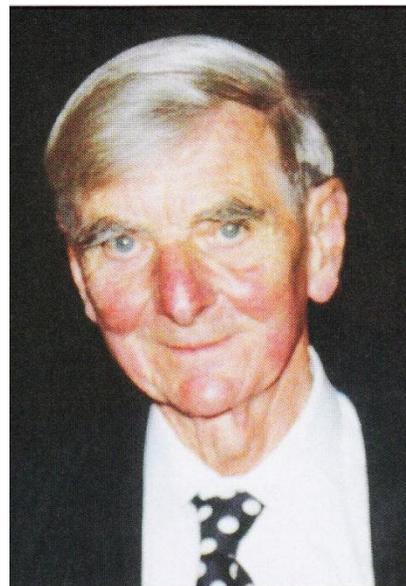


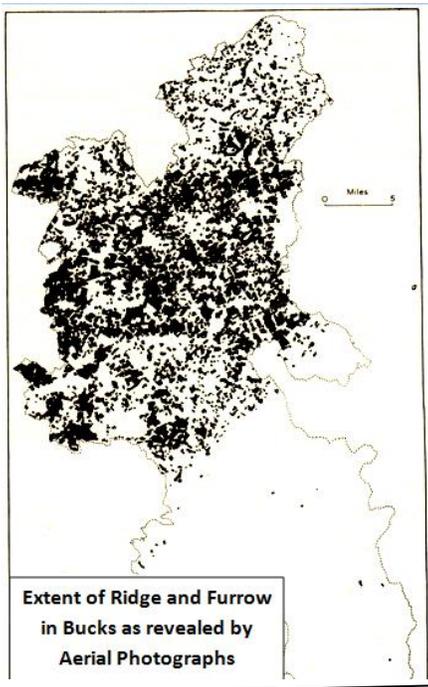


Bucks Archaeological Society was very fortunate to have received a very generous bequest of £5000 from its former President, Professor William (Bill) Mead, who died at the age of 99 in 2015. Bill also very generously left to the Society the rights to a number of his publications. To decide on an appropriate use for this fine legacy, Council considered how his memory could be lastingly preserved. Two projects have been decided upon: the digitisation of the collection early estate and other maps held by BAS and kept in safety at the Centre for Bucks Studies, and the publication of a second edition of his translation of the diary of Pehr Kalm, a visitor from Finland to Little Gaddesden in the Chilterns in 1748.



The Map Collection

Professor William Mead's fascination with the patterns of ridge and furrow on Buckinghamshire fields first arose as a boy, when he first saw those mediaeval arable strips fossilised into the pastures near Aylesbury. He completed research project into their possible origins. The map on the left is the fruit of this work; it shows clearly the marked contrast between southern Bucks, a landscape dominated by the chalk based Chiltern Hills, and the lower predominantly claylands in the north of the county. Before the era of parliamentary enclosure in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, open fields held in common predominated in the north, while the south was an enclosed landscape of small square arable fields bounded by hedgerows and held in severalty.



The sources of information Prof Mead used included aerial photographs and field surveys, but an essential part of the work was the use of pre-enclosure estate maps. Many of these are held by BAS, and are kept at the Centre for Bucks Studies in Aylesbury. Prof Mead's pioneering work on Bucks field systems could be the basis for further research on common fields and enclosure in the county and on the development of the rural economy. Maps would necessarily be part of such work. Many of them are large, cumbersome, and fragile, and stored away on shelves in a busy muniment room. How much more convenient it would be for scholars to be able to access the maps sitting before a screen and touching a keyboard, all without the need to unroll old and often delicate and vulnerable maps.

It was proposed to Council that an appropriate use for Bill Mead's legacy would be to digitise the maps on the BAS list. The proposal was passed and discussed with Bill Willett, Prof Mead's executor, and now very pleasingly, the actual work of digitisation has been completed.