



# JAMES HUTTON *The Pioneer*

The pit in front of you once contained marl – a clay containing lime. Spread on the land it acts as a soil improver. However, not all marl has enough lime to be useful as James Hutton (1726-1797) found to his cost. With his friend the eminent chemist Joseph Black, he developed a test that could be used by farmers themselves, to determine the quality of their marl.

Following studies in East Anglia and the Continent, Hutton took on the family farms - here at Sligh Houses where he lived, and also Nether Monynut in the Lammermuirs. The light horse-drawn 'Suffolk Plough' used in East Anglia so impressed him that he brought one with a ploughman three hundred miles north by hired carriage! Local farmers came to laugh at the new contraption but went home converted to this method of ploughing.



**Marl clay was dug from the pit in front of you, loaded onto a cart and spread on the fields**



**Hutton's East Anglian Plough Team**

**Hutton's new plough produced better results and was much faster than the old Scots plough. James Hutton demonstrated his new plough in part of the field behind you**

Eventually all the hard work paid off, a contemporary account of Hutton's farming states - *"all the operation of husbandry, were done to a degree of neatness and garden-like culture, which in farming had not been done before. Persons of every description came from every quarter..."*



**The Old Scots Plough Team**

All the while Hutton experimented with the effects of light, heat and fertilisers on plants, carrying out the trials in the fields and in the farm buildings. His contribution to agriculture went unmarked in Britain but the French presented him with an award from the prestigious *Societe Royale d'Agriculture de Paris*.