

The functioning of bocage landscapes in Devon and Cornwall between 1500 and 1800

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The contrasts, visual, social and agricultural, between the open field farming regions of England and those where cultivated land was for the most part enclosed were already sufficiently developed by the early sixteenth century to be receiving much attention from writers of the Tudor age. In JOHN LELAND'S hasty record of his antiquarian pilgrimage, in the nasty didactic doggerel of THOMAS TUSSER and in the propaganda of the *Discourse of the Common Weal*, we are made aware of a sharp distinction in contemporary thought between «champion» and «woodland» (LELAND, 1907-10 ; TUSSER, 1812 ; DISCOURSE, 1893). Yet the historian who attempts to renew interests in such contrasts from the viewpoint of differences in field systems between champion and woodland (or bocage) regions finds himself far better served by studies of open fields than by work on enclosed landscapes. This paper, which examines aspects of the nature and functioning of enclosed field systems in Devon and Cornwall from the beginning of the sixteenth century until about 1800, is not therefore well supported by previous studies to serve as models. But it would seem logical first to examine the texture of bocage landscapes in Devon and Cornwall, then to explore their functioning and finally to look at contemporary attitudes towards bocage. By placing some emphasis on the last of these three topics we hope to show that the attitudes which helped to create and stabilize bocage in the past were no less rational, in the context of former farming practices, than those present-day attitudes favouring replanning of bocage landscapes with which most papers collected in this volume are concerned.

I – THE TEXTURE OF BOCAGE LANDSCAPES

By the beginning of the sixteenth century most of the cultivated land of Devon and Cornwall was

farmed in severalty and lay in enclosed fields usually described in the documents as closes. Although a small minority of village and hamlet communities in the two counties which comprise the South West still practised arable husbandry within open fields divided into strips, manuscript sources and printed descriptions alike leave no doubt that the cultivated landscape of the region was for the most part a classic bocage (FOX, 1971, 21-7, 75-6). The origins of bocage in the South West still require detailed research, but we know enough to be able to say that the enclosed landscapes which covered much of the face of the peninsula in the early sixteenth century had come into being over a long period of time and through the operation of a number of different processes. Many closes had originated from clearings, made by individual farmers, of small patches of moor or wood. In parts of western Cornwall, closes which are still cultivated today appear to have been created in this way by Iron Age farmers following what C. THOMAS has called «the immensely old south-western tradition of the homestead and its surrounding plots» (THOMAS, 1966; BALCHIN, 1954; FOX, 1954). Throughout the South West the establishment of an isolated farm surrounded by its own closes was without much doubt a well tried means of colonization by the eve of the middle ages and continued into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (HOSKINS, 1952 and 1963 ; FOX, 1971, 125-7 and 132-3 ; FINBERG, 1972). Other closes in the sixteenth-century landscape had come into being through a different process, the enclosure of strips in subdivided arable fields. Enclosure of this kind was certainly under way by the thirteenth century ; the pace of the movement as well as the type of bocage landscape which it created varied from place to place within the peninsula according to regional differences in demographic and economic development, but it had been largely completed by about 1500 (FOX, 1971,

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52-62 ; FOX, 1975). Indeed, it is true to say, for Cornwall as well as for Devon, that by 1500 the mosaic of closes which covered the landscape «had been very largely drawn as it is today, in parts down to the smallest detail : only in the upland parishes were there blank spaces.... more fields to be added to old farms by hedging farther and farther up the steep slopes» (HOSKINS, 1952).

The texture of any bocage landscape is defined by three variables : the size of closes, their shape and the type of boundary which surrounds them. Documentary evidence from Devon and Cornwall before the nineteenth century gives no more than a few, brief glimpses of the last two of these variables. To a large extent, their historical study must proceed along the lines followed by FLATRES (1952 and 1957) in his detailed and careful analysis of aspects of bocage in Cornwall, namely by retrogressive speculation starting with survivals in the present-day landscape and with nineteenth-century maps. The size of closes, by contrast, is far more adequately and accurately described in the surviving documentary sources for Devon and Cornwall. The arguments presented in this paper concentrate on field size not only because of availability of information but also because this variable, perhaps more than any other, summarizes the texture of bocage landscapes. Certainly, nineteenth-century agricultural writers who provide the earliest critical accounts of the bocage of the South West gave most attention to the acreage of closes in their strictures on the inefficiency of the bocage landscapes of Devon and Cornwall. «Small» is the adjective which occurs most frequently in their comments on field size.

The impressions of nineteenth-century agricultural writers, for the most part subjective and based upon casual observation rather than upon measurement, are confirmed by objective and accurate information contained in earlier documents : a large sample of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century surveys, covering over twenty thousand acres in most parts of the peninsula, shows that the mean size of arable and pasture closes on tenant holdings was then only 3.6 acres (FOX, 1971, 85). This is a remarkably low figure. In England today closes as small as this would be regarded as exceptional (COPPOCK, 1964 and 1971) ; the only easily available historical figures for comparison relate to Kent where, except in the Low Weald, the mean size of closes in the seventeenth century was in excess of 5 acres (BAKER, 1965). «The land of small enclosures», a phrase used by PUNCHARD in 1890, would be a fair description of the South West in earlier centuries.

A mean figure of 3.6 acres for the South West as a whole naturally conceals differences in field sizes from one part of the peninsula to another. Such differences certainly existed in Devon and Cornwall during

the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (FOX, 1971, 85-8 ; FOX 1972 a) and are to be expected in a large region which comprised a number of different farming districts and where there were contrasts from district to district in the way in which closes had originated. Interesting though they are, a brief account such as this must of necessity concentrate on the region as a whole rather than upon individual farming districts within it. In order to attempt a partial explanation of the small closes which, despite some variation within the region, were the most striking features of the texture of the peninsula's bocage landscapes before the nineteenth century, we turn to the manner in which these diminutive fields were related to agricultural practice.

II – THE FUNCTIONING OF BOCAGE LANDSCAPES

1 – Arable husbandry

The form of any field landscape should represent an adaptation, in some degree, to its function and use even though, in places, an historical factor connected with the origins of the fields may partly obscure the relationship. We shall suggest here that, among all the causes of the high degree of fragmentation which was typical of bocage throughout the South West, one may have been dominant : small closes were adaptations in the field landscape to a type of arable farming, convertible husbandry, associated particularly with the two counties of the South West. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when convertible husbandry was being newly introduced into some other parts of England (KERRIDGE, 1967), it was standard practice throughout the South West and had long been so (STEWART and FUSSELL, 1929 ; FINBERG, 1951 ; FOX, 1971, 102-4). The essence of the system was an alternation of crops with grass rather than with a bare fallow : a close was cropped for a number of successive years (normally 3) and then allowed to revert to grass ley. The length of ley varied from district to district within the South West - it was reported to be 6, 7 or 8 years in parts of Cornwall in the seventeenth century, for example, and to vary between 2 and 14 years in eighteenth-century Devon (CAREW, 1602 ; MORTON, 1675 ; YOUNG, 1797) - but the mean of recorded contemporary estimates before the nineteenth century is about 7 years (FOX, 1971, 105).

Now consider a farm of 30 acres which practised a 10-year rotation of wheat, then barley, then oats, followed by a 7-year ley. The minimum number of closes into which such a farm might have been divided was ten three of which would have been sown with crops in any one season while the remaining seven stood at one or another of the 7 years making up the ley period. The mean size of closes on this 30-acre holding would

have been 3 acres. Closes on a 20-acre holding practising the same rotation would have had a mean size of 2 acres (fig. 1a). On a 30-acre holding where leys lasted for 12 years and where, again, three different crops were grown in succession (giving a 15-year rotation), the number of closes would have been greater, and their mean size smaller, than on a similar holding which practised a 10-year rotation (fig. 1a). Despite the crude assumptions of this model, it may go a long way towards explaining why, in a region where convertible husbandry was a long-established practice, the prevailing size of closes was so remarkably small.

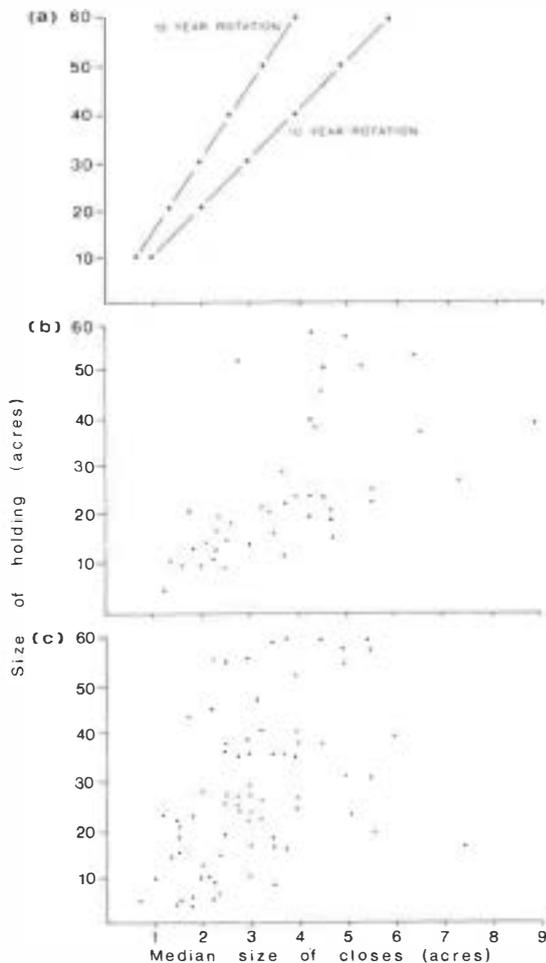


Fig. 1 :
 (a) : Hypothetical relationships between length of rotation and size of closes on holdings of various sizes.
 (b) and (c) : Relationships between size of closes and size of holdings in the North Cornish coastlands and the South Hams of Devon, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Each dot represents one holding.

The model has several implications : it suggests, for example, that one explanation for variation in the size of closes from one farming district to another may have been variation in the length of leys ; that small closes become less of a necessity if leys are reduced in

length ; and that within any set of farms practising similar rotations there should have been a regular relationship between the size of farms and the size of their closes. Only the last of these implications is explored here, and for only two of the peninsula's farming districts, the coastlands of North Cornwall and the South Hams of Devon. Data on farm size and field size in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century surveys from these two districts indicate a degree of regularity in the relationship between the two variables (fig. 1b and c) : in the former district the expected relationship is apparent on farms of less than 30 acres while in the latter a relationship, though less perfect, is evident throughout the range of farm sizes. In all types of farm economy there is a general tendency for field size to decrease with farm size, perhaps as far as a minimum threshold farm acreage below which fields tend to be of a uniform size. A more rigorous relationship, and one which extends right to the lower end of the scale of farm size (both of which traits were evident in North Cornwall and the South Hams during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) may best be explained by the strict requirements of a particular type of rotation system. That the systems employed in the South West were convertible rotations which took many years to complete contributed, without much doubt, to the relatively strong relationship between field and farm size shown on fig. 1b and c and to the prevalence of small closes throughout the peninsula.

2 – Pastoral husbandry

A model which relates the number of parcels into which a farm is divided to the number of years taken to complete the rotation practised on that farm does not specify that each parcel must be a separate hedged close. A 10-year rotation of crops, for example, may be operated on a farm of one large close divided up into ten unfenced parcels, a type of holding advocated for Devon by GRANT (1845) who wrote favouring farms «without any fences but that which surrounded them and divided them from adjoining farms, a furrow being all that separated one crop from another». What GRANT failed to realize was that, under typical Devon convertible rotations, each parcel served alternately for crop raising and for grazing : the fenced close which would securely contain grazing animals was the natural and rational type of subdivision on most farms.

Where convertible rotations prevailed, as they did throughout the South West in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the distinction between arable and pasture was blurred, much to the confusion of up-country surveyors used to less flexible allocation of land-use. Most closes in Devon and Cornwall were in fact «arable» in the sense of «errable», that is capable of being ploughed and from time to time put under

crops (FOX, 1971, 102-4). On any holding a few closes might be more specifically reserved for grazing ; these were properly termed either «pasture» (that is, permanent pasture) or «meadow» (pasture mown for hay). Such closes tended to be small simply because, under the intensive forms of pastoral management which prevailed in the lowlands of the South West, livestock graze more efficiently when confined to a limited acreage. The principle was well known in the South West: HOOKER, writing in the 1590's, was aware of the fact that the small closes of Devon enabled livestock «by their often chaunges to....feede styll as it were upon a new springnyng grasse» (BLAKE, 1915) and CHAPPLE, another Devonian, knew that «cattle thrive and fatten soonest by being frequently removed from one field to another» (CHAPPLE, 1785). Closes of permanent pasture or meadow were therefore likely to be particularly small, even by the standards of the South West. Thus on the Cornish manor of Treverbyn Courtenay, according to a survey made early in the second decade of the seventeenth century, the mean size of closes of meadow was just over half an acre whereas the mean size of other closes was just over three acres. And in East Devon, a farming district already by the sixteenth century noted for dairying, and where a larger proportion of the land was under permanent pasture than was normal in the South West (FOX, 1972), closes were exceptionally small : their mean size according to sixteenth-and seventeenth-century surveys was only 2.9 acres (FOX, 1971, 86).

3 – The function of hedges

The needs of pastoral husbandry thus reinforced the needs of the type of arable husbandry practised in the South West in encouraging the retention of highly fragmented bocage landscapes made up of a multitude of small closes. In such landscapes a not inconsiderable acreage was occupied by field boundaries. WORGAN, writing of Cornwall early in the nineteenth century, considered that the farmer was «well justified in taking the measurement of his fences with his fields» (WORGAN, 1811) : in other words, boundaries were thought of as a resource in their own right. Written manorial surveys occasionally give the acreage occupied by hedges, and estate maps do so more often. For example, a surveyor at Penpol in the sixteenth century noted that 7 acres of a 40-acre farm were «taken up... with the hedges», another at Whitford gave the acreages of some closes *cum le hedgerewe*, and an eighteenth century estate map of Trevarrick shows that boundaries occupied between 4 % and 7 % of the acreage of closes on a holding there (FOX, 1971, 113).

That boundaries were considered as resources in their own right suggests that they had functions other than their rôle as necessary divisions between closes. Stone walls occur today as field boundaries in some

parts of the South West, especially in western Cornwall, along the Cornish coastline and on moorland borders ; but massive earthen banks, 6 or even 10 feet across at their bases (MARSHALL, 1796 ; WORGAN, 1811 ; PUNCHARD, 1890), are by far the most widespread type of field boundary in the peninsula (PIKE, 1926 ; CRAWFORD, 1936 ; HOOPER, 1965). These distinctive «Danmonian hedges» (MARSHALL, 1796) performed three principal functions. In the first place, they were almost indestructible property boundaries and played a legal rôle, discussed more fully below, as guardians for a conservative society of the field and farm divisions which it had inherited from the past. Second, they gave shelter from wind to both stock and crops. Third, the land which they occupied was by no means unproductive. Massive hedgebanks are ideal for the cultivation of gorse which was widely used in the South West as fodder and litter for livestock ; moreover, they are well suited to the rooting systems of trees, valuable resources which did not go unnoticed in manorial surveys. For example, a survey of Axminster drawn up in 1574 enumerates no less than 8,394 trees «growing in and upon the severall groundes and in the comen lanes», giving their age and species in some cases, and an Elizabethan survey of Christow lists about 2,500 trees «in the severall tennantes holdinges» (FOX, 1971, 115-6).

III – ATTITUDES TOWARDS BOCAGE

In the previous section it has been shown that the minutely fragmented bocage landscapes of the South West were in many respects well adapted to the traditional farming practices of the region during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We would therefore expect that they were viewed less critically than they were during the nineteenth century when so many of the principles of modern farm management were first established. Here we explore this suggestion and, finally, trace the advent, in the nineteenth century, of a change towards a more modern attitude to farm and field structures in the South West.

1 – From the sixteenth century to the eighteenth

The attitudes of early writers to the agricultural attributes of the bocage of the South West (though not their attitudes towards bocage as scenery comprising both wild and humanized elements) are difficult to discern in the literature. Throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries open field farming was condemned and enclosed farms praised from the standpoint of agricultural efficiency. But those who put forward such views were writing for the most part in a national context and, keen to stress the superiority of enclosure, they did not discuss specific types of enclosed landscapes. Comments which reveal the attitudes of the

literate towards the agricultural attributes of the bocage of the South West are therefore rare before the nineteenth century. They are, nevertheless, decisive. JOHN HOOKER, who wrote a description of Devon towards the end of the sixteenth century, had no doubt that its enclosed land was «all the more profitable because (it was).... devided and severed with mightie greate hedges and dytches» (BLAKE, 1915). Here is no stricture on the small size of closes ; on the contrary, HOOKER implied that a highly fragmented bocage landscape was beneficial to husbandry. Those who plagiarized him in the seventeenth century (e.g. WESCOTE, 1845) did not dissent from this view. In the eighteenth, WILLIAM CHAPPLE, a Devonian estate steward and antiquary, was no less certain about the advantages of his native bocage : he gave several reasons for his description of the enlargement of closes as a «species of ill management» which should be publicly condemned and prevented (CHAPPLE, 1785). A similar attitude, though slightly less emphatic, is evident in some of the passages on fields and hedges in the work of WILLIAM MARSHALL who made a detailed study of farming in Devon and Cornwall in the last decade of the eighteenth century (MARSHALL, 1796).

Attitudes towards bocage revealed by literary sources are not necessarily majority attitudes ; direct evidence about these is meagre and relates to only one feature of bocage, the hedge, and only to its legal rôle as a property boundary. They may be illustrated from the manor court records of Kenton, an East Devon settlement surrounded, at least as early as the middle of the sixteenth century, by an exceptionally highly dissected enclosed field pattern in which the mean size of closes was under 2 acres (FOX, 1971, 306-9 ; FOX, 1973). Although this pattern of closes remained remarkably stable until the nineteenth century, tenants at Kenton were not always scrupulous in the upkeep of their hedges and cases of hedgerow removal, although rare, did occur from time to time. The attitude of the court towards badly maintained hedges was simple : those which were not «made good» or «kept up», or those which were «out of repair» or «let down» were to be repaired on penalty of a fine. Deliberate removal of hedges, even when they were internal boundaries within holdings rather than divisions between holdings, was regarded more seriously. The removal of a hedge was described as «contrary to our custom» at a meeting of the Kenton court in 1599 ; and when, in 1767, a tenant who had come into possession of two holdings proceeded to take away some of the hedges between them, it was claimed that he had «committed voluntary waste (which) may occasion great disputes» if the holdings were leased in the future as separate properties. The collective attitude of the farmers of Kenton is clear : hedges marked boundaries between properties or parts of properties as described in leases, copies and

surveys ; their retention was a «custom» which saved the community undue confusion and trouble when a holding changed hands (FOX, 1971, 315-20). That other communities in the South West saw their bocage landscapes as a natural inheritance which served the useful purpose of preventing dispute over rights to land is evident from the fact that presentments of tenants for failure to maintain hedges constitute one of the most common types of entry in the surviving court documents from manors in Devon and Cornwall. Some communities appointed from among their members special «constables» to perpetuate boundaries, such as the «viewers of the decayes of edifices and fences» at Caradon Prior in the seventeenth century ; at other places a «licence» was needed for hedgerow removal, and even when it had been granted, a tenant might be required to «leave some trees as a sign where the fence was» as a reminder that an established custom of the country had been broken (FOX, 1971, 114-5).

The manor court records of a region such as the South West, where most aspects of farming practice were not subject to communal control, cannot be expected to reveal the attitudes of ordinary farmers towards the agricultural -as opposed to the legal- functions of bocage. Majority attitudes towards the agricultural efficiency of bocage must therefore be sought indirectly. Attitudes are ultimately reflected in actions ; any popular dissatisfaction with a highly dissected bocage landscape should have give rise, over a period of as long as 300 years, to attempts to enlarge closes and remove hedges. Yet the relatively good and abundant manorial sources from Devon and Cornwall during the sixteenth seventeenth and eighteenth centuries contain only very few references to actions of this kind : removal of hedges was rare and took place only under special and unusual circumstances (FOX, 1971, 109-10 and 93-4). This absence of any tendency to «open up» the bocage landscapes of Devon and Cornwall before the nineteenth century could, of course, be attributed to the conservative attitude of manor courts towards hedges as property boundaries rather to any genuine preference for small closes for agricultural purposes ; equally, it could be attributed to the type of tenure by which much land in the South West was held, the three-life lease which discouraged investment in farm structure by landlord and tenant alike. But such an interpretation is confounded by one fact, which would have astonished nineteenth century advocates of field enlargement : the general tendency during the three centuries before 1800 was for a diminution rather than an increase in the size of closes. The same manorial sources which indicate that there was so little field enlargement during this period contain relatively more references to the opposite of this process, the multiplication of hedges and the division into two or more of closes which were already small in size. Two examples must suffice : a sixteenth-

century survey of Buckfastleigh records that a tenant there had recently divided a 4-acre close into three smaller ones and a map of Trewartha dating from the end of the next century shows a 7-acre close as «the great close now divided into four parts» (FOX, 1971, 92). Within an enclosed landscape which was relatively stable during the three centuries before 1800, there was a tendency for reduction rather than enlargement of the size of closes. In the actions of the farmers of the South West during this period we may detect a preference for small closes.

2 – The nineteenth century

During the course of the nineteenth century there took place a change in the attitudes of writers towards the bocage of the South West, a change which is apparent from comparison of the views of CHAPPLE (1785) who urged the retention of small closes, of MARSHALL (1796) whose opinions were more equivocal, containing neither total condemnation nor pure praise of the bocage of the peninsula, and of a group of agriculturalists writing in the 1840's and 1850's who saw nothing to admire there. Of this group, JOHN GRANT is the best known. His analysis of field size in ten East Devon parishes showed that about $\frac{3}{7}$ of all closes were of less than 5 acres and that the total length of the hedges amounted to 1,651 miles or «about half as long again as the famous wall of China» (GRANT, 1845). Less well known is the work of ROBERT DYMOND (1856) entitled «Devonshire fields and hedges». As well as making a thorough analysis of field size in fifty-seven Devon parishes, and describing hedges so closely spaced that the roots of the trees growing in them «met in a friendly embrace from opposite sides of the same field», DYMOND provided a cost-benefit analysis of aspects of farming in bocage regions and calculated what he considered to be the optimum acreage for closes on farms of various sizes. His remarkable paper must be seen as a highly competent nineteenth century forerunner of recent theoretical work on field size (e.g. DAVIES and DUNFORD, 1962 ; EDWARDS, 1966 and 1968). Both GRANT and DYMOND strongly advocated enlargement of closes, as did other contemporary writers such as KARKEEK (1846) and TANNER (1849) who wrote prize essays for the Royal Agricultural Society on the farming of Cornwall and Devon respectively, and CAIRD (1852) who wrote two reports for the Times on southwestern agricultural standards and conditions. The interest of these writers, and of others, in advocating enlargement of closes in the South West reflected a national interest in reform of field and farm lay out : the agricultural literature of the 1840's and 1850's indicates a growing awareness of the fact that even the relatively recent farming landscapes which had been created in the Midlands through enclosure by Act of Parliament were not ideally suited to advances in farming practice.

Four disadvantages of the bocage of the South West were repeated again and again in the works of nineteenth-century agriculturalists. First, the small closes of the region prevented the adoption of, or reduced the efficiency of, a variety of types of new farm machinery.

Second, division of estates into small closes increased the costs of underdrainage of clay soils. Third, it was pointed out that, on many farms, the number of closes was out of proportion to the number of courses in the rotations which prevailed in the South West in the middle of the nineteenth century ; one writer noticed «many instances.... of adjoining fields, of 2 or 3 acres apiece, on the same farm, being under the same crop» and urged that some of the hedges «could be spared without the slightest interference with the cropping» (PUNCHARD, 1890). Fourth, superfluous hedges were severely criticized for occupying valuable land, for harbouring pest species and for casting shade on crops.

In a mid-nineteenth-century context these attitudes are both rational and easily explicable. Mechanization and underdrainage were hallmarks of agricultural progress in the Victorian age. Moreover, they were innovations which differed in scale and nature from the improvements of earlier centuries which were ecological improvements involving new crops and new fertilizers whose adoption was not hampered in the South West by the region's bocage field structures (FOX 1971, 97-102 ; HAVINDEN, 1974). By the middle of the nineteenth century, the claim that the nature of prevailing rotations no longer required the fragmentation of holdings into many closes was entirely justified. Convertible husbandry was still practised, but the length of leys had been considerably reduced in many parts of the peninsula (KARKEEK, 1846 ; TANNER, 1849) ; and, as the model depicted in fig. 1a shows, fewer closes are needed when the duration of a rotation is diminished. The traditional rotations of Devon and Cornwall had been perhaps the paramount reason for the division of farms into many closes. When they were on the decline it was natural that the hedge itself came to be increasingly criticized : the space it occupied, the pests it bred and the shade it cast (formerly tolerated because of the other rôles played by hedgerows) were now condemned. Finally, it should be mentioned that the mid-Victorian age placed a premium on arable farming and although nineteenth-century agriculturalists were willing to grant that small closes were not unsuitable as feeding grounds for livestock, they tended to place most emphasis on their disadvantages in arable systems.

Reminiscences, contemporary comment and comparison of map series indicate that the mid-nineteenth century was a turning point in the history of the bocage of the South West (GRANT, 1845 ; DYMOND, 1856 ; CAIRD, 1852 ; GALMEN, 1880 ; TORR, 1921 ; LONG, 1935 ; LAITY, 1948). A landscape which had

been so relatively stable for so long began to change more rapidly than at any time during the previous three centuries as hedges were removed and closes enlarged. The pace of the movement varied, being no doubt affected by availability of capital, cooperation or lack of it between neighbours and between landlord and tenant, and by local example. Nor was it apparent in all parishes and all estates throughout the region, for there are numerous examples of present-day patterns of closes which differ only very slightly from their predecessors in the early nineteenth century (e.g. WILLIAMS, 1963), while the two south-western counties still have a greater density of hedges per square mile than most other parts of England (LOCKE, 1962). No detailed studies have yet been made of the «opening up» of the bocage landscapes of the South West. Indeed it would be true to say that the whole subject of nineteenth-century reform of field and farm structure in

England at large has been strangely neglected. HOELSCHER (1963) has pointed to its importance, DAVID (1971) has shown how it cannot be neglected by students of the adoption of mechanization on English farms and COPPOCK (1958) has indicated some of the sources which are available for its study. Yet whether change in the landscape resulted from a change in majority attitudes springing from the farmer's own realization of the disadvantages of small closes under new farming conditions ; whether the reasoning of the agricultural writers was known to and heeded by the farmer ; or whether landlords acted as intermediaries in transmitting information and transforming attitudes : these and many other questions relating to the financial, tenurial and ecological aspects of «dis-enclosure» still await investigation. The decline of the classic bocage landscapes of the South West is still a subject as obscure, and at the same time as fascinating, as their origin.

NOTE : It has not been possible, in the space allowed for this essay, to give detailed references where manuscript sources are cited or have been used as the evidence for a statement or conclusion. In these cases reference is made to the relevant pages of FOX, 1971 where details of the manuscripts used are given.

RÉSUMÉ

Du début du seizième siècle à la fin du dix-huitième, le paysage rural du Devon et de la Cornouaille était l'un des paysages les plus découpés et plantés de haies de toute l'Angleterre. Cependant, il semble avoir fonctionné efficacement dans le contexte des pratiques agricoles de l'époque. Il était bien adapté aux types de rotations utilisées dans la région. Il était idéal pour

l'agriculture pastorale ; ses haies avaient plusieurs fonctions juridiques et agricoles importantes. Les auteurs contemporains antérieurs au dix-neuvième siècle l'admirent plus qu'ils ne le critiquent. De plus, il est permis de penser que les fermiers de la région avaient une préférence sincère pour ses petits champs et ses hauts talus boisés. Ce n'est pas avant le milieu du dix-neuvième siècle que la structure foncière et agricole du Devon et de la Cornouaille commence à être critiquée, les haies arrachées et les champs agrandis.
