that it is shared between two county authorities—Kent, which holds the eastern and lion's share, and Sussex, in the west—is probably more to be blamed for this than the farmers.

What concerns the farmers to-day, in a phrase, is the preservation of fertility. As has been said, the Marsh owes its riches to their system of husbandry as well as to geology. Against the background of years of "evolutionary" farming, which has depended for its continued success on maintaining fertility, it is not surprising that the planners of plenty from S.W.1 should be viewed darkly.

In the dust bowls of America and elsewhere there is recorded the story of greedy exploitation; perhaps more accurately, the story of sound farming versus 20th century economics. That is the cautionary picture which exercises some Romney Marsh farmers to-day.

They know that the Government urgently want a greater yield from the Marsh. This, by means of the plough, they are willing to give—but not at the cost of their heritage, the health of the land.

Inroads on Fertility

WHEN, during the war, 17,000 acres were turned over to the plough—all without a single act of intervention by the War Agricultural Executive Committees—considerable inroads were made on fertility. Whether the Marsh can sustain 20,000 acres of arable out of 50,000, less the outlands, is what the Land Commission have to decide. The farmers will fight hard to ensure that a proper balance is maintained between arable land and stock grazing.

Whatever they decide the Land Commission may find it hard to persuade 3,000 more agricultural workers to go there—and even harder to persuade 3,000 wives to go.

The wonderful fertility of the Marsh is the capital, as it were, of those who farm it. The annual yield is income, and they have been careful, even in hard times, to leave that capital intact.

Price of Quick Profits

THEIR philosophy was well expressed by that Kentish authority on the land, Lord Northbourne. I quote from his book, published eight years ago, "Look to the Land":

"Nature will not be driven. If you try, she hits back slowly, but very hard. In terms of financial costing the results of driving may be satisfactory, for a time, but in the end they must defeat their own object by destroying the true fertility of the soil. . . .

"A real farmer has a feeling for true fertility, which is health; but many modern farmers have been led or forced into acceptance of that purely commercial outlook which leads to the substitution for it of artificial or forced productivity. . . .

"A real danger to-day is, not that the farmers may not be efficient enough, but that pressure of circumstances may finally break their resistance to influences leading to more and more centralised control, commercialisation, and so-called rationalisation."

Those passages may well be commended to the Agricultural Land Commission. The Marsh farmer has indeed a "feeling for true fertility." Fertility means more to him than quick and easy profits.

He is among the few who still possess that deep sense of true and lasting values associated with love for the soil which elsewhere seems to have gone with the wars, leaving a world less secure, less sane and infinitely less contented. The Marsh is his home.

AN AERIAL VIEW showing how well Willow Farm has been drained in comparison with the surrounding land.

New era of prosperity for Romney Marsh

Revolutionary methods tried by Lincolnshire "exiles"

HISTORIC setting for smuggling stories, Romney Marshes today set the scene for a modern engineering romance of far-reaching importance.

Reclaimed by the Romans, the 45,000-acre stretch of marshland is wholly below sea-level, guarded on its outer edge by sea defences, and noted for its sheep rearing pastures.

Grassland apart, the marshland produces heavy crops on its rich black soil, which compares in many ways with the fertile acres of the Lincolnshire fens.

It is, indeed, no coincidence that a Lincolnshire farmer, Mr. James Frith, has, with several of his friends, been quick to appreciate the equal promise held out by Romney Marsh.

His Willow Farm, at Shirley Moor on the Tenterden edge of the Marshes, offers proof of a ceaseless, but successful fight against the flooding tendencies of the area.

On its outcome lies balanced success or failure, with modern engineering science weighting the scales heavily in the struggle against nature.

THE REASON FOR FERTILITY

Direct clue to the Shirley Moor farm's fertility is to be found in the deep channels which intersect its 200 acres, and in the drone of the powerful diesel motor which pumps surplus water from the land.

Operating at the rate of 60,000 gallons an hour, the pump has been instrumental in restoring the 200 acres of Shirley Moor to full production, for in the not too distant past those acres were largely under water during the winter, in places to a depth of two feet.

The all-important scheme of drainage was designed by Paddock Wood expert Mr. W. J. Jones, the land drainage consultant whose unusual job was discovered early this month by the panel on television's popular "What's my line?" programme.

Completed during last year, the scheme has already proved itself fully successful.

Land which had never before been winter-cropped is this year carrying first quality crops of winter wheat, which thus early in the season show promise of exceptional results.

Earlier this month aerial photographs were taken of Shirley Moor and showed Mr. Frith's Willow Farm standing out like an island, almost surrounded by tracts of flooded land.

Spring sowing, too, has benefited from the drainage scheme which has enabled cropping to be completed more than a month ahead of schedule

LINCOLNSHIRE METHODS

Revolutionary methods have been brought to the Marsh by Mr. Frith and his compatriots, who have transferred the dominant trend from pasture land sheep graizng to arable farming on the Lincolnshire system.

By their methods, ploughing is carried out to a depth of 12 to 15 inches compared with the much more shallow furrow favoured by Kent farmers.

Mr. Frith's own view is that sheep, for which the area is world renowned, can be grazed with success on poorer soil, leaving the rich Romney Marsh silt to produce heavy crops.

Support for his contention is to be seen in the crops already produced, while a new prosperity is foreshadowed by the new bustle of activity which has transformed one corner of the Marshes.

FLOWERS, TOO

Nearby, a field of daffodils and tulips, grown by a neighbour who also hails from Lincolnshire, adds another connection with the Fen country.

Their nodding blooms provide a direct link with the flower growing Spalding area of their home county, known locally as "Little Holland."

It adds too, powerful evidence of the rich promise of a well drained Romney Marsh, which in turn may come to be known as "Little Lincolnshire."

New methods, new crops and modern ideas have certainly been introduced by Lincolnshire's knowledgeable and likeable farmers, and with them a new prosperity, likely to surpass anything Romney Marsh has yet known.

Kent yachts may sail to meet the Queen

Rendezvous in Estuary is hope of organisers

A NUMBER of yachtsmen in the Faversham area are planning to sail out into the Thames Estuary to welcome the Queen on her return to this country in May.

Co-organisers of the plan are Major Jack Jobey, licensee of the Shipwrights' Arms, Hollow Shore, reputed to have been one of Kent's most popular haunts of smugglers, and Mr. "Peter" Fitt, a motor engineer, of West Street, Faversham.

"So far we have two sailing yachts and three heavy cruiser types ready in Faversham Creek," Major Jobey told a reporter.

"We are inviting other yacht owners to join us, and hope to make up quite a fair sized squadron.

On the day we shall start from Faversham Creek as a squadron, and other yachts from Herne Bay and Whitstable will probably join us as we leave the Swale and go north to the point (not yet known) when we shall contact the Royal vessel.

"We are in touch with the Admiralty regarding the meeting point, and hope to receive information shortly."

Deaf and dumb, he helps afflicted people

Calls on 50,000 householders yearly to aid good cause

A DEAF and dumb man, Mr. C. R. Johnson, of Canterbury, has collected £3,000 in 18 months for similarly afflicted persons.

Mr. Johnson, who is 36 and lives with his deaf wife and two children at 7, Miller Avenue, is the only official house-to-house collector of Canterbury Diocesan Association for the Deaf.

Covering the half of Kent east of the Medway, he calls on approximately 50,000 houses a year and travels 150 miles a week, half on public transport and the rest on foot.

Deaf and dumb from birth, he courageously pursues his daily task armed with four things—a receipt book, a letter signed by the secretary of the Association, a police permit and his belief in Christian charity.

His reception varies. People are embarrassed, generous or unresponsive. But he finds generally that people who formerly refused now welcome him and readily give for the association.

MR. C. R. JOHNSON

He says he is glad to have the job, for many deaf and dumb find it difficult to obtain employment.

Physically strong and of big build, Mr. Johnson, a native of Doncaster, was formerly a steel erector.

The association secretary, Mr. D. S. G. Burch, says that Mr. Johnson is vital to its existence of the association for he provides most of the income by his door-to-door work.

"Conscientious and faithful" is