

Book Reviews

The Lake District: a Landscape History, by W. H. Pearsall and Winifred Pennington. Collins, £3.15.

Monks Wood: a Nature Reserve Record, edited by R. C. Steele and R. C. Welch. Nature Conservancy, London, £2.25.

Both these books are in the high tradition of British natural history, perhaps one might be allowed to say English natural history, for Scotland and Wales are distinctly late comers in this field. In *The Lake District*, which is no. 53 in the New Naturalist series, now rising thirty years old, the late Professor Pearsall and his pupil, now Mrs T. G. Tutin, write about their natal region as only two real and dedicated naturalists can, with a personal knowledge based on tramping the whole area on foot. Much foot-tramping must also lie behind the remarkably complete survey of Monks Wood, one of our premier national nature reserves, by a 33-man team, few if any of whom can be natives of Huntingdonshire. One group of authors summarise their and our knowledge of a whole region with a breadth of understanding that takes many years to achieve. The other group have gone over their 156.8 ha with a fine tooth-comb, listing not only the whole Plant Kingdom, except the Algae, but a remarkably high selection of invertebrates: a dozen insect orders and ten other groups.

It is good that Professor Pearsall's last great work could be rescued from the oblivion that threatened it. Seven chapters have been written by his co-author from his own notes; five more she has done herself to complete his plan. Eleven other authors fill in the gaps with their own specialisms. The result is one of the most satisfying in the New Naturalist series, and it is illustrated by 32 pages of excellent black and white photographs. Note especially the 'history' in the sub-title. There is a great deal of both archaeology and history in this book, without which the present fascinating patchwork of habitats cannot possibly be understood.

History also helps us to understand Monks Wood, as indeed any other significant habitat in this palimpsest of an island. At the end is an invaluable section on conservation, which is, after all, the main reason why the book could be written.

RICHARD FITTER

Memories II, by Julian Huxley. Allen & Unwin, £4.95.

'Not just a travel book', says Sir Julian himself about the second volume of his *Memories*, and says so with complete justice. Nevertheless, he describes, with much penetrating comment, a series of journeys taken far away and, if not long ago, yet before the winds of change had begun to reach gale force. Throughout one is sensible of the enlivening presence of his wife, Juliette. At the age of eighty-four, he describes himself as 'ageing but still active', and we may hope that the demon which possessed him in his younger days and drove him into all sorts of activity will not now let his pen rest idle.

Encounters with personalities able to influence affairs or aspects of development within the scope of the work of UNESCO were, of course, bound to form part of Sir Julian's duties when he became the first Director General of that international organisation. These opportunities he used to the full to promote the ideas and policies which he did so much to shape. An early acquaintance at UNESCO was Père Teilhard de Chardin, to whose defence he rallied when Chardin was arraigned by the French Catholic