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ROTHAMSTED RESEARCH

Report for 1971

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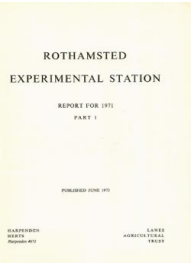

General Report

G. W. Cooke

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GENERAL REPORT

G. W. COOKE

On 8 February 1972 Rothamsted suffered a grievous blow when Sir Frederick Bawden, our Director since 1958, died after a brief illness. His work for Rothamsted, and his scientific achievements are described later in the Report. The Director's sudden death, at a time when the Station's Secretary was ill, caused many administrative problems. G. W. Cooke was appointed Acting Director and was greatly helped by many members of staff, particularly the Station's Assistant Secretary, E. Church, and the Director's Personal Assistant, Mildred E. Ashford.

We suffered another loss on 23 February with the death of the Most Honourable the Marquess of Salisbury, K.G., P.C., F.R.S. He had been a Trustee of the Lawes Agricultural Trust since 1957 and we acknowledge his valuable services.

Staff changes. D. J. Watson, Head of the Botany Department and a Deputy Director, retired on 31 March. He came to Rothamsted in 1930 to establish work on plant physiology and succeeded Dr. Winifred Brenchley as Head of the Botany Department in 1948. He was distinguished for his research on the physiology of growth and yield of field crops, but his greatest service to Rothamsted was his membership of the Field Plots Committee since 1930; he was Secretary from 1930 to 1947 and latterly he was Chairman. He did much to improve the standards and scope of our field experiments. Watson was succeeded as Head of the Botany Department by C. P. Whittingham, Professor of Botany at Imperial College and, as Deputy Director, by F. G. W. Jones.

C. G. Butler was appointed to succeed C. G. Johnson as Head of the Entomology Department on 1 April 1972, when the Bee and Entomology Departments will be merged. Dr. I. J. Graham-Bryce of Jealott's Hill Research Station was appointed to succeed C. Potter as Head of the Insecticides and Fungicides Department on 1 April 1972.

G. H. Cashen retired from the Physics Department after being on the staff for 44 years. Mary T. Franklin retired from the Nematology Department. She was with the Institute of Parasitology when it transferred from Winches Farm, St. Albans to Rothamsted to form the Nematology Department in 1947. Mrs. Marion A. Watson also retired; she came to Rothamsted in 1928 and was a valued member of the Plant Pathology Department. Her contributions to the social life at Rothamsted, particularly Christmas Parties, will long be remembered.

C. G. Butler, J. M. Hirst and F. G. W. Jones were promoted to Deputy Chief Scientific Officer.

Honours and awards. N. W. Pirie was awarded the Copley medal of the Royal Society. J. M. Hirst was appointed President of the British Mycological Society and C. G. Johnson was made an honorary member of the Entomological Society of the Netherlands. G. W. Cooke gave the Francis New Memorial Lecture of the Fertiliser Society.

Visits. F. C. Bawden visited Bulgaria at the invitation of the Bulgarian Academy of Agricultural Sciences. He took part in the Second International Symposium on Plant Pathology in New Delhi, India and visited Universities and Research Institutes. He also visited the USSR at the invitation of the Lenin All-Union Academy of Agricultural Sciences to lecture and visit research institutes in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev.

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Frederick Charles Bawden

A review of Rothamsted during his Directorship, 1958–1972

G. W. Cooke

Sir John Russell invited F. C. Bawden to join Rothamsted in 1936. He succeeded J. Henderson Smith as Head of the Plant Pathology Department in 1940, at the age of 32, and Sir William Ogg as Director in 1958. Rothamsted then had 471 staff whereas when he died it had over 700 and there were 48 more at Broom's Barn.

Progress in our work is best measured by reading our Annual Reports; nevertheless some figures of growth are impressive. The Report for 1958, Bawden's first, had 283 pages and recorded 247 published papers. The Report for 1970 was in two parts, had a larger format, totalled 644 pages, and recorded 330 published papers. During his time the Report became more valuable to scientists, agriculturists and general readers. Bawden's advice and help to departments in describing their work was invaluable, but the style of the Report owed much to his own 'General Report', described in a recent review as 'a connoisseur's piece'. These Reports, and his discussions of their relationship with current agricultural problems, were eagerly read by scientists and laymen. His keen pen examined old problems and suggested how our work might help their solution; usually there was comment on farming conditions, and vigorous intervention in debates on topical subjects, particularly if farming lore was being given more weight than scientific evidence. He finished reading the Departments' Reports for 1971 a few days before he died and was about to write his General Report.

Buildings. In 1958 the work of some departments was being handicapped by old and inadequate laboratories, and Bawden worked to provide better facilities. A building for the Orion computer and the Statistics Department was completed in 1961; in the same year Red Gables was extended to provide better accommodation for the Commonwealth Bureau of Soils and our canteen. In 1963 a large extension to the West Building rehoused the Biochemistry and Pedology Departments and the Soil Survey of England and Wales. New glasshouses were built for several departments in the early sixties and the first controlled environment rooms were completed in 1962. In 1965 a new workshop provided 'for the first time reasonable working conditions', and a field laboratory for the Physics Department was built. In 1968 the Computer Department was formed and the proposal to buy the ICL System-4-70 multi-access computer made essential the new building, finished in 1970. Bawden's largest building project, to rehouse the Botany, Nematology, and Physics Departments, and part of the Plant Pathology Department, was started in 1971.

Bawden was keenly interested in the development of Broom's Barn Experimental Station, for Dunholme Field Station had been a part of his Plant Pathology Department. The farm of 200 acres was bought and the station built with money from the Sugar Beet Research and Education Fund. The staff from Dunholme moved there and Broom's Barn was opened in 1962.

At Rothamsted a number of new houses for our staff were built and facilities for sports and social gatherings were much improved by the pavilion built in 1961.

Land for experiments. Our programme of field experiments is always expanding, and often

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