

HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF SHEEP-FARMING IN THE  
SCOTTISH BORDER HILLS:

A study of customary life and practices among the  
sheepfarming community of the central hill areas before 1900

by

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## Chapter six: THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE FARM COMMUNITY

The farming developments of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries produced a situation in which the members of the tenant class, which had itself evolved during this time, varied from those who had been shepherds and had saved enough to lease small farms, to the haughty 'gentlemen' who mixed with the lairds and sometimes became lairds themselves. It is difficult therefore to picture a typical tenant farmer at any stage, and the following description is of a composite kind rather than a portrait of a representative individual.

### 1. The Farmer's Life

The ordinary sheepfarmer of around 1800 led a life that was much as it had been a century or two earlier, fixed in a simple pattern in which active outdoor work occupied most available time. He would have agreed with those Forest tenants who in 1732 pointed out "that ane Industrious Tennant liveing in the Forrest whose care is a Mixture of Store and Husbandry" cannot spare time for official public duties, since he must "keep himself in constant Action at all Seasons the whole year round His way of liveing requireing a closs attendance either upon the Management or disposall of his flock, labouring and sowing the ground and on the Hay and corn Harvests-goeing to Mercats and keeping appointments with those from whose

hands the Masters Rent must be made out." <sup>1</sup> But he would also have had to admit that he had opportunity to indulge himself in such entertainments as he felt enlivened the daily round.

### Domestic Life

At home this farmer slept in his box bed, rose early, washed in the burn, ate his porridge, or kail, meat and potatoes from wooden trenchers with a horn spoon, and presided over gatherings of his family for prayer. He dressed himself for Sunday with more than usual care, and spent most of that day, in his blue coat with brass buttons, travelling to or sitting in church. His 'gude wife' spun and made her blue and yellow gown and her white and blue apron, using dyes made from lichens, and wore a white mutch with black ribbons on special occasions. The domestic scene at Blackhouse about 1804 was described by James Skene, who was visiting the farm with Sir Walter Scott:

"We received, as usual, a most cordial welcome at the farm... There was none of the hurry and discomposure which the sudden arrival of guests upon a retired family so often occasions. We had been descried from a distance, and the old man was already at his door with a bottle and glass to welcome our arrival. We were taken to inspect the flock of Lambs, while the room was prepared for dinner, to which the good wife got a hint, that a little addition might be required. And a plain substantial repast it was, graced with a huge flaggon of home brewed ale, the principal farm servants sitting down at the same table, but in the most respectful manner, with their bonnets in their hand, while the old man delivered a somewhat lengthy grace, with a very impressive solemnity of manner. The old mistress

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1. Minto Papers, N.L.S., M.S. 11029, Petition 8th August, 1732.

did shew some symptoms of household anxieties upon the occasion, and the other females most unnecessarily pinched themselves in room upon their seats... With the removal of the dishes, and the conclusion of the old mans after grace, the lads and lasses made their hasty reverence, & bundled off... A punch bowl was then introduced, filled and in time emptied to many good sentiments and toasts. Then followed a second visit to the sheep and the farm yard, and upon returning to the house the whole household of every class was assembled to hear the Master read a chapter of the Bible, offer up a prayer for all and give them his blessing for the night. A little cheese and bread followed, and then every one to bed. Our repose was somewhat disturbed by the gambols of the rats, who seemed to have established free passage through every corner of the house..." 1

The increasing wealth of the farmers in the late eighteenth century meant that for some life took on a more modern appearance than it had at Blackhouse. The more commodious houses were built, and the generally greater comforts bordered on luxuries. James Grieve, one of the well-to-do tenants, bought many works of literature, including, in 1807, all Shakespeare's plays; he had his portrait painted by an Edinburgh artist, and saw his son William "go in to Town to hear Paganini scrape the fiddle".<sup>2</sup> Farmers went away for days or even weeks, on business visits to buy stock or arrange sales, and on holidays to spas and resorts. The sulphur springs at Gilsland and the desolate Deadwater were popular and near at hand, as were the waters at Moffat and Innerleithen, while seabathing on the east coast and the Solway was favoured, especially by the women. Fiddle music and ballad singing gave way to the more sedate piano. One of

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1. Skene, J.: Reminiscences of Scott, N.L.S., MS. 965, f.

2. G.P., Diary no. 25, p. 285.

the most popular pleasures was a social occasion, for "even the most recluse are loth to part, especially when they meet together at markets and fairs".<sup>1</sup> At home a bottle of wine or a cheerful glass of punch frequently accompanied the plain dinner, even in what appeared to be a poorer household, while outside the farmers met to hunt, fish, and curl. Social life for them was, as Hogg characterised it, "the guns and the pointers; the wine and the punch drinking, and the singing o' the deboshed songs".<sup>2</sup>

#### Clubs and Shows

There were also the clubs. The first one to be established in the Borders was apparently "the honest Countrie Club", founded in December 1711 with a small membership of east Selkirkshire lairds. It met at Oakwood Mill, and though in theory a forum for discussion, in practice the meeting was a convivial occasion in which eating and drinking played a large part. It died out during the Jacobite rising of 1715, when Highlanders "were in the Countrie".<sup>3</sup> A successor to this in the style of its composition and of its activities was the Forest Club, started in 1788 by various Forest lairds and still going in 1840.<sup>4</sup> The wider interest aroused by such gatherings was demonstrated by the

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1. Douglas, op. cit., p.251.

2. Hogg, The Shepherd's Calendar, Vol. I, p. 15.

3. B.M., 939/32, Club Minute Book.

4. The Club still exists. One of its main occupations used to be the racing of greyhounds.



Pl. 15 The Border Inn, at Kirk Yetholm, c. 1910.



Pl. 16  
An excursion to  
St. Mary's Loch.  
c. 1900.

formation of several more genuinely farming clubs in the earlier nineteenth century. In 1811 farmers in Liddesdale and neighbourhood founded the Riccarton Mill Club, and in 1822 the Crookwelcome Club was started by various tenants in Ettrick and Yarrow. The Teviotdale farmers launched the Whisp Club at MossPaul in 1826, and in 1833 the Eskdale and Liddesdale Agricultural and Pastoral Society held its first meeting. These later clubs were not concerned only with the merits of the table fare. More serious discussion on farming affairs took up a great deal of the evening, with items such as the state of business, seasons, and average prices being considered. Perhaps the most business-like of all was the Pastoral Society of Selkirkshire, instituted by Lord Napier in 1819:

"The grand object of this Society shall be to encourage the Improvement of Sheep and Wool of the Cheviot Breed, to ameliorate the pastures on which they feed, to excite the Shepherds to industry, care and attention by suitable rewards, to encourage the habits of cleanliness in their domestic economy and for detecting and punishing the aggressions of Sheep-Stealers, illisit Distillers or others, whose nature and occupation tend to demoralize the character of the People."

Meetings, to be held in turn at Newark, Tinnis, and Thirlestane fairground, would take place annually, at which sheep would be exhibited and judged. Members would wear a plain blue coat of cloth manufactured in Galashiels, with "an appropriate button", and attend a dinner after the show. When funds permitted, premiums would be granted for the "greatest number of Drains and Stells provided on a



Pl. 17 Yarrow Show, c. 1912. The shepherds have been showing their dogs, which would not otherwise be on leashes.



Pl. 18 A contest at Yarrow Show 1912; making ropes out of hay with thrawcrooks.

certain space", for the most expert clipper, the best raiser of lambs, the greatest mole destroyer, and so on.<sup>1</sup>

This club, with its membership of "Men of respectability and public utility" in the county, flourished, and in time became the still flourishing Yarrow and Ettrick Pastoral Society. Like its counterpart in Roxburghshire, the Teviotdale Farmers Club, founded in 1859, it brought tenants and lairds together in a way that had not happened before, and was a pleasant accompaniment to the spirit of progress that marked sheepfarming in the nineteenth century.

#### A Diversity of Interests

While his diaries show that he was sometimes occupied as a juryman or in other public affairs, James Grieve, like any other active tenant, was always busy on the farm. Even if, as in his later years often happened, he did not join in the labour, he was concerned with programmes of draining, dyking, planting, building, and stock improvement. He attended to his accounts and investments, and tried to find better ways of marketing his produce. He was interested in such diverse matters as maintaining a good supply of wine in the house, in the farming experiments and estate management going on around him, in recipes and cures, the seasonal appearance of birds, local history and families, and the labourers in his neighbourhood who might make useful employees.

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1. Napier, Lord, Letter of Proposal to establish a Pastoral Society, 1st Feb. 1819. Also The Minute Books of the Society.

He described the disturbances caused by bad weather and by the 'False Alarm' of 31st January 1804. He commented on emigration, on the activities of the local militia, and on such destructive customs as 'paring and burning'.<sup>1</sup> He met people who had seen the Highlanders passing through the Borders in 1745. And above all he was ready to try anything that might make life more interesting.

## 2. Farm Employees

The long established forms of labour typical of any sheep farm underwent a slow change over the late eighteenth century. The decline of ewe milking and smearing meant that employees for these specific tasks could be dispensed with. The farmer arranged his hiring terms so that a variety of jobs would be carried out by one man. The herds were expected to help with the hay, as was the barnman, whose main task was to thresh in winter. The ploughman or 'hind' looked after the horses and maintained equipment. Most of the men participated in scything and shearing the crops, while the women rolled wool at clippings, put hay into kyles, pikes and stacks, and tied mown corn in sheaves. There was consequently a reduction in the number of people employed on a hill farm, and a careful rearrangement of shepherds and hirsels in relation to the sheepfarmer's main aim:

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1. On Whithope and Tinnis, in Yarrow, fields were dressed with clay ash, the clay having been burnt in a kiln with sod walls. Irishmen were employed for the work, "the considerable mania" for the practice occurring about 1800 or earlier (Russell, op. cit., 87-8).

"That the largest possible disposable produce may be raised, at the least expence upon that produce, in a sheep farm, so as to enable it both to send more goods, and of better quality, to market, and, of course, to afford most rent to the proprietor, it ought to be of sufficient extent to admit of distinct hirseling and herding; in such a manner, that each distinct hirsle should be sufficiently numerous to occupy, completely, a distinct herdsman, without which he must be kept, to a certain degree, idly and unprofitably." 1

This adjustment of farm size and management under economic necessity, a development that accompanied the eighteenth century changes in particular, effected all the occupants of the farms. The tenant had to ensure that all labourers and employees were necessary. The number of his ploughmen had to be appropriate to the area under crops, and the girls taken on for ewemilking ought not to be still in his employment when there was no work to do. The fluctuating size of a farm's population was therefore of considerable importance in his overall plan.

Some of the many types of servant on a sheep farm appear on the 1694 Poll Tax Roll,<sup>2</sup> which provides evidence of the number of servants as well as of tenants on typical hill farms:

<u>Farm</u>	<u>No. of Tenants</u>	<u>No. of Servants</u>		<u>No. of Herds</u>	<u>Cottars</u>	<u>Others</u>
		male	female			
West Buccleuch	1	3	2	3		2
East Buccleuch	2	6	3	3		
Grosslee	2	6	5		1	3
Over Dalgleish	3	3	2		1	3
Annelshope				2	1	1
Over Kirkhope	3	1	2	1		
Bowerhope	1	2	3	3	1	

1. Findlater, op. cit., p. 51.

2. Horsburgh 2. For the total populations of hill farms on this Roll, see Appendices IV & XI.

It is possible that some of the male servants were herds, while on most of the farms - especially, for instance, on Crosslee or Over Kirkhope - tenants were themselves shepherds. At East Buccleuch one of the tenants was a 'tacksman', Walter Scott of Todrig, who was represented in his absence by herds. So too was the laird of Tushielaw at his farm of Annelshope. Such representation increased the importance and responsibilities of the shepherd, whose position became almost that of manager.

In 1748 Robert Elliot in Hermitage hired eight men and eight women, among whom Adam Beattie was to herd the nolt, help with smearing, clipping and winning the hay, and "ouphad the Toftholm dike and hay yard dykes", while Jean Little was to work in the byre. Most of the other girls were ewe milkers. In the next two years Jean Hyslop was employed for "the Inwork", and William Gledstons "to had the Plough", his wage being grass for five sheep. Elliot's arrangements for 1752 included twelve women, among them Jean Hyslop "to keep the bairn", Isobel Learmont "fore the kitchen" and Betty Hyslop "to the byer", and eleven men, four as shepherds, one to herd nolt, one to win hay and look after wintering nolt, one "to Caw the Pleugh", one to bught the ewes at milking and be "bernman", and three for unspecified work. The wives of two of the herds were hired women, the first milking ewes as part of her husband's

bargain, the second milking "fore her house". Another man's hiring required his wife to spin "Six Slips" for the farmer. The usual woman's wage was a pair of shoes and stone of wool, whereas the men received grass for sheep and cows and sometimes a small sum of money. A tailor called Charles was also part of Elliot's farm 'toun'; he was paid a fleece of wool and six shillings.<sup>1</sup>

Female servants in the farmhouse or helping a shepherd's wife were employed when still children and had a long working day. When Janet Bathgate began at Hartleap about 1800, she was only eight years old and had had no real schooling. She rose at 5 a.m., swept out with a heather broom, took out fire ashes, brought in peats, and made up the beds. She helped to milk the cow, cook the porridge, prepare the potatoes and kail, and mucked out the byre. During the day she assisted at lambing, herded the cow, and later joined in work at the hay. She worked from March till November for 14/- and a bit of yarn.<sup>2</sup> Older girls were employed as ewe milkers, harvest workers, or in the house. In 1794 it was remarked that "Servants in the family are not so exact as to hours, as they often rise very early in the morning, and work late at night; servant maids especially."<sup>3</sup> During the nineteenth century, after the numbers of farm workers had been reduced, the

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1. Braidlie Day Book

2. Bathgate, op. cit., p. 81.

3. Johnston, T., op. cit., p. 35.

well-to-do farmer employed a female cook, and one or two 'house table maids', whose task was to look after all the housework, to serve at meals, to set tables and clean the silver. On washing days the maid might rise at 2 a.m., and have all the clothes out to bleach on the green by 6 o'clock. She would be instructed by the farmer's wife in the next day's programme about 10 o'clock in the evening, and then go to bed in a room shared with the cook. Dressed in her smart black and white, the maid was busy around the house in the morning, but often had a rest in the afternoon, though in the clipping season she had to take out great teas to the folds.

A herd, or more especially a ploughman, might by the terms of his hiring have to provide a woman for outdoor work. The married man could usually put a daughter to service, but the bachelor was sometimes compelled to house a woman in order to fulfil the bargain.<sup>1</sup> If Janet Bathgate had not been sent to Hartleap she might have had an even more difficult life at home, as her father was a ploughman or 'hind' at Dryhope, and "a plooghman's faimily have never onything to spare, but are aye juist leevin' atween the hand an' the mooth".<sup>2</sup> The ploughman often lived in the loft over the byre, and was said to be the poorest farm worker, but a married man could earn nearly as much as the

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1. The 'outworker' or 'bondager' was required on arable farms, but she appeared only rarely on sheep farms and then usually as a turnip 'singler'.

2. Bathgate, op. cit., p. 70.

shepherd, particularly if he worked in the true arable country. In earlier days, perhaps till 1800, "There used to be three oxen and four horses in the yoke, under charge of a ploughman and gadman",<sup>1</sup> but the one-horse iron plough was characteristic of the hillfarms in the nineteenth century.

### 3. Schooling

The ambition of the late sixteenth century reformers to have a school in every parish was not fulfilled in the country districts for a long time. The shortage of money and of teachers meant very haphazard progress, so that, in spite of the encouragement given by Parliament and the Church, and the guaranteed financial support of the heritors, it was probably late in the seventeenth century before many schools were established among the Border hills. At this time farmers learned to read, write and keep accounts. Though some of the lairds and their chamberlains could do so perhaps a century earlier, it was at least 1700 before literacy spread among the tenants, most of whom had been unable even to sign their names as witnesses on ordinary documents. The improvement brought by education was a precursor of the agricultural improvements that came after 1760.

In 1690 £20 scots was paid by the Buccleuch estate to a schoolmaster at Newmill on Teviot "for teaching the poor

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1. Russell, op. cit., p. 81.

upon the highlands for this year only".<sup>1</sup> No permanent arrangement was made, and in 1723 there was much need felt for an 'English' school in the Teviot valley. It was judged suitable to have it at Raesknowe, near Newmill, where there was "John Red, a well aged man, capable to teach at the said toun..."<sup>2</sup> Thirty years later the S.P.C.K. granted a sum of £4 for a school at Caerlanrig, and had four applicants for schoolmaster, all of whom were fairly well qualified to teach English, Writing, and Arithmetic, which, with bookkeeping, were the usual basic subjects offered.<sup>3</sup>

Down in the Ewes valley, provision for schooling in 1738 was most inadequate; "the School house in Ewes which is for the teaching of English is in so Ruinous a state that it needeth to be rebuilt and it is so little that it cannot contain the Scholars, and the Master hath not a Room to himself in it therefore their hath been a Necessity of permitting the School to be taught in the Church." This was obviously a bad practice, since the children were likely to damage the seats, and in any case "their Master deserveth all Encouragment for he Teacheth with great Reputation English, Writting, Musick, Arithmetick, and Book-keeping." The minister Robert Malcolm, John and William Elliot of Tarras, and Thomas Armstrong of Sorbie requested

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1. B.M., 404.

2. Wilson, J., Hawick and its Old Memories, p. 62.

3. Presbytery of Jedburgh Records, S.R.O., CH2 / 198, Vol. II, p. 116.

the Duke of Buccleuch to have the school rebuilt, enlarged, and furnished with writing tables. The Duke agreed to contribute, providing other heritors did so.<sup>1</sup> It was usual for the heritors also to provide the schoolmaster's pay.

In 1740 William Welsh, schoolmaster in Eskdalemuir and precentor at the kirk there for eleven years, was blind, unable to work, and "reduced to Extream want and poverty". He petitioned the Duke of Buccleuch for an allowance and was awarded £5. In 1763 his school was found to be "intirely ruinous" and had to be rebuilt.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to such small local schools, education for the farmer's children was, to some extent, provided at home. Private tutors were employed, and they were occasionally willing to take upon themselves more general duties if paid. In 1725 the Reverend Thomas Boston in Ettrick nominated as the parish schoolmaster John Beaty, who had been teaching at Midgehope farm under a private arrangement. Beaty and his son, also John, between them held the office for a total of an hundred and one years.<sup>3</sup> The parish of Castleton lacked a man for the dual duties of teacher and session clerk in 1764, but "Thomas Armstrong teacher to Mr. Elliot of Peal's Children" was thought fit to be the clerk.<sup>4</sup>

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1. B.M., 233.

2. Ibid.

3. Smith, James: Etterick Parish Book, p. 23. See also Craig-Brown, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 270.

4. Kirk Session Minutes, Castleton, S.R.O., CH2/64/3, pp. 14-15.

At the end of the eighteenth century the local schools were established though still inadequate. In the many remote districts of the hills, such as Tarras or Megget, even getting to school had always been a problem, which showed that sometimes one school in a parish was far from sufficient. The nearest to Megget was some ten miles away down Yarrow, in a different parish, and the farm servants and shepherds at least, had to 'teach' their children at home if they were able and if there was to be any education at all for them. Ministers had to be teachers in some places, and about 1800 it was remarked of Tweeddale that the teachers were mostly divinity students working on a temporary basis.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of such difficulties the children living on the hillfarms learned the basics of reading and writing, though their education went little further unless their fathers were prosperous tenant farmers who could afford the higher fees and the necessary boarding which accompanied secondary education at one of the burgh grammar schools or private institutions. From the mid eighteenth century onwards farmers who wished to have educated children sent them away after the elementary stages were past, and this became increasingly fashionable, so that an ever widening gap separated the tenant from his shepherd and other servants socially as well as financially.

While the schools progressed through the nineteenth century, education at home was not dispensed with. An extreme of this kind was the provision of schooling at

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1. Findlater, op. cit., p. 276.

Skelfhillhope, where in the loft or 'bauks' of the herd's cottage reached by a ladder and trapdoor, children shivered at their lessons and in 'extremities' of cold resorted to the kitchen fire below for comfort. Christopher Michie, son to the weaver John Michie at Old Northhouse, described his experience of this type of school:

"I got the A.B.C. in the ben end of my father's house. The beds and door between formed the partition. Mr. Thos. Scott, lately teacher at Lanton, was the teacher. The alphabet was pasted upon a board.... The Scholars all passed through the but end or dwelling house proper and followed in a string. I remember it well, and still I see the dog marks and big tacket marks on mother's clean though cold damp clay floor. Each boy and girl carried a peat..." 1

They studied the Bible, 'Reading made easy' by James Elliot of Goldielands, who had been a teacher before he became 'overseer of works' on the Buccleuch estate, and a few other books. In winter some grown men became pupils. Thomas Scott had first taught at an old smithy at Lowburn-foot, and like other such travelling teachers boarded with parents for a time in proportion to the number of children they had at his 'school'.<sup>2</sup>

George Scott, brought up in the Borthwick valley, remembered going to school at Deanburnhaugh in 1841, when he was five. Dressed up in corduroy trousers and waistcoat

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1. Young, R., 'Old Northhouse and Teviothead', T.H.A.S., (1875), p. 8.
  2. About 1830 there was at Potburn, at the remote head of Ettrick, "a little School (of 8) taught by an interesting boy of about 14 yrs. from Leadhills..." Five of the children belonged to the shepherd at Potburn, the other three to his neighbour at Upper Phawhope. (Smith, Etterick Parish Book, p. 1).

with brass buttons, and wearing a cravat, he set off to his 'side school', fortunate not to have to 'stilt' the river, like some children who went to a temporary school at Craig Douglas in Yarrow. Scott and his fellow pupils paid 1d to 3d on a Monday morning, and the teacher, Mr. Thomas Amos, who thereby made about 7s a week, lodged with various parents at the rate of a week per child. Amos was lame, making his way to school with the aid of a crutch, and sometimes he had to travel the four rough miles from Henwoodie or Howpasley, though he usually stayed at these places in the summer.<sup>1</sup> Special occasions enlivened the year - fair days, Hansel Monday, Barring-out day. The latter, the shortest day of the year, was very popular; it involved preventing the teacher from getting into the school - and usually ended in a holiday. Amos left Deanburnhaugh for Gilmanscleuch, where a new school building was opened in 1846. It was similar to that near the Gordon Arms in Yarrow, where the teacher was paid £10 a year, with £2 "to his wife for teaching the Girls needle work."<sup>2</sup>

These forms of schooling catered for children of all families, though farmers, who were probably the first to seek education locally, continued to send their children away to schools in towns, a habit that remains. In the 1740s Thomas Beattie attended the school at Langholm and then the old building in Ewes, where Mr. Easton was, in

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1. Scott, G., 'Reminiscences of Borthwick Water', T.H.A.S., (1909), pp. 76-7.
  2. B.M., 491, Letter dated 28th December 1846.



Pl. 19 The children of Hermitage School, Liddesdale.  
n.d.



Pl. 20 The gardening class, Etrick school, c. 1900.

Beattie's opinion, "the best teacher of reading, writing and arithmetic I ever yet saw".<sup>1</sup> In 1811 he sent two children to St. Andrews, one to "Mrs. Bertrames Boarding School" so that lost ground could be recovered after inadequate care at Meikledale under an old serving woman.<sup>2</sup> About 1790 William Laidlaw was sent from the remote farm of Blackhouse to a school at Peebles, where he probably boarded with friends.

In the later nineteenth century the many small schools dotted around the Border hill country recorded their daily routine and exceptional occasions in log books, which make it clear that most of the children from shepherding families were frequently absent. Peatwork, clippings, haymakings, snowstorms, floods, and stormy weather all kept the scholars at home. While the farmer's children were at boarding school, those of shepherds and other farm servants walked, often only when they felt like it, to the care of Amos or Scott in a small, chilly building sometimes miles away.

#### 4. Religion

At the close of the nineteenth century, many farming and shepherding families in the Borders were devoutly Christian, and had been so for generations. For the past two hundred years at least, religion had played an essential part in forming the pattern of their lives.

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1. Beattie, op. cit., p. 20.

2. Ibid., pp. 299-300.

In the earlier days of the Abbeys small chapels were established among the hills, probably for the monks but doubtless bringing the Catholic faith to the people. One of the earliest chapels recorded was that called 'St. Marie de Farmainishop',<sup>1</sup> the later 'St. Mary's of the Lowes' on the lands of Kirkstead in Yarrow. Another stood far up the Rankle Burn, at the foot of the tributary Kirk Burn and nearly opposite the Priest Sike and the Kirk Hill; a Mr. John Scott was "rector of Rankylburne" in 1491.<sup>2</sup> There was an interesting chapel near the head of Ewesdale. In July 1319 a man was appointed to the vacant church of "St. Martin in Ewysdale",<sup>3</sup> and this seems to have been the chapel at Unthank, on which farm "Martinhoope" is shown on Pont's map and where there is still a 'Martin Hope'. The writer of an account about 1720 stated that "At Unthank... there are the ruines of a Chapple for divine service in time of Popery", though no priest was "fixed" there. He continued:

"There is a tradition that Friars were wont to come from Melrose or Jedburgh to baptize and marry in this parish. And these Friars being in use to carry the Mass book in their bosomes, they were called by the Inhabitants Bookabosomes. There is a man yet alive who knew old men who had been baptized by these Bookabosomes and who saith one of them called Kair used this parish for a very long time." 4

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1. MacPherson, D., and others (Eds.): Rotuli Scotiae, Vol. I, p. 9a, 6th July, 1292.
  2. Fraser, Scotts of Buccleuch, Vol. II, pp. 92-4, no. 95.
  3. C.D.S., Vol. III, p. 123, nos. 653 & 657.
  4. M.G.C., Vol. I, p. 509.

Such pre-Reformation churches fell into disuse with the decline of the Abbeys. The Border lairds did not generally support the priesthood to the extent that their Northumbrian counterparts seem to have done, though the Stewarts of Traquair at least persisted in their Catholic faith. Protestant churches appeared, the 'New Kirk' of Ettrick before the end of the sixteenth century, and some old sites were used again. At Caerlanrig, for instance, a small 'meeting-house' replaced the chapel to serve the outer parts of the parishes of Cavers and Hawick. 'St. Mary of the Lowes' continued to serve the upper fastnesses of Yarrow until about 1637, but the inhabitants of Megget, to some extent newly occupied ground, were officially in the distant parish of Lyne, with their church a dozen miles away over the hills, on the other side of the Tweed. The people were therefore deprived of the sacrament, and other services, and the dead "oftymes ar buried in the feildis and yair young ones oftymes dies without baptisme", with the result that "aitheisme and barbarisme increase and all religioun decayes." 1

The religious disputes and wars of the seventeenth century, which prevented any settled and united form of worship, upset life in the Border hill country, where Covenanting and episcopalian factions existed as distinctly as elsewhere. From time to time the Kirk Sessions, consisting mostly of local farmers and even estate chamberlains,

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1. Yester Papers, N.L.S., MS. 14762.

impressed their moral and spiritual control upon the communities, condemning superstitious practices and inveighing against some remoter parishioners for 'dishaunting' the Kirk. These same delinquents were among those who gave the most vigorous support to the Covenanting cause, and after the new constitution for the Church of Scotland, accepted by the majority of the people, had been ratified in 1690, there were many Covenanters among the Border hills who chose the way of dissent as Cameronians rather than membership of the established church. In practice there was considerable similarity between the two, the Church, as is evident from the pages of Thomas Boston's writings, lacking little of the enthusiasm and fervour associated with the Covenanting spirit.

When Boston arrived in Ettrick in the summer of 1707, the community was not to his liking. A few had protested against his 'call', and he found the people "very liberal to the poor" but "very unkind to strangers settling among them, and not very benevolent in neighbourhood among themselves".<sup>1</sup> He preached against the "horrid swearers", had "heavy work" with adulterers, and survived the deliberate burning of his manse. He found support in certain tenants such as Walter Bryden in Crosslee, James Biggar in Over Dalgleish, and Adam Linton in Midgehope, the latter being an elder with a family that "had about them a great measure of the harshness of the temper of the country."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Boston, T.: Memoirs of the Life, Time, and Writings, p. 223.

2. Ibid., pp. 234-5.

Boston provided comfort at times of sickness, held services and catechisings in the kitchens, and extended the solemnity of a strict religion to those in need. At communions people came from great distances and settled upon the farms like locusts. In 1731 "there were about nine score strangers in Midgehop; four score of them William Blaik, husband to Isabel Biggar..., entertained, having before baken for them half a boll of meal for bread, bought 4s 10d sterling worth of wheat bread, and killed three lambs, etc. made thirty beds. And I believe their neighbour, Robert Biggar, Isabel's brother, would be much the same." <sup>1</sup> Towards the end of the century a minister of the same style as Boston preached in the kitchen at Blackhouse, the service, consisting also of a psalm and a prayer, lasting two and a half hours. <sup>2</sup>

In the course of what Smout has called "the long, slow decline of enthusiasm in the eighteenth century", <sup>3</sup> when old Calvinistic attitudes were redirected towards secular activities such as farming for profit, the Cameronians remained as representatives of a waning puritanism. Secessions around 1750 brought the opportunity of joining one of four or five new dissenting Presbyterian groups, and in the Yarrow and Ettrick areas, for example, at least three types of church adherence were to be found. The

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1. Ibid., p. 498.

2. Bathgate, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

3. Smout, op. cit., p. 98.

established Church of Scotland, losing much of its former severity, was linked with the landowning and upper middle class farmers and, as has been observed, the system of "patronage exercised by heritors produced ministers who had nothing in common with the bulk of their parishioners."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand the dissenters and Cameronians drew most of their support from the lower middle class tenant farmers and the farm servants. This division was paralleled by that already noted as a feature of developments in education, but it was not so rigid and final as it might seem, and there was always contact and exchange between all but the most extreme social levels.

The dissenters were always a small minority; in the parish of Ettrick in 1832 there were 44 'burgers' and 28 Cameronians out of a total population of 530, and some of these were as happy to attend the established church services as they were to go to their own. Apart from a few individuals there were only four Cameronian families out of eighty-nine families in the parish.<sup>2</sup>

The meetings of the Cameronians were generally held at the farm of West Buccleuch. Here services, baptisms and weddings took place, and the old covenanting spirit lingered on. Among the adherents none were more prominent than the Grieves, tenants in West Buccleuch and before that at Riskinhope. Baptisms also took place at Riskinhope,

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1. Ibid., p. 235.

2. Smith, J.: Etterick Parish Book.

Eldinhope, Crosslee, Catslackknow, and Eldinhopeknow.<sup>1</sup>

The Cameronian communions and other services were at the farms, sometimes outside, sometimes in one of the steading buildings. George Scott described an open-air meeting at West Buccleuch in the 1840s, when he was a small boy. He left Deanburnhaugh well dressed but bare-footed, walked up past Girnwood Loch and Kingside Loch on the drove road, and joined the crowd on a slope near the Milsey Burn. Each one sat on a turf seat, and, with an hour's interval for refreshments, worshipped there from 10 a.m. till 4:30 p.m.<sup>2</sup> The indoor service was nearly as long and perhaps less comfortable. As the people entered from the cobbled yard they put their offerings in a soup plate on a barrel at the door:

"the meeting house itself was neither a grand nor a costly building, being simply a barn with causewayed floor under foot and dusty rafters (on which lay a variety of farm implements) over the heads of the worshippers. A wide fireplace, in which a huge peat fire burned if the day was cold; a score or so of rough wooden forms for the seating of the congregation; an armchair for the precentor; and for the preacher, the threshing-floor - a strong wooden platform about twelve feet long by six wide, and raised a few inches from the ground. Over this was spread a crimson carpet, on which stood a round table for the Bible and a leather-covered chair for the minister." 3

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1. West Buccleuch Papers: Communion and Baptism Book.
  2. Scott, G., 'Reminiscences of Borthwick Water', T.H.A.S. (1909), pp. 74-5.
  3. Thomson, C.M., Drummeldale, pp. 37-8.

The religious associations of West Buccleuch lasted till well after 1900, as long as the Grieve family itself. Whether the farming folk were of this persuasion or not, their bookshelves were generally as full of divine works, and their church-going as regular. The reading of religious books and the growth of education among the ranks of the shepherds as well as of the farmers were interrelated, one helping to extend the other.

##### 5. A Changing Population

There is little doubt that at one time some of the hill farms, particularly those on what is now marginal ground of moderate height, carried a larger population than they did in 1900. It was not, however, just a matter of greater numbers. The old system of farming which prevailed before the early seventeenth century meant a different pattern of settlement; there were clusters of houses in farm towns rather than a scattering of them up into the fastnesses of the hills, where some parts were still waste, and there was a greater self-sufficiency about the whole community in these towns.

Large groups of people on a farm continued to exist after 1600 but changed in character. Under the new estate arrangements and influenced by a slowly developing economy, the subtenants of the past became either rented tenants or cottars, servants and craftsmen. There could be comparatively few tenants but there was a need for shepherds,

tailors, cloggers, wrights, weavers, seasonal workers such as smearers, and drivers to take stock to markets. As has already been indicated (p. 99), there was apparently little change in the population of a hill farm during the seventeenth century.

By 1800 a quite different picture was being presented. There is no indication in the records that either the sheepfarmers or the landlords evicted people, and the minister's report on the Manor valley about 1790 for the first Statistical Account claimed that combinations of small farms were not the cause of depopulation.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, from this time on many writers stated or hinted that the population had been much reduced over the previous century and even gave the impression that there had been 'clearances'. Undoubtedly events in the Highlands had a bearing upon what was written about the Border hills.

It is not at all easy to show what really did happen to the population of the hill areas, for the evidence is sometimes contradictory and often confusing. For example, much has been made of the physical traces of settlement, such as foundations of buildings, which may lead an observer to think of vanished communities and greater numbers of people. No such conclusions are possible, since remains of this kind may merely reflect different systems of occupation at various stages of the past. The sequence and history of settlement in the Border hills from the mediaeval

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1. O.S.A., Vol. XII, p. 385.

period deserves a thorough investigation.

Evidence from the old parish of Ettrick will illustrate the problem.<sup>1</sup> This area was remote (Fig.12 ), and any real reduction in population could only be said to have occurred if people had left the parish altogether so that the total numbers were less. Movement within the parish could make little basic difference to the predominant way of life. Population figures for the parish, and in many cases for each farm, over a period of two hundred years, are given in an appendix (See Appendix XI). A comparison between them indicates local variations and redistribution, but most noticeably a steady growth until the latter half of the nineteenth century when a marked decline in numbers occurred with an accompanying abandonment of cottage dwellings. Some discussion of these figures follows.

In 1792 the parish minister wrote that the population was larger than it had been in 1755, but that it had once been much greater.<sup>2</sup> No period is suggested for this greater number of inhabitants, and no further information is given. The parish total on the Poll Tax Roll of 1694 is less than that of 1755 and that of 1790-1, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century the wildest grounds, such as Chapelhope, Potburn and Nether Phawhope, may have been hardly occupied at all. Further, the same minister,

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1. A rather different development probably took place in lower areas such as Borthwick Water and Liddesdale where a more marked reduction in population must have occurred in the course of the eighteenth century.
  2. O.S.A., Vol. III, p. 296.

whose remarks on population are hardly more than hesitant guesswork, stated that "In one place, about 50 years ago, there were 32 houses; but at present, there are only three." <sup>1</sup> He was probably referring to the 'village' of Ettrickhouse, which was far from typical and from which the inhabitants had dispersed to other farms in the parish.

These comments became the basis for other similar opinions founded on no more evidence. In 1832, for instance, James Hogg complained of the bad effects of led farms in Selkirkshire. Where there had been farmers with large families and servants, he said, there were now only "a few solitary shepherds stalking over the country".<sup>2</sup> Yet in Ettrick parish, an area of led farms, the population had risen by over 12% between 1792 and 1832, and new cottages had been built at Thirlestane by Lord Napier. Furthermore a description of the inhabitants of the parish farms also in 1832 shows that the supposed absence of resident tenants had not brought a great reduction in the number of occupants, and indeed that in many cases the population of a farm was similar to what it had been a century before.<sup>3</sup> It is also worth noting that of the twenty-one major farms<sup>4</sup> ten had

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1. Ibid.

2. Hogg, 'Statistics of Selkirkshire,' T.H. & A.S.S. (1832), Vol. IX, p. 302.

3. Smith, J., Etterick Parish Book.

4. In the second Statistical Account, Rev. Smith gives a rather different impression by stating that of twenty nine farms, twenty were led. (N.S.A. (Selkirkshire), p. 69.)

resident tenants, three were occupied by close relatives of the tenants, three were tenanted by George Bryden who lived at Ramsaycleugh in the midst of the parish, and three were farmed by James Bryden of Moodlaw in the neighbouring district of Eskdalemuir. It was the owners who were absentee, as, for the most part, they had always been.

Even so, the minister writing the second Statistical Account took up the ideas of the first. It appeared to him "that the population 140 years ago must have been much greater than at present". He based this impression on 'tradition', the amount of church collections, the numbers on the paupers roll, and "the number of small farms, with the farmers and their families residing on them".<sup>1</sup> So far as the latter piece of evidence is concerned, there is nothing to show that farms in Ettrick parish had once been more numerous.

An increase in population around 1800 was part of the national trend. What is not clear is to what extent at the same time or earlier, there was an emigration of people from the parish. Certainly the younger sons of farmers and shepherds ventured to the Highlands and abroad. Movement of a more local kind seems definitely to have taken place in districts close to the developing Border towns, the growth of which after 1710 was closely linked to the progress of woollen manufactures. John Leyden, for instance, wrote of those who, in his own lifetime, had gone

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1. N.S.A. (Selkirkshire), p. 68.

from the country near Denholm to 'sicken' - often literally - in the town of Hawick.<sup>1</sup> In Liddesdale the craftsmen on the farms went to live in the new village of Newcastleton, established in 1792, and elsewhere at the same time, the Buccleuch estate created feus by breaking up a small farm, such as Catslackknow in Yarrow, and parts of farms, as at Kirkhope in the lower Ettrick valley and at Bowanhill in the Teviotdalehead district. Catslackknow "was parcelled out into some fourteen feus, on which such artisans as smith, joiner, mason, a tailor, shoemaker, and weaver might be located, to aid the farmers in their improvements, and meet the wants of the people."<sup>2</sup> It seems likely, therefore that during this period the sheepfarms saw members of the families seeking work outside the area, the disappearance of remaining cottars and craftsmen, and the emptying of those 'weavers' villages, remains of which are still pointed out at Shootinglees near Traquair and elsewhere.

This change did not necessarily mean the end of miscellaneous cottages on the farms, though there are very few of them on the farm plans of the early nineteenth century. Here and there were houses like that at the Day Syke, otherwise called 'Deeburn', which was built about 1765 on the march between Hermitage and Braidlie for a man who kept an eye on droves. A similar house called

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1. Leyden, J., 'Scenes of Infancy', p. 121.

2. Russell, op. cit., p. 84.



Pl. 21 William Crozier, clogger, Newcastleton, 1936.



Pl. 22 Jock Forrest, Selkirk, passing through  
Hawick with a load of skins bought from the  
farms, c. 1915.

'the Mount' was built later for the same purpose near the Whitrope Toll Bar. The dwellings of gamekeepers, retired workers, and a few odd job folk were also scattered in quite remote corners of the hill country. One striking feature of the Ettrick parish sheep farms in 1832, however, was that none had any craftsmen living on it except Scabcleuch where there was a slater.

By 1900, therefore, a population that had been redistributed rather than deeply disturbed was established among the hills but, as the census figures show, gradually decreasing. The latest stage of a long tradition had developed, carrying with it the elements of further change. Religious differences and the problems of a rural system of education fostered a wider class division, while, as will be seen in subsequent chapters, the abandonment of ancient practices helped to undermine the basis of an age-old society. The departure of craftsmen to village and towns increased the dependence of this society upon sources of supply outside itself, and much of the old self-sufficiency was gone. Opportunities abroad, economic pressures and improved road access with speedier forms of transport hastened a fundamental change that was already in evidence nearly a century before.

Even so, the roots of the established population in the hill valleys at the end of the nineteenth century were immensely deep and strong. The families of farmers and shepherds and servants were still living and working where their ancestors had been since the days of royal hunts in

Ettrick Forest, and there had as yet been no violent disruption. Scott wrote of this in 1802:

"The shepherds... and aged persons, in the recesses of the border mountains, frequently remember and repeat the warlike songs of their fathers. This is more especially the case in what are called the South Highlands, where, in many instances, the same families have occupied the same possessions for centuries." 1

Then, and as much so a hundred years later, the families were so interknit by marriage that ramifications of relationship were almost impossible to follow. As Thomas Beattie wrote: "I see the Elliots in Liddesdale and Teviotdale are such a numerous complicated clan that to attempt to investigate their geneologys is both beyond my power and would exceed all bounds".<sup>2</sup> One has to leave these matters to those rare and remarkable characters whom Scott so admired and can still be found today. "Would to God", he exclaimed, "I had old Mrs. Keddie of Leith, who screeded off all the alliances between the Andersons of Ettrick House and the Andersons of Ettrick Hall, though Michael was the name of every second man, and, to complete the mess, they intermarried with each other." 3

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1. Scott, (Sir) Walter, Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, Vol. I, p. cxii.
  2. Beattie, op. cit., p. 15.
  3. Constable, T., Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents, Vol. III, pp. 244-5.

## Chapter seven: THE SHEPHERD'S YEAR (1).

There were five major episodes in the older, traditional sheepfarming year: mating, lambing, clipping, ewe milking and smearing. To these may be added marketing and sales, once there had been some measure of commercial development. In course of time, ewe milking and smearing, both ancient practices fundamental to early pastoral life in the Borders, and closely linked to each other, were given up because new economic pressures made them seem unnecessary and, to some, harmful. It is with these obsolete customs, important enough to deserve a chapter of their own, that a description of the shepherd's year may conveniently begin.

### 1. Ewe milking

In the Borders, the milking of ewes died out during the nineteenth century. The custom was as old and as widespread as the keeping of sheep and is documented from the ninth century.<sup>1</sup> It was practised mainly for the sake of the cheese, which was an invaluable part of the rural domestic economy, and was given up when the market for cheese fell away owing to changed taste and alternative foods. Farmers also eventually found that the financial return was insufficient to outweigh the decline in a ewe's condition brought about by milking.

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1. Trow-Smith, R.: History of British Livestock Husbandry to 1700, p. 60. Called a "universal European peasant practice" (Trow-Smith, R.: Life from the Land, p. 187), ewe milking seems to have been practised throughout Europe and Asia in prehistoric times.

A general opinion on the purpose of ewe milking was expressed in the mid-seventeenth century by Skene, who stated that "Kys milk is best for butter, and yows milk best for cheiss, for kys milk will give both mor butter and better butter then **yow's** milk and yowis milke will give both more cheiss and better cheiss then kys milk..."<sup>1</sup> The cheese derived from ewe milk was for domestic use, and was paid as rent in kind, or 'kain'. A tenth portion of the produce was required as teind. Both payments were carefully defined. For kain "ky payis butter, yowis payis cheiss... Yowis pays always the full kean everie fyve paips payis in the yeir a stane of cheiss, and everie yow hes two paips".<sup>2</sup> The amount paid as teind was estimated at an equally exact rate, "everie 30 zewes paying a staine of cheiss".<sup>3</sup> This latter calculation was often related to numbers of teind lambs, so that as thirty milk ewes meant three teind lambs, the ratio was sometimes phrased as "ilk thrie lambis paying ane stane of cheiss".<sup>4</sup> In 1611 over 580 stones of cheese were to be received for the 1760 teind lambs of St. Mary's parish in the Forest.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Skene of Hallyyards: 'of Husbandrie! N.L.S., Adv. MS. 29.2.10, f. 92.
  2. Ibid.
  3. B.M., 943/2.
  4. B.M., 943/7.
  5. Ibid.

The proportion of one stone of kain cheese to two and a half sheep was closely matched in Borders practice. For example, accounts of 1639 refer to the "cayne cheiss of Northhouse of 200 milk zewes everie thrie zewes paying a staine of cheise",<sup>1</sup> and on this basis the Earl of Buccleuch's herds paid kain for the ewes on their soums.

The estate chamberlain's task was made more difficult by having to keep track of the teind payments, when tenants moved in or out of the district. In 1638, for instance, he had to ensure that he was not held responsible for "thes yat have flittit out of the forrest that payes no cheiss deduceing 10/- for the cheiss of everie 10 milk zewes effeiring to a teynd lambe".<sup>2</sup> On the other hand arrival of tenants to his 'charge' meant that he had to include their teinds in his accounts. As 'flitting' normally took place at the end of May, teind lambs had already been estimated but ewes had not been milked, so that it was easier to estimate the cheese in relation to the number of ewes. For this reason, careful note had also to be made of the buying and selling of milk ewes, and it was not always easy to be sure where a tenant or his sheep were at the crucial time and to whom the teinds should be paid.

When the farms were set 'stock and teind' in the mid seventeenth century, no doubt to the dhamberlain's relief, ewe milk cheese, no longer required for teinds, remained a marketable commodity as well as an article for home

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1. B.M., 943/2.

2. Ibid.

consumption and farmers kept up their production. In addition, ewe milk butter, made in a small churn, was used for the smearing mixture, though accounts are vague. The Earl of Buccleuch's herds provided great quantities of butter annually for this purpose, as is shown typically by an account of 1646 for "Butter bought frome amongst the heardis for mixing of my lordis terr".<sup>1</sup> On this occasion "Hobe Elliott in Carretrige", for example, contributed 10 st. 6 lbs. There may have been some mixing of ewe's and cow's milk; in any case, as is recorded in the sixteenth century "Complaynt of Scotland", the shepherd families "maid grit cheir of euyrie sort of mylk baytht of ky mylk and zoue mylk, sueit mylk and sour mylk, curdis and quhaye, sour-kittis, fresche buttir ande salt buttir, reyme, flot quhaye, grene cheis, kyrn mylk".<sup>2</sup>

The old practice of paying 'kain' went on as long as herds milked ewes. A typical arrangement was described in a letter of 7th January 1796 by Charles Robson in Belford, who wrote that "it has been the custom of some farmers to let the milking of their Ewes to their Shepherds at so much a Ewe and the highest price known to be paid by the

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1. B.M., 396. It is unlikely that any of this butter came from cow's milk. It was remarked in 1770 of sheepfarms in the Cheviots that "Very large stocks of ewes are milked after the lambs are weaned, for from 6 to 10 weeks: They make the milk into butter and cheese... The butter is all used in salving them" (Young, A: A Six Months Tour, Vol. III, pp. 78-9). Elsewhere this writer says, "They milk the ewes, and use the butter for greazing their bodies in autumn to preserve the wool." (Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 335)
  2. Leyden, John (Ed.): Complaynt of Scotland, p. 65.

Shepherd is 1<sup>d</sup>... They generally are allowed to milk them 7 or 8 weeks".<sup>1</sup> Such was the system practised by James Grieve, who in the 1770s hired Ninian Elliot as herd for Riccarton, letting to him the ewes "in caine" as part of the bargain. "He's to have the milk for 5 or 6 weeks (as I think fit) pays a penny a ewe and I'm to have as much butter as I need at 5 shilling a stone".<sup>2</sup> In 1776 Elliot was allowed to take "two mails into the bargain"<sup>3</sup> or two days of milking beyond the original closing date. A milking was commonly called a 'mail', the word sometimes meaning the two milkings of a day. A few older people today used to call the produce of a milking, cow or ewe, a "mail o' milk", and when the milk was to be dried off an animal, it was done by 'miss-mailing' or the omission of a mail.

Changes in Grieve's bargaining with Ninian Elliot mark the slow decline of ewe milking. In 1782 Elliot felt that milking twice a day was too much, except perhaps in the first two weeks, and gradually the time of milking was shortened from eight weeks to about four or five. By the 1790s many farmers, convinced that it weakened the ewes, had given up the custom, but this brought about a scarcity of cheese which raised its price and consequently some resumed milking. There were farmers, too, who felt that their ewes were not harmed; Charles Robson said that he did not "think them much the worse of milking two or three weeks

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1. Douglas Papers, N.L.S., MS. 3116, f. 215.

2. G.P., Diary no. 1, p. 12.

3. G.P., Diary no. 3, p. 4.

if their pasture lies easy and convenient".<sup>1</sup>

In the course of the early nineteenth century, however, the opposition arguments strengthened.<sup>2</sup> Grieve listed the disadvantages as he saw them; gathering sheep twice a day harmed them, they spoiled good ground by trampling, 'rush' and footrot increased, and a company of hired milkers in the house was expensive and a nuisance.<sup>3</sup> Hogg agreed with these points,<sup>4</sup> and a Lammermuir farmer added the fact that the sale of cheese hardly compensated for the drudgery, expense on utensils, and damage to the ewes.<sup>5</sup> Would it be a very great loss, asked Grieve, not to milk at all?<sup>6</sup>

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1. Douglas Papers, N.L.S., MS. 3116 f. 215.
  2. In 1770 a visitor to the moors of Northumberland wrote of the ewe milking practised there as "a paltry affair" (Young, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 79). "Could any good farmer", he asked, "have supposed there had existed such a system of trifling?" (Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 335). Coming from the more 'advanced' south, he found the custom primitive and barbaric.
  3. G.P., Diary no. 10, pp. 74, 78; Diary no. 12, pp. 60, 151, 167. In 1770 George Malcolm in Eskdale milked 380 ewes at Burnfoot but none on his other farms. He wrote that many still milked, but "it is going fast into disuse, because it is generally thought to be hurtful. It renders the ewe less fit to bear the storms in winter; it makes her have less wool; and she will sell at a much higher price at Michaelmas, if not milked, being fatter. The great temptation to milk ewes is to provide butter for salving..." (Pennant, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 403, Appendix vii).
  4. Hogg, James: The Shepherd's Guide, etc., p. 90.
  5. A Lammermuir Farmer: pp. 92-3.
  6. G.P., Diary no. 10, p. 176.

Grieve took to buying butter from merchants, but, like the Staverts of Hoscote, he continued to enjoy his ewe milk cheese. The pleasures of whey brose at Hoscote vanished with the death of Thomas Stavert in 1847, and with them went the last "social gathering in the district at the 'Milking of the Ewes'".<sup>1</sup> Ewe cheese disappeared from the shops over the next decades, ewe milking was "a lost art" in Peeblesshire by 1853,<sup>2</sup> and only a few eccentric individuals carried on the practice for their own purposes. In 1900 there were still one or two Border farms where ewes were milked for a few days, but now it is almost beyond recollection by the oldest members of herding families.<sup>3</sup>

One of the consequences of giving up milking was the later 'speaning' or separating, of lambs. Speaning in June or early July was the precursor to the first gathering of ewes for milking, while the lambs themselves were put to their 'summering'. The method of milking, now to be described, was general throughout the Borders.

Most farmers had a large fold or 'bught' conveniently close to the ewe hirsel. The walls were originally of feal and unless they were replaced with stone dykes have now

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1. Scott, G., 'Reminiscences of Borthwick Water', T.H.A.S., (1910), p. 9.
  2. Peeblesshire Advertiser, January, 1853.
  3. In Wales the custom survived to the 1950s and, in 1967, "flourishes still in France". (Trow-Smith, Life from the Land, p. 59.)

mostly crumbled away.<sup>1</sup> Some can still be seen, their association with ewe milking preserved in tradition, such as the enclosure on the southwest of Tudhope Hill at Carret-rig, and the smaller fold on Cacara Hill in Ettrick. The placename 'Bught Rig' is quite common, and a cut of sheep on Riccarton called 'the Bought Knowe' also indicates the area of a former milking fold.

It was usual for the herd to put the ewes to the bught. Sometimes a man was employed specially for this task, such as John Hyslop who in 1750 was hired "to bought the Gor(renberry) Ews in milking time".<sup>2</sup> Though women were the milkers, a woman 'bughter' was as unusual as a shepherdess, and it is therefore surprising to find in a seventeenth century copy book belonging to the Scotts of Gilman-scleuch a couplet addressed

"To my deir and weill beloved spouse  
Margaret Scot who buched the yowes".<sup>3</sup>

The buchting of the ewes was an opportunity for counting them, perhaps about the midst of the milking season; the reckoning at Glenrath around 1700 was made near the beginning of August.<sup>4</sup>

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1. More temporary bughts were also used: "A ewe bught is better of bars or wood slats than of turf or stone, as the latter are too warm" (A Treatise on Pasturage, p. 156).
  2. Braidlie Day Book, p. 32.
  3. Copy Book of John and Robert Scott of Gilman-scleuch, N.L.S., MS., 5068 f.13.
  4. Barns, 5/27.

Girls were hired for the milking. The conditions of a shepherd's employment often involved the provision of a female member of his family as a milker; at Gorrenberry in 1751, when the herd there was Walter Hyslop, "Margarat Beaty is to milk for Nothing in to wats bargaen", an arrangement repeated in succeeding years.<sup>1</sup> Bargains of this kind usually meant that the women received no payment, but it was possible to give them a little of their own, such as a stone of wool or a pair of shoes. Those who were hired independently received these rewards, together with a small amount of money. The hiring was about the middle of May, for six months since there was cheese to be made and perhaps some harvest work as well. Good, reliable milkers were not always easy to find, and a farmer liked either to provide them with winter work so as to keep them at hand, or to make some arrangement for the next year before they left. The hired girls, who began work aged sixteen or younger, lived on the farm, receiving full board. Consequently the farmer with more than one ewe hirsel had a household full of young women during the summer, as Thomas Beattie remembered:

"About that time (1782) we milked Ews in Bush, Burngrains, Wolfhope and Muckledale, and had many cows. We made for above six weeks... upwards of 5 Scotts stones of cheese and 2 stones of butter every day and for two months in summer we had sixteen maid servants in the house." 2

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1. Braidlie Day Book, pp. 40, 47, etc.
  2. Beattie, op. cit., p. 137.

A few hours after shearing the ewes were 'bughted', sometimes by cuts, and were ready when the milking party arrived early the next morning. Midsummer day being not long past, it was possible to begin work at 4 a.m. Findlater gives a good picture of the setting and circumstances:

"Six or seven scores of ewes are allotted to each milker. The milking is a severe service. Very little time can be allotted to sleep during the night, as the ewes must be milked over night, when confined to the fold, and in the morning, before they are again put out to pasture; and the time of their detention in the fold is shortened as much as possible, that they may have time to feed through the day. As the ewe milkers must, also, milk the cows upon the farm, and perform the task of spinning, each, ten cuts of worsted from roved wool daily, they find but little time for sleep in the day... The milking fold is an inclosure of sod dike, with whins inserted below the coping sod, to prevent the ewes from breaking over it. At one side of the dike, is erected a pen (bought), by sod dike, or paling of wood, inclosing an oblong square, open at one end, and of a breadth to admit all the milkers standing side by side". 1

As many ewes as possible were packed in to prevent movement, and then the milker, equipped with a 'creepie' stool and a 'luggie' or wooden pail, set to work. She wore a piece of coarse cloth called 'a ewe milker's brat' to protect her against the tar and dirt on the wool. First, she seized the nearest ewe by its haunches, and drew it backwards until it stood with legs astraddle over the luggie. Then with both hands she took the teats and milked by squeezing them between the first joint of the thumb bent in and the middle of the forefinger. When finished she turned the ewe out behind her to the herd who ensured that

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1. Findlater, op. cit., p. 206.

milked and unmilked ewes did not mix. Some people held the luggie with one hand and milked with the other, perhaps approaching the ewe from the side. The trouble with milking from the rear was that the ewe's excreta fell into the pail, and though it was possible to remove the solids, "the peculiar pungency of the cheese is partly owing to the salts in the urine".<sup>1</sup> Thus an effort was made to complete the milking before any excretion came.

It took up to five minutes to milk a ewe, though it was said that some women could deal with twenty-five sheep in an hour.<sup>2</sup> According to Findlater a milker managed six score in a day, doubtless at the two milkings. The quantity of milk obtained from a single ewe varied from one pint to a quart, depending on the quality of the animal and the availability of good feeding. Some herds felt that milking a ewe after speaning was a kindness, in that it could "ease the milk" from the sheep, and prevent her "from going wrong in the udder" or from taking "weeds" (i.e., mastitis).

As the milking came to an end and only a few sheep were left in the bught, the herd had to press the ewe's head against a wall to hold her still.<sup>3</sup> The last one finished,

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1. Ibid.

2. Youatt, op. cit., p.47.

3. There seems to be no record of the "ewe ladder" in the Borders. This was an actual ladder or similar device, between the rungs of which the ewe's head was placed to hold it securely. Seen in use in a Welsh farm in 1954, it is thought to have existed in Saxon times (Trow-Smith, Life from the Land, p. 60).

the flock was put out to pasture and the milkers set off home, carrying the milk in pails balanced on shoulder or head. Stools and rinsed pails could be left at the bught till the next occasion. On arrival at the farm or herd's house, the women poured the milk through sieves into large dishes and bowls, ready for the cheese-making.

Mixed with cow milk or not, the ewe milk required a rennet for curdling, and for this the stomach of a lamb was often used.<sup>1</sup> After being washed it was filled with salt, spiked on a sharp stick and hung by a string from the ceiling to dry. When required, a bit of the stomach, which in south-eastern parts of the Borders was called the 'keeselup',<sup>2</sup> was cut off, washed and boiled. The resulting liquid, the rennet, imparted a further strong flavour.

The ewe milk cheese, soft, white, and crumbly if squeezed, was stored away in the meal chest if it was kept. Those for market were weighed and sold; in the mid seventeenth century a stone of cheese fetched £1.10s scots, and in 1800 about 10/- to 12/- sterling. James Grieve dealt with a merchant in Hawick, selling to him all but a few of his ewe cheeses, and half a dozen cow cheeses, each year. There was also a use for the whey, which was heated, poured

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1. Similar sources of rennet included the stomachs of a calf, a pig, a rabbit, and a hare. The inside of a hen's gizzard, cleaned, salted, and dried, was also considered effective.
  2. In some parts the word 'yearning' was used instead, while either term could also be applied to the curd or first milk taken by a lamb or other young animal.



*Bathing or Pouring*

*Fig 13*  
*From Stephens, H. : The Book of the Farm. Vol II.*



*Ewe - milking*

into a vessel containing oatmeal, and thus thickened into 'whey brose', a dish considered a great treat by shepherd families. Skimmed milk left from butter-making was fed to the pigs.

## 2. Smearing

There is no doubt that the custom of smearing was ancient. One writer in the *Farmers Magazine* noticed the passage in Virgil's *Georgics* which relates how scab attacked sheep after clipping and how as a safeguard against the trouble the shepherds smeared the bodies of the sheep with a mixture that included tar.<sup>1</sup> So far as the Border hills are concerned, the earliest records of smearing seem to be in the Exchequer accounts for the Forest in the early fifteenth century; in May 1433 six barrels of tar were bought for the King's sheep there,<sup>2</sup> while in 1438 six barrels of tar were bought for salving the same flocks.<sup>3</sup> Whichever name was used, 'smearing' or 'salving' originally meant the application of a mixture of tar and butter to the skin of a sheep to protect against vermin, disease, and the weather.

In the first accounts of the Buccleuch estate purchases of tar and butter appear annually. On 12th February 1610,

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1. 'On Smearing Sheep', *Farmers Magazine*, Vol. VII (1806), p. 175; reference to *Georgics* Bk. III.
  2. *E.R.*, Vol. IV, p. 576.
  3. *E.R.*, Vol. V, p. 26.

for instance, payment was made to "jhone nobill a merchant in Edinburgh for 16 barrells of tar... to smeir zour L(ordship's) sheip wt"; and in the same year butter was bought from the various estate herds, including  $8\frac{3}{4}$  stone at £3.3.4 per stone from "Jok scheillis wyfe in blakgrane... to meng tar to 40 sc of scheip" at the rate of 14 lbs for each of the ten gallons.<sup>1</sup> The tar was conveyed at the buyer's expense to nearby centres such as Selkirk for distribution, It came in barrels, often called 'trees' or 'rubbers', for which the buyer had also to pay. When the tar reached the farm it was mixed or 'menged' with the butter received from the herds, to whom the milking of the ewes had been let at a low rate.

Commonly the proportions were one stone of butter to one gallon of tar, this quantity mixed together being sufficient for four or five score of sheep. During the first half of the seventeenth century butter was between £3 and £4 per stone, and a gallon of tar was about the same. A 'load' of tar cost £13 or £14, and must therefore have been equivalent to four or five gallons, that is, the contents of a 'tree'. In 1656 two loads of tar and twelve stones of butter were received for 51 score of sheep in Branxholm and Slaidhills.<sup>2</sup>

Smearing was evidently a job for the herds, who could, according to Lowther in 1629, "grease 30, some 40 sheep a

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1. B.M., 943/7.

2. B.M., 943/4.

day".<sup>1</sup> They also had to prepare the mixture. Smearers were often specially hired, an additional burden on the farmer's resources. Before the eighteenth century there seems to be no description of how or where the smearing was carried out, but, unless it was to protect against scab, it was certainly an autumn event, in October for the hogs, and November for the older sheep. Its effectiveness was taken for granted, particularly as regards scab infection, yet it was always recognised that wool from smeared sheep would fetch a lower price than 'white' wool. In 1654 the latter was sold at £6 a stone, while tarred wool was worth £5.<sup>2</sup>

The inequality in value of the two types remained, eventually increased, and became one of the causes of the decline of smearing. It must be remembered, however, that tar added weight, which made up for some of the difference.

The familiarity of the tar and butter recipe leads towards the conclusion that no other ingredients were ever used in the early period. This was not the case. Sir Christopher Lowther picked up information on smearing from his host at Galashiels, who told him that "some use for sheep instead of tar the gilly which cometh off broom sodd in water, and make salve of it with butter, as they do tar, and grease with it".<sup>3</sup> The use of broom in the pouring

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1. Lowther, op. cit., p. 14. Lowther's glossary of Scottish terms (p. 43) included "smeringe" as equivalent to "greasing".

2. B.M., 943/3.

3. Lowther, op. cit., p. 14.

mixtures that succeeded tar and butter smearing is remembered in local tradition. It is nevertheless surprising that home-made liquids were not more common.

The eighteenth century, during which the old practices continued almost unchanged, provides evidence to fill out the picture of traditional smearing. Farm accounts supply much more detail, and James Grieve's diaries contain a full record of an enterprising farmer's experiments in a period of change and so-called 'improvement'.

In 1709, when the farms of East and West Deloraine came into the hands of the landlord through the tenant's failure, the Buccleuch estate accounts for the temporary management that followed include expenses for smearing of a familiar kind; fifteen barrels of tar at £13 scots each, two loads of butter at £29 each, and a further 32 stones of butter at £4 a stone. Two pounds of rosin, costing 9/-, were bought for marking sheep. The wages for two of the hired smearers were 8/- a day, out of which their food had to be paid for, while a third man, presumably boarded free, received 4/ a day.<sup>1</sup> Robert Elliot's day book, covering the years 1748 to 1754, shows that the proportions of tar and butter 'menged' for smearing had not changed, but he was finding his tar and some of his butter outside the Borders. In 1749 he bought "a barrel of Orkny butter" containing 4½ stone for £1.3.4, and in 1752 he "wealed 10 barrels of Newingland Tarr and one of Norraway Tare" for 11/6 a barrel,

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1. B.M., 244.



both of these purchases being from dealers.<sup>1</sup> Ports such as Leith and Berwick-upon-Tweed were the supply points from which the barrels were conveyed to local towns, the farmer agreeing payments either directly with merchants at the ports or with intermediate dealers in Hawick, Langholm, and elsewhere.

Comments on farming practices increased towards the end of the century. Men like Andrew Wight and David Loch in the 1770s published works which brought to the farmer's attention the criticisms of theorists and the quoted opinions of other farmers, and these, together with the obvious difference in the values of smeared and unsmeared wool, suggested areas of possible improvement in practice or in economy. Smearing came under fire. Loch was horrified at the high proportion of tar used in Tweeddale and the Forest,<sup>2</sup> and declared that it rendered wool almost useless.<sup>3</sup> Farmers further south were already increasing the amount of butter in the mixture, so as to enable wool manufacturers to wash out the tar with greater ease, and this change was highly recommended by Wight and others. The manufacturers themselves accepted tarred wool, for they knew that smearing was necessary on high, stormy farms and realised that it had an indirectly useful effect on the quality of the fleece. This latter point was made by Naismyth: "The tar is held

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1. Braidlie Day Book, pp. 27, 51, 70.

2. Loch, David: A Tour through most of the Trading Towns and Villages in Scotland, etc., p. 51.

3. Ibid., p. 28.

an efficacious medicine for the scab, and useful to destroy the vermin which lodge upon them; and thus it prevents the fleece from being broken by scratching and rubbing, and falling off in the spring".<sup>1</sup> The same writer observed that though it was wrong to think that sheep left unsmear'd would probably not survive the winter, it was true that their wool was less and harsher. An experiment by Currer of Brownmuir was instructive. He tried salving with a mixture of tallow, butter and train oil, which at first produced an improved fleece, but on repetition over three years the quality of wool had so declined that he returned to a mixture of tar and butter in which the latter predominated, and soon the wool recovered and the sheep itself became more healthy.<sup>2</sup>

Various mixtures and permutations were tried in attempts not to oust smearing but to find better methods. A period of several years was required to test a method satisfactorily, and some farmers were not always patient enough. A writer who knew the Highlands when Border sheepfarming practices were being introduced made a rather cynical comment that had a grain of truth when applied to this uncertain period:

"Shepherds vary in their answers when asked why they smear their sheep. Some say that it is intended to prevent the scab; some to cure it; others say it is for the purpose of keeping off rain; and some assert that they do it merely to soften the wool. But it cannot be denied that a great many shepherds have none of these objects in view; and that they bedaub their sheep with tar, in order to make the fleece weigh well; in other words, to cheat the wool merchant." <sup>3</sup>

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1. Naismyth, op. cit., p. 6.

2. Wight, op. cit., Vol. III, Part i, pp. 19-20.

3. MacKenzie, Sir George: A Treatise on the Diseases and Management of Sheep, etc., p. 101.

The wool merchants were of course not cheated, and in spite of all the criticisms and experiments old fashioned smearing survived through the first fifty years of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> This period saw the continued development of new mixtures leading through salving with homemade concoctions of rough turpentine or arsenic to 'pouring' with liquid baths purchased from a local dealer and eventually to the modern dips.<sup>2</sup> Even so, none of them except the last may have been as effective in its basic task of destroying vermin as traditional smearing, to which Little gave authoritative support in 1815 and which was evidently practised in 1845 according to instructions to a servant issued by a

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1. Across the Border smearing or salving was known throughout northern England. In the Lake District, it continued well into the nineteenth century (Rollinson, W., Life and Tradition in the Lake District, p. 79), and there are photographs of the practice in the Yorkshire dales (Hartley, M. & Ingilby, J., Life and Tradition in the Yorkshire Dales, nos. 85-8, 91.).

2. Some distinction in terminology became necessary for various methods of smearing. The Crookwelcome Club in 1826 distinguished types of wool as

Wool "salved with Rosin, Rough Turpentine, Oil, etc."	- 25/-
Wool "laid with tar"	- 19/6
Wool "white"	- 28/-

(Crookwelcome Club Minute Book).

'Smearing' and 'laid' were words associated with the old method, while 'salving' came to be used for new mixtures until replaced by 'pouring'. "Buttered wool", "tarred wool", "salved wool", "Turpintined wool", and "white wool" all appeared in accounts of Aitchison in Linhope's farms between 1829 and 1840.

Dipping, introduced in the 1840s, was carried out with the aid of a tub linked to a drainer and ramp. The whole was advertised as 'Bigg's Sheep-Dipping Apparatus', and was widely used in the Borders.

farmer who was certainly not out of touch with the latest ideas. "Menging Tar", he began, "A stone of Butter to a Gallon of Tar - a Gal. should Smear 35 to 40. A good Smearer will do 23 to 28 Sheep a day".<sup>1</sup> The words were not far different from what might have been a 'smearing' instruction of 1645.

In the end, however, smearing was abandoned. There were better substitutes. Materials and labour were too expensive and tarred wool was not wanted. A new generation of writers relegated the old custom to that collection of discredited practices which they were at pains to present as the bad old world of Scottish farming. (See Appendix XII). It was pointed out that "The old method of smearing - an operation which consisted in soiling the back and sides of the sheep with a mixture of tar and grease - had the reputation of greatly damaging the selling value of the wool as well as being somewhat costly".<sup>2</sup> Thus, by darkening the shadow over the old, such commentators managed to cast over the new that flattering light which still makes it so easy to misjudge the abandoned past.

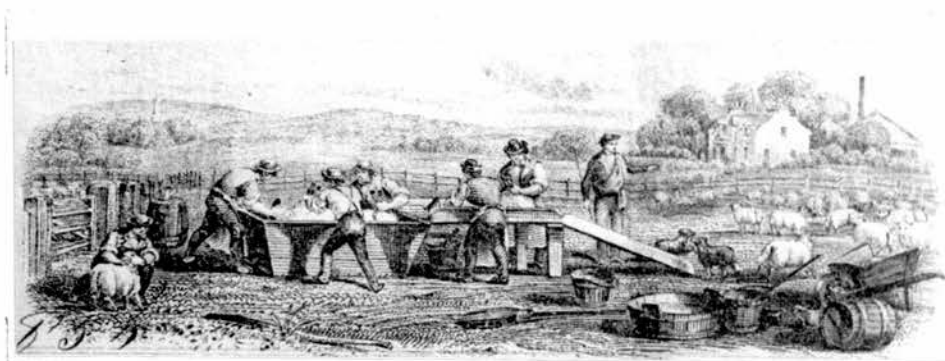
Smearing was carried out in a shed called a 'smearing house'. This building was generally in the folds, and, ideally, was "well-paved and lighted, clean, airy and dry".<sup>3</sup> Some smearing houses were part of the steading, or attached

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1. G.P.

2. Scott, J. & C.: Blackfaced Sheep, p. 140.

3. Napier, op. cit., pp. 194-5.



Pl. 23 Dipping sheep in Bigg's Dipping Apparatus -  
from a bill sent by J. Rawdin, Sheep-dipping  
Composition Warehouse, Jedburgh, in 1856.



Pl. 24 The smearing house at Blackhouse folds, 1966.

to the end of a dwelling house and commonly used as byre or stable. They were often far from ideal, being shabby, dirty, and redolent of tar. In the eighteenth century they were simple thatched huts, and some were little different a hundred years later. At Craighope on Craig Douglas in 1844 the byre and smearing house were both very dilapidated with broken walls and rotten roof: "These buildings are built with clay mortar and are all thatched".<sup>1</sup> On the other hand the smearing house at Dryhope, after a sweep out and the introduction of box beds as a partition, had been good enough for Janet Bathgate and her family to live in when they moved up Yarrow at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The houses standing today in the folds at Blackhouse and Syart were among the last built for their purpose, and are now used as storage sheds or keb houses.

The interior was usually dark and dusty. Tar barrels and half-barrels used as tubs, three legged pots, dishes, smearing stools and marking irons were kept either in a corner or outside against a wall. They were sorted out at the beginning of October ready for use. 'Menging' took place a week or two before smearing. The shepherd heated the butter and the tar over a peat fire in the smearing house or, sometimes, in the back kitchen of the farm. "Was it true", asked someone, "that he bared his arm and stirred the boiling tar with his hand?... it was said in those days that boiling tar would not burn."<sup>2</sup> Had he done

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1. T.P.

2. Thomson, John: Life and Times of William Thomson, p. 123.

so, the shepherd would have put the first black stain of the season on his hand, and when smearing was over it seemed that his whole person was permeated with tar. The finger nails were especially black. "The hand was for some time after as if it were covered with a peculiar kind of glove",<sup>1</sup> and James Hogg knew only too well that the whole process made it impossible to hold a pen for some time.<sup>2</sup>

When smearing began it was necessary to re-heat the mixture. It was then poured into dishes or pots, though tubs made out of old barrels were often used, especially where smearers were few. The liquid could be made softer or more fluid by adding milk. Some smearing houses had recesses in the wall for placing dishes, while in others the vessels were put on any handy surface. The kind of tar used—New England, Norway, or Archangel,—was the preference of the farmer, but it was shown to be good "if it appears yellowish when rubbed on a board with the finger".<sup>3</sup> Such a kind could be washed out of the wool more easily. The butter too was the best obtainable, though after local cow and ewe butter was replaced by commercial varieties, the quality was often a matter of chance. There is a tradition that Danish butter, imported in barrels in the nineteenth century, was wrapped in cheese-cloth, with a black mark in it made by a hot iron thrust through the pack so as to prevent domestic use.

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1. Ibid., pp. 123-4.

2. Correspondence of Sir Walter Scott, N.L.S., MS., 865,  
ff. 74-75, Letter dated 23rd Oct. 1806.

3. Ure, D., General View of the Agriculture of the County  
of Roxburgh, p. 60.

Smearing was often done in the evening. Candles were lit, the smearers put on skins or aprons for protection, and sat down on one end of the smearing stool, which resembled, and sometimes was, a clipping stool.<sup>1</sup> It had spars across at six inch intervals, and after the sheep had been brought in by an assistant or boy it was set on the stool with its legs through the gaps and its neck tied down with string. Then, in the moving shadows of the flickering candlelight, smearing began.

His bowl or pot beside him, the smearer dipped in his finger and drew it out with a quantity of black grease at its end. The wool was divided or 'shed' at intervals from neck to tail. Some made five sheds, two on each side and one on the back, others many more. After the mixture had been drawn along the skin by the fingers, the wool was pressed together, and the next shed opened. It was a slow process; each sheep took about ten minutes to smear, and longer if many sheds were made. With the other work involved the old average of 20 to 30 sheep a day was rarely improved upon. Should a sheep kick and struggle, a dash of smearing mixture in its face would quieten it down.

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1. Smearing stools may well have been taken over for clipping. In the account of sheepfarming of 1790 there is no mention of any but turf seats for clipping, whereas the smearers were much better equipped "with stools or seats made for the purpose to sit on." The stool was about four feet long, and "in place of the seat being made with boards, it has two sides, and is spoked betwixt them like the steps of a ladder, with feet like any other seat". The smearer sat on one end of the stool with a leg on each side, and held the sheep between his knees. (A Treatise on Pasturage, p. 189.)

Every now and again the smearer could reach up and break off a piece of tobacco twist that was hanging from a beam to refill his pipe or to chew.

According to Little, smearing was a laborious, troublesome, and dirty work; and there were few who could do it properly except herds, who learned it as a part of their up-bringing. "The art of smearing", he wrote, "can only be acquired by practice, and by observing the practice of others; and it is, therefore, almost unnecessary to lay down rules which cannot be followed." <sup>1</sup> There were two usual methods of applying the mixture:

"The one is provincially called slipping, that is, taking the tar up with the fore-finger, and cutting it against the side of the tar-tub with the second or third finger. After the wool is shed and laid open, it is held asunder by the arms and left hand until it is let gradually fall from the fore-finger of the right hand, and the salve pressed close down on the skin by the second or third finger. The first shed ought always to be along the side of the rig-back, and following to the left hand, and making the sheds at equal distances, something like the lines of a book, and following round until they meet at the back; and taking care not to have a shed along the back-bone, to prevent the rain from penetrating the skin above it during winter." <sup>2</sup>

Slipping was normally used for the long-woolled black-face on high ground. But in the Cheviot districts, where the wool was shorter, the salve was applied by taking a little of it on the point of the fore-finger, laying it down in the bottom of the shed, and rolling it along the

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1. Little, op. cit., p. 71.

2. Little, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

shed with the point of the finger, a method called 'rolling'.

Pouring was also carried out by the application of the liquid along sheds in the wool. A tin tea-pot was used to pour, and a long-handled tin-ladle could be used for stirring up the mixture in the pot, and filling the tea-pot. The pourer wore a leather apron or skin over his legs like a smearer. One of the main advantages in pouring was that a man and a boy could manage seventy to eighty sheep a day.

Many retired shepherds remember seeing the discarded lumber of smearing, though first-hand experience is now hardly to be found in the Borders. They speak too of smearing's good effects, and when the disadvantage of tarry wool is mentioned they draw attention to the fact that the tar rose with the growth of the wool. Hogs, in whom a "stint of growth" took place sooner than in old sheep, had to be done first because the tar had to have risen from the skin before the growth check occurred. The lift of the tar mark continued with the growth of the fleece, so that above it and below it was untarred wool. According to Youatt smearing "makes a black mark, which remains quite perceptible as long as the wool remains upon the sheep; but this mark gradually rises from the skin as the wool grows, so that at shearing time (i.e., clipping) it is found to be nearly in the middle, the under part of the wool which had grown during the winter and spring being of a pure white below this black ring".<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it was

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1. Youatt, op. cit., p. 54.

asked, after washing and perhaps judicious trimming, how much of 'tarry wool' was tarry?

It is suggested in this chapter that the decline and extinction of two ancient practices, once principal features of the shepherd's 'year', and in themselves of considerable interest, were important aspects of a development leading towards the disappearance of traditional sheepfarming. The two were connected, insofar as the produce of ewe milking was partly used for smearing, and it is therefore not surprising that they declined together. Later critics of the practices did not perhaps realise that ewe milking was an essential part of subsistence farming among the hills and of commercial sheep management, and that smearing was, in its time, the only form of protection known. The necessity of ewe milking meant an equally essential supply of ewes, and so to some extent dictated the type of stock each farmer held. Each practice might have survived independently, had it been commercially and economically possible, and the loss of them transformed the nature and aims of sheepfarming. Improvement in the quality of the ewe and her fleece was supposed to have more than compensated for the loss of ewe milk cheese, while better shelter and feeding as well as new, efficient dips, made smearing unnecessary. Yet, though it could be shown that for these reasons the old customs were not to be regretted, it is also to be questioned whether their absence, with all the cheerfulness and communal sharing that went with them, did not have a damaging

effect upon a rural community already under pressure in many other ways. As will be seen in the final chapter, a similar and contemporary decline also overtook the wool trade, for the sake of which smearing, and even ewe milking, had ostensibly been given up.

## Chapter eight: THE SHEPHERD'S YEAR (2)

### 1. The Shepherd's Calendar

The old world of sheepfarming was radically changed in the nineteenth century with the giving up of ewe milking and smearing. The shepherd's calendar was altered, and though occasions such as clipping, speaning, sales, and valuations inevitably continued, there was an inclination to dispense with tradition and to experiment with new methods, new breeds, and new implements. Nevertheless the years round 1900 still showed that management of sheep was firmly linked with the past, however far it had developed, and it was really the two great twentieth century wars that interrupted the long-established continuity. Thereafter the families with roots firmly set in the Border valleys grew fewer, ownership changed rapidly, afforestation began, and the skills and traditions were no longer automatically passed on.

Though in many respects still true of the present, the following description of the events and practices constituting the typical sheepfarm 'year' is intended to apply to the period generally under discussion, ending about 1900. The past tense is used, even when dealing with practices that are still common today. The chapter is based largely on oral information, sometimes quoted verbatim.

#### The Mating Season

For convenience, it is assumed that the year began in November with the mating season. On the hill farms the rams or 'tups' were generally put out to the ewes about 20th

November, but it was earlier in lower, more sheltered areas. In 1801, for instance, James Grieve put the tups to the Branhholm Park ewes on 16th November, while the herd from Buccleuch fetched away his tups from the Park on the 23rd.<sup>1</sup> Prepared for the season by being pastured on good, fertile ground, the tup was in the best of condition. One was considered adequate for about 50-60 ewes, or even a few more, that is, for a modest 'heft' or 'out', while two tups were necessary for a cut of rather below double the number. Opinions varied considerably as to the best ratio. The size of a cut was partly determined in this way, and it was considered unwise to have a group that was too large for one male and too small for two. Where there were two tups, it was advisable for them to be of much the same age, and fights between them sometimes occurred.

During the mating season the shepherd had to keep a close eye on his flock, so as to ensure that the tups 'worked' round all the ewes. In order to have an extra check for those hours when they were not able to stand by and watch, some herds splashed the front of the tup with dye or 'keel', so that in mating a mark would be left on the ewe. However, as was often pointed out, this was an unreliable method as the tup 'leaped' unsuccessfully on occasion. Careful attention in person was the best way a herd had of seeing that all went well at this important time.

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1. G.P., Diary no. 12a, pp. 121, 124.

Preparation for the tupping season also made the shepherd busy. Added vigour could be given to the tups while they were still in the field by supplying them with an extra feed of, for example, bruised oats. It was a common practice to clip the belly of the tup at this stage, so that when it was put out it could mate more freely. Gimmers, if they were not to lamb, and hoggs kept at home among the other sheep, were generally 'breeked' to prevent them from being tupped; this meant that a piece of cloth, measuring about seven inches by four was sewn not too restrictingly across the tail. A "jumpit" hogg resulted when, usually in a frost, the tup was active enough to scrape off the breek. In days before enclosures, when they ranged unconfined, the tups were, in some places, prevented from mating with ewes at the wrong time by having a cloth sewed over the belly, which, according to Findlater, "though it prevents the premature impregnation of the ewes, does not prevent exhaustion - not to mention the excoriating effect of the confinement of the urine." <sup>1</sup>

An old superstition, still occasionally heard, was recorded by Naismyth in 1795:

"Careful shepherds think it a matter deserving attention, at the time of copulation, to keep the ewes, as much as possible, from beholding improper objects, that unfortunate resemblances may not be impressed on the young. Remarkable instances of this plastic sympathy... are mentioned; such as lambs brought forth with the manner and gestures of a hare or a cat, which probably had by accident crossed the field of love. But the following was a more unlucky

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1. Findlater, op. cit., p. 189.

instance: A number of blackfaced hairy sheep, part of a drove which had been carried southward, straying back to their native home, passed at the critical period, through the pastures of the fine woolled sheep. The breeding ewes gazed with admiration at the savage looking strangers; and, at yeaning time, a good many lambs, exactly resembling them, were brought forth." <sup>1</sup>

Once the breeding season was underway the main aim was to keep the ewes grazing quietly together, fairly well in from the edges of the farm, and the tup in their midst. Two seasons with one cut was enough for a tup, as there was a risk of breeding with his own offspring thereafter. Some farmers kept back the best tup in a field and brought in the best ewes to him, in the hope of producing excellent replacements for discarded tups. At the end of the season, on New Year's Day or during the following week, the breeks were removed, and the tups were brought in again.

#### Winter Work

While November and December were also months in which to sort out accounts, and, if mild, to do some building repairs, the period between the end of tugging and the start of lambing could see the worst of the winter and the herd had to have his full attention on the weather and the whereabouts of his sheep. Most of the lasting 'storms' occurred in the first three months of the year, and, in the Borders, were usually accompanied by an unrelenting flow of cold air from the east or northeast, so that farms such as the Birks or Skelfhill with an exposure to those

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1. Naismyth, op. cit., p. 25.

directions suffered most, and their hirsels required the most particular attention. A little frost and snow did sheep no harm, but the herd had to watch for the approach of sudden overwhelming snow. Seeing the signs, he brought in the sheep to more sheltered places, which, from about 1800 onwards, were mostly supplied with stells. Pastures in these places were 'hained' for these emergencies by using the higher ground in the earlier part of the winter, but, until the provision of hay became common towards the end of the eighteenth century, such grazing was not enough, and many a hirsel was taken off its own hill to lower, more westerly and sheltered places over in Annandale. Unfortunately this was an expensive practice, and driving sheep some considerable distance when they were already in a weak condition meant certain losses in any case.<sup>1</sup>

To reassure himself, the herd would go out in the afternoon to check where his sheep were in case of a storm at night. He disliked a bad March most of all, for it weakened the ewes at a time when lambing was not too far off. Thaws were particularly dangerous, for the streams in spate could drown a weary sheep, and the wet snow clogged trailing fleeces and filled holes with slush. The occasional very severe winter meant exceptionally hard work for the herd,

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1. "It has always, at least for a long while, been a custom in some parts of the country, and it is more so now than formerly, for those who have a muir-farm for sheep, lying high in the country and stormy, to take one lower to winter their hogs upon, and to take their stock to when great snows happen". (A Treatise on Pasturage, p. 207)

and he might therefore have little time for the other duties usually carried out at this stage of the year.

While the farmer was largely concerned with hirings, hunting, and providing his sheep with hay or turnips, the shepherd, if he had time, was involved in the maintenance of bridges, dykes, and stells, repairs to sheds and gates, and 'putting in' the garden. In the later nineteenth century, at least, the herd was allowed a day off to go to the town for cabbage plants, which he would set in the garden at the end of March or early in April. Fruit bushes were planted in February. If it was a reasonably fine and sunny time, the herd could also loosen the top sod on his peats, leaving it to lie there till casting began in late May. He might expect a visit from his master some time in March, such as that made by James Grieve on 9th March 1803:

"Went up to day... to Buccleuch & Henwooddie to see how the sheep had been wintered. They look well & little loss - only 4 skins at Bucch. & not many at Henwooddie. Stells are much wanted on Both farms. Think the one made in the Killie-nest is rather too high out except for a Day of Sleet - they ought to be always where sheep naturally and of their own accord draw in for shelter. They must be much more usefull there than elsewhere..." 1

Hoggs fed on turnips or in fields for a good part of the winter were brought home about the third week of March, sometimes having to travel a considerable distance. A dry March saw the blue clouds of smoke from heather fires drifting over the hills. This was always a matter of some

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1. G.P., Diary no. 13, p. 134.

argument between farmers and those interested only in game. Early acts of parliament prohibited burning from 1st April till the beginning of September, mainly for the sake of preserving game, but in fact the judicious destruction of old woody heather benefited both sides, as young tender shoots suited sheep and grouse. The presence of long heather was useful in lying snow, since the sheep could break the cover and get at the plant, so that patchwork burning was often practised on the ground of each 'cut', with particular concern to clear the drains of old, choking vegetation. James Hogg gave the impression that farmers were all in favour of extensive heather burning.

"I have heard Mr. Laidlaw of Blackhouse aver, that rather than miss a year's burning, he would lose £50; at that time he only kept 2000 sheep. Now, when it is considered, that a great proportion of the pasture farms in Scotland have much the same appearance with his, is it not a moderate computation to suppose, that the country almost insensibly may lose, in wool, sheep, and condition, £50,000? While all the loss that would accrue to it, on account of the muirfowl nests that might chance to be burnt, would not exceed five shillings!" 1

Much depended on the feeding available in March. A blackface ewe could pasture well on a "draw moss" or "moss flow" high up, between the heathery areas, unless frost made it impossible to 'pull' the moss, in which case grass was over eaten. Then the sheep had to be fed with hay or go short, especially since returning hogs put extra pressure on the little grazing left. Cold springs, indeed, were by no means unusual.

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1. Hogg, The Shepherd's Guide, p. 50.

There were several preliminaries to lambing. When dips were introduced later in the nineteenth century, hogs and older sheep were dipped at the end of March so as to destroy **keds** and other vermin, and the former were then age-marked. Poorer looking ewes were brought in to lamb in an enclosure, while eild sheep; i.e., those that were not carrying a lamb, were marked and put out again. Then udderlocking began.

### Udderlocking

Udderlocking was the practice of clipping away the wool from round the udder so that the lamb could suck more easily. On some farms the wool was plucked off. In earlier days all the sheep, male and female, were trimmed on the underside, the long ends of wool on the hogs being cut off or 'skirted' at this time and added to the udderlocks; the total quantity obtained in this way was then sold off as 'broken' wool or given in small amounts as a part of wages.

The practice was an old one. The early Buccleuch estate accounts include many sums from the disposal of udderlocks. In 1611, £47.10s scots was received when nineteen stones of "ye uther Lock woll" was sold at 50/- a stone to "James thomsone in cairterhauche".<sup>1</sup> During the 1630s the estate "outher Lokes" were usually sold to George Currer of Howdown. It is likely that these purchasers had the wool made into blankets, plaids, and other similar goods. In the mid 18th century Robert Elliot "outherloked" his hogs, wedders,

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1. B.M., 943/7.

gimmers, dimmants and ewes on Braidlie and Gorrenberry, selling the wool locally to men such as William Thomson in Langholm or to women, usually herds' wives, who spun it on their wheels at home.<sup>1</sup>

Done about the first week of April the udderlocking was a time for looking over the ewes just before lambing. A typical report is that by James Grieve in April 1803:

"Buccleuch Udderlocking. On Tuesday the 12th began with the short Dimmants then did the Hogs also Rob's Packs- all at the Kirk fauld. Then came down to Buccleuch & did the Blakelaw Ewes then the Whomlaw ones on the other side o' the Burn. The whole of them in most remarkable good condition. The Ewe hogs all with Lamb almost - Determined to Breeke them in future at all events - most beautifull day, grass plenty very!"<sup>2</sup>

From time to time it was strongly argued that udderlocking was a risky practice, and that there was no need for Cheviot sheep to be clipped in this way. Hogg called it "an unnecessary, a painful, a dangerous, and a hurtful operation",<sup>3</sup> while James Grieve had similar reservations in 1807:

"It has for some time appeared to me to be very doubtful whither Udderlocking be an operation essentially necessary or not. I do think it right to have Ewes all turned up, & to clip some of them that are very rough about the udder. But I think it wrong to pull them as is usually done. It breakes the fabrick of the Wool upon their bellys, & is apt to make it all peel off before clipping time - I wish my Hogs had not been done yet. Yesterday & today... have been

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1. Braidlie Day Book, p. 39.
  2. G.P., Diary no. 13, p. 145.
  3. Hogg, The Shepherd's Guide, p. 81.

uncommonly wet & cold and the poor weak things must have been much the worse for it." 1

### Lambing

Soon after udderlocking the lambing began. On the hill farms the first lambs were due about 17th April, and though this might seem to be a well advanced season it was still possible to have extremely bad weather, such as the snowstorms of mid April 1917, and the terrible drift on the afternoon of 27th April 1919, when the herd's stamina was severely tested, and lambs were chilled to death. The best lambs and the twins, however, were often among those born first, and the shepherd had to be ready from the start.

The placenta passed at the birth of a lamb was called the 'clean' or 'brat'. Occasionally the whole 'lamb bed' came away, which endangered the life of the ewe unless it was found quickly. It was possible to push the bed back; the Potts of Shiringscleuch, known for their rather old-fashioned behaviour, rammed the returned bed full of sphagnum moss to keep it in place, and the ewe was then to be kept from water.

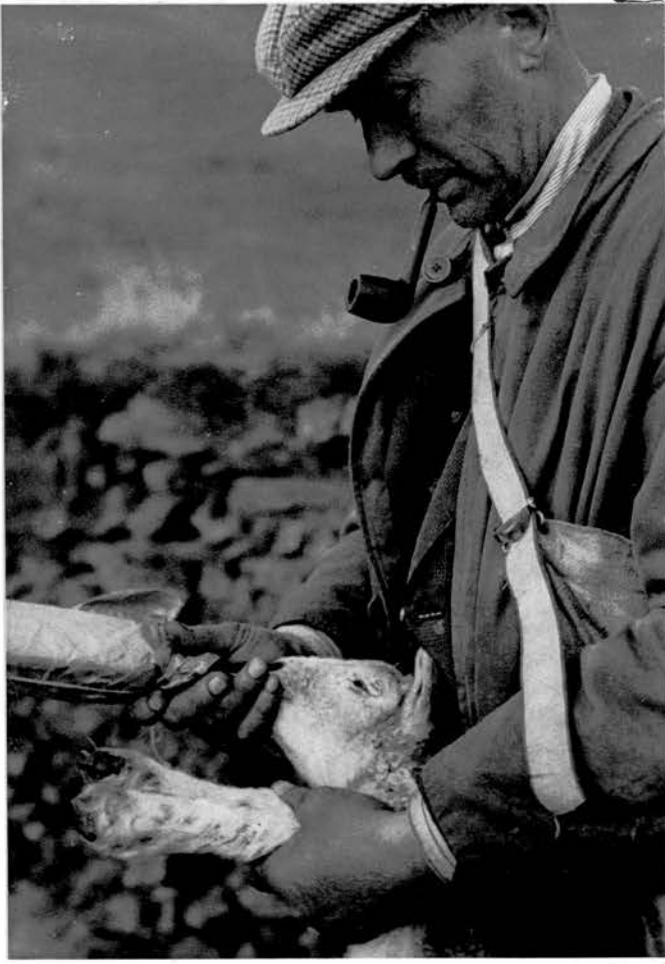
A newborn lamb could be suffocated if part of the placenta, called the 'butterleaf' in some districts, dried over the face. Other complications included strangulation of the <sup>respiratory</sup> excretary system by the navel 'string' - hence 'a strung lamb' - and cured by cutting the string with a knife.

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1. G.P., Diary no. 15, p. 144.



Pl. 25 Helping a ewe to lamb, Garwald, c. 1930.



Pl. 26  
Feeding with a bottle.  
The lamb is held by the  
top of the fore leg,  
otherwise hanging freely.



Pl. 27 Covering a twin lamb with a skin. The keb  
ewe is shy.



Pl. 28 With the skin over it, the lamb waits to  
be accepted. The ewe is marked with a  
'long keel'.

A male lamb with only one 'stone' was known as a 'riglin', 'chaser', or 'halflin', while a lamb having characteristics of both sexes was a 'scarf' or 'scerf', or, in some places in the north of the area, a 'Jenny willock'.<sup>1</sup>

A ewe whose lamb died was then called a 'keb'.<sup>2</sup> The herd brought the ewe down to a 'keb house' or small shed by tying a string to the dead lamb, or even to the skin only, and dragging it along with the mother following. If no dead lamb was found, the ewe was driven home. Once in the shed, the keb was used as a foster-mother for a twin lamb, or for one whose own mother had died. The process of setting a strange lamb to a keb, usually begun in the evening, was not easy. It was generally done by taking the dead lamb's skin and fixing it over the lamb to be adopted, so that the keb would be encouraged to accept the latter by recognition of the smell. To reinforce this method or as an alternative some of the keb's milk might be squirted over the strange lamb, and occasionally, where the skin was lacking, the herd urinated over the lamb to obscure its own scent. The whole business had to be conducted in a confined space so that the keb could not wander

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1. Freak or misshapen lambs were quite usual. According to Stephens, "Monstrosities are not uncommon, most seasons providing examples of lambs with five legs, headless lambs, fusion of two lambs into one, etc." (Stephens, H.: Book of the Farm, Div. III, p. 53).
  2. Trow-Smith states that a 'kebb' was originally a sheep culled out of the flock for any reason (Trow-Smith, History of British Livestock Husbandry to 1700, p. 153).

off, and some herds tied the ewe's horns to a fence or other convenient point before putting the lamb to her. Usually twelve hours or so saw the acceptance or rejection of the new situation, but an attached skin stayed on for two days or more, when mother and stepchild were put in a field. Some ewes, and not necessarily kebs, had such a strong maternal instinct that they would even try to appropriate lambs from other ewes, and were consequently called 'stealers', while 'kind' ewes were those that looked after their lambs well or readily took to an adoptee. Gimmers were often 'gey kittly', reluctant to allow a lamb to suck; in such a case the end of the young lamb's tail could be put in the mother's mouth so as to encourage acceptance.

Troubles beset the lambs from the moment they were born. Snowfalls, wet and cold, meant that many were weakened and that ewes lacked milk for them, and a few became so bad that they had to be carried home in the herd's lambing bag to the fireside. If the mother had died, the lamb in this predicament often became a 'pet' and was reared around the house. If the shepherd reared it, by running milk from his mouth through a 'windlestraw' before the days of teated bottles, it was usually allowed to him. Lambs feeding from ewes that had not been udderlocked were liable to suck in wool and get choked with 'wool ball'. Late in May, with the increase in grass, a heavy flow of milk in the ewe could mean 'milk sickness' from over-rich



Pl. 29

A ewe in a keb-house  
with a new lamb set  
to her.

Pl. 30 Recovery by the fire.



feeding, while louping-ill, the maggot fly, and drowning were further dangers.

Blackface lambs in particular were sometimes disinclined to suck and so had to be helped to do so. Cow's milk was given if a ewe lacked sufficient of her own. Sheep with twins could usefully be brought in to a field, where the greater quantity of grass made it more possible for the ewe to feed both her offspring. Towards the middle of May the ewes still to lamb could also be put into an enclosure, mainly for the sake of convenience.

During the lambing the herd formed some impression as to which lambs would be sold, which kept, and which male lambs were good enough to be tups rather than wedders. When the last ewe had lambed he then continued to keep a close eye on the progress of his lambs, but at the same time he was able to complete the sowing of his garden and begin on the peats. As the term day at the end of May approached new employment bargains were struck, and valuations of stock to be sold were carried out.

### Cutting

The castration of male lambs, called the 'cutting' or 'libbing', was performed in early June, or, if the shepherd was leaving, before Whitsunday. Generally the lambs were marked and had their tails docked at the same time. On a quiet, mild morning if possible, the lambs were put carefully into the fold, where ewe lambs were marked, and male lambs were 'cut'. The latter operation was best performed

early or late, to avoid the greatest warmth of the day, and it was usually thought convenient to deal with the lambs in their natural groups. The herd lifted the lamb and with a sharp knife slit the end of the scrotum, called the 'cod'. Then, by pressing his hands against the lamb's belly, he 'started' the 'stones' and drew them away with his teeth. He then spat into the scrotum, pressed the sides together, and pulled the tail once or twice "to replace the cords & vessels so violently disarranged."<sup>1</sup> The entrails or "puddens" were liable to emerge from the opened cod. It was very important to avoid dirt in the fold and to keep the cut lambs clear of nettles, while the wound was sometimes covered with an ointment, smeared on with a stick or feather, to prevent inflammation. Even so, death often resulted from 'cutting', usually about four days later. According to Douglas, a large proportion of blackface lambs in Selkirkshire were not cut in his time at all, since they grew larger and stouter and were therefore sold to greater advantage.<sup>2</sup>

The custom of 'cutting' with the teeth continued to find favour, even after the introduction of the rubber ring. One herd said that he had cut with his teeth every hirsell of the half dozen farms of his district at one time or another. Not every shepherd was able to operate in this manner; poor teeth and bad breath were both harmful, and

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1. Hogg, The Shepherd's Guide, p. 14.
  2. Douglas, General View, etc. p. 305.



Pl. 31  
Slitting the cod with a  
knife.  
Note the reversed cap.

CUTTING A LAMB

Pl. 32  
Drawing the stones with  
the teeth. A quick jerk  
to the tail follows.



anybody with a hangover was not supposed to try. It is said that nine score of lambs died on one farm when the latter rule was not observed. A third method of cutting occasionally tried was by putting a split hazel stick, tied tightly, at the point where the ring presently goes and leaving it on for two hours.

Severed cods and tail ends were collected and put by the shepherds into their turnip and leek drills as a fertiliser. The 'stones' were much valued. Moffat in Craik asked a cook he was thinking of hiring whether she could make a meal out of 'lamb stanes', which were considered a delicacy when parboiled, squeezed from the skin, and fried or roasted.<sup>1</sup>

A new herd arriving at the May term had a week or two to familiarise himself with his hirsell, the land the sheep were on, and how they moved. One natural movement of sheep was down the hill slopes to the river side in the morning, and up to the tops as the sun declined. They were therefore generally herded out in the evening, except in Moffat Water where the opposite pattern prevailed and the sheep were put to the high ground in the morning. One of the shepherd's most common tasks at this season was to keep a look out for animals that were 'awalt' or 'cowped', that is rolled onto their backs or sides and, because of

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1. Cutting with the teeth was mentioned in 1641 by Henry Best, a Yorkshire farmer, who added that the stones were "a dainty dish, being fryed with parsley" (Trow-Smith, History of British Livestock Husbandry to 1700, p. 244.).

the weight of the fleece, unable to rise again. Sheep in such a state could die in half an hour, and were easy victims for the corbies. In earlier days the herd would go out at 4 a.m. and again in the late afternoon during these weeks before clipping to check that all his sheep were in good order and in the right area.

### Washing

It was once usual to wash the sheep about a week before clipping. This was particularly necessary when smearing was practised, the aim being to clean out remnants of tar, bits of moss, earth and other refuse. Though it was not possible to remove all tar traces, washing was a useful process so long as the sheep were clipped before the fleeces got dirty again. A natural or artificial pool in a burn was used, the sheep being gathered by 'cuts' into a specially designed enclosure, sometimes diamond or funnel shaped, narrowing to a platform or steep slope from which the sheep were made to leap directly into the water two feet below. They then had to swim about in the water, and were eventually allowed to emerge on the far side. On some farms this process was repeated three or four times, while on others the sheep were plunged in by hand and submerged several times by men standing in the pool. Farms that were all steep slopes and rushing torrents did not have pools; these were the higher places, with a blackface stock, and the practice of washing was given up by the tenants there well before it was in lower Cheviot hirsels.



Pl. 33 Washing at Calroust, Bowmont Water, in 1906.  
The practice has since died out.



Pl. 34 The sheep emerge after their swim through  
the washing pool, watched by the children  
from Mowhaugh school, c. 1900.

Each year the washing pool had to be repaired, but this was a simple matter. On 26th June 1792, for instance, James Grieve "went up to Buccleugh to give orders about washing." He "got the Pool dam'd & saw the Gimmars put four times through" before he came away.<sup>1</sup> Things did not always work out well, as at Sundhope in Liddesdale in 1801. There "that raw fool Jamie Elliot did not wash the Sundhope sheep as they ought to have been", and the farmer determined "Never in future to trust him to wash them by himself but either go or send one to see it done and to have it done most completely, What fatigue is it to either man or sheep to be put 4 times thro a pool upon the farm when they have a whole day to do it in or even two days were it necessary." <sup>2</sup>The outcome was that, while the shepherd claimed he had put the sheep through seven times, the farmer made doubly certain by having two pools in action the following summer.

James Grieve was an enthusiast for the practice. He wrote in June 1832:

"I am convinced that washing sheep frequently during a warm season would materially contribute to their health and that it would tend both to prevent & diminish the Foot rot. They should always be pooled a day or two after clipping if the weather be hot and several times during warm weather." <sup>3</sup>

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1. G.P., Diary no. 8, p. 109.
  2. G.P., Diary no. 12a, p. 78.
  3. G.P., Diary no. 25, p. 375.

Among the good effects, he reckoned, washing kept the sheep clean and helped to put the milk off the ewes when milking ended late in August. He even considered that sheep could usefully be washed about once a week through the summer, and this was a belief he retained throughout his life.

The eild sheep were comparatively easy to wash. In the days of milking, however, the ewes presented more of a problem, since they had to be driven gently and prevented from rushing off to their pastures after the washing was over. On their way to the pools the ewes were generally accompanied by the girls who milked them, "along with as many boys and Girls as had a desire to go." <sup>1</sup>

### Clipping

A few days later the fleeces were dry enough for clipping to begin. The lapse of anything over a week allowed the 'eek' to run back into the wool and add to the weight. The first to be clipped, in mid or late June, were the eild sheep and the hogs. When the lambs were speaned at the beginning of July to allow a long milking season, the ewes were then washed and clipped, and it remained customary to hold the "milk clipping" about the second week of July.

The clipping was always one of the most important occasions in the year, marked generally by cheerful

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1. L.P.

festivities. In the days of the royal flocks in Ettrick Forest, it is probable that the sheep were gathered to one or two centrally located folds. Accounts of 1535 include a sum of £19.18s scots paid "to the clypstaris in feis, and meit and drynk, clippand the Kingis gracis sheip, and for careage of the woll fra the placis quhair the samyn wes clyppet to Selkirk." The wool was stored for a time in some building at Selkirk, since sums were also paid in the same year for "ane lok to the loft quhair the woll lysis in Selkirk", for 230 ells of "barres canwes" to make "sopclaithis" for conveying the wool from Selkirk, and for packing the wool.<sup>1</sup> A hundred years later, in the early 17th century, the Earl of Buccleuch's flocks were driven in to the folds at Northhouse and Branxholm for clipping. Thus, year after year, there was reference in the accounts to "clipping at the northhousfauld" and at "branxholme fauld". In 1634, for example, 5 st. 6 lbs. cheese were "given to the klipping of the toopes & wadderes at branxholme fauld upoun 18 & 20 days of June", while on 26th June "tuelff quheit bread" and "tuelff gallones of aill" went to the clippers at the "northeousfauld", with further similar payments a few days later.<sup>2</sup> Wheatbread, cheese and ale were the regular refreshments at this time, their equivalent in later years being the great teas of scones and

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1. A.L.H.T.S., Vol. VI, pp. 260, 349.

2. B.M., 936/7, pp. 87, 96-7. The wool was stored at Branxholm; in 1637, 24/- was "given for mending of the Lock and making of ane key to the wooll hous dore at Branxholme" (B.M., 936/7, p. 214).

bread taken out to the folds by the wives of herds and farmers.

Clipping parties were made up of neighbouring herds, more or less skilful, by common consent among the farmers, so that each hirsell represented on the party was completed in turn. There might be a dozen such clippers, but miscellaneous others went along too, including old men retired from herding, dykers and so on, so that in the end, the whole group might number up to twenty.<sup>1</sup> Having received notice, they assembled on a fine dry day at the folds, where they were joined by catchers, fleecerollers, and a crowd of onlookers.<sup>2</sup> According to Hogg, it was the "business of the lasses to take the ewes, and carry them from the fold to the clippers."<sup>3</sup> The clipper then turned the sheep, side down, on a wooden, slatted stool, covered with a packing sheet or sack, which narrowed to one end on which he sat. He tied down the legs, and made himself comfortable, sometimes softening the seat by placing a fleece or turf upon it. In some places, as for example at the foot of the Hott Hill near the Vales Burn on Harwood, there

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1. In 1636 there were "42 clipperes of the lames", each paid 12/-, at Branxholm or Northhouse (B.M., 936/7, p. 214). An exceptionally large clipping party was required for the gathered Buccleuch estate sheep.
  2. Accounts for 1635 refer to "takeris", "gathereris of wooll", "weareris of the fauld doore", and "Weighteris of the Wooll" (B.M., 927/22).
  3. Hogg, The Shepherd's Calendar, Vol. I, p. 43.

can be seen the remains of a row of clipping 'stools' made up of turf, or of turf and stone, which had to be renewed each year.<sup>1</sup> In general the herd clipped blackface sheep in parallel lines lengthwise, and Cheviots over the shoulder and back, the first method being quicker, the second neater. A sheep with a 'well risen' fleece might take four minutes, one with a closer fleece up to nine. Ten or more sheep might be completed in an hour, and twenty might be finished before the shears were sharpened. For sharpening the cutting edge or 'canel' of the shears a whetstone was used, and if the herd drew blood he smeared on a paste of balsam and sulphur with a stick. Among less orthodox ways of holding the shears was gripping them in the hand like a dagger, and a man at Scabcleuch used both hands to hold them in the same style.

During the long day, which began with gathering soon after dawn, meals were served for the large company involved. Breakfast was taken between 8 and 9 a.m., dinner shortly after noon, tea brought out to the folds in the afternoon, and at the end everybody went to the farmhouse for supper. There was as much toil for the women in the kitchen as for the clippers.

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1. Some examples of different types of wooden stool have been described by Ryder (Folk Life, IV, pp. 15-18), who compares the stool to the cobbler's working trestle. He found that stools had been widely used in the Lake-land, Durham, and Northumberland, as well as Scotland, but that there was little or no evidence for their existence before 1800. An account of 1790 indicates that a different type of stool was then used; at a clipping "the shepherds sit on seats of turf, sufficient to hold the sheep before them, and use sheers or scissars made for the purpose". (A Treatise on Pasturage, pp. 142-3). Stools were especially favoured by older men who could not easily kneel on the ground.



Pl. 35 A clipping party at Shaws, Ettrick, c.1900.  
The hook on the left awaits the next pot  
of tar for marking.



Pl. 36 Clipping in progress at Shaws, c. 1900.  
In the background a man stands in the  
sheet ready to pack the next fleece.



Pl. 37 Clipping at Over Kirkhope, Ettrick, c. 1900.  
The girls roll the fleeces to add to the pile.



Pl. 38 Girls rolling up fleeces on the wool board  
at Fingland, Tweedsmuir, c. 1925.

In the course of the day fleeces, varying in quality from good 'eeky' or 'yowky' ones to dry, 'kempy' thin things 'like lace curtains', were rolled up, usually from the tail end with the neck tied round, and packed into a large sack or 'sheet', which was suspended from a crossbar between two poles somewhere convenient in the fold. In the later stages the packer stood in the bag so that he could press down the contents. The wool sheets, filled with perhaps 60 fleeces each weighing, in the period of 'improved' sheep, about 5 lbs, were sewn up and taken off on carts. It was quite usual for the farmer to store the wool until the winter in a barn or shed, stacking it on top of old gates and 'flakes'. Even scraps of wool were valued, so these were gathered up carefully by children and tramps, from the clipping fold, the edges of the washing pool, long heather, or wherever else they might be. Such bits came particularly from 'peeled' sheep, animals whose fleece broke away before clipping and trailed behind them. The saying was, "As long as bairns is born naked never pass a bit wool."

Old men and others who helped in the clipping were generally given a fleece as their wage. Although they were only occasional workers, they were always at the heart of the jollity and banter that went on and made the work easier. Witticisms sparked to and fro, and jibes such as a handful of grass for a sheep that was being clipped slowly were common. The last clipping day was sometimes followed by a dance.

Pl. 39  
Packing wool in a long  
sack, c. 1955.



Pl. 40 Leading the wool packs to the store, c.1930.



### Marking

Clipping day was also the occasion for marking the old sheep, the lambs having been dealt with at the cutting. Before the clipped sheep was released it was given the owner's mark or 'buist'. This was done with an iron letter dipped in well-boiled tar or a coloured substance called 'keel', the initial representing the farmer's name or that of his farm. The mark used generally to be applied by the farmer or his son. In the years before the spread of the Cheviot sheep, the blackface hirsels were sometimes marked with a stick.<sup>1</sup> Shouts of 'buist' rang out regularly on clipping day, the iron was quickly passed to the marker, and the smell of hot tar blended with that of the sheep and of wool.

At one time it was usual to mark the sheep with a hot iron on the face, either on the nose or down the cheek. This mark, called 'the birn', was more permanent than the tar 'buist', but the practice was mostly given up during the nineteenth century as unnecessary and was later made illegal. It was carried out speedily, and two types were common; one, used, for example, at Howpasley, was a long 'straw' burn across the nose, while another, employed on the neighbouring farm of Craik, was a "hingin yin" running downwards. The Grieves at West Buccleuch burned a 'G' on the cheek with a letter iron. Together with the 'birn',

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1. L.P.



Pl. 41 A clipping. The housemaid has come from the farm, perhaps with refreshments. Second from the left, a shepherdess holds clipping shears.



Pl. 42 Marking with a buisting iron. On the left another sheep is being seized.

two other lasting methods of marking were general and prevailed throughout the period. These were the 'lug mark', a triangular or circular hole made with the appropriate instrument<sup>1</sup> in the centre or on the edge of the ear, and the 'saw-nick' cut on the horn at least one and a half inches away from the wool. The combinations of branding, tar or keel marks, lug marks, and where possible, horn marks were very many, and it really required the registers of sheep marks, published in the late nineteenth century, to keep track of all the possibilities. Thus a blackface sheep could be identified by, for instance, a 'rib keel', two 'fore bits' in the ear, and a nick or a burned initial on the horn.<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 14)

Marking with tar or by burning was an old custom. The seventeenth century Buccleuch estate accounts refer to purchases of "ane Load of black tarr to mark the scheip with,"<sup>3</sup> and to "the burneing of the Lambes",<sup>4</sup> while records of raids

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1. The two instruments necessary were in use in 1823 (A Lammermuir Farmer, op. cit., p. 90).
  2. These ways of marking, and others such as slitting the ear with wool shears or cutting off the end, were often used to indicate breeding and age. In the Lake District all the methods described here were similarly employed at one time or another, and the word 'smit', equivalent to the once common Border 'smot', was used there, as in the Borders, to mean 'mark with dye' (see Folk Life IX: 135-138). Gosta Berg has listed branding, dye, and earmarking among traditional methods used in Scandinavia (Folk Life XI: 15).
  3. B.M., 936/6, p. 105.
  4. B.M., 927/22.

also, on occasions, note the marks on stolen sheep. A paper of 18th May 1678 concerned the discovery of four "new smeired scheip skins, on of them wt tua tar marks one on ye far showlder and the oyer on ye far ryb", the other three having been "keilled" on the near side with tar and "keill";<sup>1</sup> and on 15th June 1737 a farmer observed in his diary that "we have bruntt them (i.e., his lambs) on the fare Cheake and Cealed on the nere flanke."<sup>2</sup>

Whatever kind of mark was used, however, it was always alterable and so unreliable. Only such artificial marks were allowable as proof in cases of sheep stealing, but the herd thought differently, for to him "the strongest of all evidence & indeed proof positive" was his knowledge of a sheep's identity from personal acquaintance.<sup>3</sup> As Findlater wrote in 1800, "An intelligent shepherd, whose perceptions are sharpened by habitual attention, can readily distinguish every individual of his flock, independent of any artificial mark!"<sup>4</sup> Men who were expert at this, known as 'guid kenners', were highly respected, and even took up challenges to their skill for a bet. Ability to recognise the individual sheep of the hirsell was born of a natural talent and long experience. Ewe milkers, "being

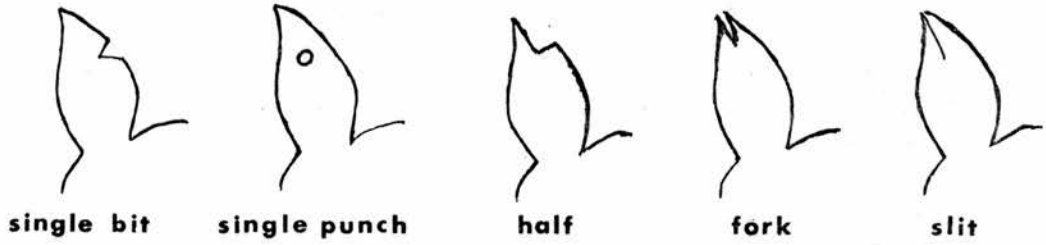
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1. E.D.P., 24/CCX, f. 29.

2. Diary of Walter Scott, Nether Bonchester, N.L.S., MS. 7184, f. 50.

3. Chalmers' Topographical Collections, N.L.S., Adv. MS. 21.1.8, f. 139.

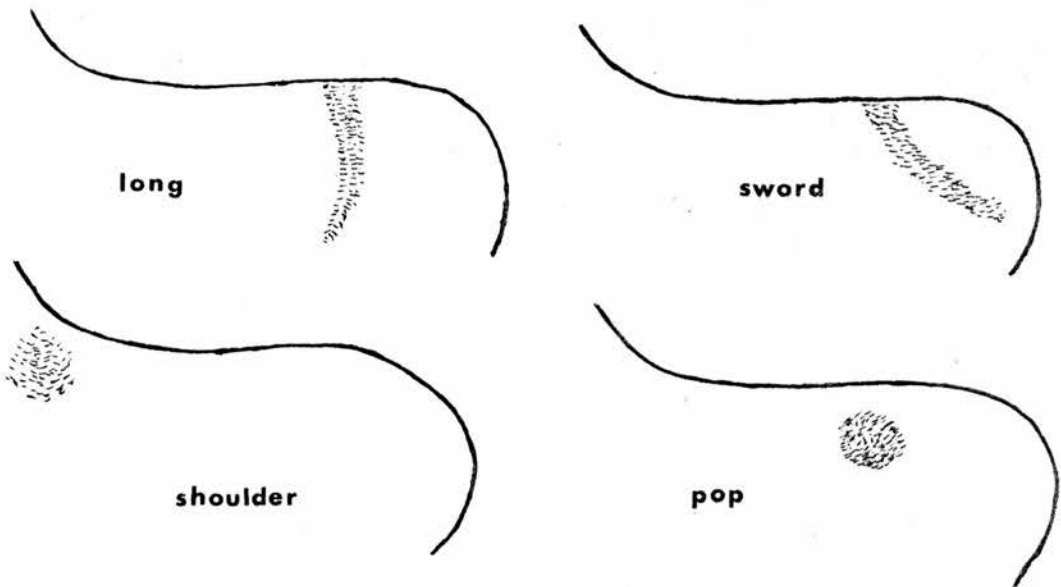
4. Findlater, op. cit., p. 191.



**LUG MARKS**

**Fig 14 SHEEP MARKS**

**KEEL MARKS**



for the most part shepherds daughters", often inherited "a faculty of knowing many of the Ewes by general appearance or what was called Head-Mark - when the flock of Ewes consisted, as I have known it do during some weeks of the latter end of milking time, to six and eight Hundred, it was no easy matter".<sup>1</sup>

### Shepherds' Gathering

One of the celebrations at the end of clipping and marking was the holding of a "gathering day", when stray sheep were assembled, clipped, and assigned to their rightful owners. One such gathering was at the Bilhope Hass, and took about a day and a half. Another was on Cheviot.<sup>2</sup> When the former was completed there were sports on the second afternoon, often with a black fleece as a prize, and a herd who once got a white fleece was not pleased. There were jumping, hop step and jump, handicap races, Cumberland wrestling, and Highland dancing to the

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1. L.P.

2. Events that involved bringing in all or most of the sheep were known as 'gatherings', and are to be distinguished from 'the gathering day' at Bilhope and Cheviot. The major gatherings were for clipping and smearing (later dipping), and these occasions were the traditional times for making a count of each hirsle, the totals being compared afterwards and differences accounted for by reference to recorded deaths and other losses. Counting was by the score, and so-called 'traditional enumeration' is not remembered or recorded as having been used in the sheep farms, though one pattern, employed in children's games, is still known in Hawick. Michael Barry has discussed traditional counting and has pointed out that there is little evidence to link it with sheep farming (Folk Life VII; 75-80).



Pl. 43 A clipping party at Lymiecleuch, Teviothead, 1910.



Pl. 44 The shepherds' gathering on Cheviot, c. 1900.

melodeon. A cycle race was introduced at the Hass gathering, down to Bilnapefoot and back. Whisky was drunk in quantity from 'greybeard' jars, and beer from barrels taken out on a creel pony. Similar competitions once took place after Linhope clipping, and the younger herds began putting a "muckle stane". Jimmy Hope, then herd at Glenkerry, who was sitting nearby, remarked that they needed a bigger stone, and fetched one from the burn that no one else could lift, so that it remains still, under the name of "Hope's Stane."

The age of ewemilking past, the clipping meant only a brief separation of ewe and lamb, and it was important to ensure that the two were united again when the operation was over, for the lamb might fail to recognise its clipped mother. They were put to good pastures thereafter, until the speaning and sales, and, when dips were introduced to replace smearing and pouring, they were dipped about the end of July in order to check maggot fly. A sulphur dip gave the sheep a yellowish colour, which was thought suitable for the sale ring. There were two other times for dipping in the year; the one in the spring, and one in October or November to protect the sheep against the weather and footrot. On the latter occasion they were also keeled.

### Speaning

Speaning followed the summer dipping. In the days of ewe milking it was completed at the beginning of July, but after the practice died out, it was generally delayed till

early August. Early in the seventeenth century the Buccleuch Estate accounts regularly recorded the speaning of the lambs, and the term is evidently an old one. Blackface wedder lambs were among the first to be separated and sold; then the ewe lambs were put to the market after about 25-30% of them had been selected as the best and kept for stock. The smaller lambs, called 'pallies', were generally sold off.

It was not always easy to keep the best lambs away from their mothers. Some shepherds remember how 'plaistering' was carried out in order to prevent the lambs from continuing to suck. A square "muslin-clout" of a suitable size was soaked round the edges in boiling tar and then stuck over the udder, the teats being first greased so that the cloth would not adhere to them. The 'plaister' was left on about three weeks. It is remembered how at Perterburn in Tarras draught ewes were speaned in this way, so as to ensure that they did not lose value through having to provide milk for unweaned lambs.

#### Summering of Lambs

During the eighteenth century and earlier, when ewe milking was still general, it was usual for the farmer to go to a bit of extra expense and put away the lambs after the early speaning to a piece of high ground on another farm for 'summering'. In 1800 Findlater wrote that the practice of sending them off to be 'summered' for six weeks "upon barren heathy land, in some cold, bleak situation",

with a notion that in addition to the convenience of having them apart from the ewes the experience 'hardened' them, was not a sound one, and by 1800 was much condemned.<sup>1</sup> Instead it was better to avoid such "violent transitions" by putting the lambs to some higher part of their own hirsell, and continuing to 'hain' the lower pasture as the 'hogg fence', for use in the autumn.<sup>2</sup> In the end it became the fashion to keep the lambs away from their mothers for about two weeks, and then, if they were not to be sold, to allow them to run with the ewes so that they might learn the characteristics of the ground grazed by their particular 'cut' before winter. When turnips were a recent introduction, in the late eighteenth century, many farmers wintered their hoggs away in fields specially rented for the purpose, and this custom prevailed in some places till after 1900; but there were also arguments in favour of letting hoggs stay on their native ground through the winter. In the early nineteenth century hoggs in the Forest were generally allowed to graze

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1. Findlater, op. cit., p. 192.

2. William Laidlaw (1780-1845) wrote that it was normal practice after shearing in July to put the milk ewes under a herd called "the Ewe boughter", while the lambs were in the charge of the "Hog-herd". The latter's task was difficult if the lambs were kept on the farm, for he had to watch them with the utmost care, day and night, "in case of their breaking off to join their former mothers which they sometimes do to the great annoyance of both those engaged" (L.F.). In the absence of specially designed pens, 'shedding', the business of separating a particular group of sheep from the rest, had to be achieved by the careful positioning of men and dogs on an open hillside.

with the ewes, in the belief that experience of the ground was valuable and that the less abundant pasture would be a check on braxy.<sup>1</sup>

### Autumn Work

The selection of 'top' lambs for stock had to be done carefully, with an eye on the best animals for the ground. Features of the head, body, coat and feeding capacity were all significant, with arguments occurring over the ideal composition of a sheep. 'Keeping lambs' were to replace old ewes, which were sold off, after their fourth lambing, in September or October. At this same period there were many other things to occupy the farmer and herd. Suitable tups had to be purchased, lambs and draught ewes for sale had to be made as presentable, and even, as decorative, as possible, by washing the face, trimming and colouring the coat, and oiling the horns. Remaining peats were led in and the stack thatched; hay was led also, and, before the railways, droves had either to be arranged and sent off to distant markets or guarded against as they crossed through the midst of a peacefully grazing ewe hirsel.

After the sales of draught sneep the old 'shepherding year' was finished, and immediately the new one started with the dosing of hoggs, the breeking of gimmers, and, in former days, the all important smearing. Dosing of the

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1. A Lantermuir Farmer, op. cit., p. 50.

hoggs is dealt with in the section on diseases below. In districts near the Border, especially on the English side, the hoggs were also treated in a more curious way to improve their condition. They were struck ('scauped') on the top of the nose so that the bone cracked audibly. The instrument used was a stone, knife-handle, or knuckle.<sup>1</sup> For protection during the winter months, some farmers favoured 'bratting', the sewing - on of cloth covers over the backs of sheep, and this added further work in the autumn. For the successful carrying out of these and all the other seasonal tasks, there had to be a sound relationship between the farmer and his employees, nothing being more valuable than the presence of a reliable shepherd.

#### Peat-Cutting

The major domestic task facing all on the farm was the annual securing of fuel, which, until the close of the nineteenth century, consisted chiefly of wood and peat.

The many demands made upon the peat acres of the Borders meant that exact areas had to be designated to

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1. Ryder has noted that the original practice must be associated with a condition called 'double scaup' (scalp), common in growing sheep on poor pastures, and was told by a Cumberland farmer that the blow ejected the 'bot' larva from the nasal passages (Folk Life V:100-101). In Northumberland and in parts of Roxburghshire the condition to be cured in this way was known as 'cappie'.

which each interest was limited.<sup>1</sup> The shepherd too was given instructions as to where he might cut his peats, usually during discussion on the spot. When James Grieve hired Walter Beattie for East Buccleuch in 1795, Beattie was "to have liberty on the common to cast Peats and I said should it be more convenient for him to have some cast anywhere else if it did no harm, (I) would not oppose it".<sup>2</sup> Mutual services were also arranged: the farmer might provide the herd with a horse to lead the peats, while the herd and his family might assist in casting the farmer's supply. In 1811 Thomas Turnbull, hired for Henwoodie, was "to Stack the Peats which remain through winter, and theeek them and accomodate the people sent out to cast them."<sup>3</sup> A herd might also be allowed to cast some peats for sale to those who would not otherwise have any.

The cutting or 'casting' of peats usually began after lambing was over, though it might be done sooner, and the diaries of James Amos, shepherd at Cacraside and elsewhere around 1900, give dates from 9th May onwards. The whole family was involved, and one herd might help another, for

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1. Farmers had to preserve their rights carefully. Robert Hope, tenant of 'Nether Mington' in Tweedsmuir about 1717, complained to his landlord that since permission had been granted to Hunter of Polmood to cast peats upon the ground, and since there was already "the burthen of the Ministers peats", the moss was nearly worn out. As he had been let the farm with "moss, muir and meadow", Hope threatened resistance (Murray Papers, N.L.S. Adv. MS. 29.1.1, Vol. IV, f. 64).
  2. G.P., Diary no. 10, p. 30.
  3. G.P., Diary no. 16, p. 335.



Pl. 45 Shepherds and others stacking the hay at  
Kelsocleuch, Kale Water, c. 1930.



Pl. 46 Casting Peats at Alderybar, Northhouse, 1930.

'casting', like building a dyke, was easier if at least two people were at work. The farmer sent out a party of servants to cut his peats, and at the "Henwooddie Peats casting" of 1810, begun on 24th May, there were four men using the cutting spades, and eight women throwing out the peats and wheeling them away to the place where they were spread to dry.<sup>1</sup> The sexes were usually deployed in this way.

Peats were in right condition for casting in late May, when the weather was often appropriately fine, though in 1740, after a very late winter, the frost was still in the mosses.<sup>2</sup> On the chosen morning the casting party set off early, in carts if they had a long way to go, with their barrows, sledges, and spades. Other equipment might include "Nails and a hammer and one bottle whiskie and some strong twine to mend or clout barrow-trams...".<sup>3</sup> There were three kinds of spade. The top cover of heather, moss and grass was cut by a sharp pointed "yeard spade" or "ritter", which sliced a line parallel to the edge of the "breast" or "hagg" left by last year's cutting, and then at right angles to form large divots which were lifted off and set aside for replacement at a lower level after the peat was removed. The "flaughter" or "flayer", a long-handled spade with a small 'ritter' shaped blade set at a slight angle, was used

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1. G.P., Diary no. 16, p. 227.
  2. Beattie, op. cit., p. 18.
  3. G.P., Diary no. 15, p. 152.

to separate the divot from the underlying peat. Finally there was the lugged peat spade. All three were kept sharp by filing with a small grindstone or scythe sharpener. The women, known in Peeblesshire as "hurlers", used sideless barrows, which were in regular need of repair.

Clearing the divots off the top and the crumbly surface from the face of the peat was called "the tirling of the breast". After this, casting began. It was common to cut four peats wide and up to three in depth, the better quality being those lower down, and some herds reckoned a yard of moss cut in this way to a day's burning. "Lypit peats" were those from the top, four inches square, cut with a special 'lypit' spade, while long peats, three inches square, were called "bars o' sape". After the peats had partially dried, they were stood up and "rickled" or "fitted" in groups so that they were aired by the wind, and eventually were put in small stacks ready for leading in.

Until the early eighteenth century at least, creels were used in the Borders, but latterly the cart and sledge or "slype" were the normal means of bringing the peats home. Each "raik", or 'there and back' journey, was made as time permitted, though fine weather in July might see every load to the stack. A herd reckoned one cart load to a week's burning. On arrival at the house the peats were stacked outside on a piece of well-drained ground in a handy situation. An art lay in building them up so that air circulated and wet did not soak in. Skill, too, was

needed in constructing a stack that would not fall or "rush" when dug into. When finished it was often given a thatch of rushes, which were held down by hay ropes.<sup>1</sup> Some peats were stored in a shed or "peat-house", one of the main benefits of which was that it could be locked against thieves.

A completed peat stack afforded as much satisfaction as any other harvest safely won. A reserve supply was a safeguard against a year when misfortune might prevent any casting or leading, and if such an extra stack was by the house when the occupant was flitting it was left to the incomer or, sometimes, valued to him. Work at the peats is often remembered with pleasure, however hard it was. The moss could also provide interest of an unusual kind, for the preserving qualities of peat meant that casters occasionally uncovered a curiosity; stumps of trees were frequent enough, but prehistoric implements, remains of animals, and weapons appeared from time to time. One shepherd dug up a perfectly preserved lamb which he had buried twelve years before. Another, at Glenkerry, found a whole human skeleton, wrapped in a "hodden grey" cloth which disintegrated after two days. He took the skeleton home, kept it under his box bed, and wore the teeth on his watch chain.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Hay ropes were most commonly used by the shepherds for securing stacks of hill hay, built often on some convenient level near a stiel. The ropes were made by the shepherd and his wife or some other assistant. One fed out the grass from a heap in an unbroken flow which was twisted by the other with a 'thraw crook' or 'wylie'.

2. Information from Mr. R. Anderson, Limiecleugh.



Pl. 47 Leading in peats, in the Cheviots. n.d.



Pl. 48

A completed peat stack  
at Badlieu, Tweedsmuir,  
c. 1920.

### Sheep Diseases

Throughout the year the shepherd had to combat a variety of diseases that prevailed among sheep. More conspicuous where flocks were large, a disease could mean complete ruin for the possessor of a few sheep such as a subtenant of the sixteenth century. Early records are few, but the evidence is just sufficient to indicate that the situation around 1800 was not new. It is possible, however, that trouble had spread as sheepfarming developed on a larger scale.

Farmers in 1688 undoubtedly appreciated a line in Scott of Satchels' poetical History: "One scabed Sheep's enough to spoil a Flock".<sup>1</sup> The infection called 'scab', first recorded in Britain in 1272,<sup>2</sup> may originally have come from the continent, but by the seventeenth century had been indigenous for generations. In 1611 wedders in Branxholme Park were smeared "for breiking in ye skab",<sup>3</sup> and similar instances in subsequent years show that the disease was widespread. Also called the 'itch', it was common in flocks that were poorly cared for, so that neither farmers nor herds liked to admit that their sheep had it. Scab was highly contagious, appeared as white spots on the wool of lambs and of sheep just clipped, and could be

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1. Scot, op. cit., Part II, p. 94.

2. Trow-Smith, History of British Livestock Husbandry to 1700, p. 154.

3. B.M., 943/7.

concealed for the purposes of sale by rubbing the patches with mercurial oil. An infected sheep began to tear its wool, the skin became red and sore, and crusts developed, the effect being to weaken the sheep and ruin the wool. In 1800, as in 1600, treatment was by smearing, either with the traditional mixture or with concoctions of tobacco liquor - a universal medicine - and spirit of turpentine. Indeed scab was one of the main reasons for smearing.

The worst of all diseases, or so it was reckoned, was the rot, known in modern times as 'liver fluke'. The Lammermuir farmer who in 1810 lost nearly half his stock declared it was "to be dreaded as a pestilence",<sup>1</sup> and Hogg, in 1830 remembered how Eskdale, Ettrick Forest, and Teviothead, "which now produce the best sheep in Scotland, the East Border scarcely excepted", were once so infested by the rot as to be considered districts of little value.<sup>2</sup> Hogg was no doubt exaggerating, and, nearly forty years before, Naismyth was told that there was little rot in the Forest, but the disease was certainly dreaded as being generally fatal. In 1692 Robert Curror in West Buccleuch received an allowance for "his loss of Sheep by rott", his complaint having been that sixteen score had died and that the same number had been "so wasted" that they were almost worthless. At the same time the tenants of Craikhope complained of a

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1. A Lammermuir Farmer, op. cit., p. 126.

2. Hogg, J., 'Remarks on certain diseases of sheep', Quarterly Journal of Agriculture, Vol. II (1831), p. 700.

great loss through "the rotting of their Ewis".<sup>1</sup> William Laidlaw reported sickness among the sheep on Whitehope in Yarrow in 1830: "I wish it has not been the rot - I hope not and that it has only been the Scab".<sup>2</sup>

Before the real cause was known the disease was put down to poor feeding, lack of shelter, wet autumns and boggy ground. Ewes were sometimes examined at the end of September, and were judged 'rotten' if the flesh was loose and flabby and the inside corner of the eye under the lid was a dull yellowish red. Other symptoms were mouth slaver, loss of wool and sagging belly. In the spring 'rotten' ewes often had a swelling under the jaw, and were hence called 'poked'.<sup>3</sup>

Wight was one of the first to point out that light stocking and the draining of bogs could reduce the rot.<sup>4</sup> By 1823 it had been observed that flukes on the liver were associated with the disease and that they were the cause of death. But it was some years before the cycle of the fluke was discovered, and the shepherd could but drain the marshy patches and kill the moles that destroyed the drains.

Year-old horned sheep were reckoned the most prone to 'sturdy', a disease which was as widespread though not as common as scab, and generally fatal. Common enough in

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1. B.M., 943/2 & 935/3.

2. Correspondence of Sir Walter Scott, N.L.S., MS. 3913, ff. 39-40.

3. O.S.A., Vol. I, p. 138.

4. Wight, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 402.

early seventeenth century accounts, where there were such entries as "tua sturdie stirks" and "sturdie scheip",<sup>1</sup> and in farm papers of succeeding times, this affliction almost completely died out in the mid-twentieth century, when a preventive remedy was found.

The symptoms were striking. The sheep would begin to run in circles, holding its head to one side and moving towards a sound such as that of a stream. It would even stand for a long time on the river bank, and, if driven away, would seek to return immediately. Bleating lambs would also attract it. Shepherds remember how the sick animal was drawn by a noise, and how "You'd see it birlin' round about" until it got dizzy, and fell down.

On examination it was found that the sick sheep was often blind in one eye, or that the eye was pale, bluish and staring. The sheep had then to be separated into an enclosure where there were no runnels of water. A soft patch, about the size of a shilling piece, was located by pressure of the thumb, on the top of the skull. If there were horns, the patch was usually between them or a little behind, and it was towards the opposite side from the blind eye. Inside the head, directly below the softness, lay the 'blob' or 'bag', about "the size of a plum or pigeon's egg", and full of a clear, rather slimy fluid which contained some little white bodies resembling ant's eggs. The progress of the disease was accompanied by an increase

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1. B.M., 936/6, pp. 100, 239.

in the size of the bag, and the skull continued to soften. There were various conjectures as to how the bag got into the head,<sup>1</sup> and general agreement that rainwater somehow penetrated there. As sturdy was found to be common on shelterless farms, after a windy, sleety winter, among year-old sheep with wool separating along the back, Hogg thought these circumstances congenial to the disease, and suggested blanket coats or 'brats' would protect the hogs successfully.<sup>2</sup>

Cures were attempted by the shepherd, or by some particularly skilful person, who might also be a shepherd, from elsewhere. One old method, practised by Laidlaw of Willenslee and not very successful, was to burn a small hole through the soft patch with a hot iron and take out the bag entire with a small hook. The wound would be covered with a plaster of wax. A similar but more gentle way was to 'tap' the skull with an awl or 'corking Pin'. An instrument with a small tube called a 'trocar' could be provided specially for this purpose. The bag was drawn out through the hole, or the liquid run through the tube. William Cowan, an old herd on Mountbenger in Hogg's time, was a great 'tapper', having a corking pin in his bonnet at all times. The sheep was set on its back, the head gripped, and the

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1. The real cause of 'sturdy' was a worm which was passed by the sheep dogs onto the grass, and so picked up by sheep in grazing. The 'worming' of dogs brought about the virtual disappearance of sturdy.
  2. Hogg, J., 'On the Causes . . . of a destructive Malady among Sheep', Farmers Magazine, Vol. XIII (1812), pp. 308-9.

pin inserted obliquely. Trepanning was also tried. The soft patch was cut open with two incisions, each an inch and a half long, in the form of a cross, so that the bag was exposed, and then agitated with forceps or a crow's feather until it came loose. By gripping the nose of the sheep from time to time and so stopping it breathing, the bag could be raised and thus lifted out more easily. If it burst, the head was tipped so that the fluid ran out. The hole was washed with spirits, then the skin was laid back neatly, a piece of dry lint or cloth folded and placed over the wound, and the dressing held by a tarry cloth to keep out damp and flies. This cover was left for two days, and then replaced with a cloth spread with hog's lard, fresh butter or tar, and the process repeated for two weeks. Return of the disease occurred and the blob was more difficult to remove.

Perhaps the commonest method was 'wiring', used particularly if the skull was soft on the forehead or if another way seemed impossible. Hogg, thought by some to have been the inventor, said that wiring had been "in use among shepherds for ages past".<sup>1</sup> It involved simply pushing a sharpened wire, such as a steel needle used for knitting coarse stockings, straight up the nostril and through the brain so that it perforated the bag. The sheep's chin

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1. Hogg, J., 'On the Diseases of Sheep', Farmers Magazine, Vol. XIII (1812), p. 477. The method seems to have been particularly located in Liddesdale (A Treatise on Pasturage, p. 237.)

was held close to the wirer's breast, with the thumb of the restraining hand on the soft patch. The wire was aimed at this thumb and plunged in, sometimes twice or thrice, as quickly as possible. As soon as it touched the thumb, the head was gently shaken; then the animal was set on its feet and, if cold weather, kept in for a night. Bleating indicated recovery.

Trepanning and wiring continued throughout the nineteenth century. One shepherd recalled how his father used to cut the skull with a penknife, take out the blob with 'nippers', and dress with soap and a rag. John Dickson, herd at Elygrain in the 1890s, was once asked to 'sort a sturdie'; he took the sheep, turned its head, and put a knitting needle up its nose till it bled a little. "You put it in as far as it'll go," he said, "and then a little further". It was said that about a cupful of fluid ran down the nose after wiring.

Later in the nineteenth century trepanning was made easier by the introduction of a set of 'boring' instruments. These were made in Edinburgh, cost a guinea, and were provided for the herd by the farmer. Forceps, trocar and canula, and syringe, in their small box, were a usual part of the herd's equipment until the disappearance of sturdy, when the boxes were thrown away. Boring, or any other sturdy operation, was carried out in a pen or keb house, or at some favoured spot as at Whitehillshiel, Ettrick, where the herd sat on a large stone called "the Sturdy

Stane". It was said, too, that a diseased sheep could cure itself some times, and one did so when it accidentally drove a length of protruding fence wire into its brain. More commonly, a sheep could effect a cure by striking its head against a stone dyke.

Considered by some the most fatal of sheep diseases, and certainly the most common and talked about, braxy universally prevailed among hogs. It was worst in late autumn, after the early frosts, when it was held to be so inevitable "that in going out in the morning, the shepherds will put on old clothes, as they expect to have some of their hogs to carry home".<sup>1</sup> Otherwise called 'sickness' or 'grass ill', it seemed to be brought on by rich feeding, especially on a frosty morning, and there was a belief among shepherds that it was also caught when, on a certain night in September, the sheep rose at midnight and fed for a short time. A connection was observed between summering lambs separately and the ensuing occurrence of the disease, so that, by 1800, farmers were giving up the practice of putting lambs to special pasture where grass was too abundant.

The signs of braxy were clear enough. The hogg went apart, crying, drinking plentifully, and restless. It eventually lay down, its body swollen, and died. On opening the carcass it was found that "the intestines, particularly the stomach, called the Rodkin"<sup>2</sup> were inflamed, and

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1. Duncan, A., 'A Treatise on the Diseases of Sheep', T.H. & A.S.S., Vol. III (1807), p. 371.

2. Naismyth, op. cit., p. 8.

that the blood had thickened to a black colour, There was a strong smell which led some to call braxy 'the stinking ill'.

The several traditional 'cures' were of varying effectiveness. A tar and mustard mixture was administered by some, while bloodletting by veins at the tail, inside a foreleg, or below an eye, was also tried. Chasing the sheep at night until they were winded, or giving a dose of dandelion juice, were among other methods.

One thing that seemed certain was that a check to the appetite seemed appropriate. If hoggs and older sheep were run together there was less braxy, which appeared to be the result of sparser feeding. Although this observation might have been made long before, it nevertheless seems to have been in the early nineteenth century that the idea dawned of giving hoggs something to put them off their food. With this in view, the pig sty was cleaned out thoroughly, and the pigs were fed on bent grass, cabbages and new milk for ten days. Their dung during this period was collected, mixed in a tub with new milk to a 'cream', and the liquid poured through a muslin bag. Each hogg, gathered two days before and underfed, was given a small glass or bottle full of the strained mixture, and turned out to young grass, where it ate little and became lean - but in general did not become a victim of braxy. There were various recipes for the mixture; Ballantyne in the Shaws, Liddesdale, used nine pints of milk to one of dung, which was near average, and these ingredients were mixed up with a stick. It is

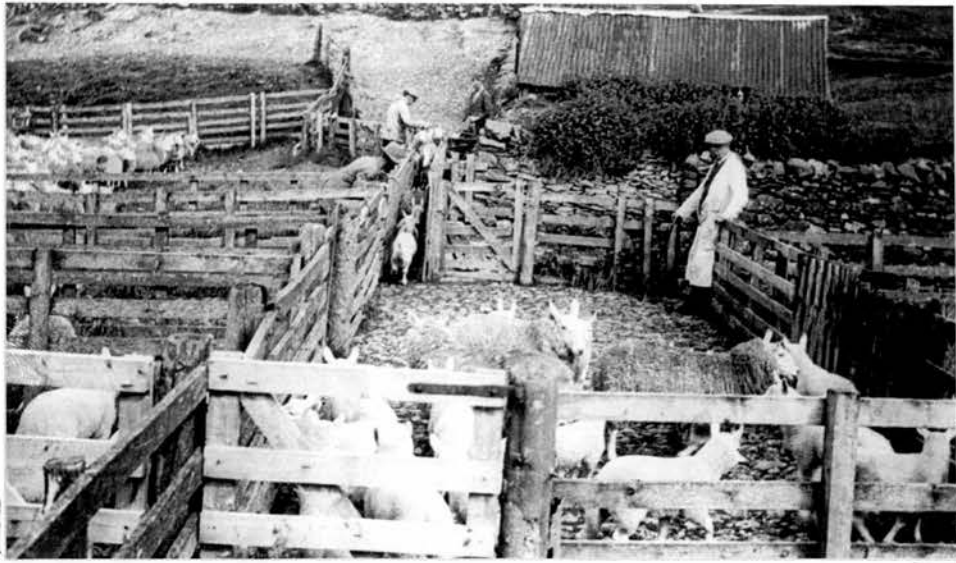
said that John Aitchison in Twislehope drank some himself to prove it was not poisonous.

The 'dosing of the hoggs' seems to have originated somewhere close to the Border, perhaps in Liddesdale or Northumberland, where it may have been known for centuries. Its rapid spread through the sheep farms suggests that it was found to be a considerable improvement on anything known before, and the practice, even celebrated in song, survived along with more scientific methods. "October and braxy", wrote a herd about 1920, "often arrive about the same time, but with sow dung and inoculation the death rate hereabout has been much reduced".<sup>1</sup>

There was some advantage in braxy to the shepherd, for it was often agreed between him and his master that a braxy hogg was his to eat. He had a few hoggs in his pack, and it was said that if his wife chanced to see him coming home with a braxy on his back she would cry out, "Was't a pack yin?" She would follow this up with "Wull't eat?" The sickness being a swift one, a hogg had to be found before it died or shortly after if it was to be eaten. It was brought home and cut up, and the sections were often put into a flour bag or sack, which was tied to a large stone in the burn and left for twenty four hours so that the thickened blood could be washed out. Then the meat was placed in a tub or 'boat' of salt brine for three weeks, after which it was washed again in the river for a further

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1. Herding a Hill Hirsels, p. 39.



Pl. 49 Shedding lambs and lame ewes at Craik folds  
c. 1935. The farmer wears a white coat.



Pl. 50 A braxy hogg, 1929.

day to get rid of the salt. The final stage was to hang the meat on the hooks in the kitchen beam, among the hams, and it is said that once there were sixty braxy carcasses, all blackened with time and smoke, on the beams at Bowerhope.

Braxy meat was eaten with potatoes, often in 'tattie stew'. It was all very well if you were used to it; Naismyth heard "that braxy eaters are generally strong, healthy, long lived people".<sup>1</sup> Those who were not accustomed to its strong flavour felt otherwise. Many shepherd families, however, found braxy an extremely important element in their diet, and did not complain at the death of a hogg or two.

In April 1691 Walter Elliot of Arkleton bemoaned "ye dearth of his rowmes upon account of the sicknes that is... among his sheep there called ye louping ill".<sup>2</sup> This meant that the pastures were infected with ticks, and there were no modern dips to clean and protect the flock. The 'louping ill', which can be taken by the shepherd as well as by all sorts of animals, was a more localised trouble than some, but Naismyth described it as common in Selkirkshire and at the heads of Teviot and Borthwick, "where, for some years, it almost laid the country waste".<sup>3</sup> Douglas reported louping ill as the most common disease among Yarrow flocks.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Naismyth, op. cit., p. 61.

2. B.M., 935/2.

3. Naismyth, op. cit., p. 32.

4. Douglas, General View, etc. p. 307.

It was particularly virulent from April to June and lambs in May were specially prone to it. The immediate effects were spasmodic convulsions and loss of strength, while death commonly followed. Bleeding was occasionally tried. By washing in cold water or pouring on a mixture made from tobacco, or broom, it was possible to reduce the number of ticks and, though the link was not recognised, so reduce the chances of louping ill.

The 'thwarter ill'<sup>1</sup> or 'trembling', common in the Tweed area, was once thought of as a form of louping ill, but, later, of 'sturdy'. The symptoms were similar, but the shepherds of earlier times do not seem to have thought of applying the treatment they used for the two other diseases. Hogg records a quite different type of cure.<sup>2</sup> As a boy he had assisted a shepherd whose wife concocted a potion out of two herbs, locally called the dew-cup and the merry-leaf or healing leaf, which she gathered in meadows. She boiled a quantity of these plants in butter-milk, strained off the liquid and poured it into the sick

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1. The word occurs in a few place names; e.g., The 'Thorster Rig' on Bellendean. Another disease of a similar kind was "Yallowsies", a kind of jaundice. It has been thought a modern ailment, but Naismyth mentions "the yellows" and 'the headswell' (Naismyth, op. cit., p. 44) which are probably the same. Cheviot sheep fed on rape were particularly prone. The ear swelled and turned a bit yellow; the skin, and even the ear itself, could eventually come off. The cure was to cut the ear, or stab it with a needle, to let water run out. The vein below the eye might be cut. Some thought the trouble was caused by an adder bite.

2. Hogg, The Shepherd's Guide, pp. 79-80.

animal's throat. Hogg had never known the mixture to fail. Other cures were tried. There was blood-letting from a vein near the eye, and powerful mixture of whisky, rough ginger, balls of mustard, any "hot purgative medicines", and gunpowder, was also suggested.<sup>1</sup> In the course of the nineteenth century, however, thwarter ill came to be considered a form of sturdy, for it was noticed that the swelling at the back of the head could be bored as one would bore a sturdy sheep or, as one shepherd put it, "ye wad use a gully just". A difference was that, instead of going round in circles, the sheep would put its head up and back until it went over backwards.

Of the many other afflictions from which sheep suffered, perhaps the best known were the 'foot-rot' and the 'maggot-fly'.

According to William Hogg, shepherd at Stobo in the early nineteenth century, foot-rot or 'scawd' (scald) had increased rapidly in late years,<sup>2</sup> and Alexander Laidlaw in Bowerhope thought it had spread with the Cheviot breed. The trouble occurred mostly in August and September. It seemed to be caused by dirty ground, often in folds, and appeared as an ulcerous and suppurating decay of the flesh and even the bone in the cleft of the hoof, which eventually drove the sheep to move on its knees. The universal treatment, lasting into modern times, was to wash the infected feet,

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1. Duncan, A., 'Treatise on the Diseases of Sheep', T.H. & A.S.S., Vol. III (1807), p. 388.

2. Hogg, W., 'Essay on Foot-Rot', T.H. & A.S.S., Vol. IX, (1832), p. 308.

pare away the rotting parts of the hoof with a knife as close as possible, and cauterize with an iron, hot quicklime, or boiling tar. This was often done at clipping time, when it was usual to check the feet of every sheep and when hot tar was at hand for marking. In later years "the fit-rot troch", or wooden trough twenty feet long and between gates, was filled with an arsenic and oil fluid, and the sheep walked through at weekly intervals in early summer. Frost and snow and the earth of molehills were both held to be excellent cleaners of a sheep's feet.

Vermin of several kinds persecuted sheep. Apart from the ticks, the worst was the maggot of the blowfly, often known as the 'mack'. Worst in the hot days of summer, the maggots could appear abruptly, around the sheep's rump or wherever flesh had been exposed by a wound after 'cutting', clipping, or a fall. As with 'louping ill', maggots seem to have been locally troublesome, though there were times when most farms suffered. The plague was hardly known to William Hogg at Stobo before 1826. "As the evil was new to us, we knew of nothing to use against it excepting tar; which we heard had been employed for the purpose from time immemorial".<sup>1</sup> Tobacco juice and turpentine also served, and the herd could remove the maggots "from their grooves" with his finger, a pin, or a knife. But too often the position was uncontrollable, and the horror of the "mackie flee" had to be seen to be appreciated.

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1. Hogg, W., 'On the Flesh Fly and Maggot in Sheep',  
T.H. & A.S.S. (1829), Vol. VII, p. 336.

The only preventative was an observant and careful shepherd; but a victim of the maggots could easily be concealed in bracken or willowscrub where it had sought shelter from the hot sun. A dead sheep could sometimes be betrayed by rising crows, departing from a feast of grubs.

Bloodsucking insects such as ticks, clegs, lice, and the ked, were checked by smearing and the application of tobacco juice, and later by dips. At Sourhope in the Cheviots the Shiels, who farmed there throughout the nineteenth century, used a dip of boiled Christmas rose roots, while a dipping liquid was also derived from spruce branches boiled with tobacco.

Blackface sheep were subject to the 'leg ill' or 'black leg', which was a poisoned condition resulting from dirt in a wound. The knee swelled and there were red blisters that could spread to the belly. Similar to it was 'redwater', which also appeared in blisters containing a red fluid, and was treated with "kirn milk & coal dust". A tobacco infusion, tar and butter, and lime were among the other 'cures' tried. Then there were the ailments characterised by diarrhoea, otherwise called "a rush". Among these were 'pining', known as the 'vinquish' or 'vanquish' in Galloway, which spread into the Borders early in the nineteenth century and was considered by some to be the result of destroying moles. It affected lambs chiefly, and the excrement became so clogged, that it could lead to death. Findlater suggested that, after washing,

the earth of a molehill could be rubbed on.<sup>1</sup> Dysentery, called 'cling' or 'breakshaw', was, according to Wight, abundant and fatal. Near Moffat a concoction of elm bark, or boiled milk, was administered, while Hogg suggested rhubarb followed up with "eggs and sweet milk, mixed with the bark of the alder-tree, ground to a powder",<sup>2</sup> but a more sensible approach seemed to be careful herding onto dry, clean ground.

In addition, there were a few incidental though often dangerous hazards that sheep had to endure. There were the occasional foxes, and the more abundant corbies that on finding a weak sheep would tear out its eyes or its bowels before it died. A form of blindness was common, brought on, so it was said, by pollen, dust, glaring light from sun and snow, or by fatigue after being driven. One cure was bleeding below the eyes - "and letting some of the blood run into each of them"; another was by putting in powdered glass to break the scum across the eyeball.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Findlater, op. cit., p. 388, Appendix II.
  2. Hogg, The Shepherd's Guide, p. 89.
  3. Some shepherds said that blindness was caused by 'wild fire'. In his treatise Sir George Mackenzie stated in this connection that "In former times, it was a practice with shepherds to bury those sheep affected with this disease at the door of the fold with their feet upwards, which they believed acted as a charm to drive it from the flock" (Mackenzie, op. cit., pp.45-46).

Even supposing that, somehow or other, a farmer's flock escaped these dangers, there were still the risks of lambing, drowning in ponds and bogs, excessive medicines, starvation, snowstorms, droughts, and so on. No wonder the careful shepherd was of such importance.

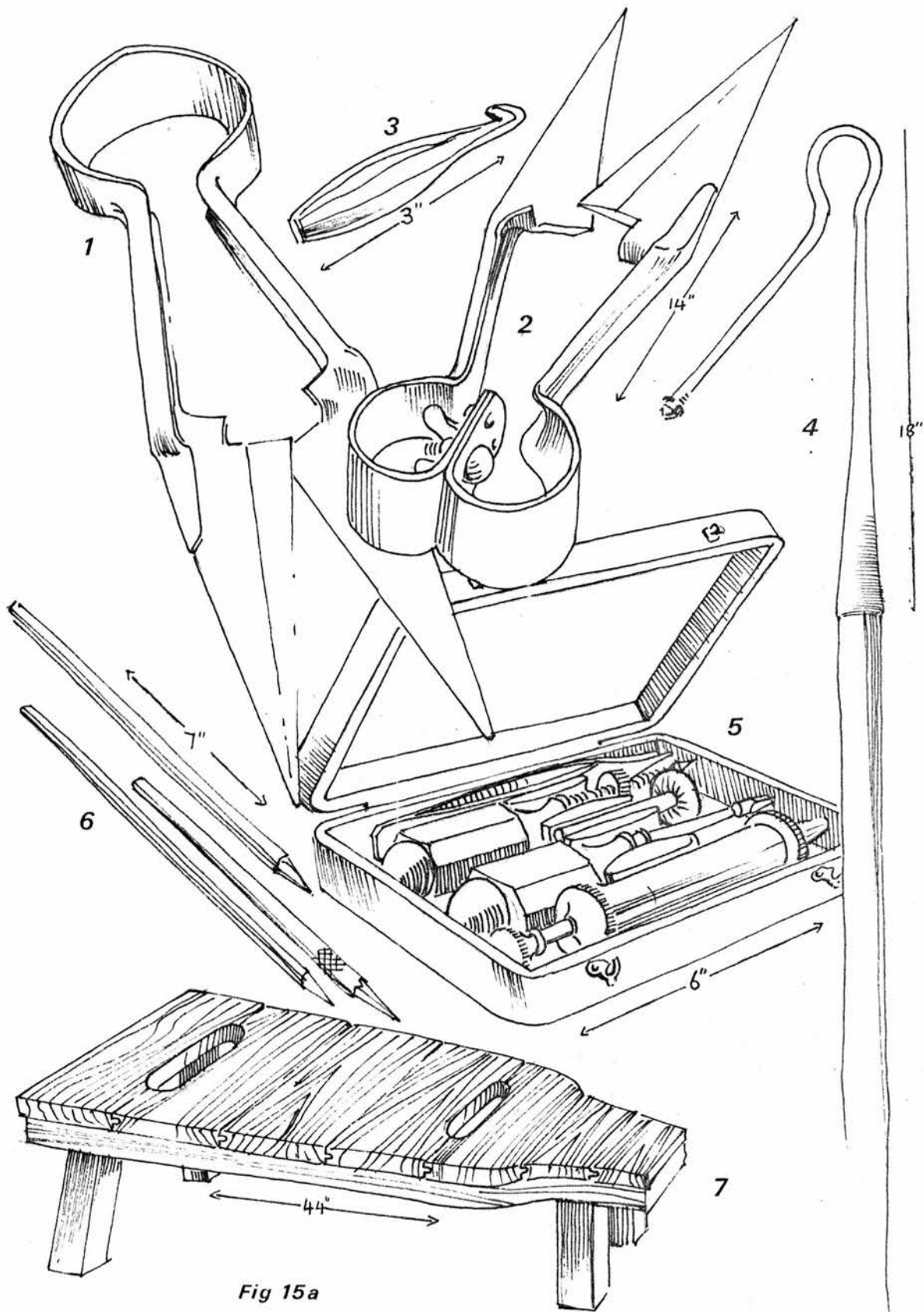


Fig 15a

1.2. Clipping Shears

3. Shepherds bone crochet hook

4. 18th 19th c Crook

5. Set of sturdy boring instruments

6. Wooden pins for fleeces

7. Clipping stool

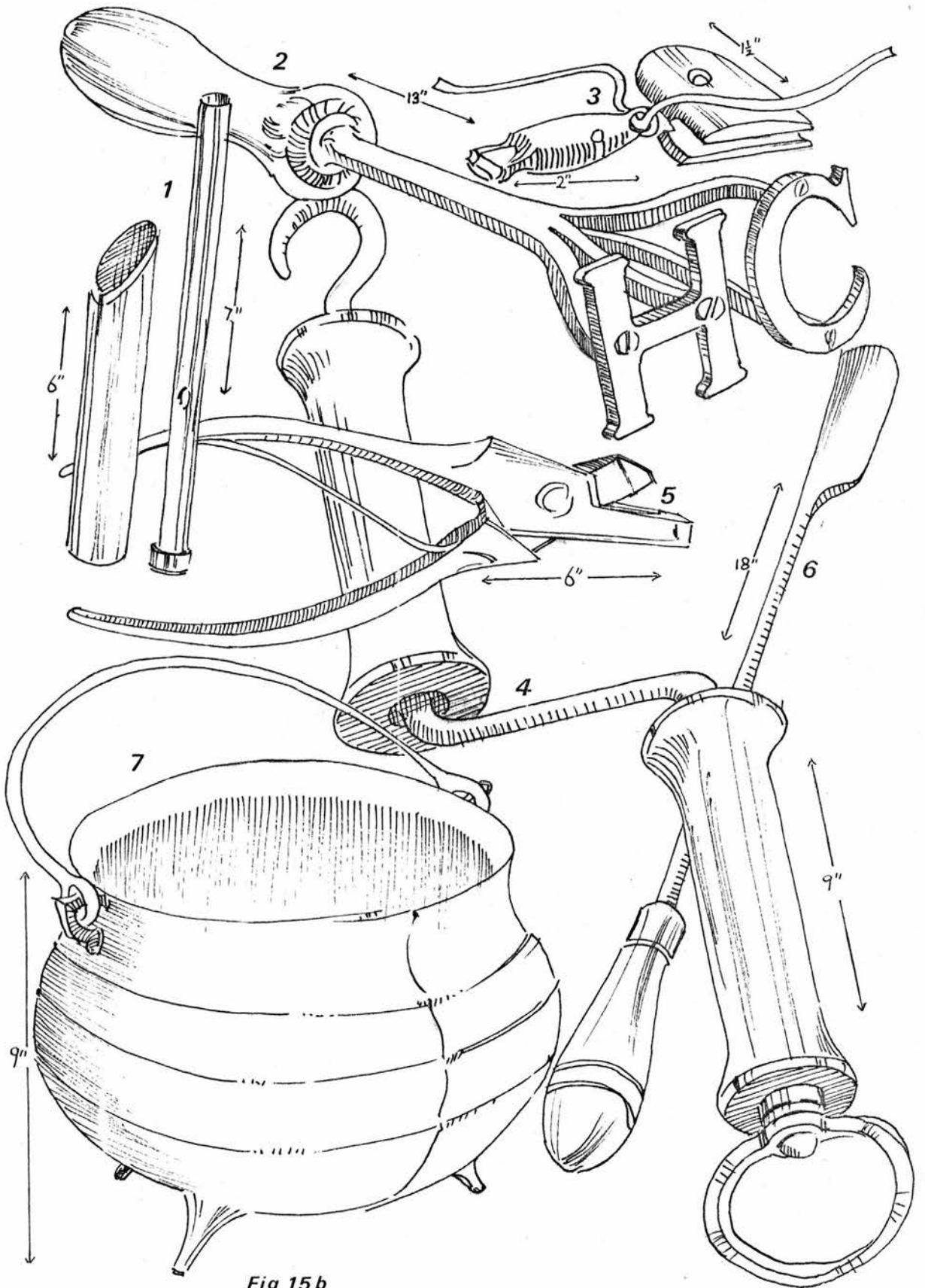


Fig 15b

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|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Dosing tubes            | 4. Thraw-cruik for twisting hay ropes |
| 2. Marking iron or 'buist' | 5. Ear markers 'bits'                 |
| 3. Bone whistles           | 6. Birning iron                       |
|                            | 7. Tar pot                            |

## Chapter nine: THE SHEPHERD'S LIFE

### 1. Two Shepherd Families

Most good shepherds were sons of shepherds. Their skill was considered in part a matter of heredity, though any small boy in a herd's family could not help but learn the general principles of his father's craft, for the work went on all around him. Continuity of tradition, as well as depth of knowledge, were inherent in the old shepherding life, for it could happen that a hirsell was looked after by more than one generation of the same herd family, and where this was not so herds still tended to remain within the same district when they moved. Large numbers of children, most of them marrying with other shepherd or farm servant families in the neighbourhood, produced over the course of many years a great social cohesiveness, in which everyone seemed related to everyone else. There was also a general familiarity with the various farms of the area, which came with such occasions as clippings and smearings, with a hiring as lambing man or byrewoman, or with ordinary gossip.

### The Riddells

In his autobiographical writings James Hogg recorded his upbringing as a shepherd. Probably in imitation of him, Henry Scott Riddell, shepherd, poet and preacher, also sketched his own early life as the son of a shepherd who, he claimed, was "ranked among the principal improvers of

the Stock of this country when it was changed from the black-faced to the white-faced or Cheviot breed." <sup>1</sup> Indeed his father lived in the days when, according to Riddell, shepherds were independent rulers over their flocks:

"It was certainly the case that the shepherds in those days had more say, and perhaps took a much greater interest in the flocks which they tended, than the store-farmers that have arisen, are disposed in these later times to concede to them."

Henry Riddell was born in 1798 at Sorbie in Ewes, where his father Robert was herd. He was only two years old, when his father took an "out-bye" herding at Langshawburn, and he recalled later the evening gatherings in his house. His brothers were musicians:

"there was always music, and sometimes dancing both incidentally... the old frequently came along with the young... Many songs were sung so that I had great mental store of them."

Robert Riddell then became tenant of a small farm called Crieve or, later, Capelfoot, on the Water of Milk, where he stayed only a year. Henry tended cows, and in winter went to Corrie school, but had to give up when he got the measles. He had been boarded at various schools - Robertson, Davington, and Newmill on Teviot - when at Langshawburn, and "during some of the winters my father also hired a person into the house who taught his family."

The father then returned to herding, going to work with Mr. Scott of West Deloraine, "a gentleman to whom he

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1. The following account of Riddell's herding days is taken from his own letters and papers, in Wilton Lodge Museum, Hawick.

had been a shepherd in his younger days." Indeed, apart from his year as a tenant, Robert Riddell spent all his life herding with Scott and with the Borthwicks of Sorbie and Hopsrig, and he died at Deloraineshiel.

Henry Riddell and his brothers helped with peats, hay, and herding, and fished Clearburn Loch on summer evenings. The former went for a while to a school at Bellendean, of which the foundations could be seen until recently not far upstream from the modern farmhouse. The teacher was a Robert Linton, who used to travel about the country "with a donkey carrying a large pack of software goods." Away from school he spent a year as "assistant-boy" and "lamb herd" to the shepherd at Glencotha in Holms Water, kept cattle out of a meadow at Deloraine - a task that he found so easy that he passed the time fishing in the Ettrick, taming ravens, and building huts of turf-, and assisted the shepherd at West Buccleuch by looking after lambs in a remote part of the farm all summer. While at West Buccleuch he dug around in the ruins of the kirk up Rankle Burn, and began writing.

Riddell then moved to Todrig, where he met another shepherd, William Crozier, who produced a little book of poems called 'The Cottage Muse' when at Wolfhope on Tushielaw, and when an old man was drowned in the Ettrick. After his father's death in 1816, Henry Riddell left Todrig, selling off his 'pack' of sheep to his eldest brother, William, who succeeded him as shepherd, and, with a little money, went to Biggar, where he began his studies to become

a preacher. In 1832, when William was tenant in the farm of Ramsaycleughburn, Henry was appointed 'minister' at Teviothead.

### The Scotts

The reminiscences of the late Tom Scott about his family provide a rare picture of the background into which a shepherd was born towards the end of the nineteenth century, and of early youthful days in remote places. The story may be told partly in his own words.<sup>1</sup>

Jamie Scott, Tom's great grandfather, came from the north to a herding at Minto, where he married a servant. About 1820 Jamie and his wife were living at Glenreif, on the farm of Burnfoot in Ewes, where he herded for Alexander Pott, the farmer. Six children were born there. Tom's grandfather, also Tom, was the eldest son. He and his brothers, Sandy and Yed (Adam), were all herds, while Andrew and John went to Australia where one became a school teacher. Mary, the only daughter, married a man who had a small mill in Hawick.

Tom assisted his father, Jamie, in the double herding at Glenreif until he got married in 1850 to Mary, daughter of Jamie Telfer, the shepherd at the neighbouring Carretrig. Yed then replaced Tom until their father retired. Jamie

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1. Tom Scott's account of his family is supported by those of his brothers Jock and Willie, recently recorded on tape.

Scott and his wife died comparatively young and were buried in the Ewes kirkyard.

After Jamie's retirement, Yed took a single herding at Dryden, on Commonsides, and when his parents died he got married to Ellen Pringle, whose father was herd at Dalgleish. Their only son, Jamie, was first a schoolteacher, then served through the first world war, and afterwards became a minister.

Grandfather Tom left Glenreiff and set up house with his wife at Roughside, on the farm of Otterstonelee in the North Tyne, where they were for several years. They then shifted to Chirdonhead (Jardinehead) on the same farm, so as to be nearer the school at Falstone. It is said that when his brother Sandy took the double herding at Kielderhead with his son, they were bound to take over an old man whom they found in a box bed in the house, unable to rise, and that they looked after him for four years until his death. While at Chirdonhead, all Tom's children were born, Jamie, Ann, Jock, Bessie, Sandy, Andrew, Willie and Yed. Jamie vividly remembered the winter of 1860, when his father made little wooden mallets and he and his sister went out to break up the frozen heather, and the sheep followed them. On that occasion the heather was also harrowed to break the crust of snow on it, and the family was kept awake at night by the rattle of sheep's horns on the walls of the house as the animals huddled in for shelter and warmth. In summer Chirdonhead proved to be "an awful place for adders".

Jamie filled his trousers with grass as a protection and jumped on them, but "there were always two or three in place of one killed."

From the Tyne Grandfather Tom went to Doecleuch on Skelfhill, and then, after a few years, was offered the herding at Slaidhills on Commonsides by Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson:

"I don't know who Mrs. Stevenson was but my grandfather and her were foster brother and sister, having both been nursed by my greatgranny, and as she always looked on him as a brother that's why she got him to Slaidhills..."

Some of grandfather Tom's sons put a loaded gun in the fire at Slaidhills, and a hole was blown in the ceiling. Not because of this, it should be said, Tom eventually shifted to Brownrig, also on Commonsides, and retired when over eighty, as did his brother Yed on the same farm.

His eldest son, Jamie, had been to school at Falstone during the summer, but he stayed at home in winter doing odd useful jobs to help out. Some of the varied pupils at the school actually grew beards, and the chief sport was not football but wrestling in the Cumberland style, which Jamie learned very well, as did his brother Jock.

Jamie started herding with his father, but then he and Jock went to herdings in County Durham, walking all the way there with a third man, who, on getting a first view of Weardale, did not like what he saw and walked all the way back. They continued to wrestle, throwing even the champions, and Jock was particularly famed for his

skill in "the cross buttock" throw:

"I've heard my father say when they were both herding in Durham there was a sports meeting on the Saturday afternoon. Father set off at daybreak with blackface hogs to the wintering. It was 18 miles. He got them there at 1 p.m., had some dinner, and set off for the sports, as he'd told Jock to bring his strip, and if he didn't manage there in time he'd to try and win both weights. When he got there he just won the 10½ stone and they (i.e., the brothers) met in the final of the 11 stone. Father said, 'If I'd let him get in the cross buttock he would have won'."

When they left Durham, Jamie gave up herding and turned gamekeeper on the Bowhill grounds of the Buccleuch estate. After being there for a while, he one day got onto a partly broken grey horse in the policies. It ran away, and in trying to keep it from running in below trees with low branches, he caused it to rear up, and it came over on top of him. The horse recovered and chased off, trailing Jamie twice round the policies as his foot was "hanked" in the stirrup. He was carried home, and was off work a year with a broken hip joint.

He regained his health, and married a girl called Annie Cresswell Carr, from Shotley Bridge, who was then tablemaid at Bowhill. While on their honeymoon at Shotley Bridge Jamie won a handicap race. They set up house at Stanhope-foot, on Deloraine, where the Riddells had lived for a while, and after a brief spell near Ettrickbridge, went to live at Andrewsknowe, Canonbie, where Jamie was keeper. Here Annie died, leaving two daughters.

Jamie then married the girl who kept house for him, Helen Telfer, daughter of Jamie Telfer in Broomieknowe. Tom was born in 1892, his brothers Jock and Willie in 1894 and 1897.

On the return from Durham, Jamie's brother, Jock, married a servant lass at Linhope, where he was young shepherd. She was from the island of Mull. They lived at Carretrig, in what was then the old herd's house with a clay floor and is now the steading still to be seen, re-roofed, beside the road. Jock carried his first child from the old to the new house about eighty years ago. While at Carretrig, Jock took part in the sports at the Bilhope gathering, winning the wrestling seven years in succession. Then, one winter, he took 'flu, but "rose from his bed and went to the hill as it was a snow drift", and as a result developed pneumonia from which he died a week later. His widow and the four children left at the May term and returned to Mull.

The other brothers were herds except for Willie who had had a fever and stayed with his uncle Yed at Common-side. The youngest, another Yed, herded at Skelfhillhope and Shielswood, while Sandy was shepherd at Twislehopehope ("Cooslophop") until, also being a great athlete and especially at jumping and pole vaulting, he injured his back when he landed wrongly and had to earn his living with a cadger's cart. Andrew stayed at school till he was eighteen so as to become a teacher, but he also took up herding, succeeding Jock at Carretrig, where he herded the Hope hirsel for twenty-nine years. He then bought the Fiddleton smallholding for cropping and grazing two cows and twenty sheep. He also carted stones for the road. In a little while he sold his property, went back to herding at Trowupburn in Northum-

berland, and then, as a retired man, lived at Jedhead and Henwoodie, at both of which places his sons herded. He died at Old Northhouse.

Jamie Scott and his family went from Canonbie to Rotheryhaugh on the Irthing, a desolate country. There was no stock and "blackfaced hogs were to heft on." Jamie, now herd again, and his sons had to help the sheep to settle.

The house at Rotheryhaugh consisted of two rooms and a 'back kitchen' downstairs, two rooms upstairs in the main part, and one room up the backstair. For fuel the family used peat, some of it brought down by the river in thick chunks, and coal dug from a surface outcrop near 'Little Tipalt'. From Rotheryhaugh all three boys rode to school on one Shetland pony. After five miles they left the pony at Wardrew farm, and then walked another two miles to the school at Gilsland. This they did for three years, but when the fourth child was of school age, and no further pony could be found, the family moved. One pleasure which the boys got in the Irthing valley was when Tom Robson from Bellingham came over to hunt two days with the Border pack, which he did twice each winter. Father and the young herd fed the dogs and looked after the horses, and would set off in the early morning to bar holes.<sup>1</sup> There was one hole "in

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1. Many foxholes had names. On Larriston Fell, for instance, there were the 'Holm Holes', which a farm servant, with a byrelamp to light his work, used to block up with stones in the night before the hunt, so that the fox could not get back in; the 'Pleughman Holes' near the Dinlabyre march; and 'the Grindstane Holes'.

the face of the Shotscaur" that they could not bar, so they lit a fire in the entrance to keep the foxes out. The reward was two sovereigns each, and on one occasion a fox's head with double tusks, which was then stuffed and is now in the Crown Hotel, Hawick.

From the Irthing the Scotts went to Haining House on the farm of Roachburn, and with the birth of a second daughter, returned to Scotland, Jamie going to the herding at Lodgegill, far up in the hills at the head of Tarras Water. Here the boys completed one more year at school, which meant a climb over the hill and down by Arkleton to the school in Ewes. The next moves were after three years, first for a year to Giddenscleugh, then for seven years at Hawkass, two years at Old Northhouse, and finally to Commonbrae.

It would be impossible, in the present context, to follow Tom and his brothers to all their herdings among the Border hills. Between them they seemed to acquire a knowledge of almost every hirsell in the area. Tom himself was hired at fourteen to Falnash, lambed at Brownrig and got 30/- for the five weeks, went on to the Craig and other farms including Eweslees, Meerlees, and Nether Horsburgh. Eventually he owned the small farm of Shiringscleuch. There was always something to remember about each place. At Eweslees, for instance, there were the clippings at which the herds took porridge from a great bowl with their horn spoons, and there too John Grieve, a ploughman at



Pl. 51 The Scott family at Hawkhass, Penchrise,  
c. 1920.



Pl. 52 Three shepherds and their dogs relax in  
the Cheviots. Plaids are carried by two  
men but are not in use. n.d.

Shaws about 1880 and then ploughman at Eweslees, had acquired five milk cows, married Barbara Scott, the farmer's daughter, within a year after he had made her pregnant, and "there was a marriage, a birth, and a death in ae night at Eweslees." <sup>1</sup> Grieve thereby got the farm, and, it is said, used her own money to bury his wife. At Meerlees the stones of the old house were used for a stell, and "lillies came up where the old house had been," while trout were supposed to cross the rushy gap between the Crow Burn and the Rankle Burn. Tom received his notice at Meerlees for going to a sale instead of out to his sheep one day.

"Now", Tom concluded, "I've tried to give you some of the Scott history from 1820, for what it's worth."

## 2. General Background to the Shepherd's Work

The outline of a shepherd family's history omits all the day to day domestic life and herding work which all such families shared. The shepherd's yearly round has been described in the previous chapter; in this one an attempt is made to picture the scene at home, flittings, terms of employment, and other affairs that together formed the setting of the shepherd's working life. For convenience a beginning is made with hiring and forms of payment.

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1. Tom Scott's own words. Barbara Scott was married and gave birth to a baby that died soon after delivery - all on the same night.

### Hirings and Wages

For a boy to find a seasonal job looking after cattle or speaned lambs all that was needed was a verbal agreement with the farmer who was often the man whom the boy's father served as shepherd. Indeed this method of hiring was used throughout the centuries for shepherds and other farm servants, and a recommendation from a friend was perhaps as good a way as any of finding the right man. In April 1655 Andrew Hay, living at Haystoun, told John Hay that "Jamie Stevisone is speiring out a servant man to yow, and a Shepherd & noltherd".<sup>1</sup> Written testimonials or 'Lines' were sometimes required in later times. On 5th April 1776 Walter Deans in Howcleuch wrote:

"This doth testefy that william Clark hath served me as my herd and that he leaves me now so as a onest man good herd and faithfull servant as I shall subscribe". 2

More recently, in 1910, George Grieve in West Buccleuch was advised by a friend in Eskdalemuir, that

"if you have not got a young man for Repelawshiel... there is a young Shepherd (named John Little)... which I think would suit you. He is son of John Little who was once at Aberlosk". 3

There were particular occasions on which shepherds were hired. Early in the seventeenth century the Earls of Buccleuch or their representatives met the men who were to

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1. Haystoun Papers.
  2. West Buccleuch Papers.
  3. Ibid.

take charge of the Buccleuch flocks on a day in April or early May, and agreed on the 'conditions' under which each herd was employed. Throughout the period, the farmer met the shepherd whom he had discovered by report or using his own wide knowledge of the possibilities, in much the same way as the Earl of Buccleuch did, and the two bargained over the terms. Employment was not a one-sided business, as shepherds had a clear idea as to who would prove a good master and who a bad, though they were not always in a position to be selective. Thirdly, there were the hiring fairs in the towns, which were occasions of great celebration as well as of important business, and were rather for ploughmen and harvest workers than for shepherds. The parties to a possible bargain at a fair met in the usual street or other recognised place - the Tower Knowe at Hawick, for example. The farmer made for the man he wanted, spoke with him about the terms of employment, and if the bargain was struck they shook hands, and the new employee was given 'arles' of about one shilling as a final mark of agreement.

Mr. John Lorimer, for forty years herd at Badlieu, described hirings as they used to be earlier this century.

People moved usually at the May term, he said, but "folk didna flit much". He attended hiring fairs at Biggar and Peebles where "I've seen the streets full" of men and women waiting to be "fee'd". Many went for a day's fun at the dances, roundabouts, gipsy shows, and the horse sale at Biggar. It was a time to gossip. Herds, in far fewer numbers than ploughmen, were distinguished by their sticks. The farmer

approached. "Are ye for fee-in'?" "No" or "Aye" was the answer. Companions walked on, not wishing to overhear the argument. The 'arles' sealed the bargain.

The fairs died out in the nineteenth century or a little later,<sup>1</sup> and reliance was placed on the old system of direct communication. The farmer kept a look-out for suitable shepherds, the herd for suitable vacancies. Of course, it was common for shepherds to stay put, and in comparatively recent times many a herd's kitchen proudly displayed on the wall a framed certificate of long service granted by the Highland and Agricultural Society. Few men could better the 63½ years of Robert Melrose at Craig Douglas, where Melroses had been for generations, but in the same neighbourhood there were the Laidlaws at Syart, Laidlaws at Bowerhope, Shiels at Berrybush, and so on, all shepherd families with long and continuous service on their farms. Such people hardly ever saw hiring fairs.

From time to time, usually in the middle of winter, the farmer 'spoke' to his herd, asking him to stay on and offering occasionally an improvement in conditions. To a really long established shepherd the farmer had little to say, and it was often the herd who had to ask for a rise. A good shepherd was honest, careful, observant and calm. He was willing to help with the hay harvest, ready to repair

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1. A few hiring fairs continued until the 1930s. In the nineteenth century they came under fire from local newspapers, which condemned the fairs as excuses for immorality.

bridges and dykes, and controlled his dog quietly and kindly. He was not, generally, a mover, and a farmer was glad to have such a man remain with him, for in such stable circumstances the sheep stock benefited for the herd's intimate knowledge and experience.

Shepherds have always been paid in two ways; on the one hand there was a sum of money, often no more than a token amount, while on the other there was payment in kind, which meant an allowance of what were called, recently at any rate, "perquisites" - meal, potatoes, and fat sheep among other items.

The Crown accounts relating to Ettrick Forest contain references to the employment of men for looking after sheep and sheep business there. In 1456 a sum of 26/8 was paid "pro custodia ovilis in dicta foresta de Ettrick".<sup>1</sup> Nearly a century later, in 1540, there were payments for keel, smearing tar, "pro cauteris vulgo birnyng irnis" used in marking sheep, for clipping, the rent of a wool store in Selkirk, and the carriage of wool to the port of Leith.<sup>2</sup> Andrew Quhyte and George Hoppringill were paid for clipping royal flocks, "et lie hirsling et aliis eorum laboribus circa predictas oves".<sup>3</sup> In the same year allowances of meal were made to twenty herds for looking after sheep then in the King's possession, each man receiving five bolls (See Appendix VII).

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1. E.R., Vol. VI, p. 226.

2. E.R., Vol. XVII, pp. 172, 296.

3. Ibid., p. 296.

The annual engagement of herds by the Earl of Buccleuch, recorded from about 1610 to 1650, included payment in kind as part of the bargain. Among those hired in 1625 were:

"Gordie dickson in Linhope for keiping to Youre Lordship tua hirsellis ane of hogges and ane of auld scheipe to himselfe thertie soume paying to Youre Lordship of butter - 15 sten maire to himselfe tuele soums frie."

"Antone ellott in rugylie for keiping to Youre Lordship tua hirsellis ane of hogges and ane of auld scheipe to him selfe 12 soume frie..." 1

The 'soun' being a measure of land allowed for one cow or ten sheep, Antony Elliot, for example, therefore received as payment grazing for possibly two or three cows and about a hundred sheep. He did not, as Dickson and most other herds did, supply any butter in return. As will be seen, the system closely resembled that of succeeding centuries.

A few of the Earl's herds had rather different or less defined tasks. In 1627 Thome Achesone, herd "in the Sclaid hilles", was in charge of "oxen in the tyme of summer and ane hirsell of sheipe all the zeire", for which he was allowed eight soums, while "Richard erente" was employed to herd "kyne" only, in summer at Kershope and in winter at Hudshouse, "and to maw and wine to thame 60 dargis of hay and the ane halfe to be mawin on my Lordis chairges". He too was given eight soums.<sup>2</sup> Arrangements were made more precise in 1628, when soums for cattle and sheep were specified and the herds were allowed to graze horses also. In

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1. B.M., 943/1.

2. Ibid.

addition money replaced butter. After Dickson's departure, "Jon heislope in Linhope" was allowed "to himselfe tuentie fyve soume to witt 8 auld nolt and the rest in Sheipe paying for everie soume £5 - £125 wt tua hors".

Two horses were usual, though some herds had none, and Robert Elliot in "mospatrickehope" had "thrie naiges". Every herd paid between £3 and £5 per soum, except for Erente's successor, William Scott, who supplied one stone of butter for every milk cow he kept.<sup>1</sup>

Members of the more important Scott families generally conducted the hirings of the Buccleuch herds. In 1625 "the gudman of harden" was in charge, while Buccleuch himself made the bargains in 1628.<sup>2</sup> In 1645 it was observed that at least seven out of the fifteen Buccleuch herds had from two to five soums more than they should, so a fine was imposed:

"It is ordained be my lorde that everie one of thir foirsd heardis sall make the grounde qrupone they are to duell voyde of all goodis except my lordis & the soumes allowed to themselves And that they sall pay Ten pund for everie oversoume to be dewlie exacted wt thair maill." 3

During the decade 1625-1635 changes in the Earl of Buccleuch's herds were frequent. Among the fourteen in 1625 only two remained with the same hirsell the whole time. However, as usual, flitting was very local. In 1651, with

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. B.M., 928/45.

the death of Earl Francis, the practice of keeping sheep directly owned by Buccleuch, was almost entirely given up, the only survival being the occasional use of a farm such as Thickside or Branxholm Park for impounded stock for which a herd was specially hired.

However, the conditions upon which shepherds were employed continued in general use. A shepherd hired for Whitshiels at Whitsunday 1680 was allowed ten soums free for his service, and a further eight soums for which he had to pay £40. If he had any extra soums he had to pay £10 for each one.<sup>1</sup> In effect the allowance of soums amounted to the right to graze the two or three cows a herd needed for supply of milk and butter, and to keep a number of sheep among his master's. These sheep were known as the shepherd's "pack". Grass for cows and a pack remained the basis of the herd's wage until the end of the nineteenth century; and it was also common to add quantities of meal, articles of clothing, small sums of money, and, later, potatoes. The shepherd went on supplying butter made from his cow and ewe milk until the close of the eighteenth century.

Robert Elliot in Hermitage made more elaborate arrangements with a herd in May 1755:

"Adam Beatty Herds Sundhope from Whitsunday 1755 to Wh<sup>d</sup>. 1756 the Said Adam beatty is to herd the hogs on Blak Clewgh & keep Rob Beatty to help him fore 50 Sheeps Gress and 2 Cows Gress & a horses Gress and a

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1. S.H.P., no. 1127.

Cows milk of mine & 3 bowls of Oatmeal And he is to mentain the herd of Grittmoure and to mentain the Smearers that Smears all the Sheep on the Toune fore which I am to Give him the Treak of the first 20 Deed hogs after they are Smeard the said Adam Beatty is to ma and win me Six Darg of hay and Carry me 2 Paks of wool & Seek me 2 Trees of Tarr and to help with the milburn hay inning and to help in with the Brodly & Gorenr. Corn if Desired fore half a boule of horse Corne to his mear & his wife is to Spin 6 Slips of Tow yarn to me & to herd what Stirks I put there among the milk Cows & winter me 6 beasts in the house if Required and Pay the balie Dargs...".<sup>1</sup>

When James Grieve hired Ninian Elliot once again for the herding of Riccarton in 1794 he allowed him grazing for two horses, three cows, and five score sheep, "with a Bit of ground to plant potatoes upon". As before Ninian had to help in carrying wool and tar, and he was expected to keep a boy during the summer for looking after young cattle grazed there.<sup>2</sup>

Single herds who lived in the farm 'toun' rather than in a cottage near their hirsle were allowed their meat and lodgings in the farmhouse as part of their wage, while 'outbye' men were similarly allowed to cut peats and to win hay for their cows. By 1800 Grieve forbade his herds

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1. Braidlie Day Book, pp. 74-75.

2. G.P., Diary no. 9, p. 100.

milk their 'packs'. He also disliked having two brothers in a double herding as it left no check upon either.

When Gideon Nichol was hired for Bellhill in 1877 he received a wage of £10, grass for a cow and 25 sheep, and meal.<sup>1</sup> His successor in 1880, Archibald Anderson, received the same, and it was reckoned that his total income would, with the produce of the sheep, be about £320. Potatoes were either allowed by the cart load, or else ground was provided for sowing them. Thus a herd's house about 1900 had around it a hen house, a pigstye, a field for the cow, and a potato garden. The house itself was provided free by the farmer.

In general the pack system was thought to possess substantial advantages. The shepherd felt some independence in being able to manage his own small stock, which he had usually paid for, though he had to suffer bad years from which a guaranteed money wage would have saved him. The farmer considered that pack sheep running with his own meant more concern by the shepherd in looking after the hirsels. It was a matter of argument whether the pack sheep should be marked off at the start, which meant that the herd might favour them at the expense of the others, or whether the 'pack' should be decided towards clipping and market time, in which case the herd might pick out all the best sheep. The system depended much on mutual trust and honesty. It occasionally broke down; in January 1801 James Grieve observed:

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1. West Buccleuch Papers.

"It is a practice highly improper for Herds to Keal their Packs in the same way as their masters, and much more so to Boost them with the same letter. I am told the Herd at Sundhope has his boosted with a G, the same as mine. There is therefore nothing to distinguish them but the Lugg mark and too often there are no luggs left upon the skins at all. This I will quarrel him for..." 1

When shepherds at Eildrig in 1888 mysteriously substituted two sheep in place of two pack ones that had died, the matter went to law before it was cleared up.

The herd had his pack sheep scattered among all the cuts. They knew their own, and clipped them separately so as to sell the correct fleeces. A pack kept a herd on a place. With the pack went the perquisites - peats for the winning, grazing of cows in return for boarding a young herd, 60 stones of oatmeal, a ton of 'tatties', and the house. A single man got no perquisites, but was paid £12 a year and allowed his board. A herd could make extra money by selling eggs, butter, fat pigs, a stirk, and in general he was a thrifty man with little to spend money on.

The whole business of settling a hiring bargain was often softened by a few gifts. After discussion on the Tower Knowe, the parties would adjourn to the Tower Hotel for a celebratory drink, while herds who were asked whether they were "stoppin' on" by Moffat in Craik were given a quart bottle of whisky, a "kirnie Banna", and a cake of shortbread, whether they were or not. Such entertainment added colour and cheer to shepherding as it used to be.

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1. G.P., Diary no. 12a, p. 3.

### The Shepherd's Dwelling

A single herd could move in to the farmhouse or the loft above the byre with little trouble, as he had few possessions to carry with him. But a shepherd who had just got married and was setting up house, or a family going from one farm to another, had furniture and other accumulated household goods to move, and this required at least one horse and cart. At one flitting up Yarrow early in the nineteenth century three carts were necessary, two for the furniture and another filled with straw for the people.<sup>1</sup> The farmer generally provided the cart; if only one was needed it usually came from the farm to which the herd was flitting, but a second one could be made available on the farm which he was leaving. The best for the purpose was the 'lang' cart, which was used for all sorts of occasions; it conveyed the hay and the corn sheaves to the steading, the coffin to the funeral, and the pets and hens, as well as the furniture, at a flitting. Since carts sometimes 'couped', it was prudent to pack more valued possessions in boxes.

With the help of neighbours removal was soon accomplished. Providing the distance was not too great, the herd generally paid a visit to his new abode two months before the flitting so as to 'put in' his garden. With the cart went cured hams and a sack or more of peats to

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1. Bathgate, Janet: Aunt Janet's Legacy to her Nieces, p.2.

keep things going until new ones were cut and dried. Cows had to be driven from one place to the other across the hill tracks that the cart also followed. At one flitting from Riskinhopehope (commonly known as 'the glaur hole') in 1915, five children who were all sick with measles at the time were carried out lying across a bed and 'carted away'.

In earlier times, before the 'improved' cottages of the nineteenth century, there was little space in the small huts to put furniture, and establishing oneself in a new dwelling was quite easily and quickly done. However, the flitter had to bring most of the timber work, including doors and window frames,<sup>1</sup> and Janet Bathgate's family took their box beds with them to Dryhope.

At Dryhope the family stopped first "at a low, old thatched house" built of stone and turf, with the roof couples resting on the uneven clay floor and its one apartment having a single glazed window and a hole for the peat smoke to escape.<sup>2</sup> It was not good enough to live in, and so they were given a smearing house, smelling of tar and wool, as a dwelling until their new cot was ready. The herd's house at Hartleap where Janet worked was

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1. A detailed description of a Roxburghshire farm-servant's cottage, mid nineteenth century, but old-fashioned, is given by R. Shirra Gibb, who remarked on the need for the occupant to be his own joiner and blacksmith (Gibb, R.S.: A Farmer's Fifty Years in Lauderdale, pp. 16-17).

2. Bathgate, op. cit., p. 15.

"a dwelling of the most humble kind. You entered by a door in the centre of the house; on the left hand of the passage stood the cow, tied to her stake; a little further on there was the hay-neuk; and at the far end of the passage a door leading into the family apartment. Here there was a window of four small panes; the fire-place was on the centre of the floor; and the peat-reek, after coursing throughout the place, found its way outside by a hole in the roof. On one side of the fire was a long chair, that would seat three or four persons; on the opposite side was the peat-neuk, which had to be refilled from the stack every morning. The furniture consists of two box beds, a big press and dresser, a few three-footed stools, and a table." 1

Between the beds a door opened on a further room with a potato bin at the entrance, and against the wall barrels for oatmeal, pot-barley, salted meat, and salt butter. There were also the 'kirn', the bakeboard, girdle, kailpot, porridge pot, water stoups, washing tub, and some large flat earthenware dishes called the milk plates. In the living room a chest contained blankets and clothes, while spinning wheels for wool and lint, together with cards and wool, occupied a corner.<sup>2</sup>

With the improvement of houses during the nineteenth century, and the removal of the fire from the middle of the floor to a chimney in or against the end wall, the arrangement of the furnishings was slightly altered, while greater prosperity meant an increase in the variety and quality of the herd's possessions. "Enter the shepherd's lowly cottage, and you will be delighted with the arrangements", wrote a nineteenth century visitor. You sit near "a clear peat

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1. Ibid., p. 64.

2. Ibid., pp. 64-65.

fire... at one end"; there are chairs, a neat chest of drawers, the "bink" with crockery and cutlery, a cradle in the warmth of the fire, and an eight day clock,<sup>1</sup> the latter being a considerable advance on the sand-glass whose runnings-out were chalked up on a door.<sup>2</sup> The boxbeds still formed a partition in many cottages, separating off the room where the milk and provisions were kept. Among books on a shelf was a sheepskin bound Bible; the others were mostly the works of Boston and other divines, and the poems of famous poets from Milton to Burns. A meal was served on a table covered with a clean white cloth, woven by the herd's wife. By the end of the century cottages had large loft 'bedrooms' reached by a ladder or small stair, pantries and porches, and a new milkhouse added so that the old one could be turned into a small bedroom and the boxbeds thrown out.

Cooking was done over the fire. The wall chimney was equipped with a bar of iron or wood across, called the 'rantle tree', from which hung a chain known as the 'crook'. The pot used for boiling potatoes and for porridge, the kail pot, and the baking girdle were all hung on the 'crook', or on 'cleeks'. The swivelling arm, the swee, was a later alternative, used in many a herd's house. The burning peats

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1. Anderson, L., Literary Recreations of a Sheep-farmer, p. 83.
  2. Janet Bathgate also remembered being told: "Lassie, gang oot an' step yer shadow." This meant telling the time by counting the paces needed to cover the shadow's length (Bathgate, op. cit., p. 73).



Pl. 53 Cottage fireside - late 19th century.

Pl. 54 An untidy, broken grate, with a swee.  
Probably in a Newcastleton cottage.



lay on a rack of bars; some were put on top of a three-legged pot when cakes were to be baked. Within living memory the fireplace at Old Aberlosk was kept whitewashed round the fire, much as is still done in a few Hebridean cottages.

### Cottage Life

In his story 'Rob Dodds', Hogg pictured the shepherd, "auld Andrew, wi' his darned hose, and his cloutit shoon: his braid bannet...; his drink out o' the clear spring, instead o' the punch bowl; and his good steeve aitmeal parritch and his horn spoon, instead o' the draps o' tea, that costs sae muckle".<sup>1</sup> Oatmeal porridge was indeed the staple diet of the shepherds, until in the eighteenth century potatoes were introduced. There were however many other items upon which the average herd's family could rely. Meat came in many forms; on the hill there were hares, grouse and other 'game', and rabbits nearer at hand, while the farmer usually allowed the shepherd to dispose of the braxy sheep. In a good season and in more recent times, a pig could be fattened for slaughter each autumn. Some people kept hens. From the streams salmon and trout were taken, and in the seventeenth century it was remarked that shepherds who lived near St. Mary's Loch sewed plaids together around Michaelmas and caught great numbers of fish called "Red Waimbs" from the stream flowing out of the

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1. Hogg, The Shepherd's Calendar, Vol. I, p. 9.

Loch of the Lowes. These they salted down in vessels.<sup>1</sup> From at least the eighteenth century till the end of the period salted herring were bought in barrels, and the strings of herring hung along garden fences are still remembered by a few. Until comparatively recently, many a cottage kitchen had its smoked or salted hams, braxy meat, and salmon hung on beam hooks. Butter and cheese, milk in various forms and mixed with porridge or potatoes, barley or pease bannocks, oatcakes, kail, and later the leeks and other vegetables from the herd's garden, all provided valuable nourishment, and shepherds at East Buccleuch and other nearby farms could take 100 dozen "pick-maa" eggs from Kingside Loch.

Plants growing on the hill or in streams were also valued. Nettles were used for a broth and, by some families, as a vegetable. In the famine which resulted from the snowy spring of 1740, the occupants of Berrybush survived on nettles boiled with a little salt and on "a kind of weed which grows among the potatoes in old gardens, provincially known by the name of Myles".<sup>2</sup> Blaeberrries were plentiful on open hillsides and in cleuchs, while along the higher ridge tops grew cloudberrries which could be eaten as picked or, after sugar became available, made into an excellent jelly.

The minister of Yarrow, James Russell, regretted that in the course of the nineteenth century barley bannocks and

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1. M.G.C., Vol. III, pp. 157, 180-1.

2. Napier, op. cit., pp. 36-7.

oatmeal porridge were to a great extent given up by the ordinary people. Four carts, "piled to the top with loaves", were sent up from Selkirk by Yarrow to Moffat, and these in turn were supplanted by the daily supply carts driven by 'cadgers'. Around 1800 Jean Dunlop had once a week carried all the bread needed in Yarrow on her back.<sup>1</sup> The cadgers brought such luxuries as tea and sugar, and in return took away eggs and butter from the farms and herd's cottages, though to make such an exchange the herd's daughter at Muttonhall on Blackhouse about 1880 had to walk several miles over the hills with her load. Early in this century a shepherd in the upper Tweed hills had a good if repetitive menu; for breakfast there was oatmeal porridge, followed by home-cured bacon and two duck eggs or up to six hens eggs, and, at midday, kail, potatoes and meat, with a milk pudding and a cup of tea. Further porridge was taken in the evening, and for any meal there were bread and scones, spread with home-made butter and jam. Special occasions such as Christmas meant black bun, shortbread, and other treats for the children.

The weekly cadgers, who took orders one week for the next, were the only means that many had of obtaining groceries, and miscellaneous items from clothes pegs to paraffin, unless a pedlar's cart called. There were various sorts

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1. Russell, James: Reminiscences of Yarrow, pp. 105-6. About 1820 James Hogg wrote to Blackwood that the Yarrow carrier came up every Saturday and Tuesday, reaching the Altrive Moss area at 12 noon (Blackwood, N.L.S., MS. 4719, p. 158).

of pedlar, distinguished from tramps by their selling of wares or skills. The Lorimers remember several calling at Badlieu; Heather Jock made scrubbers out of heather, while once a year a man came to sharpen knives, scissors and wool shears. Both cadgers and pedlars were, like drovers, the bringers of rumour and news.

According to tradition, many a farm had an illicit whisky still hidden away in a deep cleuch or remote hollow. One was in "a kind of rude cave" on the way up to the Minchmuir from Yarrow, and it was lit by fir roots burning in "an old rusted cruzie".<sup>1</sup> Others were on Dalgleish, Lodgegill, Ettrick Hall and up at Hoscoteshiel. At the same time, and earlier, small inns or mere cottages sold ale and whisky to the traveller, drover and passing herd. Thus at many stages down the central drove road through the Border hills drink was available; there was an inn at Crook-welcome, another at Deanburnhaugh, and a third below Old Northhouse; and houses in between, for instance, East Buccleuch, had barrels or greybeards full for those who called in.

In 1802 Hogg wrote of the Border shepherds:

"They delight greatly in poetry and music, in which sundry are considerable proficient. Burns's are the favourite songs, and the Scottish strathspeys the favourite music." 2

The singing of Burns' songs mingled with that of the old ballads. The fiddle, and, in more recent times, the

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1. Thomson, Life and Times of William Thomson, p. 29.

2. Hogg, J., 'A Journey through the Highlands of Scotland', Scots Magazine, Vol. 64 (1802), p. 815.



Pl. 55 The Andersons, shepherds at Blackhouse,  
c. 1910.



Pl. 56 In the folds at Potburn, Ettrick. The dogs  
have some of the 'beardie' breed in them.  
A turf coping adds height to the wall.

Jew's harp and the melodeon, provided music and accompanied dancing. Small rooms of herds' cottages nearly burst with the merriment, which cheered a December night far up among the hills, and, with the snow lying deep all around, it was common for guests to stay until morning when they could get home more safely. There was dancing and singing too at the 'kirn', held in the farm granary or barn, along with eating, drinking, and speeches. Card playing or a game of 'knap' might take a shepherd many miles over high ridges to another house for a long evening, while athletic sports and poaching expeditions also provided an excitement equalled, for the young men, by adventures like the raid on the serving girls celebrated in the song of the 'Browndean Laws'.<sup>1</sup>

Although, in the later eighteenth century and after, the shepherd became something of a reader and writer, superstition, custom, and the knowledge gained from experience still very much governed his daily routine at home and at work. Thus while in his spare time he might attend a debating society composed of other herds or become an expert on political and theological matters, he was to some extent merely imitating his more educated master, and for the greater part of his life continued to behave in the manner that accorded with the beliefs and practices of his ancestors. Thus, even in 1900 and later, tradition persisted with the herd where it had died out in the farmer's

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1. A version of this song is published in Tocher, no. 5 (1972), pp. 150-1.

family,<sup>1</sup> and in no facet of life was tradition so evident as in that of home cures and recipes.

The fat sheep allowed to the herd, or any dead sheep that he found, was boiled, often for eating, and usually for its fat or tallow. The smell of tallow was unpleasant, but the product was extremely useful. Each year, especially in the dark winter evenings, great quantities of tallow candles were made. The fat was heated to liquid, sieved, and poured into a vessel, which was then stood in another tub of hot water on the floor. Then a row of perhaps six cotton wicks, hanging down over a rod an equal distance on each side and with the hanging parts twisted together, was set over the grease. There were many such rods with their burdens of wicks; each one was 'dipped' into the grease and put back to cool, so that, if taken in turn, a coating of tallow gradually built up on the wicks by regular dipping and cooling. Tallow candles had to be pinched out, for if blown the offensive smell lingered. Shepherds also used tallow mixed with soot or 'lamp black' in a tin and heated as a polish for their boots, and, if taken from a sound killed sheep, especially from its kidneys, an ingredient in steamed puddings. It could be stored in a dried pig's bladder.

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1. Changes also occurred among the shepherds. In 1918 Andrew Linton in Gilman's Cleuch wrote that only older shepherds could identify plants by the local name. "The younger men are certainly less informed... than were their forefathers". This was, in Linton's view, the result of education - "Modern schooling tends to destroy the natural education of the people" (Linton: Grazing of Hill Pastures).

Ailments in humans and in stock were treated with an assortment of 'remedies'. Warts were smeared with a slug and, like ringworm, cured with a charm. The latter disease was common among cattle; if on a calf the affected part was smeared with treacle, and the cure was worked by the licking of the other beasts. Dosing for worms was with a mixture of turpentine and 'kirn' milk. For a dog this mixture was sometimes put in the gut of a rabbit, a piece about two inches long and tied at each end, then slipped into the dog, where it dissolved and removed the worms. Fresh cow dung, the skin inside an eggshell, or cobwebs were applied to bleeding wounds. At least in the Liddesdale area, a special instrument resembling a penknife with the end of the blade broken off across the full width was used to prevent toothache in young members of the family when they were about to leave on a summer's hiring; the end of the blade was heated redhot and applied to a particular spot on the ear.

The small, yellow flower called tormentil, growing wild on nearly every hill, seemed to be of exceptional importance. It hung in bunches to dry from a cottage ceiling, and was used as needed. For the 'scoor' in calves the dried stem and flower of tormentil were crushed and rolled very finely, heated with water like tea, cooled, strained, and put in milk. More interestingly, tormentil was an ingredient in the poultice known as "the Singdean Cancer Plaster."

According to the late James Scott of Overhall, the first known possessor of the plaster was Walter Scott, herd in Singdean, who was never heard to divulge the source of

his knowledge. He collected together plants from the hillside, including tormentil, and laid them out on a broad, wooden board that was kept in a little locked keb-house. When dry, the plants were crushed and mixed with "some other ingredients" to produce what was known to be an effective 'drawer' of surface growths.

The existence of the 'plaster' was widely known, and many strangers came to Singdean. Two women suffering from breast cancer came from Bewcastle and Duns; and it is said that when Scott had removed to Twislehopehope, a woman's breast, drawn off entire by the 'plaster', was found in the burn. The uncle of a man presently living in Newcastleton developed a growth in his heel which prevented him from walking. So at last he rode to Singdean for the poultice, which, after several applications, drew out the growth - "It had long white roots, like a leek". When at Broomieknowe, Tom Scott's father had a 'lump' drawn from his lip, and David Ballantyne, farmer in the Shaws, Liddesdale, had the plaster applied to a growth the size of a fist at the junction of his back and neck. The socket bled freely and was eventually cauterized with a blacksmith's iron. On this occasion Scott received no thanks, and apparently never used his 'cure' again.

Patent cures travelled the hillroads with pedlars, tramps, and wandering strangers. One shepherd's son was 'cured' with a mixture of waterplants suggested by a hill drainer and packman who happened to call in at a suitable moment.

Plaid, stick, and dog

The shepherd made his own clothes, as he did his own furniture, and provided most of his own entertainment. Cloth from wool spun and woven at home was used for the wide blue bonnets and coarse homespun coats of earlier times that were going out of fashion by the mid nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The best known and most characteristic article of clothing was the plaid, of white and black or white and brown check, which was worn in the seventeenth century and no doubt before. A description of the plaid in 1790 suggests that there may have been a social distinction involved:

"This plaid is made of fine woollen, generally five or six ells long, double at the middle, and made thereby two breadths of the cloth; sometimes at the doubling the end is not cut out. It is coloured according to fancy. The lower kind of people in the south part of the country some time ago wore them stripped black and white; the better sort chequered." <sup>2</sup>

Made of local wool and manufactured in the district, the plaid had usually "a dirty and smokey hue", the result of using sulphur or peat-reek to improve the white.<sup>3</sup> The doubling of the cloth was made to form a 'bag' at one end, for the purpose of carrying a lamb or some oatmeal, and while the wearing of the plaid died out in the early twentieth century shepherds still find it necessary to use

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1. In Yarrow in 1833 they were "no longer to be seen" (N.S.A., Selkirkshire, p. 48).
  2. A Treatise on Pasturage, pp. 250-1.
  3. Gulvin, C., The Tweedmakers, pp. 70-1.

Pl. 57

With his left arm in the nook, the herd swings the rest of the plaid round behind him and back across his left shoulder.



WEARING THE PLAID



Pl. 58

The nook hangs on the left.  
Some herds wore broad-brimmed  
hats in winter, caps in  
summer.

a lambing bag slung over the shoulder.<sup>1</sup> Some shepherds carried their knitting around in the 'pocket' of the plaid, and as they walked knitted their socks. Leggings were made out of flour sacks treated with linseed oil. By the nineteenth century, however, most clothing was bought. Clogs, probably the original footwear at all times, but later worn in winter, were acquired from 'cloggers', who, having once lived on the farms, had all gone into the developing towns and villages. Boots, too, both the 'coarse bits' for ordinary work and the 'fine bits' for Sundays, were made in the towns, and those from Newcastleton were especially popular. For church services and other important occasions the tailor-made suit and watchchain became fashionable; but shepherds and their wives still remember how as children they walked barefoot from the head of Tweed five miles and more down to the church at Tweedsmuir, in order to 'save' their boots.

In addition to the plaid, the shepherd commonly used a stick. Usually cut from a hazel tree and fitted with a horn handle, the stick was 'dressed' on winter nights by the fireside. A shepherd practised his skill in stick dressing by carving the shank and the horn top into decorative shapes such as birds, snakes and fish. Two main sorts

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1. Charles St. John, describing Sutherland in the 1840s, observed that with the Border shepherds there had come to the north the plaid, which, when wrapped round carefully, protected its wearer from rain and provided "a pocket or bag in which to carry anything or everything..." (St. John, C., A Tour in Sutherlandshire, Vol. II, pp. 247-250).

of stick existed; the 'neck crook' had a wide curving handle, while the 'leg crook', used for seizing a sheep by the hind leg, had a handle that curved down sharply and narrowly. The distinction between these types may not be an old one, as there is no hint of it in 1790:

"In some places the shepherds have a crook, which is a long staff, with a small semi-circular turn at the end of it: The end of this is forked like a small hammer; with this they easily catch hold of a sheep by one of the legs without doing it any hurt. This is not generally used in very extensive farms, as the sheep are too wild. The dogs are, among other things, trained to catch any sheep the shepherd, or herdsman, inclines." 1

No shepherd could carry out his work without a dog, and it may be assumed that men who looked after larger flocks in the fifteenth century and earlier needed their collies as much as their successors. The origin of the Border sheepdog remains obscure, but McCulloch has given a good description of the known history.<sup>2</sup> Some shepherds considered that a collie worked sheep because of its instinct to seek blood: "They're after blood." Consequently there was always a risk that a badly trained dog, or one difficult to train, would bite, and to prevent such 'gripping' a piece of wire was sometimes put through the dog's nose, so that close contact with the sheep or tangling in the wool made it draw back. Some herds tied a dog on a short length of rope to a ram, which could kill the dog if the two were linked too long. There were, however, stubborn

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1. A Treatise on Pasturage, p. 249.

2. See McCulloch, J.H.: Sheep Dogs and their Masters.



Pl. 59 Catching a ewe. Dogs and shepherd in action.



Pl. 60 Catching with the neck crook. The shepherd's coat hangs from the large lambing bag.

dogs that could not be properly controlled and they had to be 'broken' like a horse. The method of 'breaking' was kept secret. It was known as 'rareying',<sup>1</sup> and was carried on at night in a closed room or smearing house by a few skilled men to whom herds with unbidable dogs and those who went in for sheepdog trials resorted when their services were required.

A man at Twislehope not so long ago could 'break' both dog and horse. Part of the secrecy lay in the words spoken; the rest of the process, often, though not necessarily, involving some brutality, was kept quiet for obvious reasons. After a period ranging from a few days to two weeks the 'rareyed' dog emerged, its awkward will broken.

The hunting instinct of the collie, and the need for strict training, was commented on in 1790:

"The shepherd's dog as naturally hunts sheep as the pointer shows where game sit; and they as naturally run from them. The dog must be learned by threats and beating to desist when ordered, otherwise he would run them down and kill them. When he is become somewhat tractable in this respect, he may be learned to run to either side of the flock, by directing him with the hand to follow to a lesser or greater distance - and a variety of other things. The sagacity and tractability of this animal is surprising." 2

The ordinary training of young collies lasted six months or a year. Good dogs were born with the instinct to work sheep and to control them with the eye. They could

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1. The word 'rarey' apparently derived from the name of an American horse-trainer of the mid nineteenth century, Mr. Rarey, author of "The Art of Horse-Taming" (Sidney, S., The Book of the Horse, p. 559).

2. A Treatise on Pasturage, pp. 245-6.

recognise individuals, and pick out particular sheep wanted by the shepherd. The names given, usually of one syllable, could be easily shouted, and, together with a series of whistles and brief commands, constituted the language with which herds directed their dogs to remain still, to move in a desired course, and so on. Generally the dogs were kept in an outhouse, and were fed on meal, scraps, and boiled salmon from the burn. Puppies were given or bargained away at six weeks old, and grown dogs lived on average twelve years - less if used on steep ground. 'Beardie' dogs were not very popular as their long hair became clogged in snow. When a dog died it was put in a sack and buried, a stone with perhaps a hastily scratched name being placed over it.

There are several accounts of the close relationships which existed between shepherd and dog and of the feats of the collies. Hogg wrote much about Sirrah, "beyond all comparison the best dog I ever saw",<sup>1</sup> and both he and William Laidlaw sent to Blackwood's Magazine accounts of the dog that collected the Chapelhope ewes for milking while its master was at an open Cameronian sacrament beside the lochs below. No dog was more admired than Yarrow, who stole sheep on behalf of Murdison and Millar at Glenormiston without their immediate directions.<sup>2</sup> That shepherds kept a note of good strains of dog is evident; as Tom Scott said:

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1. Hogg, J., 'Further Anecdotes of the Shepherd's Dog', Blackwood's Magazine, Vol. II (1818), p. 623.
  2. McCulloch, op. cit., pp. 93-100.

"Great grandfather was noted for having the most distinct breed of black and tan collie. They had tanned legs, muzzel, breast and ears; they were very hardy and wise. They were handed down from generation to generation right to the present time... and a lot of the trial collies have their blood in them."

An idealised picture of a shepherd was commonly held a hundred years ago. He was seen as a sort of Biblical patriarch, wise, dignified, intelligent and calm, enjoying the independence allowed him by the farmer and fostered by the remoteness of his dwelling. Having only three or four days holiday a year - at New Year and fair days - he was rarely away from his hirsel, and appeared to be content with the circumstances of his life. This picture had elements of truth in it. The traditional position of the shepherd, whatever his character, was one which gained much respect, and he was the leading farm servant. Only in comparatively recent years, with the breakdown of tradition, have the lonely cottages been abandoned as too remote from the school, the doctor, and the grocer, and the shepherding life given up by the shepherd's children.



*Fig 16 A Border Shepherd*

*From an engraved bottle, dated 1841 and belonging then to Thomas Elliot, Howcleugh; bonnet, plaid, leg crook, dog and sheep are shown.*

## Chapter ten: MARKETS

The development of sheep-farming on a large scale in the Borders depended upon conditions that varied in kind and significance over the centuries. Among the more important factors were the laws governing markets, the pattern of trade, political circumstances, and the attitudes of landowners, but none of these was constant nor can be described in simple generalisations. Nevertheless, some outline of the economic background which encouraged and defined the growth of the sheep industry and against which the people and activities recorded in the previous chapters must be set, is attempted in this final section.

### 1. Trade in Sheep and Wool

#### Early Trade

Though commerce may have been part of the scene, on an extremely local scale, in the days of the Anglian settlers or even earlier, it is usually held that the produce of Border sheep flocks became more than a mere subsistence matter with the establishment of the great Abbeys in the twelfth century, and that it was encouraged still further by the growth of the burghs and when the central authority in Scotland, in the shape of the Crown, involved itself in pastoral farming during the fifteenth century and after.

Undoubtedly a Scottish wool trade to the continent was established in the middle ages, with the assistance of foreigners such as the Flemish settlers on the east coast, and equally certainly the monks of Melrose, Kelso and the

other Abbeys were closely involved. The buying merchant from abroad was bound by Scottish law to purchase wool only in a burgh,<sup>1</sup> and in the thirteenth century additional statutes protected even further the interests of the burghs by limiting transactions in hides, wool and cloth to brothers of the merchant guilds. The monks, however, were granted privileges which enabled them to market wool independently and so compete with the merchants, especially in days before the strengthened influence of the burghs. The medieval royal burghs of importance to the Border sheep-farms were Roxburgh, Jedburgh, Dumfries, Peebles and Selkirk, each providing a market over and above the Sunday markets in the kirkyard.

It has been claimed that sheep were the most profitable of all medieval farm stock, and that the flocks of the Border Abbeys were as large as any in Britain save a few in England.<sup>2</sup> Where farming was of a subsistence kind and no more, the milk, meat, and wool of sheep were equally valuable, but by the thirteenth century the north and midlands of England had a reputation for cloth made from native wool which attracted foreign buyers, and commerce developed there before it did in most of Scotland. Even when wool was available in quantity from the Melrose Abbey flocks it was at a disadvantage, for it was at a much less convenient distance from English and continental looms, but it must

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1. Davidson, J. & Gray, A.: The Scottish Staple at Veere, p.8.

2. Trow-Smith, History of British Livestock Husbandry to 1700, pp. 113, 145.

nevertheless have brought in considerable wealth. Wool was the first item of sheepfarm produce to become an article of trade.

In the south of Scotland, as in England, the landowners derived a great part of their income from sheep, and especially from the wool, just as the Abbeys did.<sup>1</sup> The position of a Border sheepfarmer, however, was different from that of his English counterpart in so far as the climate was generally more severe and the ground more exposed, these inhospitable conditions rendering the whole business of raising sheep that much more arduous and risky. Thus, with endless wars and storms disrupting life, and with less capital available, the farmer was unable to develop along commercial lines and remained near subsistence level, while in England a flourishing sheep industry grew up in Tudor times.

Progress south of the Border permitted the emergence of a distinction between the breeder and the feeder of sheep, and this distinction was to prove of considerable importance to the Scottish farmer. Sheep could be bred and raised on the rough hill country of the Forest, or on the Northumbrian fells, but they might never become more than skinny creatures barely able to survive the harsh conditions. If they were sold off to more gentle pastures in the south, they

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1. In 1389 Robert Earl of Fife, Guardian and Chamberlain of Scotland, exempted the Abbot of Melrose from payment of customs on "all thair wollys as wele of thair awin growing as of thair tendys of thair kyrkes" (Nat. MSS. Vol. III: no. 47). The teind wool was contributed by farmers in the area.

prospered in the warm sunshine and lush grasses. They became fat, the quality of the fleece improved, and the ewes were able to produce an extra lamb or two. The existence of men willing to buy sheep raised on the hills in order to fatten them in lowland meadows was a necessity for the development of hill breeding stocks but though such men were present in England the restrictions on trade between the two countries that lasted until 1707 limited their usefulness to the Scottish sheep farmers.

Internal limitations on trade were set by the Scottish Parliament, responding to the political necessity or the impoverished state of the country. In 1357, for example, the need to pay the ransom of one hundred thousand marks for David II, who had been released from captivity in England, resulted in a prohibition placed upon all exports of cattle and sheep, and in an act requiring all wool and fleeces to be given to the King in order, it is supposed, that he might sell them at a good profit to foreign buyers. Dearth or famine was a regular occurrence, and there were periods when restrictions on the export of stock and wool were almost continuously in force, as, for instance, in the later sixteenth century. Customs duties were charged on goods, whether they were destined for England or abroad, each animal and each fleece or 'skin' being subject to a payment. There were also attempts to maintain stability of prices for the benefit of the home consumer; on 18th August 1550 the prices of mutton were fixed at three standard levels, to counteract an excessively high peak

reached as a result of demand from visiting buyers. The impression conveyed by all such regulations is of a society with little to spare for trade.

The rules were, however, broken in various ways, sometimes illegally, sometimes by special licence. The latter system, introduced in 1574, lent itself to great abuse. James VI prohibited the export of many items, and then sold licences to individuals, an arrangement that even acts of Parliament could not prevent, and in 1585 it was stated that by means of the King's licences, wool, tallow and victuals, none of which should have been exported, were being taken out of the kingdom every day. Various 'gentlemen' were tempted by high prices to sell sheep and wool in England, either under a licence, or, if they could not get one, by smuggling. One has to imagine droves of sheep, and cattle, passing secretly among the hills, perhaps by night, in the care of drivers and skilled route-finders. They took to the "fels and other by-passages", and the English found sheep with a "kind of Hairy and very coarse wooll" coming down to their markets in considerable numbers.<sup>1</sup> Some people tried to evade customs duty by packing an excess number of fleeces into a sack.

In spite of the predominating needs of home consumption, and often hostile circumstances, there were evidently outlets, both within the bounds of Scotland and beyond, for the sheepfarmer's produce well before the union of the Crowns

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1. Lythe, op. cit., p. 199.

in 1603. Raw wool, for instance, was a principal means by which Scotland earned foreign capital. Compared with England, the home manufacture of woollen goods remained small and technically not very efficient, because most of the marketed wool went abroad, and the demand for the home clip could not meet the supply. Butchers required wedders for slaughter, and farmers themselves frequently needed stock to replenish their flocks after losses by storm. It was however the example of English commercial success in making manufactured woollen clothing a valuable export industry that helped to launch new Scottish attitudes and ambitions in the more peaceful days of the early seventeenth century.

#### Seventeenth century sales of Sheep and Wool

The selling of sheep locally composed the greater part of the legitimate trade until well after 1600. Markets were not essential for this. There were few people in a position to put large numbers up for sale, and most transactions must have been very small affairs conducted by private arrangement. After the Union of 1603 the ordinary sheepfarmer, whose forbears had lived in the age of feudal loyalties, became a rented tenant whose concern was to extend his stock, and he purchased or sold a score or two of ewes or hoggs according to his need. Tenants of a more ambitious sort, aware of what had happened over the previous century in England, may have felt that similar

progress could be made in the Borders, especially as the Scottish Parliament seemed to be inclined to promote cloth manufactures in emulation of the English.

As evidence of the local nature of transactions the sales account for 1611 of sheep belonging to Scott of Buccleuch is of interest.<sup>1</sup> Among the first detailed records of its kind in the Borders, the account shows that all purchasers were people farming in the area, a few of them being minor lairds:

TO

"Wat Scott of ye laik"	-ewe hoggs	-593 @ £45 per sc.
John Gledstanes	-dinmonts	-1 h. @ £60 " "
Laird of Langlands	-ewes	- 40 @ £70 " "
Walter Scott in Whithope	-ewes & lambs-	30 @ £73.6.8 ""
John Scott of Teindside	- " "	- 40 @ " " "
"hob grenscheills in Langhoip"	- " "	- 20 @ £70
Will Dickson in Shaws	- " "	- 10 @ £36.13.4
"ye guidwyfe of Utter huntlie"	- " "	- 40 @ £70 per sc.
Robert Scott of Shielswood	- " "	- 40 @ £66.13.4 "
Walter Grieve in Middlestead	- " "	- 20 @ " " "
Arthur Scott of Newburgh	- " "	- 20 @ £70
Hob Wilson in Singlie	- " "	- 30
William Scott in Catslackknow	- " "	- 56
James Hall of Penchrise	-shot ewes & lambs	- 20 @ £57
Thomas Cairns in Langhope	- keb ewes	- 32

This pattern continued until the 1630s, but by then purchasers from further afield were appearing. In 1633 ewes and lambs, draft lambs and draft wedder hoggs from the Earl of Buccleuch's flocks were bought by at least twenty-five different farmers, some of whom shared the purchase and among whom were John Geddes, bailie of Dumfries, "My Ladie Ross", and various Northumbrians.<sup>2</sup> Four years

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1. B.M., 943/7.

2. B.M., 393.

later Robert Anderson, flesher in Edinburgh, bought widders, and no doubt the fleshers of Hawick did the same from other stocks.

Throughout the 1650s the wool from sheep in possession of the Buccleuch estate was sold to a dealer from Carlisle called Thomas Sewell, who in 1654 paid £6 per stone of white wool and £5 per stone of tarred wool.<sup>1</sup> Sewell seems to be the first recorded 'outside' buyer of wool from across the Border.

During this same period there was increasing interest shown in the promotion of the home-based cloth manufacture. The acts which forbade export were generally ineffective, and, as a petition to the Scottish Parliament in 1633 shows, "forbidden goodes ar incontrollabillie transportit out of Scotland into England for the benefeit of that Kingdom".<sup>2</sup> The petitioner was requesting the free importation of English goods, perhaps with the finer wool of that country particularly in mind. Whereas the prohibition had been originally for the sake of maintaining sufficient stocks, depleted after storm losses, it came increasingly to be associated with a very different cause and this change is a sign of new, more industrial attitudes. As early as 1581 Parliament had seen that the establishment of manufacture could mean useful employment for the "greit numberis of pure folkis, now wandering in beging", especially as "God

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1. B.M., 943/3.

2. Davidson & Gray, op. cit., p. 64.

has grantit to this realme sufficient commoditeis for cleithing of the Inhabitantis".<sup>1</sup> Ways had been found in spite of the acts, to send native wool to England as well as abroad, without anything being done to set up a home clothing industry, but when Parliament proclaimed the reinforcement of the old restrictions in 1614 it expressly stated that the aim was to encourage use of wool within Scotland, "quairthrou not onlie might a number of his Majesteis poore subjectis be haldin at worke, bot that the trade of making of cloathe and stuffis, quhairby otheris cuntreiyis ar so far inritchheit and bewtifeit, might lyke-ways be broght in practise and intertenyit heir..."<sup>2</sup>

The right conditions for a Scottish wool industry could be set up at a time when peace in the Borders, along with the new system of rent tenure, was encouraging sheep farmers to increase stocks and market at least part of their produce. In addition, a considerable income could be derived from officially permitting the export of surplus wool, if not of stock, to England and abroad. In 1622 this subject of trade across the Border was discussed, and missives were sent to various Border lairds, including those of Harden, Thirlestane, Buccleuch, Galashiels, Roxburgh, Traquair, Philiphaugh, Drumlanrig and Yester, instructing them to act as commissioners and to meet their English colleagues in London, where they might ponder "upoun the best way how

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1. Ibid., pp. 66-7.

2. R.P.C., Vol. X, p. 273.

the woll of this kingdome not draped and wrought at home mycht be send to England and sauld thair".<sup>1</sup> In 1623 there was a report of a spectacular increase in wool production throughout the Border shires,<sup>2</sup> and it may have been new opportunities for marketing wool that led to the rapid rise in rents during the 1620s.

Wool was evidently the farmer's chief source of revenue, as was made clear in a document of 1623, questioning whether superfluous wool should be sold only to England when better prices might be gained elsewhere:

"the nobillite and gentrie, specially quhair thair rowmes is in stoir, quhair they haif in presentt ane rowme sett for V or VI hundreth merkis or ane thousand libe. proportiallie, giff this restraint be only to Ingland, the rowmes wilbe cassin waist, becaus the greitest pairt of that rentt comes be thair wooll... The greittest pairtt of the Bordour, I mein that leiveis be stoir in the Hielandis, hes no uther menteynance bott be thair wooll, thair comes nocht being abill to serve thame of any greitt use; sua, this being taikin frame thame, they may sterve for hunggar or else beg, quhair of we haif anew alreddy." <sup>3</sup>

On 5th June 1623 a royal letter to the Privy Council took up the question of manufactures in Scotland, especially of wool. It said that the Council should choose "a competent number of noblemen" and others, recommend manufactures to them, and ask them "to select certane of the best experi-

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1. R.P.C., Vol. XIII, p. 70.
  2. R.P.C., Vol. XIII, p. 774.
  3. R.P.C., Vol. XIII, p. 777. England attempted in 1623 to control the destination of Scottish wool by buying it all, so that continental countries might not receive any. The aim of this was to protect the English cloth trade and to prevent English farmers from exporting their wool by smuggling it through Scotland.

mented of eache estate to advise of the best meanes how the bussynes may be undertane, societies joyned, a stoke maid, and the worke erected." As a result a meeting was arranged for 9th July, and letters were sent to the Border lairds who had been appointed commissioners and were doubtless the best equipped with sheep farms and "experimented" farmers.<sup>1</sup> When they went to England the Commissioners achieved nothing at all, and apparently no new manufacture was initiated as a consequence of the recommendation.

The transport of stock and produce out of the country was described in 1626 as "so publict, frequent, and univerrall" that prices had risen to a great height, to the advantage of the sellers, and the country kept insufficient quantities for its own use.<sup>2</sup> In spite of this situation, however, some of the annual clip was always taken up by the manufacture of cheap woollen and worsted goods in Scotland, which, though not produced on the scale hoped for, were nevertheless considered in 1614 one of the most important of the country's exports.<sup>3</sup> The Baltic countries and the continent were the chief buyers. This trade probably continued to expand slowly until the 1680s, after which it fell into serious decline in the hostile climate generated by England's wars with Holland and France and because old customers sought to build up their own industries.

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1. R.P.C., Vol. XIII, p. 236.

2. R.P.C., 2nd series, Vol. I, pp. 383-4.

3. Gulvin, C., 'The Union and the Scottish woollen industry 1707-1760', S.H.R., Vol. L.2, p. 121.

In the absence of a fine cloth industry, coarse woollen manufacture also produced goods for home consumption by most sections of society except the rich who preferred English and French cloth of higher quality. Thus Border sheep farmers in the seventeenth century, whose wares consisted mostly of coarse wool from blackface and dunface breeds, found their markets were to England or to merchants at local towns buying either for direct export or for home manufacturers. A typical marketing process is described by Smout; a farmer could take his wool to Kelso, where Quaker merchants called Ormestone, said to be "rich and faithfull in dealling", sent it on packhorses to Edinburgh wholesalers, from whom another merchant, specialising in exports, would buy what he needed.<sup>1</sup>

Local markets became more important as centres of distribution during the seventeenth century. One of the most flourishing was that called St. Boswell's Fair, which used to take place on 7th July in the kirkyard of Lessudden and which was moved in 1621 to "Lessudden Loan".<sup>2</sup> Thereafter the date was settled as 18th July, and late in the same century the Duchess of Buccleuch wrote: "Few can furnish St. Boswells Faire with sheep better than I can".<sup>3</sup> Stock from the Buccleuch estate was also taken to markets at Langholm, and at other Border towns such as Kelso, Jedburgh,

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1. Smout, T.C., Scottish Trade on the Eve of Union 1660-1707, pp. 81-2.
  2. R.P.C., Vol. XII, p. 492.
  3. Morton, op. cit., p. 348.

Hawick, Innerleithen, Peebles, Lockerbie and Moffat. An act of 1672 entitled the Duke and Duchess to hold private 'mercats' at Langholm and Castleton, the latter having "thrie frie yeirlie fairs" and one "weiklie mercat" on Fridays.<sup>1</sup> At this period one of the most important trading centres was at West Linton where there were two fairs and "the greatest sheep marcat in the south of Scotland..." There were such numbers of sheep in Peeblesshire "that in Linton Mercats, (which are kept once a week during the moneths of June and July) there are sometime to be seen 9000 in the Customers Roll, and most part of all these sold... in one day."<sup>2</sup>

In an age not far removed from that of the raids and wars, and itself characterised by continuing dissensions and thefts, taking goods to market was of course subject to a special set of rules. In 1618 the Privy Council ordered that buying and selling of sheep, cattle and horses should be only "in oppin fair and mercat and with borgh and hammell."<sup>3</sup> Each animal had to be marked, and even carcasses had to be identifiable: "no beeff nor scheip (to) be brocht to be sauld in ony fair or mercatt by ony boutcher or uther persone without the hyde nor without the skyne hanging on the carkeis".<sup>4</sup> The all-important item of wool was equally

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1. Hyslop, J. & R.: Langholm as it was, pp. 529-530.

2. M.G.C., Vol III, p. 153.

3. R.P.C., Vol. XI, p.443.

4. Ibid.

well watched. The clip of 26 sc. 6 'old sheep', sold to Sewell of Carlisle in 1654, was reckoned to be twenty two stones, the weight being estimated on oath by "tua honest men whoe had the charge of the Clipping" and by "tua that Weyed thee Wooll."<sup>1</sup> Once put up into packs, the wool had then to be taken to some secure store until handed over to the merchant, who was sometimes present at the original weighing. Quality varied from year to year, and on the same occasion in 1654 Sewell refused at first to accept the wool, "alleging it was not swa good wooll as he had bocht of befoir".<sup>2</sup> The teind rate for wool had been "everie aucht Lambes paying ane staine of Wooll",<sup>3</sup> or three pounds per teind lamb, a high level of tax in relation to fleece weights.

The export of stock and wool across the Border remained subject to customs duties and licences until the Union of Parliaments in 1707. An account of Selkirkshire indicates the general trading picture in the late seventeenth century:

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1. B.M., 943/4.

2. Ibid., Fleece weight varied according to the breed and condition of the sheep. Earlier records show that an average fleece, from an undefined breed, weighed about one to one and a half pounds, with twenty-four pounds, or about twenty fleeces, to a stone; in 1652, for example, there were forty eight stones of wool clipped from fifty score and thirteen sheep, and in 1659 twelve stones from twelve score (B.M., 943/15). By the late eighteenth century the weight of a fleece was three to four pounds, and more if it was tarry wool.

3. B.M., 943/2.

"The Commodities this Shire affords, are great store of Butter and Cheese of the finest sort for tast and sweetness... and that in such plenty, that many parts about it (are) furnished by it. It affordeth also store of Neathides and sheep skins and great plenty of Wool, which is carried to forreign Nations, so that the cold eastern Countreys bless this happy soil being armed with the fleeces of their Sheep. It affordeth also store of Neat and Sheep, which are sold and carried partly to the northern parts of Scotland, but most what into England, the Custom whereof at the Border, is no small increase to His Majesties Revenue. It affords also great plenty of well spun Worset, which is sold and carried for the most part unto forreign Nations." 1

From time to time during the seventeenth century England legislated against the export of English fine wool through Scotland, but despite these measures smuggling continued, and there was a two-way traffic over the Border. English fine wool came north, Scottish coarse wool and stock went south. Scottish manufacturers tried to prevent exports abroad, since, they claimed, international demand inflated prices. Farmers, on the other hand, sought the best price they could get, and it is no wonder that Scott of Satchels wrote in the 1680s of the 'golden fleeces' and the reward they brought. Those who produced wool argued that the home clip was in excess of manufacturers' requirements, and that the latter in any case preferred finer wool than that which came from the Border hill flocks. The manufacturers gained a victory in 1701 when an act was passed forbidding the export of wool for five years. It was enforced rather more effectively than its predecessors, but the subsequent decline in wool prices and accumulation of

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1. M.G.C., Vol. III, p. 184.

large stocks at home led to a resumption of exports in 1704.

Before describing some of the effects of the Union in 1707, an illustration of the Border customs arrangements about 1700 may be given, to show some of the difficulties experienced by the officials and to provide a glimpse of ways by which farmers evaded charges.

A major droving route from the Border hill farms into England lay through Liddesdale, so that an excise officer was necessary in that area to try and outwit smugglers as well as to receive the duties. About 1700 Captain David Kennedy was "Colector of the Customs at Castletown", and he was assisted by a local man, "Francis Eliot, wayter". In 1703 a David Stark was "surveyour of His Majesties customs at Castletoun."

To this latter gentleman Archibald Gledstaines in Northhouse wrote, with perhaps deliberate vagueness, on 8th June 1703:

"I am sending some clipt sheep to my farme of Smeall in England - about eleven scores. I can not be peremptore of the precise number because at this time we have not gott them exactly told but if they are any they will litle exceed that number, and I am not certain that they are all out so many. I desire yow may please to give a bill for their passage if yow can which I doubt nothing of, and as litle of your Goodwill to me. And if other ways I desire yow may let me hear from yow that I may apply to the office at Jedburgh for a bill thence." 1

No doubt playing off one 'office' against another was a way of securing a favourable reply. Furthermore, leasing

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1. Customs House Papers, U.E.L. Laing MSS.II: 490/30.

a farm across the Border, as Gledstaines had Smale in the North Tyne valley, meant that one could move cattle or sheep on a pretence of keeping them on one's own ground and so avoid duty. Gledstaines was adept at this trick, as Captain Kennedy complained:

"Mr. Archbald Gladstanes of northhouse hes sent in to England severall parcellls of nolt and sheep, these two years past, on pretence of Grazing, but never ounes the office, nor enters them, either going out, or coming in, and disposes of them in England as he pleases: This last sumer, he sent in 580 lambs, not entered, and sold nyne score sheep off his farme there, wch he owned to my selfe, but refused to pay the dutie." 1

The assistant, Francis Elliot, was by no means a disinterested or honest man, for, though he made an attempt on one occasion to confiscate twenty six scores of Gledstanes' sheep, he also connived in transporting excess stock through the lonely watershed between Scotland and England at Deadwater, on several occasions, for which offences he was eventually suspended.<sup>2</sup> The minister of Castleton was another who tried to avoid paying by claiming that all ministers were exempt, and Armstrong at Whit-haugh pled exemption for his annual sending of two "fatt nolt" and thirty or forty sheep to Stagshaw Fair, on the ground that "ye droves goes still thorow a large feild of his best grass, wch he keeps for his sheep walk", and that they caused damage of twice the cost that "his smale duty comes to".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., U.E.L., Laing MSS. II: 490/29/2.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid.

Markets for Wool after 1707

The Act of Union in 1707 held out little promise of improved markets to the sheepfarmers. The foreign export trade in raw wool was forbidden, so as to protect English manufacturing interests, and Scottish manufacturers were faced with direct competition from England, which was better endowed with resources and skills. The only market open to the Scottish wool producers was across the Border, and there was little sign that the English wanted the coarse wool offered them. Faced with such a gloomy prospect Scotland had to seek some sort of compensation and it was successful in securing the provisions of the fifteenth article of the Union.

This was an article aimed at stimulating the growth of coarse wool manufacture in those Scottish counties where sheep farming predominated. An annual sum of £2000 for seven years was set aside from public funds for this purpose, but it was twenty years before the money was actually applied to the needs of the wool industry.

The administration of the fund was at first the responsibility of the Barons of the Exchequer, who set about their task by organising a census of tarred wool produce in 1708. They intended thereafter to distribute the money on a pro-rata basis. In 1709 the Border Royal Burghs expressed their interest in the whole scheme,<sup>1</sup> and a year later Roxburghshire

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1. Petitions to the Barons of Exchequer, U.E.L., Laing MSSII: 488/18/2.

landowners led by Douglas of Cavers requested immediate distribution of the fund, since wool was "perishing in the tennants' hands because of want of encouragement to manufacture it".<sup>1</sup> No distribution followed, and a certain impatience characterises a petition submitted on behalf of Selkirkshire heritors, which pointed out that the share for the county ought to be very considerable since it produced "about 14,000 stone of Coarse wooll", but that the money was lying unused, "to the great Detriment of all the woollen Countreys".<sup>2</sup>

It seems that one reason why the Barons were reluctant to apply the fund was that they considered the estimates of wool production were too high. That there were grounds for their suspicion is shown by a letter of about 1720, when the results of a new survey were being gathered. The writer was probably Gideon Scott of Falnash, the Buccleuch estate chamberlain for Teviotdalehead.

"Some years agoe there was ane account taken of ye wool of this Country and Sent to ye Sherrif of Teviotdale who I hear has wryte to his Clerk to send in these lists upon his own oath that they are True Lists quch some think will be Sustained. But as I have Some ground to belive the former acct's of ye wool were not taken upon ye tennents oaths... I Conveen'd the Country and Took the depositions you have Inclosed ... The wool was Certainly Give up more Largely at yt time then now upon oath." 3

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1. Watson, D.: 'Notes on the early manufacture of coarse wool in Scotland', T.H.A.S. (1880), pp. 3-7.
  2. Petitions to the Barons of Exchequer, U.E.L., Laing MSS.II: 488/18/3.
  3. S.M.P., 70.

Another chamberlain, William Scott, writing from Hobsburn on 22nd February 1720, explained the difficulties in securing estimates:

"If the inclosed estimate of the Wooll in Liddisdale comes Late to your hands it is none of my fault. Soe soon as I got notice from Falnesh I conveyned the Tennants but found it impracticable to take them upon oath, both upon acctt of their own Consumption which they could not depone upon, and also their herds and servants, Soe that I cause the tennants only signe their declarations, what in their judgements the whole might amount to. I was at a stand how to state the growth caried in to England upon the Sheep that are Sold their and therefor have omitted it altogither, and only taken notice of the clipped produce." 1

Scott enclosed letters from those who had not been present to sign declarations, including one from Charles Scott in Adderstoneshiels who had not been well enough to venture out on a bad winter day; "as for the Wool", Charles wrote, "one year with another about fortie ston for my half part of the ground, and for the Hirds I cane give no perfite account... but they have about fave Scor on Shipe which I think will be about Six ore Siven Ston..." 2

This second survey also came to nothing, and no action was taken until the setting up of the Board of Trustees in 1727. A sum of £14,000 was to be invested so as to give an annual income of £700 which would be distributed among the wool-producing shires of the Borders. The Trustees generally accepted suggestions from local heritors regarding the use of the fund, and plans for improved sorting and stapling,

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

as well as for manufacture, were put into action.

Up to this point the variability of the sheepfarmer's markets for coarse wool was usually in kind and direction. Henceforward the uncertainties were rather of an economic sort, involving marked fluctuations of price, while the disposal of the coarse wool became more regularly associated with the slowly developing cloth industry in Scotland and the north of England. This development has been discussed recently in detail,<sup>1</sup> and only a few points require attention here.

The efforts of the Board of Trustees to encourage cloth manufacture met with little success. Output remained low, and by the 1750s was even in decline. Manufacturing under the Board in the Borders ceased altogether, and the failure of the Board's plans for development was one reason why sheepfarming was in such a grievous state around 1755, with many tenants going bankrupt.<sup>2</sup> After 1757, however, the Board concentrated upon quality rather than on quantity, and introduced payments to farmers for improvements in their wool and in the breeding of sheep. While this may have assisted the producers it did not solve the industrial problems which centered largely on lack of skills and efficiency

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1. In, for example, Clifford Gulvin's 'The Tweedmakers', and his Ph.D thesis, 'The Scottish Woollen Industry 1603-1914' (University of Edinburgh 1969).
  2. Another probable reason was that the Board of Trustees had given much more vigorous support to the linen industry which was complementary to, rather than competitive with, the English woollen manufacture.

in sorting and combing, so that by the 1770s there had been little or no increase in the number of looms in the Border villages.

Throughout the eighteenth century there were men to comment on the industry as they did on nearly every other topic of the time. In 1733 Patrick Lindsay remarked on what he saw as a shortage of labour on the farms:

"In the Wooll-countries there are not many hands for manufacture. A Farmer or Store-master... who pays 200L a Year of Rent, has no more People in his Family, besides himself, Wife and Children, than three or four Herds, and as many Maid Servants for milking the Ewes, and doing his other necessary Work. All that can be proposed there is to clean and wash their Wool, and to send it to the Market sorted." 1

Lindsey probably underestimated the number of people actually living on many Border hill farms, but it seems certain that what cottar and craftsman families there were saw no particular attraction in manufacturing work until late in the century<sup>2</sup> and there was indeed a lack of workers, particularly the skilled, necessary for the progress envisaged by the Board.

Some "Observations on the Woolen Manufactorys in the South of Scotland", apparently written by the provost of

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1. Lindsay, P.: The Interest of Scotland Considered, p. 107.
  2. The perquisites inherent in farm life, along with a well established situation, seemed perhaps more advantageous than the low wages offered by the Scottish manufacturers, and a cottage on the farm may have appeared more pleasant than a room in the town. Eventually, however, in an age of rapidly increasing population, the opportunity for work in the town drew in many of the country families who were no longer needed on the farm.

Dumfries and dated 12th June 1749,<sup>1</sup> point out that farmers sold their fleeces as clipped, and that washing, scouring and sorting were the next necessary step before spinning. Tarred wool, which was "either pull'd or Shorn off the Sheep", required particularly thorough washing and scouring even though "the remains of the Tar'd coat must be cutt off". Thus the Scottish manufacturers, who "were not well acquainted with the proper utencills", received help from the Board of Trustees who "Setled in Severall places in the South of Scotland, washers and Sorters of wool" apparently brought in from Yorkshire. The provost recommended that in Scotland "we ought to learn manufacturing by lower pric'd goods, which will consume 1000 times more of our Course wooll and (be) more profitable both to manufacturers and Country especially in the export way for our plantations, where there is a Sure markete". The lower priced kinds from England were exported in great quantities by Scottish merchants, but it would be sensible the writer thought, to manufacture them in Scotland, use up native coarse wool, employ many people, and save large sums spent on carriage from the south. An anonymous peer issued a pamphlet in 1775, in which he drew attention to the absurdity of sending wool grown in Scotland to England for sorting, bringing it back to be spun, sending it away again to be woven, and returning it to be worn or exported,<sup>2</sup> all of which

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1. Erskine-Murray Papers, N.L.S., MS. 5127, f. 64.

2. Anon., Eight Sets of Queries by a Peer of the Realm, pp. 9-10. (The author was apparently Patrick, Lord Elibank.)

indicated the continuing deficiencies of organisation and regulation in Scotland for which the Board of Trustees itself has been blamed. Also writing in the 1770s, David Loch found very inferior goods for sale in the Borders, as well as inefficient and unpopular stamp-masters employed by the Board to check the standard of product.<sup>1</sup> The inferiority he noticed was to be contrasted with superior goods in England, where skills were developed and wool was of better quality.

In spite of the shortcomings of the Scottish situation, Border sheepfarmers still found markets for their coarse wool. Home consumption of coarse woollens remained sufficiently large to take up some of the clip, and there is evidence of a trade in locally woven goods with Holland, the West Indies, and America.<sup>2</sup> The increased use of the longer fibres of the native blackface and dunface sheep in cheap worsted production was also to their advantage. But their main outlet was to England, where in the north there was a growing demand for coarse wool, made into cheap worsteds in the West Riding of Yorkshire. In 1738 Sir John Clerk of Penicuik regretted that "large quantities of our worst tarred wool" were sent to Leeds, to the detriment of the home industry, while in 1759 sheep farmers in Roxburghshire claimed that over twenty per cent of Scotland's wool was produced in the county, and that ninety five per cent of

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1. Loch, D., Essays on the Trade, Commerce, Manufactures and Fisheries of Scotland etc., Vol. I, pp. 190, 193-4

2. Gulvin, op. cit., p. 133.

that production was sent to England or, apparently, to the Aberdeen stocking trade.<sup>1</sup> In addition the expanding north of England industry drew labour from the Borders, and spinners living in the Border towns worked for the English firms. It has been pointed out that after the Union the Border counties were more closely associated with the economy of the north of England than with that of the rest of Scotland,<sup>2</sup> and this is continued in the marketing habits of the sheep farmers late in the eighteenth century. Robert Scott in Skelfhill was sending his wool to Yorkshire manufactories at Halifax and Huddersfield in the 1770s,<sup>3</sup> and Findlater reported that most of the wool from Tweeddale was sold to Yorkshire, where it was used for "serges, shalloons, carpets, and coarser cloths".<sup>4</sup>

To many in Scotland the disposal of wool to Yorkshire dealers seemed a remarkable waste of one of the country's few natural resources. With the decline of the fine linen industry in the latter part of the eighteenth century, largely owing to the price of imported flax, renewed suggestions of a very traditional kind were put forward by David Loch, James Anderson, John Naismith, and others for the resuscitation of the native coarse wool manufactures. The Board of Trustees responded both to Loch's essays and to

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1. Ibid, p. 137.

2. Ibid.

3. Wight, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 404.

4. Findlater, op. cit., p. 64.

the improvements being made on the sheep farms in facilities and stock by transferring more of its resources to the woollen industry. This move happened to be accompanied by the expansion of carpet manufacture and increased demand from abroad for woollen goods.

Higher wool prices (see Appendix XIII) and a rapidly growing population also played their part, along with technological improvements in equipment, in fostering the development of mill towns such as Galashiels and Hawick with the result that farmers found an expanding market near at home which remained their chief outlet throughout the nineteenth century. In 1794 it was reported that Tweeddale wool was being "bought much by Hawick people",<sup>1</sup> though most was still going to Yorkshire, and Ure stated of Roxburghshire at this time that "a great quantity of wool, chiefly the product of the store-farms in the neighbourhood", was used by local wool manufacturers.<sup>2</sup> By 1844 almost all the Border wool was going to Border towns; the Liddesdale clip was sent in to Hawick and Jedburgh, while of the 8000 stones produced in Eskdalemuir, 4670 went to Langholm, 1070 to Hawick, 2010 to Selkirk and Galashiels, and only 250 to England.<sup>3</sup>

The connection between improvements on the sheepfarms and the state of the wool manufacture has already been indicated. More precisely, it was a connection between the

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1. O.S.A., Vol. I, p. 135.

2. Ure, op. cit., p. 70.

3. B.M., 496.

extension of the Cheviot breed to the higher hill farms and the production of better wool. The Cheviot or 'long' sheep, produced a fine, white, short fibred wool, whereas the Blackface or 'short' sheep had wool that was coarse, open-fibred, long in the staple and hairy or 'kempy'. Moreover the latter breed was universally smeared, while the Cheviots, being associated with less exposed ground did not so usually require a treatment that deterred many manufacturers from buying the wool. Smeared or 'tarry' wool, however, to which there had always been some objections, often from outside observers, was the inevitable result of the only method known to the hillfarmers of protecting their sheep, and on occasions could make up with its weight what it lost on its value per pound, particularly if it were Cheviot wool. The combination of the Blackface type of wool with the effects of smearing was the most unrewarding, and meant that farmers changed from Blackface to Cheviot breeds with perhaps an excessive enthusiasm.

The price of Blackface wool declined in 1782 with the closure of the American market, whereas local and English buyers increased their demand for the Cheviot clip and kept up its value.<sup>1</sup> By the 1820s, when the market had slumped, the Galashiels manufacturers were the only ones to pay anything for tarred wool,<sup>2</sup> and it seemed as if there would be

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1. O.S.A., Vol. XII, p. 611.

2. Hogg, J.: 'Statistics of Selkirkshire', T.H. & A.S.S. (1832), Vol. IX, p. 300.

little future for the Blackface fleece. However the introduction of dipping, and the crossing of the Blackface ewe with the Border Leicester led to an ideal type of wool for tweed cloths later in the nineteenth century. Meanwhile the qualities of the heavier Cheviot fleece made it more suitable for woollen manufacturing throughout southern Scotland and England, although demand for wool began to decline as tastes changed. It became less relevant to the needs of the tweed-makers, since it was not fine enough, and at the same time more colonial wool was imported. However expansion of the British woollen and worsted industries maintained price levels, except for short periods such as the 1870s, and though in 1848 it was reported that the Galashiels Wool Fair had "almost dwindled down to nothing", because foreign wool had superceded the home-grown,<sup>1</sup> the Duke of Buccleuch's Chamberlain, William Oglivie, was able to write on 14th July 1850: "Tomorrow is the great sale day for Wool at Hawick. The Farmers are holding out for 5/- above last years prices, and many will no doubt get it".<sup>2</sup> The Cheviot breed thus retained its extensive hold until the severe winter of 1859-60 proved its limitations on the highest farms, to which crossing experiments allowed the reintroduction of the Blackface, and the wool of both breeds was taken up by the manufacturers to the end of the century, though without the ready welcome given to that

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1. The Border Advertiser, 14th July 1848.

2. B.M., 492.

imported from Australasia.

### Sale of Sheep and Mutton

While the wool market seems always to have played a major part in the economy of the Border sheepfarmers, it was not of course their only source of income and among the other uses of the sheep there was mutton. Sales of draft lambs, ewes and widders to the butcher or the lowland 'feeder' were often at least as important as those of fleeces. Until the end of the seventeenth century it seems that most sheep were sold either to English flockmasters for feeding or else to other Border hill farmers who were building up stock or replacing losses after winter storms, and that comparatively few were slaughtered for mutton. Thereafter, however, with the decline in the wool trade around 1700, sales to the 'fleshers' in Border towns, and in Edinburgh and Carlisle, increased, and according to Adam Smith, Galloway farmers made up for the falling wool prices through the rising price of mutton during the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> After 1750 there was a good market for stock, Blackface at first and later Cheviot, to the Highlands where new sheepwalks were being established, and by 1800 the rapid increase in population meant a growing demand for mutton which was maintained through most of the nineteenth century. Blackface sheep has always been regarded highly for its mutton, but the reputation of the

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1. Smith, A., Wealth of Nations, Vol. I, p. 216.

Cheviot in this respect had to be advertised as part of the general promotion of this breed in the 1790s. At the annual dinner of the British Wool Society in December 1793, "The first course consisted chiefly of mutton, principally of the Cheviot breed, dressed in above 20 different ways; when it appeared, that fine wool was not incompatible with most excellent mutton." <sup>1</sup> It is supposed that it was the attempt to produce Cheviots renowned equally for wool and mutton that led to a decline in the quality of the fleece.

### Other Produce

The sheepfarmer had a variety of other items to sell. It has been said that in the eleventh century the ewe was looked on mainly as a source of milk,<sup>2</sup> and ewe milk cheese was sold until at least 1850. The age-old value of the fleece has been described, but it must also be remembered that 'udderlocks' and black wool were useful commodities, and that something was earned from selling skins of dead sheep or 'traik'.

The 'traik' skins, later called "murt" or "mort" skins, were taken off the body as soon as possible after death and hung in a barn or shed, necessary proof of the farmer's losses. Until the improved shelter and feeding of the

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1. Edinburgh Advertiser, Vol. 9, no. 3129.
  2. Trow-Smith, History of British Livestock Husbandry to 1700, p. 74.

nineteenth century, such losses could be enormous, and therefore could mean a considerable return from the skins alone. In 1634 the "traik skinnes" from the Earl of Buccleuch's hirsels were sold to George Curren of Howden at 6/ each, and the same man bought the "slaughter skinnes" of sheep "slaine at the Buriall "of the Earl's father the previous year.<sup>1</sup> There were 6,740 traik skins sold by the Buccleuch estate in 1635.<sup>2</sup> All these articles were mainly sold locally and used at home; they were also sometimes used as forms of payment to farm servants, just as braxy sheep were allowed to herds.

Sheep, calculated always in scores, were often sold by the 'clad' score until the practice faded out in the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> For the 'clad' score an extra sheep was added. In November 1655, twenty score of "yowis" which had been 'pounded' by the Buccleuch estate were sold to Thomas Brown, "with one to everie scoir",<sup>4</sup> an example of an old custom about which George Malcolm was to complain in 1773:

"In all Sales of Sheep out of a Market, it is the universal Practice to give one to the Score. This is a bad Custom, as it makes People believe they get more for their Sheep, than they really do. This Practice does not take Place at Markets, but they

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1. B.M., 936/7, p. 91.

2. B.M., 927/22.

3. In parts of Scotland the 'clad score' was still known in the mid twentieth century.

4. B.M., 943/4.

are there sold what we term bare. This explains the Expressions of Sheep and Score, and bare, so often made use of". 1

Some twenty-five years later Findlater remarked on the practice,<sup>2</sup> and the diaries of James Grieve show that it was normal at that time.

A market existed for almost all kinds of sheep. Malcolm described the two traditional stages at which ewes were disposed of. The old ewes, called 'crocks', were sold off at Michaelmas, in their fifth or sixth year, for fattening, as they still are. It may well be that this trade did not exist until lowland and English 'feeders' created a demand, perhaps in the seventeenth century. On the other hand the need for breeding ewes was probably ages old.

"What are called great Ewes, are Ewes with Lamb, which are sold in the Beginning of Aprile. It is not the common Practice of this Country to sell Ewes then, but it is some times done, when we think our Ground is overstocked". 3

In Tweeddale about 1800 some great ewes were sold in March at Peebles or House o' Muir,<sup>4</sup> but they are rarely sold now that over stocking does not occur.<sup>5</sup> Until the early

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1. B.M., 290/1.

2. Findlater, op. cit., p. 67.

3. B.M., 290/1.

4. Findlater, op. cit., p. 64.

5. The practice was known in Selkirkshire until at least the 1830s. In a letter to Sir Walter Scott of 19th April, 1830, from Whithope in Yarrow, William Laidlaw wrote "I wish we had known sooner for ewes to lamb could have been got cheaper than ever they have been in our remembrance and still I think at Whitsunday they will be cheap." (Letters to Sir Walter Scott, N.L.S., MS. 3913, ff. 39-40).

nineteenth century wedder hirsels were common, because wedder fleeces were the best, and because a 'breeding' farm was less rewarding than one producing wool and mutton. Wedders could withstand the rigorous conditions better than ewes, which required better feeding and shelter. They were sold to butchers at various ages; there were eighteenth century farmers who kept little or no breeding stock, but who bought wedder hoggs annually and sold them off as din-monts or 'old' wedders after one or two years.<sup>1</sup>

Surplus lambs provided the bulk of sheep at markets. Once the 'keeping lambs', ewe, tup or wedder, had been selected, the rest were sold off, either in their first summer or as hoggs in their second summer. The opening-up of the Highland market began with a great demand for wedders and was followed by one for breeding ewe hoggs.<sup>2</sup> Farmers naturally kept the best ewe lambs for their own ewe hirsel, so that those in the Borders or later in the Highlands who required breeding stock might often find that only poorer lambs or hoggs were available. In the Borders, until the seventeenth century at least, massive replacements for losses were often necessary, and it must therefore have been very difficult to maintain a good standard of breeding sheep. The improvements on the hill-farms and the levelling off of wool prices from hill sheep in the first half of the nineteenth century, brought a

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1. Findlater, op. cit., p. 67.

2. O.S.A., Vol. I, p. 134.

change to breeding ewe hirsels, and Findlater described a 'Breeding Farm' which is broadly of the modern kind. He suggested a stock of ewes with the necessary tups; the farmer would retain the best ewe lambs as replacement for crocks sold annually along with a few discarded tups, the poorer lambs would be sold, and some wedder lambs would be bought for marketing along with the farm's own wedder hoggs a year later.<sup>1</sup> This pattern, without the wedder hoggs, has not changed much since.

The prices fetched by sheep put up for sale depended on demand from butchers, feeders and farmers, just as wool prices depended on manufacturers and trade (See Appendix XIII) External events such as wars, and the state of the country's economy, also played an important part, as they had done since long before the Union of the Crowns. The American War of Independence and the Napoleonic Wars, for example, assisted the rise in prices which began about 1780, stock prices rose with the demand from the Highlands and after natural disasters like the winter of 1772-3, while the depression which began about 1816 has been variously attributed to a fall in demand after the end of the French war, deterioration in Cheviot wool, importing of foreign wool, the general economic gloom as a result of poor harvests, and a low level of investments in manufactures. From the beginning, farmers have had to face sudden ups and downs, changes of demand, and the waywardness of landlords, and

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1. Findlater, op. cit., p. 67.

there were always some who were unable to survive the blows. It is not surprising that keeping an eye on the markets was a favourite occupation.

## 2. Dealers and Droving

The fairs available to the sheepfarmers from the seventeenth century onwards were in the neighbouring towns and villages. They seemed conveniently situated, though in 1815 Little complained that "St. Boswell's fair is very ill situated for hill lambs, being too far in the low country", and he thought Melrose, Lockerbie and Langholm also difficult to reach.<sup>1</sup> Langholm was in fact one of the more accessible markets as were those at Peebles, Moffat and Hawick. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries tenants in the Forest and further south sent wedder hogs to the fair at Stagshawbank near Hexham in Northumberland, and their lambs chiefly to St. Boswells and Langholm. Draft or crock ewes usually went to Yorkshire.<sup>2</sup>

The absence of tenants' accounts until the eighteenth century makes it impossible to describe the markets used by the farmer before then, or to trace his fluctuating fortunes, so that the domestic economy of the Border hill farm during the interesting period after 1603 remains for the most part unknown. A general picture of this earlier time, however, may be gained from the farm account books,

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1. Little, op. cit., pp. 172-176.

2. O.S.A., Vol. VI, p. 65; Johnston, T., op. cit., p. 42.

surviving from the first half of the eighteenth century, before the major changes that occurred after 1760. It seems at least possible that the arrangements recorded in his pocket book between 1710 and 1720 by Walter Scott, tenant in Girnwood, were not much different from those that prevailed thirty or forty years previously. For a later age the accounts of Robert Elliot in Gorrenberry and Braidlie cover the years 1748 to 1755, while those of Walter Grieve in Branxholm Park for his farms of Riccarton, Linhope, and Braidlie begin in 1737 and continue over the remainder of the century. Other records kept by the Grieves, and by the Moffats in Garwald and Craik, span the period 1770 to 1880. All these farmers were either very or moderately successful among their kind.

To reach any of the fairs, in the Borders or in England, as well as to pass to other farms in the area, stock had to travel on foot and had therefore to be driven. Driving or 'droving' was as old a practice as the trade in animals, and while undoubtedly being less in the days of subsistence farming it was a feature of the Border hills when the great Abbeys flourished, and the royal flocks pastured in Ettrick Forest. After reaching a climax in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, droving was superseded by railway and eventually mechanised transport.

The drove 'roads' were grass tracks, passing through or from a district towards the market and fair sites around the fringes of the hills. These tracks were often confused or even identical with tracks used for other purposes, such

as peat roads, local communication routes, and ancient highways and Roman roads. Travellers, troops, and 'flitting' shepherds, on foot and horseback, with carts and sledges, all deepened the ruts and hollows worn by innumerable 'drifts' of stock. Now that all the traffic is gone, the old hillroads remain, a network over the uplands, but disappearing through lack of use or under the blanket of forest.

Some of the first such ways to be recorded in any detail were the 'passages' over the Border, described in the sixteenth century raiding. On the section between Liddesdale and England there were several recognised routes, and in 1550 Sir Robert Bowes called one at Kershope "a comon passage as well for the theves of Tyndalle bewcastle and Gilleslands in England as for the theves of Liddesdalle in Scotland with the stolen goodes from the one Realme to the other...".<sup>1</sup> The thieves usually preferred greater secrecy and chose hidden tracks known only to some of their own number. That the tracks were a great deal older than the turbulent sixteenth century is indicated by the mention in 1236 of the "Thyrlstangate" across the ridge between the farms of Berrybush and Thirlestane.<sup>2</sup> James Hogg knew most of the ancient roads as 'Thief roads, or King's roads', and observed that unlike the new highways of his own time in the valley they kept to the heights and "appear in many instances to have been formed with great labour, morasses

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1. Hodgson, op. cit., Part III, Vol. ii, p. 213.

2. Innes, & others, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 260.

being cut through to the bottom, and the stony channels laid bare...".<sup>1</sup>

An unusually interesting road, dating perhaps from the time of the King's sheep in the Forest, was one running eastwards along the south side of the Ettrick Valley on the rolling grassland between Hutlerburn and the Fanns, and called in 1626 "th kingis hie mercat gait";<sup>2</sup> while undoubtedly the major 'through' route was that which entered the Border hills area at Peebles, passed south over Yarrow, Ettrick, Borthwick Water and Teviot, and then through Liddesdale into England. Either could be used for local stock, which were driven onto the track at the most convenient point, but the through road mainly carried cattle and sheep travelling from Falkirk or Doune to England. The main droveroads in the Borders can be seen from the map (Fig. 17 ) to run both 'down', on a north-south line, and 'across' from east to west. Following them on the ground one soon finds that levelled stretches, stone bridges over streams, draining, dykes and commons were all important features.

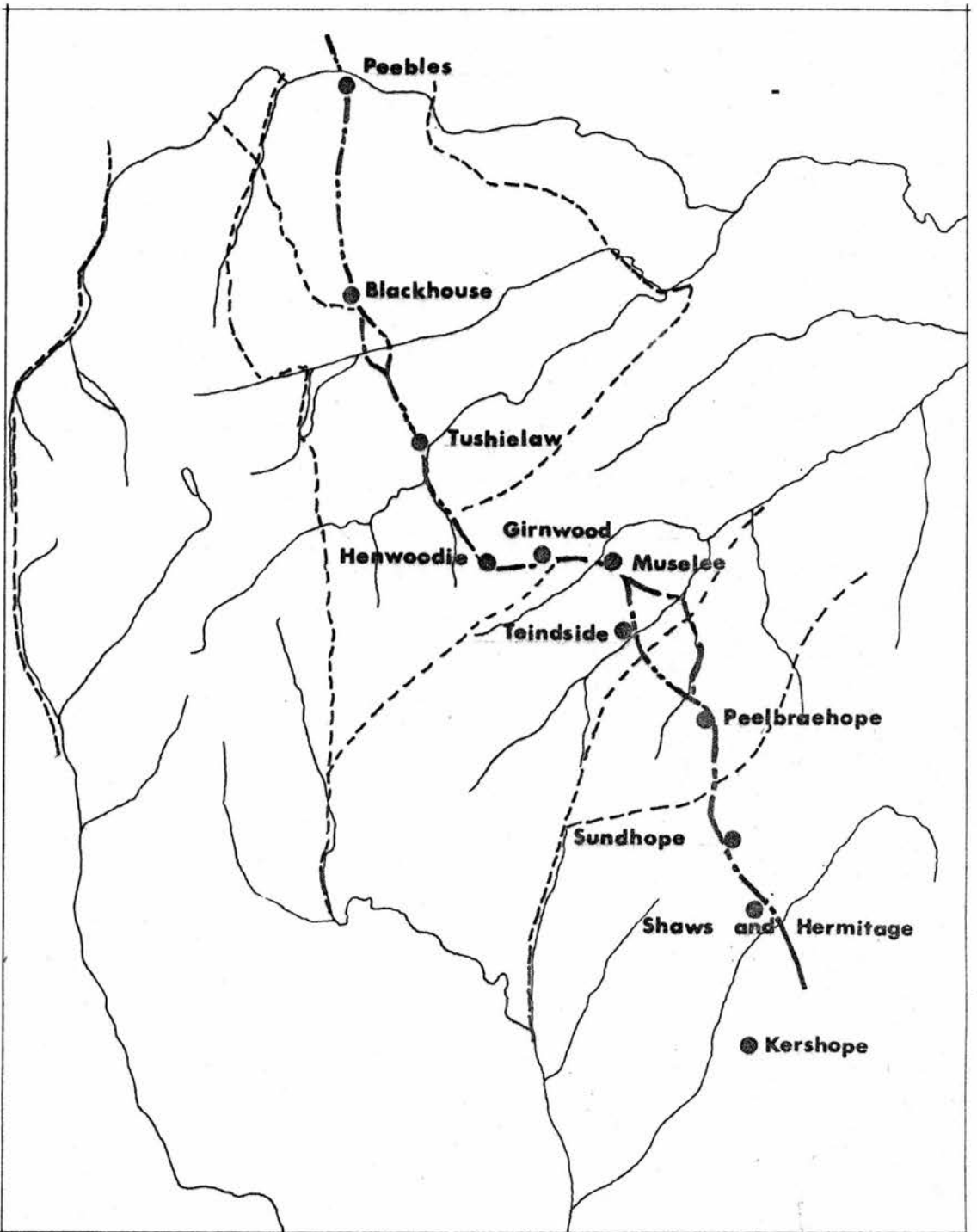
Taking stock long distances required responsible men to look after the droves or 'drifts'. These men were called 'drivers', as distinct from the 'drovers', who were dealers rather than people who took to the roads themselves.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Hogg, 'Statistics of Selkirkshire', T.H. & A.S.S. (1832), Vol. IX, p. 288.

2. S.H.P., no. 195.

3. Haldane says that contemporary records use the term 'drover' indiscriminately (Haldane, A.R.B., The Drove Roads of Scotland, p. 23), but in the Borders at least the distinction is generally clearly made.



**Fig.17**

**MAIN DROVE ROUTE THROUGH THE  
'BORDER HILLS AREA'**

**Main route** —————

**Common ground for over-night stances** ———●———

**Some minor routes** - - - - -

Drivers were employed by the farmer or by the drover or by the purchaser of the stock who might be a butcher in Edinburgh or a fattener in England. They were often unemployed shepherds or the sons of shepherds, and upon them depended good relations with the farmers whose pastures the drove road crossed. Commonly a local boy, perhaps the farmer's son, was sent out to watch that the drivers did their job and prevented the animals from straying, particularly at night.<sup>1</sup> Things could easily go wrong, as for example in mid September 1822, when "a very large Lot of sheep came past East Buccleugh late in the evening". The shepherd's son went out to watch the drove as far as the Foulmyre, but here he met a friend and they slipped off. "The night became very dark and stormy and the Drivers slunk away and left their charge". For a while the drivers were lost, and in the black darkness no one could see what was happening. "There, did about one thousand sheep spread themselves over the Saughie bog and the Killie nest and fed till day light." The leading driver, called the 'Topsman' or 'Oversman', tried to pacify the shepherd by giving him a guinea, and, the damage done, went on his way.<sup>2</sup>

For his own stock a farmer generally had his own driver, either the shepherd or a specially hired man. It

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1. The hiring terms for the shepherd at Henwoodie in 1795 required him to "keep a sufficient lad to assist to look after the Drovers as they pass and see they do no mischief" (G.P., Diary no. 10, p. 27).

2. G.P., Diary no. 21, p. 332.

was not always easy to find suitable drivers for hire, and much searching might be necessary among the local farm employees or even in the nearest town. For this reason, and for economic reasons, farmers sensibly combined forces, and the droves going some distance were often composed of stock from several farms. It was also common for a farmer to send stock under his own shepherd to join up with a drove in the charge of the purchaser's, or a drover's, men. In 1807 James Grieve sold his Buccleuch draft ewes as usual to a Mr. Dixon, from Yorkshire, with whom he settled in Hawick on 3rd September. The day before, "Mr. Dixon's man called ... to let me know that the Ewes should be at the Pealbraehope on Saturday night." So Grieve sent off four score ewes in pouring rain on the Saturday under his Buccleuch herd, who returned late in the evening, "having delivered the Ewes and gotten the Topsmans receipt for them." The topsman had charge also of "the Langburnshiels Shankend Girnwood Thorlishope Carretrigg ones" as well, "a pretty large Drove o them! " 1

Drovers were middle-men, valuable as watchers of the markets, who dealt chiefly in cattle, and who arranged the profitable disposal of what they purchased more cheaply from farmers. It was an uncertain business and lent itself to dishonesty. The system of credit upon which drovers operated sometimes meant that the seller of stock was deceived, or that he had to take a considerable risk,

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1. G.P., Diary no. 15, pp. 198-200.

trusting that on the basis of a bill or promissory note he would eventually be paid. The drovers, on the other hand, often went into business with little or no capital, and, unless they were lucky, could easily become bankrupt.<sup>1</sup>

Some drovers were farmers themselves. In 1675 "John Armestrange, drover" was tenant of Nether Harden in Liddesdale,<sup>2</sup> and in 1681 "James Grieve Drover" was tenant in East Buccleuch,<sup>3</sup> while five farms in Liddesdale were let to a group of drovers around 1715.<sup>4</sup> Like many of their kind, this group was unsuccessful, and by 1721 they were bankrupt. It was easy for a drover to fail, and about 1720 William Scott in Rowanburnfoot, who was considered a great drover, was also bankrupt. That being a drover did not earn much respect is clear from the diaries of men who knew them like Thomas Beattie and James Grieve. The former described Thomas Armstrong, a farmer in Ewesdale early in the eighteenth century:

"Thomas... turned out to be a sober, careful, intelligent young man; he took to droving Black Cattle to the south of England, an employment for none but desperate men; he had two or three lucky years and as soon as he thought he could shift without it, he gave it entirely up and took to farming with uncommon judgement and application..." 5

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1. The economy of drovers has been described in some detail by Haldane (op. cit., pp. 46-52).
  2. B.M., 402.
  3. B.M., 409.
  4. B.M., 277.
  5. Beattie, op. cit., p. 11.

Some thirty years later Robert Elliot of Fenwick, who had purchased an estate consisting of Fenwick, Lairhope and Easter Highchesters, lost his property, for he was "a Drover, and one who speculated deeply in Highland-Cattle and soon his circumstances gave way...".<sup>1</sup> In 1764 John Armstrong, tenant of three farms, also failed; he was "a Drover, a cunning draughty fellow, but little scholar, and as little real capital".<sup>2</sup> One who survived the business was John Bell of Dunnabie, who lived in the mid eighteenth century and who "was all his life a great Drover and was often partner with Carrick and Keplin, the greatest Drovers in the North of England."<sup>3</sup>

It seems that such drovers played little part in the life of the Border sheep farmers, being more concerned with acquiring stock from the Highlands to market in England. There were others like Robert Scott in Skelfhill, James Grieve in Todshawhaugh and his son Walter in Branxholm Park, who conducted a small business in 'Highland' cattle, chiefly by summering them in their grass parks.<sup>4</sup> In 1755, for instance, Walter Grieve turned a loss on sheep into a small profit with his 'nolt', and in 1766 a profit on sheep of £29.17.6 was increased to £102 by "Summering... 56 Nolt

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1. G.P., Diary no. 16, p. 294.

2. Beattie, op. cit., p. 55.

3. Ibid., p. 179.

4. In 1767 advances of £500 each were made by the British Linen Bank to Robert Scott and James Grieve to help finance their dealings in cattle (Haldane, op. cit., p. 48).

here in the Parks". He bought cattle at Falkirk, Dumbarton, Kinross, and Letham, and usually sold them off to "Wattie Armstrong, Drover".<sup>1</sup> His grandson, William Grieve, practised a similar business. He went regularly to the October 'Tryst' at Falkirk and bought 'kyloes' to winter; in 1819 he bought thirty at £6 each, all bred in "Lord Raes country" and thought cheap.<sup>2</sup>

By 1800 there were signs that the increased trade in sheep had led several local men to take up dealing, and unless they were good they quickly earned the dislike of farmers, who could turn to more direct, if less convenient, methods of marketing their stock. The term for these dealers was 'jobbers', often used rather disparagingly, as when a disillusioned Grieve wrote in his diary:

"These Jobbers are all a parcel of Damned dishonest scoundrells, John Murray no less so than the rest. He pretended to advise me with respect to the disposal of my sheep while all the time he meant to have a share of them himself. And that fellow Windross made an offer to one of my drivers with a view to make me ask a greater price than I had any chance of getting that he himself might not miss them." 3

Some jobbers were also drovers on a large scale and respectable, like John Elliot of Templehall and James Scott, a member of the Milsington family, who had been a shepherd in his youth and later conducted an enormous cattle and sheep trade to England from his Highland farms in the mid-

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1. G.P., Account Book (Walter Grieve).
  2. G.P., Account Book (William Grieve).
  3. G.P., Diary no. 13, p. 22.



Pl. 61 Highland 'kylies', bought from the north,  
feeding on Shaws, Ettrick, c. 1930.



Pl. 62 A section of drove road in the Manor valley.



Pl. 63  
Cheviots at Jedburgh  
c. 1900.

SHEEP TO MARKET

Pl. 64 Cheviots at Dovemount, Hawick, 1896.



nineteenth century. They were useful, even essential, to the marketing of sheep from the Borders at a time when long distance trade had reached a higher level than ever before.

All sorts of stock used the drove roads. In 1825 James Grieve saw "a very large Drove of Poneys pass Sundhope... no less than Nine Score...", and a shepherd remembered a flock of two hundred goats passing over the Minchmuir around 1900. Cattle passed through the Borders from the north, while sheep came mostly from local farms until those from new Highland sheepwalks were sent south towards the close of the eighteenth century. The 'through' drove road then became extremely busy in the autumns, forking in several places into separate sheep and cattle tracks, so that the defined limits on the ground within which the droves might pass or stay overnight were of increasing importance.

The enclosure of stock for a night had to be carefully managed, and in the nineteenth century Francis Armstrong, shepherd at Henwoodie for forty years, used to receive money for every drove that stayed at the Qua Park there.<sup>2</sup> Shops, pubs, and smithies, catering for the drivers and their droves, were scattered along the route, and shepherd's houses were used to guests for a night in spite of the 'rule'

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1. G.P., Diary no. 22, p. 458.

2. Money was often paid for the use of a farmer's pasture overnight. Elliot in Hermitage entered "Money got for Droves" in his account books of the 1820s and 1830s. (Hermitage Account Books, nos. 3 & 4).

that drivers should sleep out near their charge in sheds or behind dykes.

In 1800 and after shepherds or especially hired drivers took their employer's sheep to market much as their predecessors had done centuries before. With a great flock of bleating lambs in front of them, they made their slow way to the ridge tracks and eventually came down between dykes to a field, rented beforehand, on the edge of the fair ground. If they had to pass through a dyke or fence they found a gap designed for the purpose, sometimes marked with tall poles and usually closed with a gate. Any such gap improperly closed on a permanent basis was opened up again by force. If the late summer weather was good, the whole occasion was pleasurable, a social outing which brought adventures and news to enliven the evenings of autumn and winter.

The real end of droving came with the arrival of surfaced roads and road transport, for even with the railways nearby stock had to be driven often great distances to the stations. The abandonment of the hill ways, both as drove routes and as means of communication, was yet another indication that the old way of hill life, in which ewe milking and smearing had also played large parts, was vanishing fast. These were all social as well as farming activities, and their absence meant a loss both to the tradition connecting present with past, and to the spirit which had supported the traditional world of shepherding in the Borders.

## EPILOGUE

The main impression left after this exploration of the history and traditions of sheepfarming in the Borders is that the customary methods of looking after sheep were ages old, having their roots in prehistoric times. There is much in common between shepherding practices in the Scottish Borders and those of the North of England, suggesting perhaps that they were in the main introduced by Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian settlers with possible Celtic and Roman elements as well.

In course of time the community of the Border hills came to depend almost entirely upon the produce of sheep for its very existence. Landowning and tenant families carried on the business for generations, expanding and developing in accordance with the changing need for essential commodities of life: wool and meat. The southern uplands of Scotland were most fitted for raising sheep, and after a long period of development in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there were the flocks and management skill to be drawn upon by any who required them. Towards 1800 therefore, manufacturers established themselves in Border towns to take advantage of local wool suppliers who were sending their fleeces to Yorkshire and Lancashire, and landowners in the Highlands with vast mountainous estates turned to the Borders for both sheep and men. The Border hills community even expanded overseas when younger sons of farmers and shepherds ventured to the new settlements in Australia and America.

## EPILOGUE cont.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, therefore, sheepfarming seemed to have reached unprecedented levels of success. Many tenants looked upon their farming as an organised business, cutting out needless expenditure and outworn practices, dispensing with unnecessary labour and making improvements where possible. One result was that the population of the hill valleys began to decrease, although not to the point where traditional community life came to a halt. The sheep business seemed destined to prosper as far as could be seen into the future.

The world of 1900 was very different from that of the old mediaeval period. Though in many cases the farming and shepherding families were the same, their attitudes were entirely new. For most, the past was no longer a guide to the present, but had been superseded, and every successful introduction was seen as a step away from ignorance and superstition. The continuation of this process, however, has, within a few decades, resulted in hill communities being broken up and the scale of sheepfarming so diminished that its very existence seems imperilled. In its place has come coniferous afforestation, now covering more than half the area which had been the principal setting of the pastoral way of life in the south of Scotland.

## APPENDIX I

### A Note on Gold, etc.

Whatever minerals lay in the Border hills, they were of little significance to the people, though some use of them was made over the centuries.

In "Ane Memorandum ... anent the Metals of Scotland...", Robert Seton, who was said to have lived in the reign of James V, wrote that gold could be found:

"in Henderland, Glengaber burn there"  
"in Monbenger braes and burn there"  
"in Dowglass braes, and at Dowglass craig"  
"at Windie-neil in Tweddale. It marches with the  
Blackhouse in Yarrow"  
"In Borthwick hill, betwixt Hawick and Branxome"

(Atkinson, S.: The Discoverie and Historie of the Gold Mynes in Scotland, pp. 81-82, Appendix I. "Windie-neil" should be "Windie-neis", the 'Windynies' on Glenrath.)

One John Gibson, aged 92 in 1619, had been "a washer or streamer for gold in sondry places", and declared "for a truth that the greatest gold that ever he gott" was from the Glengaber Burn, at Henderland (Atkinson, op. cit., p. 21). Others have since taken the gold from that burn, and in some farmhouses are rings and other ornaments made from it.

Gold was mentioned as being found at Kershope in Yarrow, where also "there is a little strand", which after heavy rain washed up "many peices of lead, ... found by Countrey people among the sand" (M.G.C., Vol. III, p. 185). Copper was reported at "Borthwick-hill", and "there is a silver Mine on Windy-neil, in Tweeddale" (Atkinson, op. cit., p. 86, Appendix III). Remnants of buildings or other evidence of workings have been found in several of the places listed by Seton.

APPENDIX II

Some Scott Families of the Seventeenth century

Before 1700 many of the small lairds in the Border hills area depended for their livelihood on the produce of sheep, especially wool, and they played their part in the development of sheep farming, either in their own right or as 'tacksmen' of great landlords such as Buccleuch. The Scotts were the most numerous, and flourished during the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Often relatives of established families, they obtained their lands, by title, wadset or hereditary tenure, at a time when possession was a matter of the great landowner's favour; they served a useful purpose in supporting him as clan chief and in furthering the expansion of his estate.

The table below includes the majority of minor Scott lairds with lands in the Border hills, together with the approximate period in which each was in possession.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Period when first recorded</u>	<u>Period when last recorded</u>	<u>Replaced by</u>
Headshaw (1)	? 1450	1630	Scott of Headshaw (2)
Roberton	? 1450	1620 - 1630	Harden
Whitslaid	? 1450	1740 - 1750	Scotts of Tanlawhill
Howpasley	1460 - 1480	1610 - 1620	Andersons of Tushielaw
Tushielaw	1490 - 1510	1680 - 1690	Harden
Oakwood	1500 - 1510	1620 - 1630	Scotts of Davington, etc.
Thirlestane	1510 - 1530	1620 - 1630	Earl of Traquair
Dryhope	1530 - 1540	1630 - 1640	Bucleuch
Foulshields	1530 - 1540	1640 - 1650	Bucleuch/Scott of Crumhaugh
Goldielands	1550 - 1560	1670 - 1680	Bucleuch
Newburgh	1570 - 1580	1660 - 1670	Ogilvie of Hartwoodmyres
Hartwoodmyres	1570 - 1580	1680 - 1690	Bucleuch
Gilmanscleuch	1580 - 1590	1720 - 1730	

APPENDIX II cont.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Period when first recorded</u>	<u>Period when last recorded</u>	<u>Replaced by</u>
Todrig	1580 - 1590	1746	
Huntlie 2	1590 - 1600	1630 - 1640	Harden
Langhope	?	1690 - 1700	Elliot of Minto
Shielswood (1)	1590 - 1600	1660 - 1670	Scott of Shielswood (2)
Mangerton	1620 - 1630	1690 - 1700	Buccleuch
Girnwood	1620 - 1630	1650 - 1660	Buccleuch
Deuchar	1623	1630 - 1635	Murray of Philiphaugh
Gorrenberry	1629	1761	Buccleuch
Headshaw (2)	1630	1690 - 1700	Elliot of Minto
Harwood	1650 - 1660		
Shielswood (2)	1660 - 1670	1700 - 1710	Elliot of Minto
Renaldburn 3	1660 - 1670	1750 - 1760	Buccleuch
Crumhaugh	1670 - 1680	1809	Scott in Priestthaugh
Grassyards	1680 - 1690	1700 - 1710	-
Falnash	1691	1759	Buccleuch
Merrylaw	?	1750 - 1760	-

1. A family may well have existed before the first records, and representatives sometimes continued to use the title years after loss of the estate.
2. Probably passed from one Scott family to another.
3. Formerly Scott of Newburgh.

APPENDIX III

Testament of James Bruntoun in Greistoun, who died in  
April 1622 (T.P.)

STOCK, etc.:

3 "kye" @	- £ 9
2 horses @	- £10
8 bolls oats sown, estimated at a threefold crop	- £64
3 bolls "beir" sown etc.	- £60
2 "queyis" @	- 5 merks
3 sc. "auld scheip" @	- 30/-
other items	- 10 merks
	Total: £277.13.4 scots.

DEBTS owing to Bruntoun:

By "Johne (Kinin?) mound in the auld toun of peblis"	- £50. 6. 8.
"Adam Henrysone in the glen"	-
"James Muray of kirkhous"-for beir-	9. 6. 8.
"Alaine Dunlope - couper" - for tar barrels	- 1.16.
"James hog in schillinglaw" - for iron	- 1.15.

Sum Total: £347.15.8.

DEBTS owed by Bruntoun:

To "Walter scheill in schillinglaw"- for beir	- £36.
"Robert heckfuird in Innerlethin - brother in law to the defunct"-	100 merks.
"Helene Skarlet in Edinburgh"	- £100.
"Issobell brekanrig"	- .13/-

Total debts owed: £203. 6. 8.

Of these debts owed-free of	- £144. 9.
To be deducted still	- £ 48. 3.

APPENDIX IV

Records of tenants and other occupants of two hill farms in 1650 ('Borthwick Water Communicants', T.H.A.S. 1959: pp. 19-26) and 1694 (Poll Tax Roll, Horsburgh 2).

Bellendean

<u>1650</u>		<u>1694</u>	
Simeon Nicoll	} tenants	John and William Nicoll:	tenants
James Nicoll		Simon and William Nicoll	
William Nicoll		& two wives	
Helene Grieve		John Clerk and wife	cotter
Margrat Andersoune		William Trumbell and wife	"
Helen Sheille		Robert Scot and wife	"
Helene Gowanlock		James Headly and wife	"
Helene Andersoune		Robert Stodart and wife	herd
Archibald Campbell		James Nicoll and wife	"
Margrat Forrest		Tho. Scot	servant
		Isbell Hill	"
		Helen Beattie	"
		Michaell Armistronge	"
		James Nicoll, son to William	
		Two daughters to John Nicoll	
(10)		(25)	

Hoscote 1650

<u>1650</u>		<u>1694</u>	
Johne Elliot		Gavine Eliot and wife	tenant
Jannet Elliot		Adam Govinlocke and wife	"
Robert Elliot		Thomas Govinlocke and wife	"
John Gowanlock		James Scot and wife	"
William Scot		William Scot, and wife &	
Francis Scot		daughter	"
Bessie Scot		Walter Chisholme	"
Agnas Scot		William Watson and wife	"
William Davidsoune		James Mitchell, wife &	
Bessie Davidsoune		children	"
Joane Glendinning		Adam Glendinning, and wife	"
Adam Glendinning		Isbell Govinlocke	cottar
Margrat Clerk		Robert Heislop, wife &	
Marione Andrew		daughter	"
		Walter Beattie, and wife	"
		Thomas Glendinning and wife	"
		Thomas Hoge and wife	herd
(14)		(28)	

Note: The population of each farm 'toun' seems at least twice as large in 1694 as it had been in 1650, but the lists of 1650 may have been incomplete. Hoscote, a lower farm with more arable and on the Harden estate, retained a large tenant group to the end of the century, while Bellendean (Buccleuch Estate) never had more than two or three tenants. The continuation of the same surnames in both farms is also to be noted.

APPENDIX V

Examples of Farm rents 1620 - 1860

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CRAIK</u>	<u>GARWALD</u>	<u>SKELFHILL</u>	<u>WEST DELORAIN</u>	<u>EAST BUCCLEUCH</u>	<u>PRIESTHAUGH</u>
1612	£ 900.	£ 300.	£ 900.	£ 733. 6. 8	£ 100.	
1625	306.13. 4	110.	400	333. 6. 8	266.13. 4	
1627	780.	180.	800.	800.	466.13. 4	
1629	1066.13. 4	300	1000.	1040.	733. 6. 8	
1645	1513. 6. 8	866.13. 4	966.13. 4	1066.13. 4	666.13. 4	
1650	1300.	900.	1333. 6. 8	1333. 6. 8		
1660						
1670	1766.13. 4	966.13. 4	1400.	1366.13. 4	700.	
1672	1833. 6. 8	1100.	1466.13. 4	1400.	600.	
1675	wastet	wastet	1100.	wastet	800.	
1677	1300.	666.13. 4		866.13. 4	600.	
1690	1620.	a1000.		1333. 6. 8	800.	
b1710	1500.	86. 2. 2 $\frac{3}{4}$			800.	
1722	119. 8. 10 $\frac{3}{4}$		130.			
1740	119. 9.		140.	111. 2. 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	66.13. 4	
1760	155.		145.			
1770	180.		145.			
1792	165.	100.	145.	147.	80.	
1811	280.	a155.	153.	c145.	a120.	
1821	607.	220.	200.	c180.	253.	
1831	473.	a661.	520.			
1840	541.	528.	430.	340.	428.	
1850	577.	540.		276.	451.	
1860	836.	615.11. 3			463.	
1866		950.15. 9.			679.17. 6	
		970.				

+ i.e., without rented tenants. a, a farm has been added.  
 b, conversion from Scots money to Sterling. c, a farm has been separated off.  
 Main Sources: B.M. Rentals, Garwald Papers.



## APPENDIX VII

In 1536 a party of Armstrongs and others were accused of "the Theft and concealment of certain sheep from John Hope and John Hall, the King's shepherds, furth of the lands of Braidlee in the Forest" (Pitcairn, op. cit., Vol. I, Part i, p. 173).

This was Braidlie in Borthwick Water, never part of the original Forest. With its neighbouring Philhope it appeared on a list of farms pastured by the King's flocks in 1540 (E.R., Vol. XVII, p. 290), and the same shepherds were in charge:

"Braidlie et Filop"	2 herds - John Hop, John Haw
"Balloden"	1 herd - George Nycholl
"Bukclewch"	4 herds
"Esdailmur"	9 herds
"Commounsyde, Dry Dam" (i.e. Dryden)	1 herd - James Cesfurd
"Vestcotrig et Southcothrig et Bolburg"	1 herd - Richard Hendersoun
"Northous, Stobbetait, et Cokburn"	1 herd - William Hendirsoun
"Lie Burgh"	1 herd - George Hendersoun

All of these lands, except for Braidlie and Philhope, were in Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch's charge, though many of them in theory belonged to Melrose Abbey.

APPENDIX VIII

Lambs 'told' on three farms:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Craik</u>	<u>Blackhouse and Craig Douglas</u>	<u>West Deloraine</u>
1625		9 sc. 8; 14 sc.10; -	-
1626		21 sc. ; 13 sc. 6; 14 sc. ; 20 sc. 6	36 sc. 12
1627		20 sc.10; 22 sc. ; 15 sc.12; 26 sc.17	40 sc. 15
1628		19 sc. ; 15 sc.10; 11 sc. ; 14 sc.	34 sc.
1629	41 sc.	19 sc. ; 14 sc.10; 11 sc. ; 13 sc.	29 sc.
1630	34 sc.	20 sc.10; 13 sc. 5; 11 sc.13; 15 sc.16	24 sc.
1631	36 sc.	19 sc. 6; 16 sc. 5; -	40 sc. 10
1632	37 sc.	20 sc. ; 15 sc.10; 19 sc. 3; 21 sc. 8	35 sc. 12
1633	30 sc.15	- - -	40 sc. 10
1634	29 sc.10	- - -	36 sc. 12

(These figures are derived from the teind accounts: B.M., 943/1 & 943/6.)

APPENDIX VIII cont.

Sheep Stocks

The sheep stocks were calculated at Whitsunday. Breeds may have changed.

	<u>1729</u>	<u>1737</u>	<u>1738</u>	<u>1753</u>	<u>1977</u>
1. <u>Linhope</u>					
Ewes & Lambs	3 sc. 8	8 sc. 14			80 sc.
Eild sheep	5 sc. 19	4 sc. 10			
Hoggs	3 sc. 3	3 sc. 5			22 sc. 10
Eild gimmers	0	10			
Keeping Lambs	3 sc. 14				
Tups					2 sc. 10
	16 sc. 14	16 sc. 19	50 sc. 15	47 sc. 7	
	(1/6 stock)	(1/6 stock)	(1/2 stock)	(1/2 stock)	
Total Stock				103sc. 12	105 sc.

Walter Grieve purchased a sixth of the stock of Linhope in 1729, another in 1737, another in 1738, so that, as sharing tenant, he then held half the stock. He purchased the other half in 1753. (See Chapter three, p. 154.)

	<u>1735</u>	<u>1771</u>	<u>1788</u>	<u>1976</u>
2. <u>Riccarton</u>				
(Old) Tups	0	16	1sc. 2	15
Ewes & Lambs	19 sc. 3	17 sc. 10	17sc. 5	28 sc. 10
Eild ewes & gimmers	5 sc. 17	2 sc. 2	6sc. 2	6 sc. 10 (gimmers only)
Hoggs	3 sc. 12	6 sc. 18	8 sc.	6 sc. 10
Dinmonts	3 sc. 2			
Total Stock	32 sc. 8	27 sc. 6	32 sc. 9	42 sc. 5

APPENDIX VIII cont.

Sheep Stocks cont.

3. Braidlie (Liddesdale)

	<u>1763</u>	<u>1792</u>	<u>1977</u>
Tups	1 sc. 9	1 sc.	
Tup Hoggs	. 10	. 16	
Ewes & Lambs	33 sc. 8	21 sc. 8	
Gimmers		4 sc. 6	
Ewes, Gimmers, & Lambs	21 sc. 7		
Eild ewes	. 2	1 sc. 6	
Dinmonts		13 sc. 2	
Wedder Hoggs		13 sc. 15	
Hoggs	14 sc. 3		
Wedders		12 sc. 8	
Gimmers with lambs		3 sc. 15	
Ewe Hoggs		10 sc. 10	
Total Stock	70 sc. 19	82 sc. 6	80 sc.

	<u>Meikledale</u>		<u>Craik</u>		<u>Penchrise</u>	
	<u>1765</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1833</u>	<u>1930</u>	<u>1838</u>	<u>1977</u>
Ewes & Lambs	30 sc. 5					
Eild ewes & gimmers	6 sc. 2	50 sc.	71 sc. 11		93 sc. 2	105 sc.
Gimmers & Lambs	6 sc. 9		10 sc. 2		16 sc. 12	
Ewe Hoggs	12 sc. 6	12 sc. 6	17 sc. 1			
Hoggs	2 sc. 4	1 sc. 10			21 sc. 11	25 sc. 10
Tups					1 sc. 16	2 sc.
Total Stock	57 sc. 6	63 sc. 16	98 sc. 14	107 sc.	133 sc. 1	132 sc. 10

APPENDIX IX

Sheep and cattle losses on Buccleuch Estate farms in Ettrick and Yarrow resulting from the winter of 1673-4.

("Ane note of sheepe & nolt deid in Forrest 1674": S.R.O., R.H. 9/17/101)

<u>Farm</u>	<u>Dead nolt</u>	<u>Dead sheep</u>	<u>Living sheep</u>
Wester Doloreane		1500	700
Easter Doloreane		600	900
Wester Buccleugh	22	1160	490
Easter Buccleugh	23	1880	220
Andleshope	10	760	540
Bellendeane	25	540	60
Utter Huntlie		560	90
Over Eldinhope		920	130
Mid Eldinhope		280	420
Eldinhopeknow		280	270
Eltrieve		1600	600
East Montberinger	5	540	910
West Montberinger	5	1040	760
Catslackburne	3	480	870
Catslacknow		100	450
Shuttinglies		600	550
Glengaber & Fastheugh		680	520
Wheithope & Blackgraine		1280	970
Ladhope		300	500
Foulsheills		400	-
Falsyde		260	40
Tynneis	6	720	1280
Peill		300	1100
Carterhaugh	3	140	710
Aldwark		220	180
Newark	4	460	240
Corslie	8	920	880
Falwoodsheilrig		400	} 690
Winterburgh		560	
<u>Totals:</u>	114	19480	

The sheep losses are estimated to the nearest score.

APPENDIX X

Inventories of Farm furnishings and equipment

1. Goods belonging to William Burnet, tenant in Craig

Douglas: October 1720

(Welsh Papers)

FARM:

"a seven Beast pleugh",	
"ane old pleuch and a yock and a double tree,"	
3 "peice of old pleuch Soumes",	
"Coulter and a pleuch Brydle",	4 pair "woollen sheares",
10 pair of "pleuch heames",	2 burning irons,
4 pair Iron "heames",	a mattock,
4 sleds,	30 "nolt stais",
5 harrows,	a horse heck and manger,
5 pair "Muck Creells",	2 saddles,
4 pair "peett Creills",	5 bridles,
2 flaughter spades,	"Ane Furnisht Bought",
3 peat spades	4 hay rakes,
2 "Barne Shelves",	3 ladders,
2 graips,	4 forks,
6 corn riddles and a seive,	2 scythes,
2 iron crooks and 12 hooks,	3 "hair Tedders"
1 saw,	"yeard Spade",
1 "Womle",	iron rake,
2 axes,	"hurle Barrow",
a "Rake Borrell",	4 hand barrows.

DWELLING HOUSE:

3 beds with 'hangings',	2 forms,
5 beds "for servants",	3 stools,
2 close beds,	2 old planks,
2 "fetherBeds with Bolsters and Coads",	3 candlesticks,
1 "Calf"(i.e. Chalf) Bed and Bolster,	a brass pan,
3 "Bed mads",	a copper kettle,
38 pairs blankets,	a pair of "Gauntries",
7 pairs sheets,	a gun,
2 rugs,	a sword,
18 "Coverings",	a pestle and mortar,
4 dozen "of Neaprie",	1 "Iron Chimney and two pair Tongs",
8 table cloths,	a copper tanker,
3 presses,	3 "worsett wheells",
"ane vessell Amrie and ane vessell Bink",	2 "Big Wheels",
2 chests,	5 pairs of "Combs for wooll",
4 tables,	2 pair old cards,
15 chairs,	a "Timber Cradle",
	4 arks,

KITCHEN AND PANTRY:

4 stoups,	"Bouk board",
3 cups,	"seed skep",
7 timber plates,	14 milk tubs,
15 spoons,	4 kirns,
6 "pooder plates",	7 cheesefalls,
12 "pooder Trenchers",	6 ewe cogs,
"flaggon",	2 "Ale Boatts",
21 timber trenchers,	5 ale barrels,
a basin,	4 "Parr Tubs",
a "brander",	2 flesh boats,
frying pan,	9 tubs,
dropping pan,	6 "Little milk Bowies",
"milk Search",	3 pots,
"Reeming Cup",	10 empty tar barrels,
flesh fork,	"corn full",
girdle,	2 pair of "Baulks and Brods".
cheese press,	

2. Inventory of 'furniture' bought for Southfield 1740  
(Grieve Papers). The articles were bought from farm  
'roups' at Southfield, Todshawhill, Whitfield, and  
from Crawhill and Hawick. Many were the same as at  
Douglas Craig; others included:

a "Milsey",	"mads"; i.e. 'mauds' or plaids,
a chamber pot,	a lint wheel,
2 dressing irons,	a punch bowl,
candle snuffers,	a desk.
a scythe and 2 "strakes",	

3. Goods belonging to James Burnet, Tenant in Bellendean:

October 1833

(Northhouse Papers)

FARM:

3 carts,	7 hay rakes,
1 pair of harrows,	4 "padles",
2 ploughs,	12 cow bands,
2 cart frames,	4 spades,
3 sets of harness,	3 grapes,
pair of fanners,	4 forks,
6 sheep 'flakes',	tar barrels,
5 sheep nets,	2 ladders,
2 beds and bedding in the stable loft.	

DWELLING HOUSE:

"Midroom":

8 day clock,  
weather glass,  
chest of drawers and cover,  
tea tray,  
3 stools,  
"crum cloth and rug",  
fender and fire irons,

4 chairs,  
"a quantity of Crystal",  
3 table cloths,  
2 beds and bedding,  
2 pairs of sheets,  
4 pairs of blankets.

"In the Parlour":

looking glass,  
12 hair-bottomed chairs,  
dining table and cover,  
corner cupboard,  
12 knives and forks,  
carpet,  
"crumcloth",

rug  
fender and fire irons,  
"Carron Grate",  
2½ doz. bottles,  
an old tray,  
bed and bedding,  
20 volumes of books.

"In the Kitchen":

dresser and kitchen table,  
"A Grate and swye",  
2 resting chairs,  
4 kitchen chairs,  
crockery,  
pots,  
pans,  
2 kettles,  
5 candlesticks,  
tongs,

"sundry small Kitchen Utensils",  
4 pails,  
milk vessels,  
churn,  
"Two flesh Boats",  
2 barrels,  
Bakeboard,  
12 horn spoons,  
1½ doz. silver teaspoons & tongs,  
2 beds and bedding.

"In the Garrot":

2 meal arks,  
steelyard and weights,  
2 meal boats,  
wearing apparel,

an old saddle,  
5 chests,  
2 bee skeps,  
wheel and reel,  
12 sacks.

APPENDIX XI

Population of Ettrick Parish 1694-1891

1. Parish Totals:

<u>1694</u>	<u>1755</u>	<u>1766/7</u>	<u>1790</u>	<u>1832</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1891</u>
379	397	352	470	530	477	433	410

2. Farm Populations:

<u>Farms</u>	<u>1694</u>	<u>1766/7</u>	<u>1832</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1891</u>
Potburn			11	9	10	8
Over Phawhope	7		6	4	11	3
Nether Phawhope	10		5	5	9	7
Broadgairhill	16		6	6	8	7
Over Kirkhope	11			6	4	8
Brockhoperig		37	5	13	8	6
Shorthope		4/5	6	4	6	7
Cossarshill	17	6/7	6	11	8	15
Scabcleuch	12	8/11	21	19	4	6
Ettrick House	40	9	22	14	7	3
Craig Hill	9		9	6	6	7
Midgehope	18	38/39	3	10	11	7
Ramseycleugh	13	6/8	16	13	12	7
Glenkerry		6	13	16	6	8
Nether Dalgleish	8	5	16	10	9	13
Over Dalgleish	31	5	11	11	13	11
Gair		11	4	5	5	6
Deephope			15	19	6	2
Gamescleuch		13	18	8	6	7
Hopehouse	20	24	40	39	31	27
Annelshope	8	17/18	12	11	9	8
West Buccleuch			7	10	7	8
Meerlees			3	6	6	4
Mountcommon	20	32	2	7		
Phenzhopehaugh			6	7	4	5
East Buccleuch			5	10	10	4
Baldhill	21		5	8	6	4
Ropelawshiel			10	10	4	10
Cacrabank	13	25	20	8	11	7
Crosslee	33	32/37	32	31	28	29
Tushielaw	26		24	16	13	9
Chapelhope		22	3	7	5	7
Muckra			8	4	5	9
Kerrcleuch	16		4	10	5	5
Summerhope			6	7	7	10
Riskenhope	7		3	7	13	10

3. Notes:

- A. 1694: Poll Tax Roll, Horsburgh 2. Figures for nos. 4, 20, 21, & 26 are probably combined totals for places that were united from time to time over the whole period. The figure for nos. 5 & 6 is probably the total for both farms.
- B. 1755: Webster's Census.
- C. 1766/7: List of Examinable Persons, Etterick Parish Book. The figures are approximate and indicate the numbers present at the time of a visit rather than the permanent population of the farm.
- D. 1790: N.S.A. (Selkirkshire).
- E. 1832: Etterick Parish Book.
- F. 1851-71-91: Census.

The status of some places altered. The farms of Meerlees, Craighill, Deephope and Ropelawshiel became herd's dwellings on other farms. Cottages at Ettrickhouse were reduced from three (1851) to one (1871), at Deephope from three (1851) to one (1891), at Hopehouse from seven (1871) to three (1891). Consleugh on Glenkerry, was abandoned (1851), as was Mount-common (1871). On the other hand new cottages appeared at Crook, Quave, Rodono, and elsewhere (by 1891), but few of these were for farm workers.

## APPENDIX XII

### Two Views on Smearing

In the late nineteenth century H. G. Graham was one of those who wrote disparagingly of smearing. He based his opinion on information derived from a mid eighteenth century pamphlet by Sir George Clerk-Maxwell, but considerably altered the intended effect.

Clerk-Maxwell's pamphlet was called 'Observations on the Method of growing of Wool in Scotland, and Proposals for improving the quality of our Wool'. It was published in 1756, at a time when there was a universal complaint from farmers about the low price of tarred wool, and was designed to encourage producers and manufacturers to find ways of overcoming the problems caused by excessively heavy smearing. In the past the situation had been different, and "Some of the oldest people informed me, that they remembered the wool much better of its kind, and much less spoiled with tar, than at present" (p. 4). Heavier tarring had come in, possibly within a lifetime, or about a hundred years before, and possibly to meet developing markets.

"There is a tradition, and I believe there are some very old people yet alive who remember, that it was some farmers in the head of Tweeddale who introduced the custom of oversmearing, which, as it brought with it present profit, soon spread over the country." (p. 5)

Tweeddale and the Forest were considered by the author to be the heartland of sheepfarming, selling more surplus

wool in proportion to the population than anywhere else. The wool, however, was very coarse and very tarry, and farmers had given the impression that much tar was necessary. It was more probable that they deliberately smeared heavily to sell heavier wool, and the few manufacturers in operation before 1750 had little choice of quality. Clerk-Maxwell stated that a stone of such wool was reduced in weight by over 50% after washing and 'scouring' (p. 5).

Lessons learned from a tour in England were that much tar hurt sheep and wool, that stock marks with tar should be as small as possible, that more grease or butter in the mixture was useful, and that sheep should be washed carefully before clipping (p. 14) to remove the tar, moss and dirt. These lessons persuaded Clerk-Maxwell to conduct experiments with various mixtures (pp. 16-20) in which greater quantities of butter, tallow or oil were used, and they proved advantageous. Certain home concoctions were not approved of; "Some ... cheat themselves, by mixing their salve with wine, and others by mixing it with water in which the tender branches of broom have been boiled" (p. 18). The business of hand-washing sheep should not prove too troublesome, "if they will take the small trouble, to place one of their shifting-bughts that they milk their ewes in, upon a burn or river side, and make two or three men go into the water, the servants who are generally employed upon farms of that extent will easily wash a thousand a day." (p. 26) In addition, the inclination to experiment meant that the whole purpose of

smearing was questioned. Why was it done, at considerable expense, each year?

"The storemasters disagree amongst themselves as to the very intention of smearing.

"Some consider its principal use to be, the preserving the sheep from cold; others from the rains; others again the destroying of insects, or preventing, or curing the scab. They think the tar the principal ingredient in the salve; but being too hot of itself, they qualify it with butter." (p. 21)

Clerk-Maxwell himself thought smearing necessary, mainly to kill insects and to protect against scab (p. 21).

Graham's picture of the eighteenth century pastoral scene was very different and speaks for itself:

"The sight of sheep browsing on a Lowland meadow did not give a pleasant pastoral beauty to the landscape. Their fleeces, covered with tar, moss, and dirt, as they crawled under their woollen burdens, made them unsightly objects. Whether originating or not from a desire to add weight to the scanty wool, and impose on buyers, the farmers followed the custom - on pretext of health and warmth - of smearing their flocks with dense tarry coating, till the original weight was more than doubled; the fleece was spoiled, and the expense of cleaning the wool made havoc of the profit. But, however foolish and wasteful any practice might be, the farmers persisted in it with their wonted reverence for aged custom."

(Graham, H.G. : The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century, Vol. I, p. 177.)

APPENDIX XIII

Prices and Wool Weights

a. Prices of wool and stock:

Prices differed between farms and from one market to the next. Sheep, especially lambs, and wool varied in quality even on one farm, and produce differed in value according to breeds and conditions. It is therefore as difficult to produce a meaningful sequence of average prices as it is to compare wool weights. Tables 1 and 3 below contain information drawn from farm account books, showing how the two farmers fared; while Tables 2 and 4 consist of average prices at two important periods.

b. Wool Weights:

The generally accepted measure for weighing wool in the Borders before 1850 was a stone of twenty-four pounds. Variations occur, depending on the breed and age of sheep, the pasture and conditions, and on whether or not the sheep were smeared. In 1750 George Malcolm wrote (B.M., 290/1):

"There are 12 Stones in every Pack of wool, and one Wool stone consists of 25½ lib. Eng."

Though slightly overstating the number of pounds, this sentence serves as a general guide.

The records suggest that fleece weight gradually increased over the years, but comparison is made difficult by lack of information. A little evidence comes from accounts of the mid seventeenth century:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Sheep</u>	<u>Wool total</u>	<u>Fleece Weight</u>
1652	50 sc.13	48 st.	c. 1 lb.Scots
1654	26 sc. 6	22 st.	c. 1 lb. "
1659	12 sc.	12 st.	1.2 lb. "

(Source: B.M., 398, 943/3, 4, 15.)

In 1720 a total of 6 or 7 stones was clipped from 5 sc. sheep, indicating a fleece weight of nearly 1.5 lbs. Scots (S.M.P., 70). Almost certainly wool mentioned in these earlier Accounts was tarred, but there is no information on fleece type, and Scots weights differed from English, there being 16 lbs. Scots to the stone.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century fleeces weighed on average 3 lbs. (English). Charles Robson of Belford described the situation in a letter of January 1796 (Correspondence of R. Douglas, N.L.S., MS. 3116, ff. 214-5):

"An old wedder of the Cheviot breed generally clips from three to four pound of wool and worth about 23 sh. the stone of 24 pound: if smeared properly would clip upwards of four pound and be worth about 10d the pound. White Ewe wool will take about 10 Fleeces to the Stone and be worth 23 sh. Young sheep and hogs are generally salved take about 8 Fleeces to the Stone and worth a Guinea".

In the later eighteenth century therefore one set of weights would be:

<u>Cheviot widders</u>		<u>Cheviot Ewes</u>	
Fleece:	3-4 lbs.	Fleece:	2-2½ lbs.
6-8 Fleeces:	24 lbs. (1 stone)	10 Fleeces:	24 lbs. (1 st.)
72-96 "	: 12 stones (1 Pack)	120 "	: 12 st. (1 Pack)

Blackface fleeces were about the same weight but fetched half the price.

With cross-breeding improved fleeces were produced during the nineteenth century, and an increase in weight to 5-7 lbs. per fleece.

Table 1

Prices 1735-1770:

(G.P., Riccarton Accounts)

The following prices are from accounts kept by Walter Grieve for his farm of Riccarton, Liddesdale. The breed of sheep is not specified.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Draft</u>	<u>Wedder</u>	<u>Draft</u>	<u>Laid</u>	<u>'Kain'</u> <sup>1</sup>
	<u>Ewe</u>	<u>Lamb</u>	<u>Lamb</u>	<u>White Wool</u> <u>per St.</u>	
	s.d.	s.d.	s.d.	s.d.	£.s.d.
1735	2.4.	1.6.	1.	3.6.	9.6.8.
1736	3.	-	1.6.	4.	12.7.0.
1737	3.6.	2.	1.	3.9.	11.9.8.
1738	4.	2.	1.6.	4.	11.0.0.
1739	4.6.	2.6.	1.6.	3.9.	12.0.0.
1740	-	2.9.	1.8.	3.9.	-
1741	5.	3.6.	1.6.	3.9.	7.0.0.
1742	6.	2.8.	1.9.	4.8.	9.6.8.
1743	5.6.	2.10.	1.7.	7.3.	10.13.4.
1744	3.9.	2.11.	1.10.	7.	12.0.0.
1745	4.	2.8.	1.6.	7.6.	4.5.0.
1746	-	2.6.	1.6.	6.6.	7.0.0.
1747	3.8.	2.3.	1.6.	6.8.	7.0.0.
1748	4.8.	3.	2.	6.6.	7.10.0.
1749	4.8.	3.	2.	6.4.	7.10.0.
1750	5.8.	3.	2.1.	6.6.	8.0.0.
1751	4.5.	2.8.	1.8.	5.6.	8.10.0.
1752	4.	2.6.	1.9.	4.6.	6.0.0.
1753	4.6.	3.3.	2.	4.6.	6.0.0.
1754	4.4.	3.7.	1.9.	5.4.	-
1755	-	3.	2.4.	5.6.	5.0.0.
1756	5.	3.	2.4.	5.	5.6.8.
1757	6.6.	3.8.	2.3.	6.	5.0.0.
1758	6.6.	3.9.	2.10.	7.6.	7.18.4.
1759	7.6.	3.8.	2.9.	9.9.	8.15.0.
1760	6.6.	-	3.6. <sup>a</sup>	8.	10.8.4.
1761	7.3.	-	2.	6.	10.0.0.
1762	7.4.	-	1.9.	5.?	-
1763	5.	-	2.6.	5.6.	-
1764	6.4.	-	3.3.	7.5.	
1765	-	-	3.6.	7.	
1766	-	-	4.	7.8.	
1767	8.6.	-	4.	6.6.	
1768	7.6.	-	-	7.6.	
1769	7.	-	3.	7.	
1770	6.8.	4.4.	1.6.	6.7.	

1. 'Kain' prices are for the total produce (i.e. of ewe milk cheese)

a. No distinction in types of lambs until 1770.

Table 2Average Prices of Wool and Stock 1750-1771: (B.M. 290/1)

George Malcolm, farmer at Burnfoot in Eskdale, listed average prices for the period 1750-1771. His account book from which they are taken, is among the Buccleuch Muniments. The wool is described as 'white', and was probably Cheviot. Malcolm's wool prices compare closely with those listed for the same period by Henry Brown, woollen manufacturer, in his account book for 1828 (Information supplied by C. Gulvin), though the latter were said to be for 'Cheviot laid wool'. Brown was apparently relying on an earlier record in his possession, perhaps the source used by Malcolm. Walter Grieve's prices may be set against these averages.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Brown</u>		<u>Tar</u>	<u>Malcolm</u>		
	<u>Cheviot Laid Wool</u>	<u>White Wool</u>		<u>Butter</u>	<u>Top Lamb</u>	<u>Draft or Crock Ewes</u>
	s.d.	s.d.	s.d.	s.d.	s.d.	s.d.
1750	6.2.	6.2.	14.2.	5.6.	2.11.	5.8.
1751	7.	7.	14.	5.6.	2.	4.8.
1752	6.	6.	13.8	5.		4.3.
1753	5.6.	5.6.	13.	5.	3.3.	5.6.
1754	6.	6.	16.6.	5.6.	3.4.	6.
1755	6.	6.	14.	5.6.	3.3.	5.6.
1756	6.	6.			3.	6.
1757	6.	6.			3.4.	6.6.
1758	6.8.	6.8.			3.8.	7.3.
1759	8.4.	9.2.	13.	5.3.	4.	8.
1760	8.4.	9.2.	18.	5.8.	3.4.	7.
1761	6.	6.			2.5.	
1762	5.3.	5.3.	20.3.	6.8.	2.	5.
1763	6.	6.	15.	8.	2.11.	5.
1764	6.6.	6.8.	15.		3.9.	7.
1765	7.	7.			3.11.	8.
1766	7.	6.8.	13.	7.	4.4.	10.6.
1767	7.	6.8.	11.6.	9.	4.6.	
1768	6.8.	6.8.	10.	8.	3.1.	8.
1769	7.	6.8.		7.8.	3.7.	8.
1770	6.8.	6.8.	12.6.	8.	4.5.	7.
1771	7.2.	7.	13.6.		4.7.	7.8.

Table 3

Prices of Wool and Stock, etc. 1771-1787

(G.P. Riccarton Accounts)

Selected items from James Grieve's account book for Riccarton after he succeeded his father as tenant in 1771 show variations in price in the years leading up to the American War.

Rent: The rent of Riccarton, which had been £70 at Walter Grieve's entry in 1735, stood at £60 from 1737 till 1768. In this year of reappraisal the Buccleuch estate farm rents were increased generally, and Riccarton rose to £75, where it remained until the increase in prices during the 1780s brought another small rise to £85. Further improvement in prices brought much larger increases in rent over the next twenty years.

Smearing Materials: The tar and butter for smearing were among the farmer's major expenditures for the year. Tar prices are included in the table; prices for bought butter varied, but the Grieves mostly used kain butter sent in by the herds after ewemilking, and for this the price stood at 5/- per stone from 1735 to 1786.

Wool Prices: The prices received by the Grieves may be compared to those listed by Henry Brown. Brown's figures for the period 1771-1786 are given below and continued to 1796 in order to show the marked upward trend towards the end of the century, which was the result of increased demand from manufacturers.

Year	Profit		Tar per barrel	Draft Ewe	Wedder Lambs	Draft Lambs	Wool		Brown:	
	£.	s. d.					s.d.	s.d.	Wool	s.d.
1771	a		23.	6.	4.8.	2.10.	7.6.	7.2.		
1772	7.	8.8.	24.	8.	5.6.	4.	9.6.	8.2.		
1773	43.	18.11.	22.	9.9.	4.7.	3.8.	8.	7.6.		
1774	32.	14.9.	22.	9.9.	4.3.	-	8.	7.99.		
1775	55.	7.11.	23.	8.9.	4.	3.3.	9.6.	8.		
1776	34.	12.2.	32.6.	7.9.	3.3½.	3.	9.6.	8.9.		
1777	25.	15.7½.	-	7.2.	3.10.	3.11.	9.6.	8.8.		
1778	21.	0.0.	30.	6.4.	3.6.	2.6.	7.3.	6.10.		
1779	a		27.6.	6.	2.4½.	1.8.	6.3.	5.		
1780	11.	1.9.	26.6.	5.7.	2.4½.	1.11.	7.5.	5.9.		

a Losses: £6.0.10 (1771) and £14.13.7½ (1779).



Table 4

Prices of Wool and Stock 1811-1850:

(Minute Book of Riccarton Mill Club)

The following prices were those judged as average by the members of the Riccarton Mill Club, who were mainly from Liddesdale and Teviotdale.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Cheviot</u> Per st.	<u>Laid</u> <u>Wool</u>	<u>White</u> <u>Wool</u>	<u>Turpentine</u> <u>Wool</u>	<u>Blackface</u> Per st.	<u>Cheviot</u> Per st.	<u>Blackface</u> Per st.	<u>Wedders</u> s.d.	<u>Dinmonts</u> s.d.	<u>Draht</u> Hves s.d.	<u>Wedder</u> Horses s.d.	<u>Wedder</u> Lambs s.d.
1811	22.							30.	25.	22.		10.
1812	23.							29.	24.6.	22.6.		10.6.
1813	22.							31.	26.	21.		10.6.
1814	30.							30.	25.	20.		9.
1815	33.							29.	24.6.	21.		10.6.
1816	19.							25.	22.	12.		8.3.
1817	23.							21.	16.	15.		6.9.
1818	34.							32.	27.6.	23.6.		13.
1819	22.6.							32.	27.6.	24.		12.
1820	20.							28.	23.	17.		9.6.
1821	17.							18.6.	14.	11.		5.3.
1822	12.6.							14.6.	12.6.	9.6.		5.3.
1823	10.6.					23.		20.	16.	10.		5.6.
1824	13.					21.6.		21.6.	17.6.	12.6.		5.9.
1825	21.					28.		29.	25.	21.		9.6.

Table 4 cont.

Year	Laid Wool		White Wool		Turpentine Wool		Stock				
	Cheviot Per cent s.d.	Blackface Per cent s.d.	Cheviot Per cent s.d.	Blackface Per cent s.d.	Per cent s.d.	Wedders s.d.	Dinmonts s.d.	Draft s.d.	Ewes s.d.	Wedder Hogs s.d.	Wedder Lambs s.d.
1826	9.9.		16.		13.	18.	15.9.	10.6.		12.	5.6.
1827	11.		17.6.		15.	18.6.	15.	14.		12.6.	6.9.
1828	9.		16.		13.	22.	18.6.	14.6.		13.6.	8.3.
1829	8.		13.9.		11.	21.6.	18.6.	11.		13.6.	7.
1830	10.6.	5.	17.6.		12.6.	18.	14.	10.6.		10.6.	5.3.
1831	17.	7.	23.6.	8.		22.	17.	14.		13.	6.3.
1832	14.	7.6.	19.6.			23.	18.	15.		14.	8.6.
1833	20.	12.6.a	29.6.			28.6.	22.6.	19.6.		17.6.	10.
1834	25.	16.6.a	37.			28.6.	24.	21.		20.	10.6.

Two important observations were made at this time:

1835: "In consequence of Wedder Stock being totally laid aside in these districts the members of the Club are therefore not able any longer to fix the prices either of Wedders, Dinmonts or Wedder Hogs."

1836: "Owing to a Stormy Winter and late Spring the Crop of Sheep and Lambs produced this year at market was deficient both in numbers and quality."

Year	Cheviot Wool		Blackface Wool		Cheviot		Blackface	
	Laid	White	Laid & washed		Wedder	Cheviot	Ewes	Ewes
1835	19.6.	29.6.	11.		8.6.	17.	12.	12.
1836	23.6	33.	13.6.		9.4.	15.9.	10.	10.
1837	14.	21.6.	8.		10.	18.	13.	13.
1838	22.	33.	12.		8.3.	16.3.	12.	12.

a. Described as 'Laid and Washed'

Table 4 cont.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Cheviot Wool</u>		<u>Blackface Wool</u>		<u>Cheviot</u>		<u>Blackface</u>	
	<u>Laid</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Laid &amp; washed</u>	<u>Wedder Lambs</u>	<u>Ewes</u>	<u>Ewes</u>	<u>Ewes</u>	<u>Ewes</u>
	s.d.	s.d.	s.d.	s.d.	s.d.	s.d.	s.d.	s.d.
1839	19.	30.	11.	8.9.	17.	12.	12.	12.
1840	14.6.	23.	9.	9.9.	18.6.	12.9.	12.9.	12.9.
1841	16.	24.	9.6.	9.3.	18.	13.	13.	13.
1842	14.	20.6.	7.6.	5.6.	10.6.	8.9.	8.9.	8.9.
1843	12.	19.6.	7.	6.	12.	9.6.	9.6.	9.6.
b1844	17.6.	28.		8.9.	14.6.			
1845		28.		10.6.	18.			
1846		25.		11.6.	21.			
1847		21.6.		12.6.	18.6.			
1848		16.		9.6.	18.			
1849		20.9.		7.9.	16.6.			
1850		24.		8.6.	15.6.			

Prices rise steadily hereafter.

b. From this year blackfaced sheep and their wool are omitted from the prices. So too is laid Cheviot wool; this at a time when pouring and dipping replaced smearing.

## GLOSSARY

Brief definitions are given for the majority of words, some of which are explained more fully in the text.

### Sheep names (see p. 217)

chaser	: male sheep with imperfectly developed genitals
crock	: old ewe (for sale)
dinmont	: two years old wedder
eild (yeld) sheep	: barren ewes and males
ewe	: female
gimmer	: two years old ewe
great ewe	: draught ewe in lamb
halflin	: see <u>chaser</u>
hogg	: sheep between first autumn and next clipping
keb	: ewe that has lost its lamb
old sheep	: sheep (esp. ewes) over 2 years old
pallie, palley	: poorest or smallest lambs
pet	: sheep reared by hand
riglin(g)	: imperfectly castrated lamb, chaser
scarf, scart	: hermaphrodite
shot	: sheep selected for sale
tup	: ram
wedder, wether	: castrated male

### Other words

awalt	: fallen over and unable to rise
baulks and brods	: weighing beam for wool
bink	: bench, kitchen dresser
boat	: barrel, milk dish
bouk	: carcass
bowie	: milk dish, cask
brai(r)ding	: sprouting, planting of young shrubs or trees
brat (1)	: cloth apron, cover
brat (2)	: placenta
breast	: face or vertical bank of peat
breek	: piece of cloth for hoggs
broken (wool)	: rough, loose, scrap
bught, bucht	: pen for milking ewes
buist	: tar mark, marking iron
butterleaf	: part of placenta
cade	: sheep louse
cadger	: supplier of groceries, etc., by cart
cain	: see <u>Kain</u>

cast	: cut (of peats)
cheesefall	: stone weight in a cheese press
clean(in')	: placenta
cod	: scrotum, husk
cog	: wooden pail for milking
coping	: top layer (of a dyke)
corbie	: carrion crow
cowped	: see <u>awalt</u>
creepie	: three-legged stool
cundy	: covered drain, made of stones
cut (1)	: division of a sheep hirsle
cut (2)	: castrate
darg	: a day's work
eek	: natural grease in wool
elding:	: fuel
ell	: approximately a yard (measure)
fail, feal	: turf or sod.
fence	: enclosed or designated ground
fit	: set up in groups (peats)
flake	: a small gate or hurdle of wood slats
flaughter	: a spade for lifting turf
fleet	: flow, flood
flit	: move house
'flot quhaye'	: dish of floating curds on whey
flow	: swamp, wet ground
gauntry	: wooden stand or tripod
gear	: stock, possessions
graip, grape	: dung fork
grassum	: sum paid by tenant at renewal of lease
grew	: greyhound
gulky	: knife
hain	: enclose or preserve ground for pasture
hagg	: see <u>breast</u>
haugh	: level or meadow ground by a river
heames, hames	: parts of a horse collar
heft	: accustomed place of pasture
hirsle	: flock of sheep in charge of one shepherd
holm	: see <u>haugh</u>
hurl-barrow	: sideless barrow for peats
kain, kean	: payment in kind
ked	: see <u>cade</u>
keel	: ruddle or dye for marking
keeselup	: stomach of lamb used as rennet
kempy	: with hair (fleece)
kenspeckle	: conspicuous
kind	: showing natural or maternal attachment
kirn	: a) churn. b) harvest-home celebrations
kittly	: awkward, ticklish
leap	: mate
lib	: see <u>cut (2)</u>
luggie	: wooden dish, milking pail
lypit	: narrow and four square, a peat spade with lip

mack	: maggot
mail	: a milking, a meal
maud (mad)	: plaid, covering
meng	: mix (of tar)
moss	: area used for cutting peat
nolt	: cattle
outby (e)	: out of the way, remote
pack	: small flock serving as part of a shepherd's wage
parr	: immature salmon or type of trout
peel	: rub off or lose wool
pickmaa	: blackheaded gull
plenished:	: furnished, equipped
'plewgraith'	: plough equipment
puddens	: entrails
pull (1)	: eat
pull (2)	: pluck
quarter	: a quarter of an ell
raik	: wander out, pasture, a journey to and fro to collect
reeming (cup)	: frothing, creamy
'reyme'	: cream
rickle	: see <u>fit</u> ; small stack (of peats)
rood	: six ells
room	: farm
search (milk)	: strainer
shed	: separate, divide
sheet	: wool pack
skirt	: trim ends of wool
slype	: wooden sledge
'sourkittis'	: dish of clotted cream
spean, spain	: wean or separate lambs
stell (1)	: enclosed plantation of trees for shelter
stell (2)	: circular or other shelter of stone or feal
stint	: check (in growth)
stone	: testicle
store	: stock, esp. sheep
storm	: a period of frost or snow, or of lying snow
strake	: a scythe sharpener
strung	: restricted by the navel cord
thraw crook	: implement for twisting hay into rope
throughband	: a long stone through a dyke
tirl	: take off a surface (peat)
traik, treak	: death of sheep, corpses of sheep, dead mutton
tram	: shaft (cart, barrow)
tree (1)	: barrel
tree (2)	: section of tree trunk or branch
udderlock	: pluck or clip wool from near the udder
wear	: guide, direct
wylie	: see <u>thrawcrook</u>
yearning	: see <u>keeselup</u>
yoke	: see <u>EEK</u>

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 The Border Advertiser.

#### 5. Maps:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Surveyor</u>
1654	Border Shires	T. Pont: 1590-1600 (Blaeu's Atlas).
1741	Tweeddale	J. Edgar
1749-55	Borders	Board of Ordnance (Military Survey).
1770	Roxburghshire	M. Stobie
1771	Tweeddale	M. Armstrong
1772	Selkirkshire	J. Ainslie
1840	Roxburghshire	N. Tennant