

The E.E.C. and British Archaeology

The possible increase in rate of site destruction

ANENCLETUS

AFTER ACCESSION to the EEC, the British system of agricultural support will be required to conform gradually to the Community's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). An important feature of the CAP is the higher level of prices for agricultural products, particularly grain. If the policy remains unchanged, it is likely to lead to an increase in the profitability of cereal-growing relative to other agricultural enterprises in the U.K.

of 2 million acres would be required from the "permanent grass" category.

Table 2: Agricultural Land in the United Kingdom (excluding rough grazings)

	Million acres	
	1968	1971
cereals	9.4	9.4
other tillage (a)	3.0	2.7
temporary grass (b)	5.9	5.7
permanent grass	12.2	12.1
all crops and grass	30.4	30.0

(a) includes potatoes, sugar beet, fodder crops, vegetables, fruit and bare fallow;
 (b) grass grown as part of a crop rotation.

Most of the 12.1 million acres of permanent grass (grass on land not under rotation) is not likely to have been ploughed since the "plough-up" campaign of the 1939-45 war, and a considerable part will not have been ploughed for a very long time, if at all. Even at the height of the plough-up campaign the area of permanent grass only fell to 11.8 million acres. It can therefore be expected that many of the undisturbed archaeological sites in the U.K. lie beneath this 12 million acres of permanent grass, very

There are no official forecasts, but Josling and Lucey¹ have recently tried to quantify the increase in grain production in the U.K. in the years following accession to the EEC. They have forecast a rise in production from 13.4 million tons in 1968 to 22.8 million tons in 1980 (both on a "normal harvest" basis). Clearly this rise which may be regarded as an upper limit, would need a substantial increase in the acreage of cereals: how large an increase depends on the likely change in yield over that period. Britton² has forecast a "most likely" increase of 12% over the period 1967-1977, and a maximum increase of 20%. Table 1 shows the increase in acreage needed to give the increase in production forecast by Josling and Lucey, under various assumptions about yields.

Table 1: (in million tons or million acres)

assumed increase in yield, 1968-1980	increase in production on unchanged acreage	further increase needed in production	extra acreage needed to supply this increase
NIL	NIL	9.4	6.6
12%	1.6	7.8	4.9
20%	2.7	6.7	3.9
40%	5.4	4.0	2.0

Under Britton's "most likely" yield assumption, an extra 5 million acres of cereals would be needed by 1980. Where could it come from? Table 2 shows the current uses of agricultural land in the U.K. It would seem unlikely that more than 1 million acres could be taken from "other tillage," or more than two million acres from "temporary grass" (representing about 35% of each category), so that the balance

little of which can have been subjected to modern ploughing methods.

There is little scope for an expansion of cereals at the expense of grass in the eastern counties, where the percentage of agricultural land as tillage is already very high, and geographical and climatic factors limit the expansion of cereals in the north and west of England, and in Scotland, Wales and North-

1 T. Josling and D. Lucey *The Market for Agricultural Goods in an enlarged European Community* (1971).

2 D. K. Britton *Cereals in the United Kingdom* (1969) 49.

ern Ireland. The bulk of any expansion is therefore likely to occur on the heavy soils of the midlands. The class of sites most seriously affected would probably be the deserted medieval village (DMVs) of this area and their associated field systems.³

If livestock populations are maintained as Josling and Lucey expect them to be, the reduction in permanent grass together with the other losses of agricultural land could well lead to a pressure to upgrade rough grazing land. This would involve re-seeding and perhaps drainage work, posing a lesser but not negligible threat to some prehistoric sites on this sort of land, formerly protected by its low agricultural potential.

Thus in a period of ten years, if some current forecasts are correct, some 2 million or more acres of mostly archaeologically undisturbed land could come under the plough. Some estimate of the likely density of sites on this land must now be made. RESCUE have suggested an average density of 4 sites per square mile (i.e., one site every 160 acres) over the country as a whole, but allowing for the relatively late occupation of the heavier soils of the midlands, we shall assume a lower average of one site to every 500 acres. The 2 million acres would

3 M. Beresford *The Lost Villages of England* (1954) 221.

then contain an estimated 4,000 sites, which would come under the plough at an average rate of 400 per annum for the next ten years. While a single ploughing would not be sufficient to destroy the majority of them, it would not take many years of modern ploughing to cause irretrievable damage to many of the threatened sites. Field systems are particularly vulnerable. This rate of damage must be added to that currently proceeding from other causes—urban development, motorways, quarrying, afforestation, etc.

Discussion: Josling's and Lucey's forecast assumes unchanged policies and may well be too high: if so the extra acreage required would be less than shown here (if Britton's forecast for yield is adopted). On the other hand, the estimates of the proportion of extra land for cereals coming from permanent grass, and of site density may both be conservative. No great accuracy can be claimed for any estimate of the likely rate of damage, but it may be concluded that a high priority should be given to the scheduling of DMVs and the mapping of medieval field systems in grassland areas, and in appropriate cases to their more effective protection under the Field Monuments legislation.

New Director for Museum of London

FOLLOWING THE retirement of Norman Cook to Wells Museum, Somerset, Thomas Hume has been appointed as Director of the new Museum of London. This Museum which will combine the collections of the London and Guildhall Museums, is due for completion in 1974.

Thomas Hume, married with three children, has been the Curator of the Liverpool Museums since 1960 and has had previous experience of setting up a new museum at Liverpool, which will undoubtedly stand him in stead.

A widely travelled man, he has spent two months in America as a guest of the State Department and American Museums Association, and also lectured in Australia at a U.N.E.S.C.O. conference on museums and education.

The association of museum collections with the people who used them is an asset with which he is endowed and it should help to provide a truly comprehensive display of London's people, growth, industries and character.

