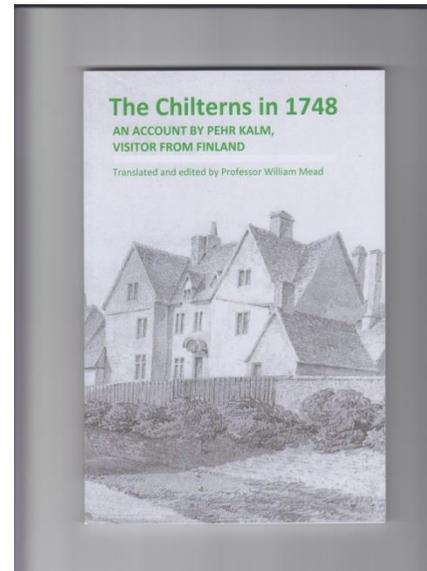




A New Edition of Pehr Kalm's Visit to the Chilterns.

BAS has published a reprint of Bill Mead's translation of the diary of Pehr Kalm, a Finnish scientist and naturalist dwelling in Sweden, who visited Little Gaddesden in the Hertfordshire Chilterns in 1748. He spent five months in the company of William Ellis, whose writings on agricultural improvement and the rural economy of the Chilterns had been circulated in Sweden among the owners of larger estates. This was the period of the so-called Agricultural Revolution when English farming was being transformed by the integration of clover and turnip growing into crop rotations in arable farming, enabling greater livestock densities and manuring rates on the arable fields, the systematic and intensive folding of sheep, and the innovations in farm instruments. Ellis himself had developed an improved plough, and had described in some detail the contrast between the farming systems in the enclosed Chilterns and the common field systems in the Vale of Aylesbury.



Kalm kept a diary of the five months of his journey from Tilbury through Essex and Herts to Gaddesden; he visited on the way St Albans and Hemel Hempstead, and was impressed by the productivity of the arable green mainly hedged landscape which he likens to a garden, contrasting with the vast open lands and the dark coniferous forests of Sweden. He was an astute and enquiring observer, imbued with the spirit of scientific enquiry learned from his teacher, Carl Linnaeus. In the pages of his diary, nicely translated from the Finnish by Mead, and with a full introduction, both the serious scholar and the interested general reader will find details not just of farming methods, but also of the household economy of farmers and of the labouring families, methods of hedge laying, the local botany, the state of the roads and lanes, detailed records of the weather, and of especial interest to agricultural historians - the contrasts between the common field farming in the Vale that he observed at Ivinghoe and Eddlesborough, and the advanced farming methods in operation at Gaddesden in the Chilterns.

The Chilterns in 1748: an Account by Pehr Kalm, a Visitor from Finland, translated and with an introduction by Professor William Mead. This is a reprint edition with a new cover, extended index, glossary and biographies and is available in paperback from BAS, The Museum, Church Street, Aylesbury, HP20 2QP at a price of £6.00, £1.80 post and packing.