

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

M.J.H. Robson

Ph.D., University of Edinburgh, 1977



"You must not on any account hesitate on publishing the Shepherd's Calender. There is an absolute necessity exclusive of all other concerns for the collecting of these varied pictures and details of pastoral life. I must have them brought into some tangible form by one means or another else my conscience will not be at rest."

James Hogg to William Blackwood, Mountbenger 5th Jan. 1828

CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	
List of Plates and Figures	
Abbreviations	
Abstract	
Preface	i
Chapter I: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SHEEP FARMS	1
1. <u>General Description of Area</u>	1
Woodland	4
Wildlife	14
Fuel	18
Lime and Marle	24
2. <u>The Hill Farms</u>	28
Early Settlement	28
Early grants of land and Ownership	30
The Districts and their Farms	32
Distribution and Combination of Farms	37
Boundaries	39
Chapter II: THE DEVELOPMENT OF ESTATES: 1500-1700	47
1. <u>The Emergence of Estate Administration</u>	47
Landowners and Kindly Tenants	47
Development of the Buccleuch Estate: 1590-1700	52
Proprietors in Trouble	67
Estate Managers	71
2. <u>Tenants in an age of Unrest</u>	80
In Raiding Times	80
The 'Pacification' of the Borders	89
Uneasy Progress	97

Chapter III: THE DEVELOPMENT OF ESTATES: 1700-1900	108
1. <u>Development of the Rental System</u>	108
Rents	110
Leases	126
2. <u>Chamberlains and Tenants</u>	133
Chamberlains	133
Tenants	143
 Chapter IV: THE MANAGEMENT OF THE SHEEP FARMS	 158
1. <u>Sheep Stocks</u>	158
Antiquity and Growth	158
'Scottisheep' and Other Breeds	171
2. <u>The Land: Arable and Pasture</u>	177
3. <u>The Coming of Improvement</u>	185
Improving Policy and Practice	185
Dykes and Stells	195
Draining	204
4. <u>The Structure and Arrangement of a Sheep Farm</u>	209
The Size and Combination of Farms	209
The Types and Distribution of Sheep Stock	215
 Chapter V: FARM HOUSES AND COTTAGES	 224
1. <u>Before 1700</u>	224
Towerhouses	224
Tenants' Houses	232
Shiels	236
2. <u>After 1700</u>	238
Farmhouses	238
Shepherds' Houses	249

Chapter VI: SOCIAL LIFE OF THE FARM COMMUNITY	254
1. <u>The Farmer's Life</u>	254
Domestic Life	255
Clubs and Shows	257
A Diversity of Interests	259
2. <u>Farm Employees</u>	260
3. <u>Schooling</u>	265
4. <u>Religion</u>	271
5. <u>A Changing Population</u>	278
Chapter VII: THE SHEPHERD'S YEAR (1)	286
1. <u>Ewe milking</u>	286
2. <u>Smearing</u>	298
Chapter VIII: THE SHEPHERD'S YEAR (2)	313
1. <u>The Shepherd's Calendar</u>	313
Mating Season	313
Winter Work	316
Udderlocking	320
Lambing	322
Cutting	325
Washing	328
Clipping	330
Marking	335
Shepherds' Gathering	338
Speaning	339
Summering of Lambs	340
Autumn Work	342

2.	<u>Peat-Cutting</u>	343
3.	<u>Sheep Diseases</u>	348
Chapter IX: THE SHEPHERD'S LIFE		365
1.	<u>Two Shepherd Families</u>	365
	The Riddells	365
	The Scotts	368
2.	<u>General Background to the Shepherd's Work</u>	375
	Hirings and Wages	376
	The Shepherd's Dwelling	386
	Cottage Life	390
	Plaid, Stick, and Dog	398
Chapter X: MARKETS		404
1.	<u>Trade in Sheep and Wool</u>	404
	Early Trade	404
	Seventeenth Century Sales of Sheep and Wool	409
	Markets for Wool after 1707	421
	Sale of Sheep and Mutton	432
	Other Produce	433
2.	<u>Dealers and Droving</u>	438
Epilogue		
Appendices I - XIII		
Glossary		
Bibliography		

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Much of the material for this study has come from records loaned by families in the Borders, and from the reminiscences and knowledge of over two hundred farmers, shepherds and others who have spent innumerable hours with me, in conversation and in going over the ground. Without such kindness and assistance any attempt to describe the life of the sheepfarming community of the Border hills would have been impossible.

I am also extremely grateful to the many people who have provided me with photographs and have helped in preparing the illustrations, and to those who have discussed the content and presentation with me. I wish to express my gratitude in particular to Mr. Eric Cregeen for his understanding supervision of my researches.

LIST OF PLATES AND FIGURES

1. <u>Plates:</u>		<u>Between Pages</u>
1 & 2	Marches in Ettrick	40 - 41
3 & 4	Digging for sheep in snow at Craik in 1937	170 - 71
5 & 6	Fail dykes and enclosures in the Forest district	184 - 85
7 & 8	Early farmhouses - Oakwood tower and Todrig house	230 - 31
9 & 10	Two deserted farms, Peel and Blackhouse	241 - 42
11 & 12	Contemporary extremes: late 19th century farm buildings at How- pasley, and a thatched cottage in Yarrow	248 - 49
13 & 14	Two shepherds' cottages	250 - 51
15 & 16	The Border Inn, Yetholm; an excursion to St. Mary's Loch	257 - 58
17 & 18	Events at the Yarrow Show, 1912	258 - 59
19 & 20	At school in the Borders	270 - 71
21 & 22	Services to the sheepfarmer: clogger and skin-buyer	283 - 84
23 & 24	Dipping and smearing	305 - 06
25 - 28	Early stages of lambing	322 - 23
29 & 30	Recovery indoors during the lambing season	324 - 25
31 & 32	Cutting a lamb with the teeth demonstrated	326 - 27
33 & 34	Sheep washing	328 - 29
35 - 38	Clipping and Women rolling fleeces	333 - 34
39 & 40	Packing and leading the wool	334 - 35
41 & 42	Clipping and marking	335 - 36
43 & 44	Two companies of shepherds, at a clipping, and at the Cheviot gathering	338 - 39
45 & 46	Stacking the hay and casting the peats	344 - 45
47 & 48	Leading in and stacking peats	347 - 48
49 & 50	Attention to lambs and sick sheep	357 - 58
51 & 52	Border shepherds	374 - 75

Plates cont.Between Pages

53 & 54	Cottage interiors	389 - 90
55 & 56	Shepherds at ease and at work	393 - 94
57 & 58	Wearing the plaid	398 - 99
59 & 60	Catching sheep with the neck-crook or lambing stick	400 - 01
61 & 62	Cattle on a sheepfarm	446 - 47
63 & 64	Sheep to market	446 - 47

2. Figures:

1	Southern Scotland	Preface - 1
2	Districts of the 'Border Hills' area	2 - 3
3	Principal rivers of the 'Border Hills' area	2 - 3
4	Extent of recorded woodland in the seventeenth century	11 - 12
5	Principal estates in the 'Border Hills' area	30 - 31
6	Lands possessed by Melrose Abbey c 1415	31 - 32
7a	Farms of the upper Borthwick Water, Teviotdalehead	37 - 38
7b	Farms of Ettrick Parish	37 - 38
8	The Buccleuch estate in the 'Border Hills' area, c. 1650	53 - 54
9	Thirlestane Farm, 1822	193 - 94
10	Bughtrig, 1793	219 - 20
11a	Sketch of a farmhouse for Langhope, 1820	244 - 45
11b	Plan of a herd's cottage for Berrybush, c. 1840	244 - 45
12	Main farms in the 'Borders Hills' area	253 - 54
13	'Bathing' and 'Ewe milking'	297 - 98
14	Sheep marks	337 - 38
15a	Shepherd's implements	364 - 65
15b	" "	" "
16	The Border Shepherd	403 - 04
17	The main drove route through the 'Border Hills' area	441 - 42

ABBREVIATIONS

E.U.L.	Edinburgh University Library
N.L.S.	National Library of Scotland
S.R.O.	Scottish Record Office
A.L.C.C.C.	Acts of the Lords of Council in Civil Causes
A.L.C.P.A.	Acts of the Lords of Council in Public Affairs
A.L.H.T.S.	Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland
Barns	Burnet of Barns Papers
B.M.	Buccleuch Muniments
B.M. (Irvine House)	Buccleuch Muniments at Irvine House
B.P.	Border Papers
C.D.S.	Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland
C.S.P.	Calendar of Scottish Papers
E.D.P.	Erskine of Dun Papers
E.R.	Exchequer Rolls
Garwald	Family Papers of the Moffats of Craik and Garwald
G.P.	Grieve Family Papers and Diaries
H.M.C.	Historical Manuscripts Commission
Harden	Papers relating to Harden in private hands
Haystoun	Haystoun Papers
Horsburgh	Horsburgh of Horsburgh Papers
L.P.	Letters and Papers of William Laidlaw
M.G.C.	MacFarlane's Geographical Collections (MS.)
M.P.	Minto Estate Papers
N.P.	Northhouse Papers
N.S.A.	New Statistical Account
Nat. MSS.	National Manuscripts of Scotland
O.S.A.	Old or First Statistical Account
P.B.N.C.	Proceedings of the Berwickshire Naturalists Club

R.P.C.	Register of the Privy Council
R.P.S.	Register of the Privy Seal
S.A.P.	Scott of Ancrum Papers
S.H.P.	Scott of Harden Papers
S.H.R.	Scottish History Review
S.H.S.	Scottish Historical Society
S.M.P.	Scott of Mangerton Papers
S.T.S.	Scottish Text Society
T.D.G.N.A.S.	Transactions and Journal of the Proceedings of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society
T.H.A.S.	Transactions of the Hawick Archaeological Society
T.H. & A.S.S.	Transactions of the Highland (and Agricultural) Society of Scotland
T.P.	Traquair Papers

ABSTRACT

No historical account has previously been written of Scottish sheepfarming, though it has played an important part in the social and economic progress of the country. The present study attempts to describe pastoral life from early times in an area which, though limited, may be considered the home of sheep and their management in Scotland.

This area, the central uplands of the Borders, is described in the first chapter, together with its natural divisions and resources. The origins of the sheepfarms are also examined, and linked to the establishment of large estates owned by noblemen and Melrose Abbey in mediaeval times. The distribution of farmsteads and the definition of their boundaries is seen to depend much upon the nature of the land and the wild conditions under which early settlement took place. In the next chapters it is shown that little progress in farming was made until, with a larger number of locally-based landowners and the relatively peaceful conditions after 1600, the old customary tenant system was replaced with a commercial arrangement. The rapid expansion of the Buccleuch estate at this time was of the greatest importance to the subsequent development of sheepfarming in the area, as were such matters as the function and place of estate factors, the number and status of tenants, and the terms upon which farms were held. These, and various aspects of the sheepfarms themselves - size of stock, breeds, extent of arable and pasture, eighteenth century 'improvements'

ABSTRACT cont.

distribution and management of sheep, housing, etc. - all form the historical background to the traditional social and working life of the shepherding community.

Of particular importance in this study are the chapters (6-9) dealing with the domestic world of farmer and shepherd, and their yearly round. This section is necessarily based upon a blend of information drawn from oral and written sources, and it provides a picture of a way of life whose traditions go back beyond history. Some practices, such as smearing, became obsolete, others, such as marketing, changed in style. Change was slow at first, deeper and swifter towards the end of the period, and the causes of it were many; the major one was the pressure of those altering economic circumstances which are outlined in the final chapter on the wool trade and markets.

PREFACE

This study is concerned with the history of sheep-farming settlements and customs in the central hill area of southern Scotland (Fig. 1). I have found no other similar description of the region and its occupants. When seeking to picture the pre-eighteenth century farm scene in the Border uplands, historians still refer to an inaccurate piece of guesswork by Sir Walter Scott.¹ Even detailed accounts of Scottish agriculture make only fleeting comments on a part of the country that may be said to have been the heart of the sheepfarming industry. Indeed, it sometimes seems as though the so-called 'Highland Clearances' were needed to remind the outsider that there was more worthy of interest in the Borders than sixteenth century raids, towers and wardens.

The period under discussion extends from earliest times to, approximately, the beginning of the twentieth century. This is the extent of sheepfarming within the old tradition; thereafter, under increasing pressure from economic changes and urban systems of living, it became in many respects an industry rather than a rural way of life. Exploring and recording that way of life, the traces of which grow fewer daily, involve consideration

1. Mitchison, R.: A History of Scotland, p. 159. The reference is to a letter of 23rd November 1806 from (Sir) Walter Scott to the Earl of Dalkeith (Grierson, H.J.C., Ed.: The Letters of Sir Walter Scott, Vol. I, pp. 329-335).

of numerous aspects. The shepherding 'year', with its various essential activities and associated customs and practices, is central; but such matters as estates, landlords and their factors, the farmer and shepherd families, houses, farm organisation, stock, and marketing are all of importance. As far as possible information has been drawn from original sources, written and oral, within the area, reference being made occasionally to closely-linked districts where necessary.

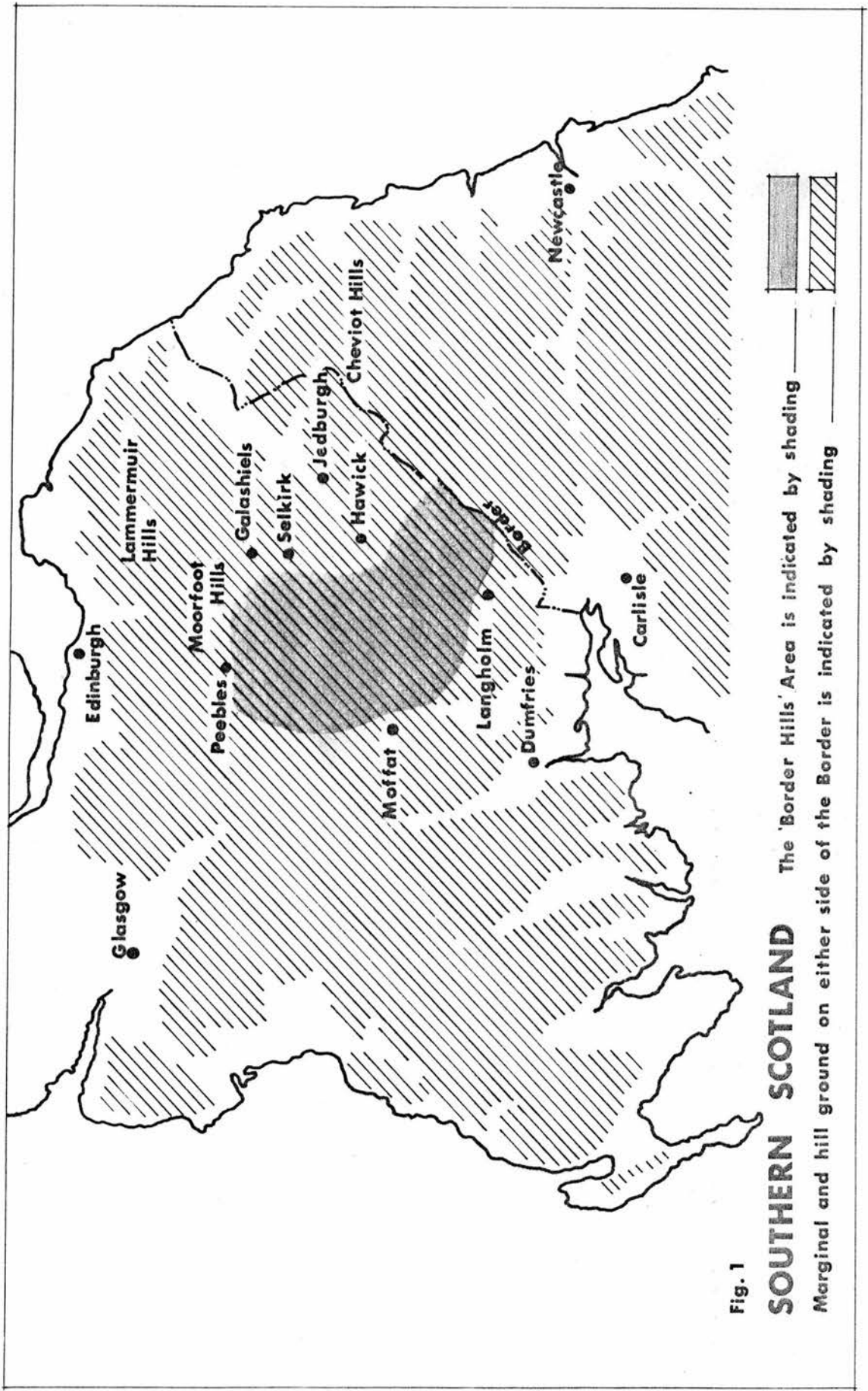


Fig. 1

SOUTHERN SCOTLAND

The 'Border Hills' Area is indicated by shading

Marginal and hill ground on either side of the Border is indicated by shading

1. General description of area

Hill country occupies the middle part of south Scotland, from Peebles to the Border, from Hawick to Moffat (Fig. 1). The fertility of the valleys is limited, and once the main stream is left behind the land quickly becomes wilder. Bare, lonely slopes take over from the wooded banks and fertile haughs of the riversides. Visitors in the past were inclined to ignore the higher ground as featureless, and uninteresting, and now great tracts have been rendered inaccessible through afforestation, so that whatever human activity went on among the hills was largely unnoticed, and its physical effects upon the landscape are now often obscured.

The main travellers' routes always went round rather than through the hills. Until the first constructed roads of the early nineteenth century the tracks in the valleys and along the ridges were primarily for local communication, though tramps and other wayfarers used them from time to time, and farmers sent their stock by them to often distant markets. In some places it was easy to cross the hills to the next valley; in others such a journey was much more of an undertaking, and communities were correspondingly more isolated from each other. A seventeenth century writer noticed the contrast of scene near Peebles:

"This Countrey is generally swelled with hills, but for the most part green, grassy and pleasant, except a Ridge of bordering Mountains betwixt Minchmoor and Henderland, which are black and craggy, of a melancholy

aspect, with deep and horrid Precipices, a weary and comfortless peice of way for travellers." ¹

The ridge of mountains in effect made something of a boundary line between two valleys, in this case those of the Tweed and the Yarrow, with the result that each valley contained a distinct community, and this distinction was marked over the centuries by different estates, different family names, and perhaps different markets. High, shelterless expanses of moor, such as those between Ettrick and Borthwick Water, served to separate districts as effectively as mountains, and it is probable that all such natural barriers were more effective before the seventeenth century when farming was on a smaller, more local scale, and both people and country were less tamed. Thus it is necessary to realise the importance of 'districts' in the development of the Border hill region. (Fig. 2)

Though, at its northern extremity, far from the actual Border, the region has long been referred to familiarly as "The Borders". This name, however, includes the arable lands of the lower Tweed and around Canonbie and Langholm, and it is therefore useful for the present purpose to distinguish the upland area as "The Border hills". Parts of the former counties of Peeblesshire, Selkirkshire, Roxburghshire and Dumfriesshire are involved, but of greater relevance to this description are the river valleys,

1. M.G.C.: Vol. III, pp. 152-153.

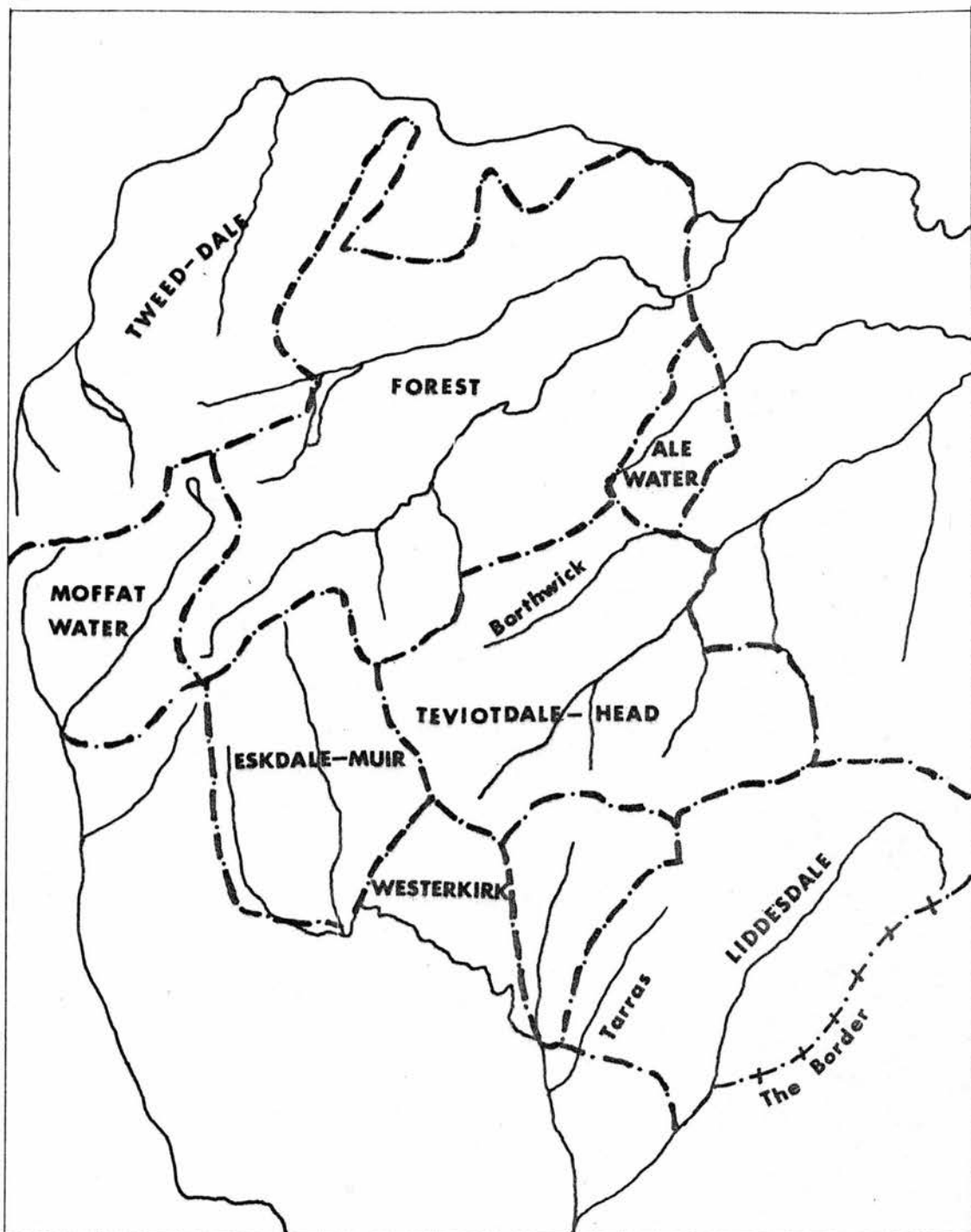


Fig. 2

**DISTRICTS OF THE
'BORDER HILLS' AREA c1200**

Boundaries are approximate

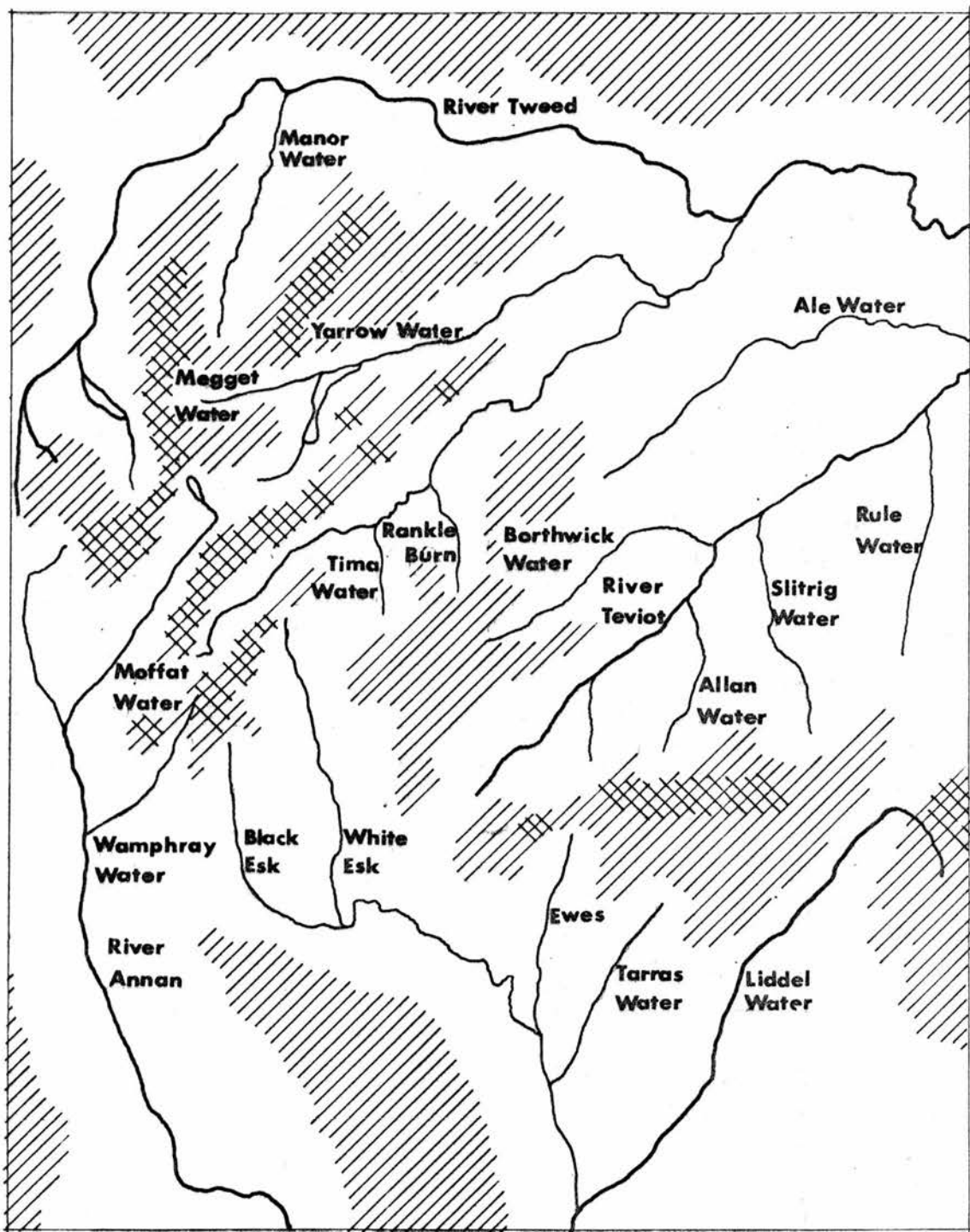
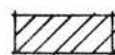


Fig. 3

**PRINCIPAL RIVERS OF THE
'BORDER HILLS' AREA**

Approximate Areas of ground over 1250 ft, (379 metres)

" " " " 1800 ft, (549 metres)



since in prehistoric times these formed the district divisions of the settlement pattern, and from the earliest records the valley names have been used to identify the districts. The western and southwestern parts of the region were comprised in Eskdale, Ewesdale, and Annandale; further east lay Liddesdale and Teviotdale, or rather Teviotdalehead; and in the north was Tweeddale, the old name for Peeblesshire. The exception was the remaining district, now forming the greater part of Selkirkshire; it was formerly called 'The Forest', and much of it continued under this title as part of the Buccleuch estate, though in recent times the river names 'Ettrick' and 'Yarrow' have been more commonly used. (Fig. 3)

At no time was there so much similarity between these districts as their predominantly hilly and pastoral character might suggest. Tweeddale, the Forest, and the Moffat Water portion of Annandale contain most of the higher, steeper hills, with crags, waterfalls and lochs, while further south there is the more open, rolling country of upper Teviotdale rising to high, rounded and grassier summits before descending into the moorish loneliness of Liddesdale. The type and quality of pasture varied, and variety of another kind was brought by prehistoric settlers, who, though generally practising a pastoral husbandry, came at different times, were of different races, and occupied the land in varying density. Subsequently, under the influence of farming, the landscape was superficially altered; woods were cut or planted,

land was ploughed, enclosed, grazed or left waste, settlements flourished and faded. Nevertheless, sheepfarming linked district to district, and created the wider 'community' of the Border hills, within which differences of dialect, implement, and sheep breed occurred. To some extent it was a world of its own. Slow development over a long period brought a conservative outlook, a clannish grouping of people, intermarriage between a limited number of families, and the careful handing on of knowledge and belief through oral tradition. But it was not a world that turned in upon itself; it always had its progressive figures, ready to learn from others, to undertake improvements, and eventually to launch enterprises anywhere from the Highlands to Australia.

Woodland

The Border hill country had many natural advantages as a land for occupation. One was timber. Though it is difficult to determine the extent of the post-glacial forest, abundant evidence of former tree cover appears in ground that has been bare for centuries. Oak, elm, ash and alder were the most widespread species, with clumps of pine, and the scattered, stunted scrub of birch and willow on the ridges and slopes. If the woodland was patchy, as perhaps it was in Teviotdalehead, then people could settle more quickly, using the timber for their houses and fences, and the open ground for their stock.

A more impenetrable forest required much cutting before a pastoral life could develop, and in any case concealed troublesome and dangerous animals such as wolves, boars, and wild cats. Yet it was possibly sheer remoteness rather than an inhospitable terrain that made occupation later and more sparse at the heads of Yarrow and Ettrick than in Teviotdale.

The areas originally covered by natural woodland in the Border hills have long been a matter of popular conjecture and vague tradition. At the end of the eighteenth century local ministers, in the accounts of their parishes, speculated on the vanished forest. One remarked on the "great quantities of oak... still dug up in the mosses",¹ while another observed:

"Though a great part of the land in Lyne and Megget has been formerly covered with wood, yet, at present, there are only a few trees around the church and some of the farmhouses. The old trees naturally decay through time, and the growth of young ones is effectually prevented by the sheep and cattle." ²

Judging from the various references to wild life, and from subsequent evidence of destruction, it seems likely that natural woodland still occupied many lower slopes and riversides in the thirteenth century, and that the name 'Forest' actually meant the presence of trees as well as signifying a hunting area. David I designated wilder hill country as 'forest', so as to indicate regions where he or his noblemen would hunt, and there

1. O.S.A.: Vol. III, p. 296.

2. O.S.A.: Vol. XII, p. 565.

were accompanying restrictions on the unauthorised pursuit of such animals as deer and wild boar. The monks of Melrose, granted rights to pasture in the 'forest' at the head of Eskdale, were allowed to trap wolves, since no doubt they had to protect their sheep against the predators lurking in the scrub and among the rocky outcrops. The presence of fallow and roe deer as well as sheep suggests that the landscape was a mixture of woodland patches and open grazing, and it is to a scene of this kind that the curious tradition recorded by Scott of Satchels introduces the earliest members of the Scott clan, who came to the Rankle Burn in the time of 'King Kenneth':

"... all our south-parts was Wood and Forrest
Except here and there a summering Plain
Into which his Keepers did remain." ¹

The "summering plain" to be found in various places among the remote hills was the scene of seasonal occupation, a temporary venture similar to the Highland practice of going to the shieling, but indicating that people were not prepared to risk the difficulties and dangers of trying to farm the wilds through the winter. Under such a system natural forest would be reduced only gradually.

1. Scot, Captain Walter: A true History of several Honourable Families of the Right Honourable Name of Scot, Part I, p. 33.

By 1300 large quantities of oaks were being cut for building,¹ and this process of destruction increased, illegally in the 'forest' districts at least. Much of the old hunting ground fell under the control of Melrose Abbey and the Douglas family, so that, in spite of continuing restrictions, it may be assumed that sheepfarming developed even there. The presence of many farmsteads at this stage meant the inevitable clearing of ground for grazing, and the official enquiry in 1499, more than forty years after the return of the Ettrick Forest to the Crown, as to whether "the forestis be kepit forest like or geif thay be occupiit be ony personis"² showed that in Ettrick Forest at least, where there were many inhabitants, rules were necessary to establish a balance between agricultural and hunting interests. These stated that there should be

"na telin, sawin, delfyne or any maner of corne...
na mureburne nor na maner of yardis nor dikyne of
na maner of wod... except it be of thorne, saucht,
or erde..."

And it was ordered that

"na forestar hald undir him in his steid haggar,
flegeour, turnour, barcar, colebyrnar, pelar of
bark, scab, pikar, wrychtis, swyne, nor gait...
nor yit he sall nothir geve nor sell ony maner
of wod till ony personis, nor yit cut nor distroy
himself... bot till his awne neidis..."³

-
1. For example, fifty oaks from Selkirk Forest were sent to the Bishop of Glasgow (C.D.S.: Vol. II, p. 433), and forty oaks to the Abbot of Melrose (C.D.S.: Vol. II, p. 526).
 2. E.R.: Vol. XI, p. 394.
 3. E.R.: Vol. XI, pp. 394-395.

It could not have been easy to enforce such limitations upon a 'forest' stead especially when tenants outside a 'forest' were probably restricted to a lesser degree. Bearing in mind that there were also unforested hillsides and ridges, it is therefore not surprising to find large flocks of sheep in the Forest well before 1500. Grazing and the burning of heather effectively reduced the natural regeneration of trees.

Faced with a lack of sixteenth century evidence for the Border hills area,¹ one may turn to accounts of similar country along the Border. About 1540 John Leland wrote from hearsay that

"In Northumberland... be no forests excepte Chivet hills, where is muche brushe wood, and some okke, grownd ovar growne with linge, and some with mosse... There is greate plenty of redd dere and roo bukkes..."

"In Glindale here and there wood, and Chiveot servithe them well; but the great wood of Chiveot is spoylyd now, and crokyd old trees and schrubs remayne." ²

English surveyors of the Border at much the same time reported in like terms, emphasising that timber for towers and houses had to be brought in by sea, and that the alders and "other ramell wood" growing up the sides of small streams were used "for the buyldinge of suche small houses as be used & Inhabyted by husbandmen." ³

-
1. In Major's History it is observed that "In the southern parts of Scotland forests are few, for which reason coal is burned, and stone peat or turf, and not wood, ..." (Major J., A History of Greater Britain, S.H.S. Vol. X, p. 39).
 2. Smith, L. Toulmin (editor): The Itinerary of John Leland, Vol. V, Part IX, pp. 67-68.
 3. Survey by Bowes and Elleker 2nd December 1542 (Hodgson J.: A History of Northumberland, Part III, Vol. II, pp. 188, 202-205).

Furthermore the red deer and roe bucks frequented treeless hill country that was so wet and boggy as to be uninhabitable and useless to farmers. Indeed the region north of "the peghte wall" and linked to "the wastes of Gyllesland & Bewcastell dayle", was called "a desolation" and "a greatt waste ground... that stretcheth all waies soo westwarde to a place called the belles and so to Crysshoppe brigge".¹

At the end of the sixteenth century the word 'forest' was commonly used to mean 'wilderness', and it was in this sense that, about 1600, Sir Robert Cary used it of Tarras, where "chief outlaws" had hidden out amid marshes, "thick bushes and shrubs".² There seems to have been little substantial timber left on the Scottish side of the Border.³ In peaceful times it was customary for gentlemen to ask leave of the English Middle March warden to cross into England with hunting parties towards the end of summer. They pursued deer with greyhounds, and abused the freedom by sending servants with carts to fell as much wood as they wanted.⁴ No doubt they guarded their own woods

-
1. Hodgson, J., op. cit. Part III, Vol. II, p. 230 (Survey 1542).
 2. Mares, F.H. (editor): Memoirs of Robert Carey, pp. 52-3.
 3. In a survey of the Borderlands in 1604 it is remarked that "Ther is little or no tymber in anie part of this dale (i.e. Bewcastle district), not sufficient to maynteyne the Tenants houses". (Sanderson, R.P., editor: Survey of the Debateable and Border Lands etc., p. 35).
 4. A letter from the King of 12th April 1606 complained against certain Liddesdale men for keeping up the custom (R.P.C. Vol. VII, p. 489), and in 1611 Robert Elliot of Dinlabyre and others were accused of hunting in the Cheviots and spoiling the woods (R.P.C. Vol XI, p. 240).

jealously. As the natural forest of the Border hills diminished, so the deer were reduced to a few scattered herds. In Megget, where the Hays had a hunting tower at Cramalt, royal and noble parties pursued the "mervellous gret hartes" with "sluthe-hundes" or "swofte dogs called grewhundes" ¹ on many occasions throughout the sixteenth century, and in 1615 Scott of Buccleuch hunted in Eskdale, ² but the great days of the sport were over. Placenames like 'Hartleap' and 'Wolfhope', together with 'Oakwood' and 'Hangingshaw', remain as evidence of a vanished time, much as the relics seen at Cramalt and elsewhere about 1690:

"I saw in the hall... a very large Harts-horn, upon the Wall for a Clock Pinn, the like I observed in several other Contry Mens Houses in that Desart and Solitary place..." ³

Sheepfarming developed at the expense of both deer and woods. A writer about 1700 mentioned Badlieu and Glenbreck, at the head of the Tweed, "where there are Fallow Deer to this day: I myself have seen half a dozen together. They have been here in far greater plenty but the Fawns are by degrees kill'd and destroyed by the Herds..." ⁴

The herds, and the farmers, also plundered the remaining clumps of grown trees for building material,

-
1. Cody, E.G. and Murison, W. (editors): The Historie of Scotland - Bishop J. Leslie (tr. Father James Dalrymple 1596) S.T.S., Vol. I, pp. 7, 19.
 2. Discharge Account: 1 stone cheese "gewin be nicoll Lytill in aidsall ye tyme Zor L(ordship) wes at hunting thair" (B.M. 943/7).
 3. Pennecuik, A., : A Geographical, Historical Description of the Shire of Tweeddale, p. 24.
 4. M.G.C., Vol. III, p. 167.

preferring oaks and ashes if they could find them but making do with birch and alder. In 1618 nine men from Teviotdalehead farms were accused of cutting 440 alder trees from the "wood and forest... called Gorrumberrie", making "such a spoyle" that "thay half left few or no growand treis at all thairintill, the same being formarlle replenneist with grite stoir of all kyndis of growand treis." ¹ Removal of 60 ashes and birches from Dodhead in 1619 left but few trees there, ² and other similar records confirm the fragmentary state of once greater woods (Fig. 4).

The effect of destruction by man was a shortage of good local timber for most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and this in turn hampered progress in standards of farm housing. The absence of woods meant more space for pasture, but lack of shelter for the stock. Landowners saw the advantage of conserving what old trees remained, and, later, of making plantations both in the parks around the mansion houses and on the farms.

In 1629 Sir Christopher Lowther, on his way to Selkirk, saw "some woods of Ettrick Forest" remaining on the lower reaches of Yarrow and Ettrick.³ The Yarrow wood stretched from Newark and Foulshiels up to Tinnis,

1. R.P.C., Vol. XI, p. 437.

2. R.P.C., Vol. XII, p. 122.

3. Lowther, Sir Christopher: Our Journall into Scotland AD 1629, p. 17.

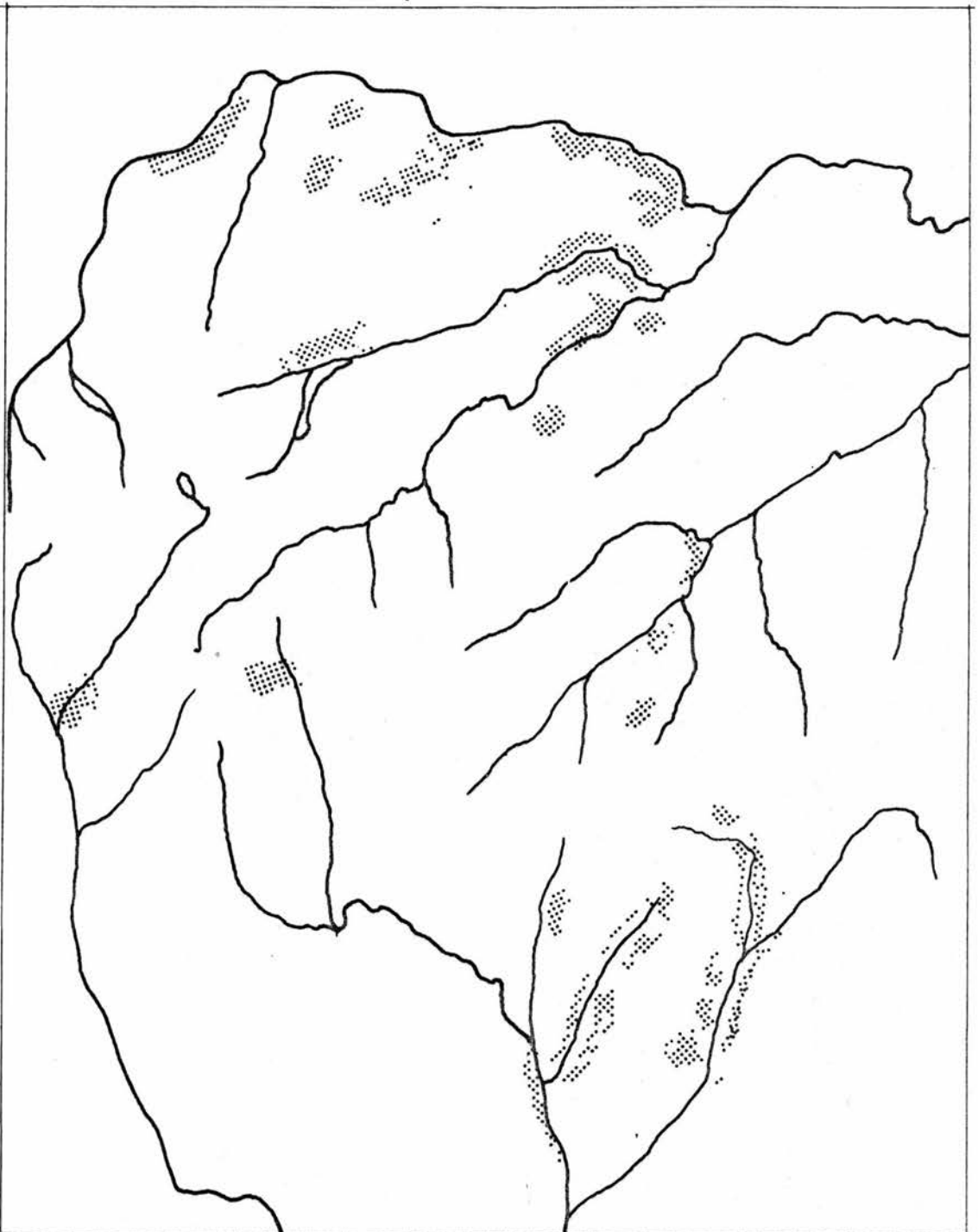


Fig. 4

**THE EXTENT OF RECORDED WOODLAND IN
THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY**

Scattered shrub, sparse tree cover and trees in cleuchs or by streams,
are not shown

and belonged to Buccleuch, while that in Ettrick extended westward from Fauldshope to Kirkhope and Newhouse, on land possessed by Scott of Harden. These two did not escape the plunderers but, under protection, survived to become the main sources of timber for farm buildings in the Forest and Teviotdalehead districts.

In Teviotdalehead itself there were similarly surviving woods at Whithope and Branxholm, and more remotely at Fernieside near Skelfhill, with a few substantial ashes around Broadhaugh and possibly on Falnash. One of the Buccleuch estate chamberlains wrote in 1663 that "by his care thair is a bank of young timber brought up" at Broadhaugh, consisting of more than three hundred trees.¹ There were scattered oaks and ashes among the alders that lined the banks of streams in Liddesdale, particularly at Blackburn, the Roan, and on Hermitage Water. But a late seventeenth century description of Roxburghshire gloomily remarked that "There was abundance of Woods here, which are now altogether cut down and decayed for want of haining".²

The situation in Eskdale around 1700 resembled that in Liddesdale, and was repeated further north in the Tweed valley, where:

-
1. T.H.A.S., (1970), pp. 45-46. James Grieve (1751-1838), tenant in Branxholm Park, used to tell his son William that in former times a man could ride on a white horse for four or five miles from Todshawhaugh to the Castlehill without anyone seeing the horse for the thickness of the leaves (Fraser, Sir W.: Scotts of Buccleuch, Vol. I, p. vi).
 2. M.G.C., Vol. III, p. 172. A description of Selkirkshire at much the same time contains similar information (MGC, Vol. III, pp. 184-185).

"The greatest want here is of Timber, there being but little Planting... except it be some few trees about the houses of the Gentry, and not one Wood in all this Countrey worth the naming; so that this want of foresight compells them to be obliged to Clidesdale for most of the timber necessary for their Houses & Husbandry." ¹

The early eighteenth century saw the landlords busy establishing new woodland. Pennecuik noted "amongst the Young Nobility and Gentry" of Tweeddale "a general Genius for Planting; which in a few Years will turn to the Ornament, as well as Advantage of this Cold and Naked Country..." ²

A section in the farmer's lease reserved to the proprietor the right to plant a wood or 'stell', and required the tenant to protect it from his stock. The benefits were shelter and timber, as well as a financial saving to both parties. There was little change in approach thereafter to the end of the period.

Remains of ancient woodland lingered in many places. Oaks and alders survived at Fauldshope, Tweedenhead, Cacrabank, and elsewhere. The 'Whithope Thorn' on Craig Douglas was the subject of stories and superstition, while Lord Napier tried to preserve a single thorn in the middle of the public road near Berrybush. To these may be added introduced trees still standing at old house sites, such as the great sycamores, well over two hundred years old,

1, M.G.C., Vol. III, p. 154. The tenants in Glensax, on the Haystoun estate, had to go to Elibank some miles down the Tweed for their timber (Haystoun Papers: Baron Baillies Court Book).

2. Pennecuik, op. cit, p. 4.

at Old Kershopehead and Rashiegrain, the elms and ashes planted at Blackhouse about 1750, and the equally old ones below Doccleuch. In many cleuchs the birches and rowans flourish as they must have done centuries ago, and here and there, as on Craikhope, Henderland, Altrive, and Manorhead, scrubby clumps of willow, hawthorns, and juniper hint of the forest cover long ago.

Wildlife

The sheepfarmer cleared his land of natural woodland and scrub, and made use of the timber while he could. Similarly he took advantage of the deer, but in doing so helped to destroy them. Perhaps he was not particularly saddened at this, since deer were rivals for the grazing. Once they were gone, he concentrated his attention on the other creatures inhabiting his farm.

The many varieties of 'hill game' were all protected; offences included hunting hares in storms, fishing in forbidden times, killing grouse with guns and traps, and so on. Though there were severe penalties, one can scarcely imagine the inhabitants of secluded places such as Ettrickhead resisting the temptation to improve upon a meagre diet by shooting a hare or spearing a salmon. Many of the constables were sheep farmers who were no doubt often guilty themselves, but even so the justice courts were busy with offenders. In the seventeenth century and after, landlords, who were entitled to hunt the game on their own estates, derived an income

from letting salmon fishings and grouse shootings, so that they had an interest in warding off poachers.

Farmers never lost the freedom to fish and hunt by licence, and James Hogg was describing a typical situation when in 1802 he remarked of his neighbours that in summer "their chief rural diversions... are fowling, and fishing with the rod", while in winter "they assemble in mixed clubs to curl on the ice, and trace the fox or hare."¹ The habit of keeping a greyhound or 'grew' survived well into the nineteenth century, the dogs being launched after hares and, in the Forest, at an annual race, usually early in October, for the prize of a silver collar.²

Apart from its value as a source of food or entertainment, the wild life of the hills had a more direct effect upon sheepfarming, and here the interests of the farmer and the sportsman coincided. Both were hostile to what they called 'vermin'. Wolves were gone, probably before 1600, the last one killed, according to tradition, by a woman with a baking girdle at Wolfcleuchhead, or Glendearg in Eskdalemuir. Wildcats, or "wulcats", persisted much longer, dying out about the 1830s. Birds of prey, stoats, weasels, adders and especially carrion crows or "corbies" were also destroyed relentlessly but not wiped out. Hatred for the crow, which attacked sick

-
1. Hogg, J., 'A Journey through the Highlands of Scotland', Scots Magazine, Vol. 64 (1802), p. 815.
 2. G.P.: Diary no. 20, p. 211, 12th Oct. 1819.

sheep and pecked out the eyes of still living lambs, was matched only by the intensity of feeling against the fox.

In the Border hills foxes did not present the same threat to sheep that they were supposed to do in the Highlands; at least one does not find there the belief that foxes made the keeping of sheep on the hills impossible. However, their inclination to bite lambs casually as well as to carry one off perpetuated the farmer's hostility, and the following story must have been told with satisfaction by the shepherd concerned:

"... in the very severe season of 1772 for some days all the sheep in the districts of the Parish of Ettrick and Eskdalemuir had to be confined to stells... The Hirsell of Upper Dalgliesh had stood almost three days without a bite of Heather or any sort of mitigation to their hunger and an aged & very carefull person who was shepherd got up early & went to the stell... where he had left his sheep more from an irres(is)tible uneasiness about the state of his hirsell than from any hope that he might administer to their relief - when as he approached the Stell one of his dogs seemed in great excitement darting forward & then running between his legs or in behind him - from this circumstance he became aware that something extraordinary had occurred. At that period the sheep of Dalgliesh as well as all those of the Parish of Ettrick were of the old Blackfaced breed the Rams of which sort were possessed of much intrepidity & fierceness and on coming more near the old man was not a little

surprised to see one of the Tups time after time preparing himself for an onset walking backwards attacking the stone dike of the stell with all his force. The shepherd approached as fast as he could when he saw a Fox lying at the foot of the wall not only dead but flat like a thrashed sheaf as the old man expressed it by the continued long perseverance of thumping he had gotten." ¹

Two other forms of 'vermin' having particularly to do with sheep farming deserve mention. Periodically the pastures suffered from plagues of grass-spoiling creatures, with a resultant set back to the stock. One of the first to be recorded was that of about 1765 when, along with a drought, there came some kind of caterpillar in swarms, which destroyed the grass by eating at its roots. They spent the summer ravaging an area extending from the Annan to Liddesdale, and eventually fell victim to crows, gulls, and a rain storm. A similar invasion scoured the higher farms in Tweeddale in 1802. Most damaging, however, were the infestations of mice and voles which occasionally came to certain areas. The vole plague of 1892 was not the first, but was possibly the greatest, and was so harmful that it became the subject of an enquiry by special

-
1. L.P. Skene's description of "Tod Willie" provides an instance of an eighteenth century 'vermin destroyer' chiefly concerned with foxes. (Skene, James: Reminiscences of Scott, N.L.S., MS. 965, ff. 15-16) Gamekeepers or game watchers were a feature of the nineteenth century; the gamekeeper's house of "Blackcock ha' " on Bellendean was built in 1840-1.

Committee of the Board of Agriculture. The members met at Howpasley, and later at Hawick, before moving on to Moffat. They heard that the outbreak had been noticed initially on Glenkerry in 1888, after which thousands of acres were affected. The grass was so withered and destroyed that some farmers had to resort to feeding sheep hay in summer. The Committee was unable to suggest how the swarms might be destroyed, but commented favourably on the remarkable numbers of natural predators such as owls and hawks that had gathered, and on the various methods of trapping and killing invented by shepherds. It also found that neither shepherds nor gamekeepers knew much about the wild life of the hills.¹

Fuel

The early settlers on the edges of the hills may have preferred the Teviotdalehead area because it was gentler, more open and grassy, as well as more accessible, than the country further northwest. But the sheepfarmers of the later times found just as much advantage in the rougher terrain, which with its heather and sometimes better drained ground was equally valuable for sheep,² and parasites such as ticks and keds were as likely to be found on the low grasslands as on the high

-
1. Report on a Plague of Field Voles in Scotland, pp. 1-43.
 2. On 12th April 1690 the tenants of 'Dewislees' (Eweslees) complained "of their ground being altogether destitute of Heather which was both food and bield to their sheep", and they expected a reduction of rent (B.M. 935/2).

rocky steeps. Moreover, heather afforded a useful feed in snow, and generally grew on peat, which was both a fuel in itself and a preserver of old timber.

To the occupants of houses with clay floors and thatched roofs, fuel was of the greatest importance. Whatever woodland there was provided a limited quantity of kindling and logs, to which would be added the remains of trees dug out of bogs and banks. But with the scarcity of natural wood, and the careful protection of plantations, the people had often to depend on either chance fragments or the leftovers after felling, and must have found peat increasingly valuable. Fortunately the Border hills were well provided with this commodity, although in some parts it was necessary to go long distances for it. Thus regular annual use was made of the "mosses", which were sometimes high up on the ridges, sometimes conveniently close to farm or cottage. Names such as 'Peat Hill', 'Peat Law', 'Peatshank Head', may still be accurate descriptions, but so great has the consumption of peat been throughout the period that it is possible that they no longer apply. Turf, too, was burned in certain districts, but usually by those who could get nothing better, and by 1800 there were few who still used it.

An old word for fuel was 'elding', which survives in the 'Elding Qua' on East Buccleuch, and 'the Elding Haugh' at Delorain. In 1649 Roxburghshire was described as "plenteous of all sorts of grain, and store of Cattell,

but no other elding but Peats and Heather",¹ while Selkirkshire in the same year "has no other fewel for fire but Peets and these digged out from the tops of the Mountains".² Much the same was said of Tweeddale at the end of the century. These reports are further evidence of the lack of wood.

In the seventeenth century the farmer was often bound by the terms of his lease to contribute peats to his landlord. Buccleuch's house at Branxholm received hundreds of loads from neighbouring tenants whose farms have little or no peat on them now. An agreement of 1680 between the Earl of Tarras and the tenants of four farms, ran as follows:

"It is agreed yt ye Tenents of Wester Allmore, Easter Allmore, Howcleuch, and Sr. Wm Scotts Tenents in Hosscoats, shall furnish me wt good and Sufficient Lipet peets Cassen in Allmore: That is to say, to Cast, Wine and fetch home for 12 penis Scots ye Load in Lieu of their Meat and drink. It is agreed if any of the Loads be Short of the Measure Condescended on it is Lost to ye Tenent, and if any hold out being questioned by My Servant I shall pay double for yt load. The Tenents are obliged to Lay in ye peets betwixt Whitsonday and Lambes yairly under ye penalty of 6 sh. Scots for every Load Wanting." ³

The Alemuirs provided 400 loads between them, the other two farms 320 loads. The quantity was unusually large, because Tarras had few tenants. The Earl of Traquair was able to spread the burden more widely, and

1. M.G.C., Vol. III, p. 148.

2. M.G.C., Vol. III, p. 150.

3. Harden.

Thomas Linton, whose lease of Garlacleuch began in 1698, had to provide only 14 loads.¹ During the first half of the eighteenth century most landlords found it easier to convert the peat loads into a money equivalent added to the rent, but the arrangement depended on what was most convenient. In 1738 Sir Gilbert Elliot was entitled to take peats for his own use from "any convenient Moss or Mosses" on his farm of Shielswood, and at the same time he arranged for his tenants in lower, arable farms also to get their peats there.² Similarly tenants and cottars at Traquair had an established right to peats from the moss of Glenlude, and it is remembered how the people at Milsington used a moss on the west part of Bellendean. On occasion agreements for peat were reached between different estates. In 1688 Douglas in Bodsbeck sent thanks to Scott of Harden for the privilege of casting peats on Potburn - "For wtoutt yr libertie to cast peitts in that ground I cannot live heir."³

Some of the peat mosses served people living in a town such as Peebles or Selkirk, and were common land, as, for example, those at Waddenshope, recorded in the thirteenth century, Langholm Hill, and Foulside near Selkirk. The use of coal meant that such sources could

1. T.P.

2. M.P. (Estate) NLS., Folder 57.

3. S.H.P., no. 2718.

be given up in the later eighteenth century, when commons were being divided and enclosed. Farm leases became more exact in their definitions of the place where the tenant might get his peats, but it was up to him to make arrangements with his servants about casting them, and this situation would still prevail today though very few now use any peat at all.

In the seventeenth century Tweeddale had "a Coalpit at Carlops, and another in the Common of Linton wherewith the most of the Gentry of the Shire are served" ¹, but the hillfarms found their peat mosses more convenient. In general the coal supplies were too far away, and there were few tracks that would enable coal carts to reach the lonelier farmers and their shepherds. Nevertheless, coals from the Forth and from Canonbie were coming to the Border valleys well before 1800.

A few farms, in the Liddesdale district, had coal of their own. In 1719 the Buccleuch estate made an order to try for coal at Stichelhill,² and this was done with some success. About 1753 "a little House for ye Coalliers" was built on the same farm, and the men who lodged there and who were already working at the nearby "Ladlhophead" were "to make trayele for Coall".³ Not much use was made of this coal, but as there was lime nearby it was burned

1. M.G.C., Vol. III, p. 154.

2. B.M.; 239.

3. Ibid.

in the kilns. Apart from Stichelhill, there were seams near the surface elsewhere in the district, particularly in the Tweeden and Kershope valleys. Though not quite up to the standard of the North Tyne farms near Falstone, each of which had its own little mine, the farm of Tweedenhead had its 'coal pits', and it is still remembered how coal could be 'howked' at the sheepfolds and above the house, though these useful places have long been buried in the dense conifers of Kershope Forest. Also lost among the trees are the sykes of the Coal Grain at Kershopehead, which washed coal out of their banks and where herds could dig coal to replace peats in a bad season.¹

In the nineteenth century farmers in Tweeddale and the Forest fetched coals from Lothian pits, while those in Teviotdalehead, and the more southerly districts, sent their carts to Canonbie or to the north Northumberland valleys of Rede Water and North Tyne. Carts and panniered ponies came from Plashetts, following the old drove track up the Dawston Burn and across to Roberts Linn, and according to a shepherd who lived for many years at Phaupknowe, a man who was draining on the march between Saughtree and Phaupknowe kept on turning up bits of coal which had dropped from these pack ponies.

1. A map of Castleton parish in 1816 has "Old Coal Pits" marked up the Tweeden Burn (B.M., Irvine House). According to the 1604 Border Survey, in the Bewcastle district there was "great store of Coales, and very esie to bee come by, but the inhabitants esteeme not of them by reason they have suche store of Peat... But if the Countrie weare planted with industrious men of trade the mynes ther would bee of great Value". (Sanderson, op. cit., p. 35).

Lime and Marle

Limestone was found on a few Liddesdale farms, and exploited a little in the eighteenth century. In 1800 kilns were operating on Larriston, and subsequently there were large operations on Thorlieshope. Sheepfarmers, however, did not make as much use as they might have done of lime to improve the pastures since for the most part it was a long way away, and they were similarly hindered from taking advantage of marle deposits sometimes found under a peatmoss and in lochs.

Marle in peat mosses could become accessible when the peat ran out. A lease of Braidlie (Borthwick Water) in 1829 included a reservation to the landlord of "the Marl Moss of Broadlie... with full power and liberty to dig, lay down and carry off Marl and Peats therefrom at all Seasons of the year without being liable to the Tenant for any damages..." The tenant could also dig whatever quantity of marle he wished to put on the farm, without charge. A further reservation on the part of the landlord was of the right "to cast winnow (sic) and lead Peats from Broadlie flow", but "in casting the said Peats they shall strip the ground down to the marl, and carry off the rubbish." ¹

Though they were few, the small lochs and mosses situated amid the undulating moorland in the east of the area, from Branxholm to Ettrick, contained considerable

1. N.P.

quantities of marle and sheep farmers who had a local source used it on meadows, so that consequently a portion of their flocks derived some benefit. James Grieve's father, Walter, held a three year's lease of the Branhholm Loch "Marle:pitts" in 1781 and the source was still worth using twenty years later.¹ In 1792 there was "a Marle pit called Tocherlodgemoss, that lyes between the farm of Outer Huntley on one side, and Wooll and Hartwoodmyres on the other."² Adam Ogilvie let his farm of Hartwoodmyres with a right to this marle, though the moss was under dispute. In 1767 some of the mosses round Fanns and Hungryhill were thought to be promising.

The story of the attempts to drain Kingside Loch, high up among the sheep pastures of East Buccleuch, illustrates the problems involved and was exceptionally well preserved in tradition.

It was first drained early in the nineteenth century, by order of "old Goldielands", James Elliot. "That was during the rage for marl", said Charles Grieve, "which in my opinion is the best top dressing yet discovered." No great quantity was found, and the venture was unsuccessful, though "some was driven as far as Dryhope on St. Marys". The main drain was a "cundy", mostly 18 inches wide, and was planned carefully. Part can still be seen though even a hundred years ago covers had fallen in, and there were

1. G.P.

2. B.M., 659, Letter: Adam Ogilvie to Duke of Buccleuch
23rd May 1792.

considerable alterations. The loch was emptied, and remained in that condition for a long time. According to tradition, "dried eels were found in millions and could be raked up like hay." Then the drain got blocked, filled up, and "flected back" so that the sheep that were feeding where the loch had been began to 'rot'. It was therefore decided to dam the stream again, and the loch reappeared.

William Grieve, the tenant around 1850 and 1860, talked long of draining it once more, and of making the main drain deeper. The work was at last begun in 1872, Grieve taking on the responsibility himself, and pipes came free by arrangement with the Buccleuch estate from the tile works at Smeaton. They were carted out from Hawick over a period of many months, and they lay two winters at East Buccleuch before any were laid. The idea was to lift the cundy, dig two feet deeper, put in 12 inch pipes, and throw the old cundy stones on top of the pipes "to form a rumbling cundy on top". Three men started below the washing pool and worked up till they came to a very hard mass of rock, where they gave up. After an unsuccessful attempt to penetrate the rock, the old drain was thought enough. Bad workmen delayed completion of the task. It proved difficult to lay pipes in the soft, slushy bottom of the loch. "They put in layers of flat stones like flags with old hay between. In some places there were ten flags below the pipe. It

was so soft that the men had to stand on battens and if they put a batten 12 feet long on end it would have gone out of sight from its own weight."

The work continued until it was too dangerous to proceed further. All but half an acre in the middle dried out. This pond, "like a well ee", would never dry, even though two open drains were cut at the sides, one to the main drain from the south of the pond, the other from the west side down to the Rankle Burn. During the hard frosty winter of 1878-9, the middle area remained soft and the sheep developed the habit of crossing it as if they were on a road. Thus, when a thaw came, some were stuck, and neither man nor dog dare go into rescue them. Rot again struck the sheep cut, and in spite of all the labour and expense, it was decided to dam the stream again, with the result that about 1889 Kingside Loch returned and has remained ever since. "This was not an undertaking for a tenant".¹

1. This account is derived from a notebook kept by Charles Grieve, Branxholm Park (G.P.) and from the late Mr. R. Anderson, shepherd, East Buccleuch.

2. The Hill Farms

Early Settlement

'Bronze' and 'Iron' Age settlers, and the Romans who followed them, must have widened the grassy spaces by cutting timber and burning scrub. Farm steadings could be established and maintained, the small stocks of sheep and cattle increased, though both were subject to the ravages of tribal raids. The principal Celtic tribe facing the Romans, the Selgovae, held most of the Border hill area, but sited homesteads and settlements on the slopes and summits chiefly along its eastern edge. They were perhaps as concerned with fighting as with farming, but evidently some pastoral life existed, and livestock was more appropriate than crops for the exposed hill tops.

Circular wooden huts, quickly constructed and easily removed, were probably typical of the Celtic tribes, and shelters of similar design were still used in the seventh century when St. Cuthbert, not yet monk, was a young shepherd "in the hills above the River Leader"¹ where he lived with other shepherds in a small community. Similarly light constructions were used in the twelfth century, long after the Angles had settled in the eastern Borders and extended their influence even into the central hills. Earl Waldev, during the reign of William the Lion (1165-1214), made a grant of pasture in the Lammermuirs to the

1. Webb, J.F. (Transl.), Lives of the Saints, p. 21.

monks of Melrose Abbey, and since he wished to preserve the hunting the shepherds were ordered to have moveable folds and lodges so that no permanent building or settlement be established.¹ In a further charter of the same period, the monks received a site elsewhere for a cow-house or sheepfold, a house in which they might have a fire for themselves and the shepherds, and a hayshed, on condition that they make no other lodges. The shepherds were to have wattled cots for shelter.² No doubt such temporary dwellings often served as shielings on the "summering plains", and were left to decay when their occupants withdrew to more secure winter quarters in lower country.

The invasion of Angles penetrated the uplands only slowly, but it was thorough. Most of the earliest names on record for distinct possessions or "lands" in the hills are of Anglian or English origin, though in certain districts such as Tweeddale, the extreme head of Eskdale and near the head of Teviot, a number of early Celtic and later Gaelic names remain. In the western valleys from Liddesdale round to Moffat Water, Scandinavian names occur for hill features and farms. In general the place names suggest that many of the hillfarms remaining today have their origin in "lands" settled by Angles, or developed by them in places previously occupied by Celts.

1. Liber Sancte Marie de Melros, Vol. I, p. 67, no. 76.

2. Liber Sancte Marie de Melros, Vol. I, p. 95, no. 106.

The majority of Anglian settlements in the hills came probably in the tenth and eleventh centuries. It is not clear how extensive each one was, nor how closely the boundaries matched those of the later, corresponding farms. But boundaries certainly existed, and their lines, as indicated on the earliest charters, are in some respects similar to present ones. They were marked, in the main, by natural features. The evidence of these earlier times is however too slight to provide an exact picture of land divisions or farming pattern and customs in the hills.

Early grants of land and ownership

Under the Norman feudal system of land tenure, grants of land were made by David I and subsequent Scottish kings to favoured noblemen. These were sufficient to indicate how in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries the Border hill area was apportioned in large estates at a time when the greater part of it was still wild and untamed. (See Fig. 5) The recipients were the monks of Melrose and leading Anglo-Normans, with a few Anglian families as well. In a description of the marches of the manor of Stobo in 1200, a list of witnesses included the names of possessors of land in Tweeddale. They were Anglo-Norman, Anglian, and Celtic.¹

Two Anglian possessions deserve mention. Between 1153 and 1165 Osulf son of Uctred, with consent of his

1. Innes, Cosmo, and others (editors): Origines Parochiales Scotiae, Vol. I, p. 199.

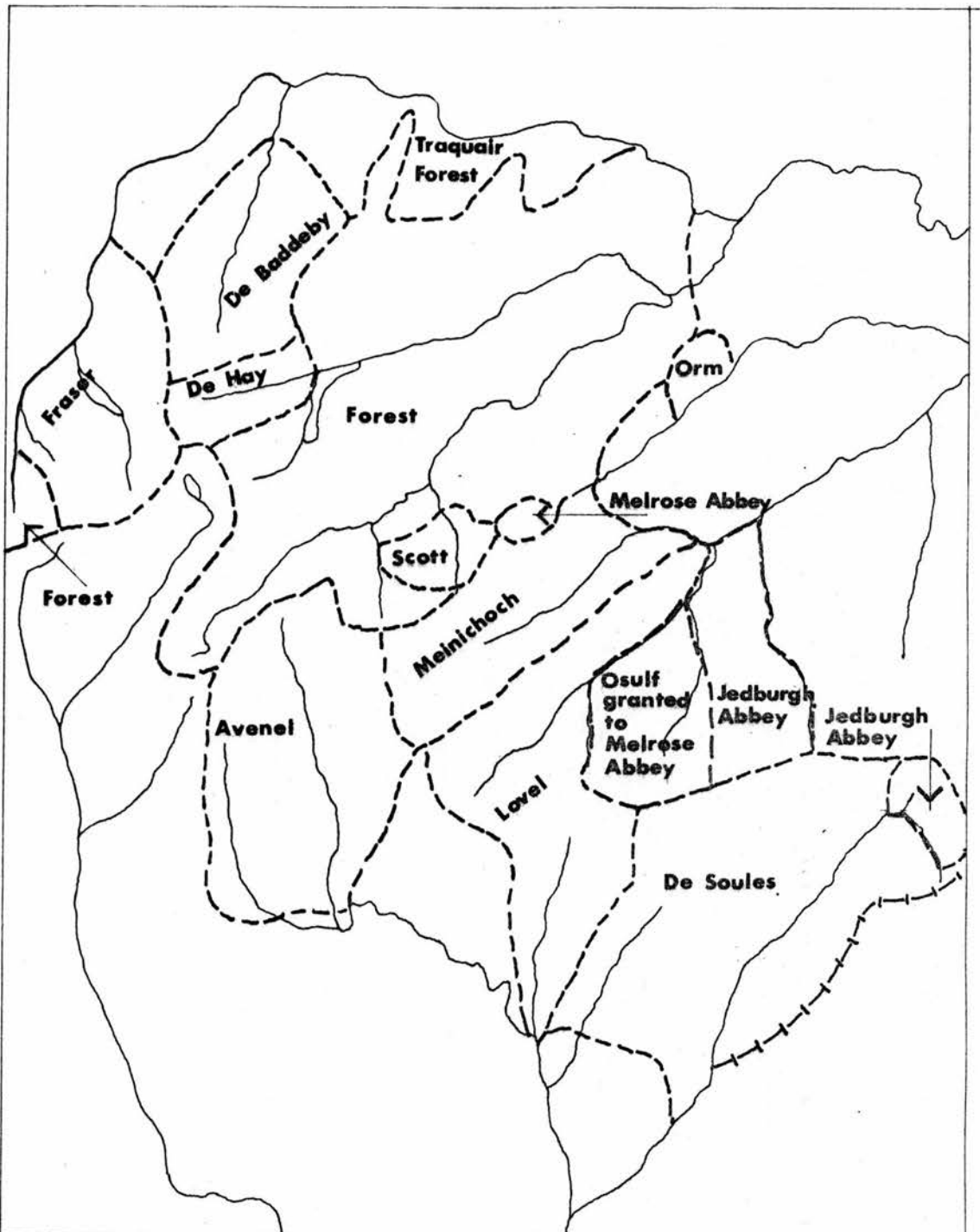


Fig. 5

**PRINCIPAL ESTATES IN THE
'BORDER HILLS' AREA c 1200**

Boundaries are approximate

son Uetred, granted to the monks of Melrose the lands of "Ringwude", otherwise called Ringwoodfield, in the barony of Cavers.¹ This area, centred upon the Allan Water, then belonged to Melrose till the Reformation. Within the next twenty years William the Lion confirmed to the Church of Glasgow and to Orm of Ashkirk and his heirs rights to pasture in lands on the edge of the Forest near Langhope and Todrig. They had liberty of "plowing, sowing, and waynage within the fence that was raised around their deer-parks..."²

In the thirteenth century the Melrose lands were further increased by the grant of Ettrickhead and Rodono, and the transference of Eskdalemuir from the Avenels. The Abbey then held what were undoubtedly some of the loneliest areas of the Border hills (Fig. 6). It must be presumed that the monks wanted the land for sheep. There were chapels on all the Abbey lands; for instance, at Old Northhouse and possibly Priestthaugh in Ringwoodfield, Over Kirkhope in Ettrickhead, and Chapelhope in Rodono. The sites of "monks' houses" were still to be seen on Bellendean³ until recent afforestation covered them.

-
1. Liber Sancte Marie de Melros, Vol. I, p. 10, no. 9.
 2. Innes, Cosmo, and others, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 314.
 3. Information from the late Mr. Tom Scott, formerly of Shiringscleuch.

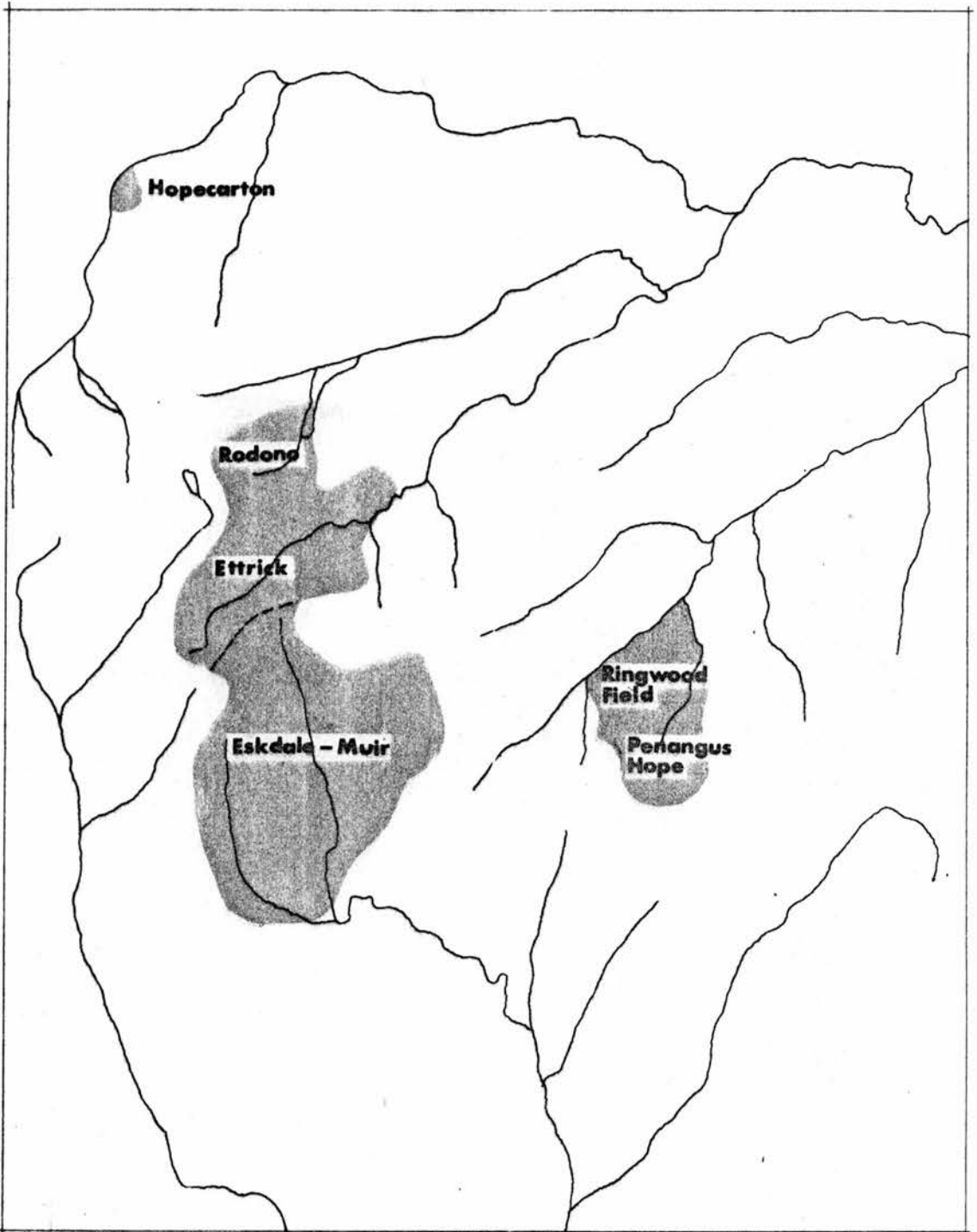


Fig. 6

**LANDS IN THE BORDER HILLS AREA
POSSESSED BY MELROSE ABBEY c 1415**

Boundaries are approximate

In the greater part of the Border hills area estates were large, corresponding mostly to the river valley districts. This pattern continued almost unchanged throughout the period, so that many farms existed under one proprietor. Here and there, and particularly in Tweeddale, there were estates consisting of one or two farms only. Disputes and wars with England held up progress, but the people living in the seclusion of the hills may have been less disturbed than those in the more accessible region of the east Borders or in the fertile lowlands of Dumfriesshire. Thus, in spite of the troubled condition of the country, the hill farms - small holdings rather than the large modern units - were almost all established before 1400, and for most of the time permanently occupied. Only the very remote corners, such as Ettrickhead, Rodono, perhaps Megget, and the outer parts of farms such as Blackhouse, Garwald or the Buccleuchs, remained uninhabited and even these had shielings in summer.

The districts and their farms

A brief description is given of each district and its landowners in the transitional period from mediaeval to eighteenth century organisation, the latter being of a pattern that may be called 'modern'.

Melrose Abbey lands

Eventually the Melrose Abbey lands were put under the management and control of powerful local figures, which was the fate of much church land in Scotland during the century before the Reformation. In 1484 David Scott of Branxholme and Buccleuch, and his son Robert, received from the Subprior and monks of Melrose a grant of the bailiery of the Abbey lands, including those called "Ettrik, Rodonow, Esdale, Ringwodfeld, and Est Teividale." The Scotts thereby were empowered to set the lands "to the profit and utilite of ovr Abbay", but of course they gained financial reward themselves.¹

The task was not easy. When in 1500 Sir Walter Scott succeeded to the office he was faced with the problem of "the rasyng and lpbryngyng of the malis and profits of thir lands and stedings undyr Writin quhilk has lyne Wast thyr mony zers bipassit".² The underwritten steadings were those of Ringwoodfield, which by this time included the lands called 'Penangushope', and they were included in the charter of the Free Barony of Branxholm, dated 16th August 1599, to the then Sir Walter Scott.

Far away in Tweeddale the small Melrose possession of "Hoipcartane" was included in the west part of

1. Fraser, Sir W., op. cit., Vol. II, p. 82, no. 84.

2. B.M. 891/10.

Drummelzier by 1511, though the Abbey retained the superiority till the Reformation.¹ Between Hopecarton and Ringwoodfield lay the great Melrose pastures at the heads of Ettrick and Yarrow, and in Eskdalemuir. By an arrangement of 1415 the monks had exchanged Bellendean for Glenkerry which belonged to the Scotts, so that the Melrose 'Forest' lands were rounded off in the Tima valley, and the Scotts extended their Buccleuch estate towards the Borthwick. At the Reformation most of the Ettrickhead holdings went to Scott of Thirlestane and subsequently to Scott of Harden, while Rodono passed in 1599 to Hay of Yester. The latter district, and probably also the very head of Ettrick, was not inhabited all the year round until the early seventeenth century.² Much of Eskdalemuir became part of the Buccleuch estate about 1612, though Harden gained land at the remote northern extremity of the district, and other Scott families acquired small properties there during the seventeenth century.

The Forest

When granted to the Douglas in 1325, the Forest of Ettrick was defined in a manner by surrounding estates, some of which, such as those of Melrose Abbey to the west,

-
1. Buchan, J.W., History of Peeblesshire, Vol. III, p. 434.
 2. In a copy of "Ane act to big ane chapell upoun rodono" (c. 1635), the lands of Rodono were understood "to haif Lyne waist and not to haif bene Inhabited (but wtin thir few zeiris) Saifing onlie be sum border persones and scheiphirdis a schort quhyle In the sommer seassoun" (Yester Papers, N.L.S., MS. 14762).

had reduced the original extent of the Forest itself. The many small 'steads' within the district were first named in the Crown Rental of 1456¹ after the Douglas forfeiture, and were arranged in the three 'wards' of Tweed, Yarrow, and Ettrick. These 'steads', occupied as small farms, survived in spite of coming under the restrictions of Forest laws, and can all be located if not with complete accuracy of boundary. Very few of them have entirely vanished. In the course of the sixteenth century, a variety of landowners acquired the steads by charters of feu farm, and, in effect, became proprietors. Farms in the Ettrick valley went mostly to Scotts, and those in the Yarrow valley and by the Tweed to Scotts, Murrays, and Stewart of Traquair.

Liddesdale

Apart from lands mostly at the head of the valley, belonging to Jedburgh Abbey, and, apparently, the farm of Thorlieshope, Liddesdale was possessed by Douglasses in the fourteenth century. A rental of c. 1376² contained nearly 170 holdings, of which perhaps 130 were 'hill' steads, and they were arranged in five divisions. Not many can be identified, and by 1541 there had been some combining and changing of names, this in turn producing a distribution of farms more like that of today.

1. E.R., Vol. VI, pp. 223-225.

2. Registrum Honoris de Morton, Vol. I, pp. lxviii-lxxiv (Appendix 17).

The Lordship of Liddesdale passed to Scott of Buccleuch in 1594. Isolated in the midst of the district were the lands of Redheugh, Hartsgarth, Larriston, Dinlabyre, and one or two others, which belonged to Elliots, and the Armstrong lands of Whithaugh. Despite power struggles, these remained separate from the Buccleuch estates, but for the most part Elliots and Armstrongs, once the dominating clans in the district, became tenants to the new overlord, as is described in the next chapter.

It is impossible here to give the history and fate of the many Liddesdale steads; that would be a worthwhile study in itself.

Teviotdalehead

Although the powerful Scotts of Buccleuch had possibly their chief dwelling at Branxholm, few of the farms around the head of Teviot were part of the Buccleuch estate before the eighteenth century, when several more were added. Elliots were present around 1600 in farms from Harwood to the head of the river, and across Ringwoodfield to the Dod Burn and Penchrise on the eastern margin of the 'Border hills' area.

In the Borthwick Water valley Milsington became a Buccleuch farm in 1451, and elsewhere the Scotts of Harden and Howpasley succeeded Turnbulls as the leading figures, although most of the farms on the north side of the water belonged to Buccleuch from the early seventeenth century. There were also small Scott estates outside the district on the Ale Water, at Whitslaid, Todrig, Shielswood, Burnfoot and the Essensides.

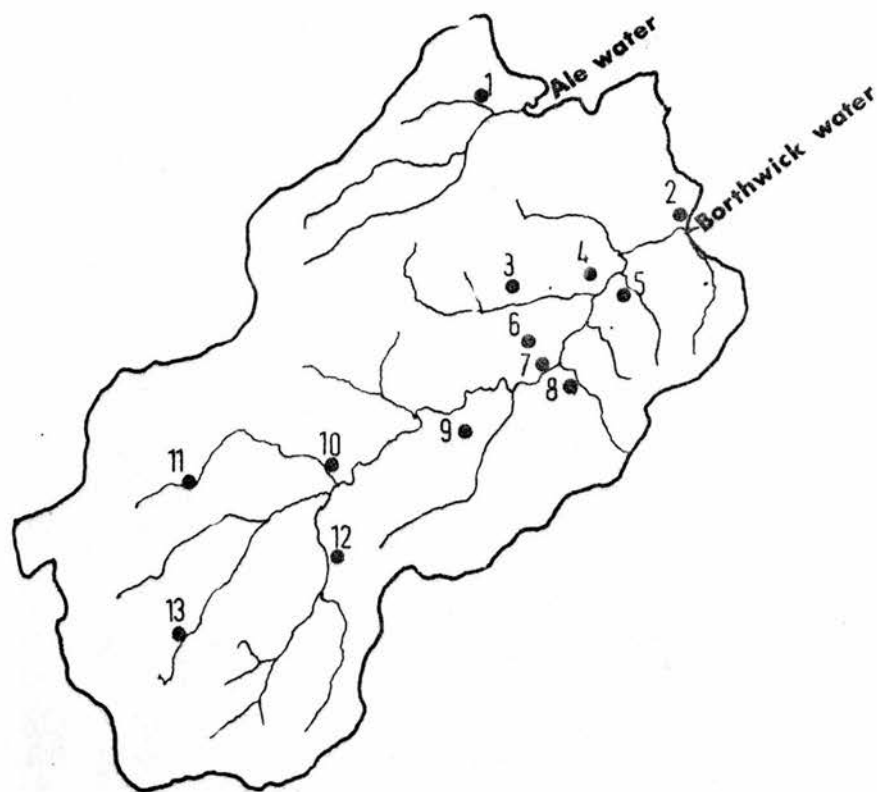
Ewesdale

After the execution of Alexander Lord Home in 1516, Ewesdale was divided into two estates, which corresponded to the 'over' and 'nether' parishes, each of which had its chapel. The former part was returned to the Homes, while the latter was bestowed by James V on the Maxwells, and early in the seventeenth century both were added to the Buccleuch estate. Most of the farms in the two divisions still exist today, though some are run in combination, and it is worth noting that the large farms of Arkleton and Meikledale, roughly opposite each other mid-way up the valley, never belonged to Buccleuch.¹

Distribution and combination of farms

Little need be said about the distribution of the farms, which were fairly evenly spread up all the valleys (Fig. 7). In most of Liddesdale the original holdings were far more numerous and therefore much smaller than elsewhere, and this may partly be explained by the gentler nature of the land, and by its comparatively mild, southwest exposure. It will be noted how in Tweeddale, for example, most of the farms extended back from the main river of the valley up a small tributary glen and were separated from each other by a spur jutting down from the high ridge of summits above.

1. Arkleton may have come into the hands of Buccleuch for a short time towards the end of the sixteenth century. There is a letter of 5th June, 1595 in which it is reported that Armstrongs burned "Erckilton, a town of his"; i.e., Buccleuch's (C.S.P. XI, p. 627, no. 577).



scale $\frac{1}{4}$ in. = 1 mile.

Fig. 7a

FARMS OF THE UPPER BORTHWICK WATER, TEVIOTDALEHEAD.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Bellendean | 8. Philhope |
| 2. Milsington | 9. Eildrig |
| 3. Girnwood | 10. Craik |
| 4. Hoscote | 11. Wolfcleuchhead |
| 5. Broadlie or
Braidlie | 12. Howpasley (orig. in
'quarters') |
| 6. Outerside | 13. Craikhope |
| 7. Meadshaw (incl. in
10) | |

The farm 'touns' are shown at their old, and, in some cases, unaltered, sites.

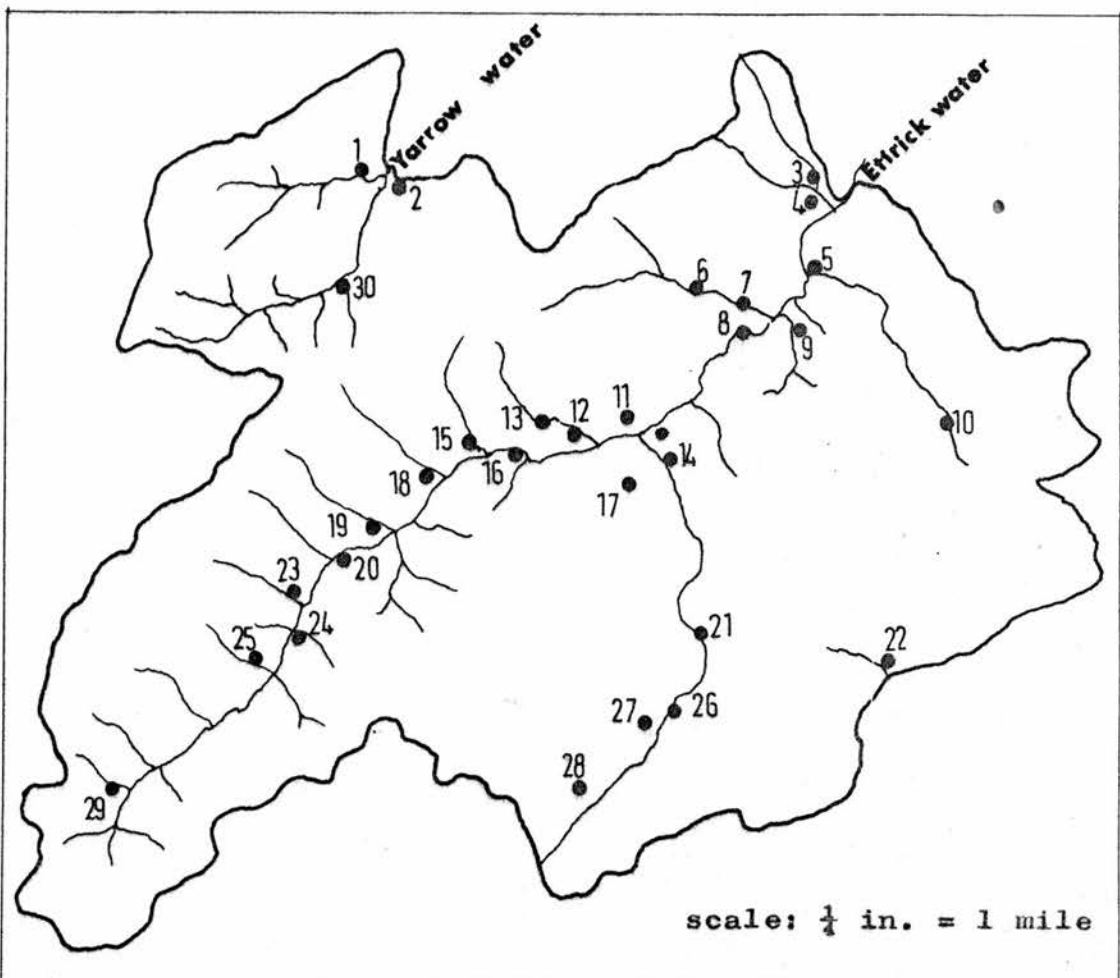


Fig 7b

FARMS OF ETRICK PARISH

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Chapelhope | 16. Ettrickhouse |
| 2. Riskenhope | 17. Midgehope |
| 3. Crosslea | 18. Cossarshill |
| 4. Tushielaw | 19. Brockhoperig |
| 5. Cacrabank | 20. Shorthope |
| 6. Thirlstane | 21. Glenkerry |
| 7. Hopehouse | 22. Ropelawshiel (incl. in 10) |
| 8. Wardlaw 1 | 23. Over Kirkhope |
| 9. Annelshope | 24. Nether Phawhope |
| 10. East and West
Buccleuch | 25. Broadgairhill |
| 11. Ramsaycleuch | 26. Gair |
| 12. Ettrickhall 2 | 27. Nether Dalgleish |
| 13. Craighill | 28. Over Dalgleish |
| 14. Gamescleuch and
Deephope | 29. Potburn |
| 15. Scabcleuch | 30. Muckra (incl. in 1) |

1 Created when Thirlestane farm was divided.

2 Smallholding and the location of the church and school.

No sequence of settlement can be made out from records earlier than 1600, since these are occasional and sparse, but the fact that Rodono was not regularly inhabited until the seventeenth century suggests that the remotest parts were only then being comprised within hill farms.

With regard to changes in the number of farms, as a result perhaps of combination into larger units, it is evident that many of the small original holdings had ceased to exist independently before 1600, and that the majority of subsequent mergings took place over the first half of the seventeenth century. Among the Border hills no 'clearances' occurred towards the end of the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, though Sir Walter Scott and others have asserted that they did. Cottars and craftsmen were however, encouraged, especially after 1750, to leave the farms for dwellings in the town, on specially allotted feus, or in a new village like Newcastleton. The process of combining lands was mostly a gradual one, accompanying the slow acquisition of capital by those who were actual or potential tenants, and no single combination could be assumed a final one, as throughout the period separation of previously united farms occurred. The fluctuations in number and the arrangement of the hill farms require more detailed examination than is possible here; for the continued existence of a farm name attached to a shepherd's cottage or a weaving community, the temporary merging of two farms, and the insufficiency of records all obscure the situation at any given time, and make generalisations more than usually

risky (Fig. 7). It seems clear, however, that the economic development of sheep farming accompanied, required, and made possible the larger unit, and that the belated progress of Liddesdale in this respect was at least in part due to the very large number of original small holdings in that district.

Boundaries

In districts such as Tweeddale the boundaries between farms were almost inevitable from the start, whereas in Liddesdale divisions between the small holdings packed along the river sides were much more complicated. Yet, however straightforward the situation might seem to be, the line of march was never entirely simple. There were places where hill ridges were so broad or branched off in such a way that no distinct line could be followed without the addition of more precise marks; and there were streams that altered their courses so abruptly that whole haughs of good land could change banks, and owners, at a single spate. Nevertheless, ridge crests, known as 'waterfalls', and watercourses provided the usual boundaries between farms; while quite commonly other natural features were employed such as old trees, outcrops of rock, and even clumps of rushes.

Sometimes it was necessary to use artificial objects. Large stones set upright, tall cairns, pits, prehistoric works such as the Catrail and the ramparted hill settlements

were all suitable points by which to fix a boundary. For instance, the bounds of a fourth part of Dollarburn, subject to a grant in 1549, were distinguished in one place by an old ditch called the "auld brokin Fauld."¹ In places, and particularly on the Border itself, a march was drawn across an otherwise featureless open moor or slope by a turf dyke, with an accompanying ditch. Where it formed the southeastern boundary of Liddesdale, the Border crossed just such country between Kershopehead and the Bells and Thomas Musgrave wrote in 1583 of the western part:

"Kyrsope is a smale becke and desendes from the wast grounde called Kyrsopeheade. It devydes the realmes from the meare dyke untill it meet with Lyddall, and is from the head unto foote without habitacioun."

Eastwards, near the Bells, one of the 'passages' across the Border was at "the heade of the Parle rigg throughe the mere dicke att the side of the Reademoss..."³ The word 'mere', meaning boundary, occurs at several places in the Borders; the 'mere dicke' near the Red Moss seems to have given its name to the farm of Meerdykes, over which the wall passed.

Boundary marks of all these kinds remained in use till the nineteenth century. Their survival depended on the memory of local men, in particular the shepherds, and in no other aspect of sheepfarming did tradition play a

-
1. Barns Papers, 1/9.
 2. B.P., Vol. I, p. 121, no. 197.
 3. B.P., Vol. II, pp. 469-470, no. 853.



Pl. 1 A march stone on Ramseycleuch, with the modern march fence.



Pl. 2 The dyke running up the Brown Rig, formerly the march between Tushielaw and Thirlestane.

more important part. When landowners disputed, experienced shepherds were called in for a settlement. Thomas Shortreed, visiting Scott at Abbotsford on 30th July 1823, spoke to another guest on this very topic.

"In the course of conversation She and I happened to speak of the ancient custom of whipping children round the Boundaries of property that they might know the marches when they grew up - and of the similar practice now obsolete in Scotland of Setting children of 10 years old upon the march stones on the Boundaries (of neighbouring proprietors, not otherwise defined) and Scourging them with rods, that the recollection of this undeserved punishment might make them good witnesses when they were old." 1

And, as Adam Ogilvie, chamberlain to the Duke of Buccleuch, wrote in 1792: "the pointing out of the Marches, with the late alterations, is of much more importance. That can be done accurately by the Herds upon the Farms only." 2

Official alterations were commonplace in the later history of the farm marches. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries neighbouring landowners often agreed to exchange pieces of land, or to readjust the march line, so as to get rid of erratic zigzags and to settle the boundary on a sensible course. They also found it necessary to fix with a dyke or a fence doubtful stretches where perhaps trees had disappeared, or stones had been removed. On the Buccleuch estate there was remarkably little trouble over boundaries, probably because the farms formed so large

1. Shortreed Papers, N.L.S.: MS 8993, f. 85.

2. B.M. 659.

a bloc, but farmers themselves might squabble, and in 1822 Napier of Thirlestane remarked on the need for clear divisions: "it requires most constant vigilance and care on the part of the watchful shepherd to prevent the incursions of those around, and thus preserve his pastures for his own." ¹ Unfortunately, in this situation, neither shepherd could be friendly.

"His stock are unable to approach the boundaries of the farm in peace; the hostile shepherds, ever at variance with each other, are consequently disposed to offer every molestation in their power; and eventually a great proportion of the pasture at the march is thus but partially consumed. The only remedy which now presents, is the 'erection of a substantial stone-dike'..." ²

This is rather a serious view of the problem. Shepherds commonly indulged in a more light-hearted rivalry, by deliberately putting their sheep across a march to see how much grazing they would get before the neighbour found out.

Boundary disputes in the hill country may not have arisen much before the mid seventeenth century, for the outer parts of farms were previously little used, and it is not surprising that concern over unfixed marches only appeared in records about 1680, ³ and then only in places

-
1. Napier, The Hon. W. J., A Treatise on Practical Store Farming, p. 148.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Acts of Parliament in 1661, 1669 and 1685 provided for the straightening of boundaries and the erection of march fences, thus encouraging landowners to sort out the boundaries of their estates and settle disputes.

where different estates met. On 5th May 1681, for instance, it was observed that Fingland was "unclear with the E(arl) of Tarras lands of over Cassa", "Megdale and meartfauld" were "unclear" with Sir James Johnstone's lands of Glendinging, and "Meitschaw" was "unclear with outerside in a litle peice".¹ It was 1730 before the Megdale situation was resolved, and 1816 before the march between Meadshaw and Outerside was finally cleared with a dyke. In 1714 the Duchess of Buccleuch, owner of Fingland, Megdale and Meadshaw, instructed her commissioners to tidy up boundary affairs, particularly where her lands bordered with those of other proprietors, and to demonstrate her seriousness she employed a Wiltshire surveyor, Edward Ladd, to make exact plans of every farm. He had to "distinguish each peice of ground how it lyes, what quantity of Acres it containes, and what is the nature and quality of it", and he was to be especially accurate in setting out the marches, describing the quantity and quality of disputed ground.² The Duchess emphasised her desire "that noe Gentleman may farm lands of mine adjoyning to their own where the Marches and Boundaries may not be known",³ for, as a protracted dispute over the marches of Peelbraehope showed, it was possible for the 'gentleman' to allow the boundary between his own property and the tenanted farm conveniently to

1. B.M. 943/23.

2. B.M. 935/4.

3. Ibid.

disappear. A memorialist of about 1733 commented to the Duke of Buccleuch:

"We have a saying that a great Estate is like an immense Hay-Cock on the High way which every Passenger thinks he may lawfully take a pluck of.

"Your Graces Estate in the South of Scotland is of the extent and value of some two Countys. Several Gentlemens Lands some of which hold of your Grace lye interjected and are bounded with your Graces Grounds and such have always found it their Interest to get in to be Tenants and have them more closely conjoynd by a promiscuous Pasturage and Tillage by which they have improven their own Fortune to the prejudice of your Graces Family..." 1

Such words marked the transition from the time when 'hill' estates were ill defined and scarcely farmed in their outermost parts to one in which boundary definitions were accurate and complete. The change was to some extent hindered and made irregular by combinations, sometimes temporary, of two or more farms, which resulted in altered sizes and shapes. There is, therefore, in more than one place, a 'March Syke' that is no longer near the march, and the trace of a turf or even stone wall which once separated farms long since united. William Keir's review of Buccleuch farms in 1791 suggested various 'adjustments', which, when put into practice, meant similar realignments of boundary. Had there been a march dyke round Altrive, for instance, it would have had to have been totally rebuilt on the south side:

1. B.M. 307.

"that part of it (Altrive) lying to the Southward of Corsans Cleuch, should be cut off, and added to the adjoining Farm of Berrybush, and as Eltreve has not within itself, any Shelter from the East Winds, ... it would be of considerable advantage to the farm, to add that part of Over Eldinhope lying to the Southward of Carlins Cleuch, to Eltreve..." 1

The enthusiasm for march dykes was fostered by that for enclosure of lower ground, and though considered by men like Napier a great 'improvement', it did not find total support. Findlater, writing of Peeblesshire about 1800, said of that flourishing sheep country: "Farther than the arable land, enclosure could be of little or no advantage to sheep farms".² His reasoning was that a boundary dyke would not be effective in keeping sheep in, and that it was scarcely economic. But the view expressed by Napier prevailed throughout the nineteenth century:

"To a sheep farm a 'march-dike' may be considered as a means of a more equal, undisturbed, and economical consumption of the grass, - a more extensive holding upon the ground, - a mark of boundary for that distinct line to which the 'drains' may be laid on without waste in any sense on either side, as always happens where no dike exists, - as affording an extended line of shelter on proper occasions, - one ready side for any subsequent inclosure, - and, above all, by active management on the part of the tenant, as the means of saving the burden and expense of a regular established shepherd and his pack. The advantages of a 'march-dike' or inclosure round a hill-farm are too obvious even to admit of doubt on the part of the tenant; although there are many honest men perfectly satisfied with the custom of mutually giving and taking..." 3

-
1. B.M. 459/1, pp. 193-194.
 2. Findlater, C., General View of the Agriculture of the County of Peebles, p. 77.
 3. Napier, op. cit., pp. 145-146.

Thus boundaries, originally seen only as lines between holdings or estates, came to be an integral part of the farming system.

The background of scene, settlement, estate and farm distribution outlined in this chapter is intended as an introduction to a description of the shepherding way of life and of the people involved in it. All levels of society played an important part; landowners became tenants, tenants purchased small estates, shepherds ventured into farming, and for much of the period the links between factor, farmer and farm servants were extremely close. So interconnected was the sheepfarming world in this way, that it is necessary to consider the place of the laird, as well as of his factor and tenants, before moving on to the wider practical concerns of the shepherd himself.

1. The Emergence of Estate Administration.

Landowners and Kindly Tenants

The early feudal landowners of the Border 'hill' estates, holding their property by royal gift in return for services past or future, were often remote figures, and similarly the great families of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, those of Douglas, Maxwell, Hepburn, Hume, Murray, perhaps even Scott of Buccleuch, were little known or seen among the farms that contributed to their wealth and position. But there were lesser lairds, possessing small pieces of ground by comparison with the great tracts that were granted to Melrose Abbey or the Douglases; and these were more local figures, living on their land, acquainted with their farms.

In the sixteenth century, various Tweeddale proprietors were of this latter kind. There were Langtons at Earlshaugh, the Porteous family of Hawkshaw, Tweedie of Glenbreck, Hunter of Polmood, Murray of Stanhope, and so on, down by Inglis and Lowis in the Manor valley to Burnet of Barns, Elphinstone of Henderston (later Haystoun), and the Stewarts of Traquair. They were in possession of their lands until after 1600, along with greater, more distant people such as the Flemings and the Hays of Yester. There came a period of consolidation in which the various farms of the Tweedsmuir district, which in the sixteenth century were dispersed among seven proprietors, were drawn together

under Yester, Murray of Stanhope and Porteous of Hawkshaw, and this was the arrangement, for instance, in 1665. Thereafter there was an increase in the number of lairds, but some selling under pressure of debt. Among the sales that of Hawkshaw, Fingland and Carterhope by Porteous to Anderson of Tushielaw about 1700 was one of the few instances of lands going to an owner who lived in a quite different district.

In much the same way, the Moffat Water farms were associated with local people. Most of the area was Johnstone country, but there were Ewarts and Moffats too, either as owners or tenants. In 1509 the lands of "Bodisbeck" were said to have been once held by "Nele Ewarte",¹ and a hundred years later the same family occupied the farm. Though it was a Patrick Douglas of Corhead who in 1539 received a licence to search for gold, the lands of Corhead were later owned by Johnstones and then the Hunters of Polmood. In 1569 there was reference to "the Johnnestonis of Selcouth and Pocornell", and to "the Moffettis of Powbudy".² "Pocornell" is now represented by the "Cornal" tower near Craigbeck, while "Powbudy" is now Polmoodie.

An equally distinct, though quite different, pattern of ownership prevailed in the other districts of the Border hills, which were comprised in the great estates of noblemen and of Melrose Abbey and the Crown. All these

1. R.P.S., Vol. I, p. 284, no. 1857.

2. R.P.C., Vol. II, pp. 49-50.

landowners expected military or other services from their tenants, and relied upon administrative officers or bailies to gather any financial contributions. Partly as a consequence of this situation and of the feudal relationships, there existed a company of gentlemen who held their lands from their overlord by a system of hereditary tenure in return for their loyalty and service. Sometimes the younger sons, nephews, cousins of the actual landowner, they were known as 'kindly tenants' and were, in effect, minor lairds who used their 'property' as a sort of title.¹

The kindly tenants, whose position until 1600 was a strong and significant one, generally lived on the farm, but often turned the work over to subtenants, people who had no security other than that of their value as servants of their master. The arrangement, which was not confined to the Border area, was aptly described in 1733:

"While our old Aristocracy subsisted, all our Lands were held by Ward-tenures; the Power of the Country was possest by the great Families, and the property by their Vassals, who served them in the War; the Husbandry was managed by a Kind of Servants, who delivered so much Grain, Butter, Cheese, Wooll, and a certain Number of Bullocks, Sheep, and Poultry, in Proportion to the Ground possest by them, and the Stocking put on it by their Masters; and these were Tenants at Will." 2

-
1. The full range of 'landowners', extending from the 'nobility' through the 'bonnet laird' to the 'kindly tenant', as described by Smout (A History of the Scottish People, pp. 135-144), was to be found in the Border hill region in the sixteenth century. Bonnet lairds were mostly on the northern fringes, with a few interspersed amid the extensive central area which was mostly possessed by the nobility and their kindly tenants.
 2. Lindsay, P., The Interest of Scotland Considered, etc. p. 38.

The resident laird, or, sometimes, the kindly tenant built the stone houses and towers that were so conspicuous a feature of the Border landscape in the sixteenth century and remain as evidence of the social standing of those who occupied them. With his fortified home behind him, the laird who wished to increase or replace his stock and other goods would organise and himself lead a raid over the Border or into a neighbouring district. The 'tenants-at-will' might compose the raiding band; and, since they were suppliers of produce, they were the people who suffered most immediately if their ground was raided.

The involvement of the kindly tenant in farming and raiding is discussed later. It is important here to clarify his position, and to comment on the fate that overtook him after 1603.

A kindly tenant generally received his land as a favour because he was a relation of the landowner, or because he was a man of at least local influence. On 7th September 1591, Sir Walter Scott of Branxholm, heritor of the lands, rentalled his "lovitt freind and servitor Gilbert ellot brother germane to Rot ellot of Reidheuche", and his heirs, "kyndlie rentalleris and tennents", in the 40/- land "callit comonsyde with the northcroft hillend and hoghill", of which Gilbert was already occupier. The new lease - and a lease at all was a rare thing - was granted for services done or to be done, and doubtless repeated a previous form of arrangement. A rent of £5 scots

was payable in equal halves at Whitsunday and Martinmas.¹ Such tenancies could even become ownerships, though often of a temporary kind under a 'wadset' arrangement. There was, for instance, the agreement of 19th December 1590, by which Alexander Lord Home wadset to Sir Robert Scott of Thirlestane "ye landis of eltries (i.e., Altrieve) and corscleuche"; Sir Robert was already "kyndly tennant and possessor", and "he and his predicessors has evir bene kyndlie tennentis yrto."² The effect of the 'kindly tenant' system was to confirm close links between the two main parties involved, links that were of great significance in the age when Scotland and England were often at war, and the relationship of loyalty and service was nearly as fundamental to the tenant system of later times as it was to the survival of the clan.

The changed political situation after the union of the crowns removed the necessity for military service on the Border and elsewhere, and the landowners who had provided armed forces from the occupants of their estates then

-
1. B.M. 1059. Whitsunday and Martinmas have remained the traditional times for payments of rent instalments and for 'flitting'. Most leases began at Whitsunday, and sheepfarmers preferred to pay their full rent at Martinmas, after the summer stock sales. Candlemas and Lammas rent collections were proposed and practised from time to time, but as William Ogilvie, Chamberlain to the Duke of Buccleuch, pointed out in 1841, "In a pastoral district such as this (i.e., Teviotdale), the Forest, Liddesdale and Eskdale, a Martinmas Collection in place of Lammas is of great advantage to a Tenant, for it is nearly the end of Augt. before his sales of Lambs and Wool are completed, and by Martinmas he has either received his Cash or bills for both" (B.M. 491).
 2. B.M. 888/11.



turned to the peaceful management of their lands and to the development of agriculture as a source of wealth. Vassals or kindly tenants found their position undermined, and they had to choose between becoming lairds of little property or rent-paying tenants of a new kind.¹ Those who tried the former course frequently lacked the financial resources to sustain their position and sooner or later joined the company of ordinary tenants who themselves had a struggle to survive. The transition period introduced the modern form of sheepfarming to the Border hills, and this is illustrated in the development of the Buccleuch estate.

Development of the Buccleuch Estate: 1500 - 1700.

Except in the Tweeddale and Moffat Water districts, and in the Yester lands of Rodono and Meggat, the Scotts of Buccleuch and to a lesser extent those of Harden, came to dominate the central Border scene. This was made possible because the area from Yarrow south to Liddesdale had been in the hands of distant owners, with very few resident lairds, and when the former lost their lands—Melrose Abbey at the Reformation, Bothwell by forfeiture,

1. In the north, for instance, James, Earl of Moray, excluded kindly tenants from his estate but they were members of Clan Chattan and tried to resist with arms (Grant, I.F.: The Social and Economic Development of Scotland before 1603, pp. 248-9). In the Border hills the only such resistance seems to have been that traditionally ascribed to the Beatisons or Beatties in Eskdale.

- the more fortunate and local Scotts picked up the various properties, some as rewards from the King. In any case, the Buccleuch family was already in a strong position as existing landowners, as hereditary baillies for Melrose Abbey, and latterly as holding the chamberlainship of Ettrick Forest. Between 1590 and 1625 the greater part of Liddesdale, Ewesdale, and Eskdalemuir, were all acquired by Buccleuch. Many farms in Ettrick came into the possession of Harden. (Fig. 8)

Liddesdale

In the mid sixteenth century the clans of Armstrong and Elliot occupied almost all Liddesdale. A few farms on the upper Liddel were held by Nixons, Crosers, Hendersons and one or two others, but these were mostly henchmen of their more numerous and powerful neighbours. The general situation in the valley was described by Thomas Musgrave at the end of 1583:

"The ryver is all Scottishe, untill it come to Kyrsooppfoote: planted with Ellotes untill it come neare Wheatoughe towre, then the Armestronges inhabit it on bothe sydes, untill it come to Kyrsooppfoote where it takes the dyvysion of the realmes from Kyrsoopp - then the Armestronges have the one syde, and the Englishe Fosters the other syde..." 1

Only two families, the Elliots of Redheugh and the Armstrongs of Whithaugh, actually owned their lands; the other leading figures, including sometimes a powerful one

1. B.P., Vol. I, p. 120, no. 197.

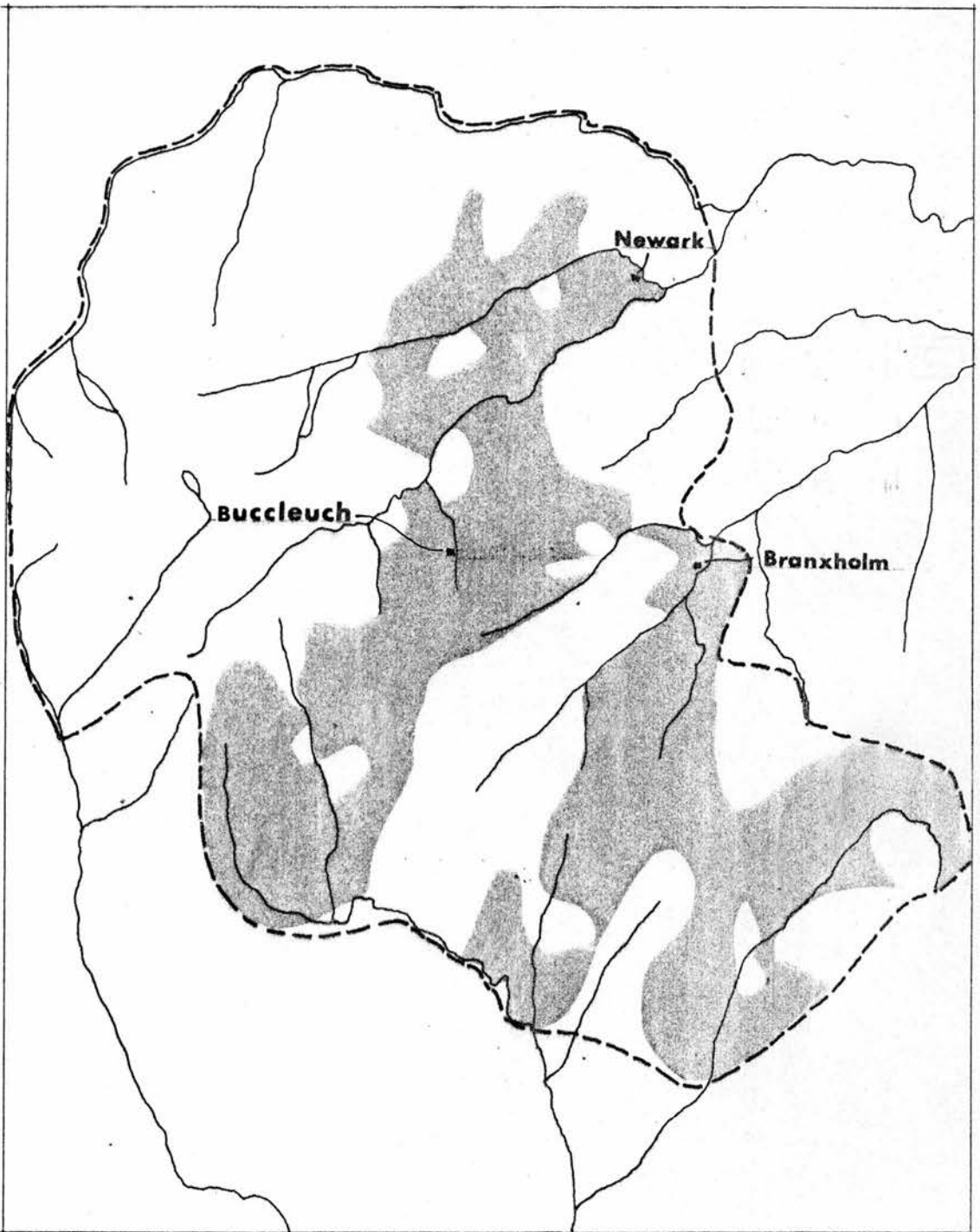


Fig 8

**THE BUCCLEUCH ESTATE IN THE
'BORDER HILLS AREA' c 1650**

Boundaries are approximate

such as Martin Elliot of Braidlie, had an hereditary attachment as kindly tenants. The majority, therefore, depended for their security on the good will of their clan chief or of whoever happened to be Lord of Liddesdale. When Bothwell was deprived of the Lordship in 1591, and when this was followed up by the succession of Buccleuch to the title three years later, the position of the Liddesdale clans became uncertain. At first Buccleuch needed their support, and the rescue of Will Armstrong of Kinmont from Carlisle in 1596 was only one, though the most spectacular, of several cooperative ventures. But after King James departed to England and the 'pacification' of the Borders was launched, there was no particular advantage for Buccleuch in being associated with men who were looked upon as criminals. While Buccleuch was abroad, the Earl of Dunbar hanged and evicted the Liddesdale reivers.

Those Elliots and Armstrongs who survived were able to become ordinary tenants of the Buccleuch estate if they were prepared to. The account books and rentals are irregular and incomplete before 1625,¹ since it took some time for the Borders to settle down and for estate administration to be properly organized, but it is evident that former kindly tenants mixed with those who had been

1. The three farms included in the first Liddesdale rental of 1611 (B.M., 943/7) were in remote hill country, and other farms of the same kind were occupied by Buccleuch's own flocks. It seems probable that the Armstrong and Elliot kindly tenants retained the lower grounds, where most of them lived, for several more years.

tenants- at-will, and all now found themselves in a position, familiar enough no doubt to the subtenants, of having a one-year lease of a farm, with no written tack and a substantial rent to pay. Armstrongs became tenants in their old farms round Mangerton, such as Pouterlampert, Tweedenhead, and the Roan, but Mangerton itself was granted to a Scott. The particular Armstrong family whose members were nicknamed 'Rackas' remained in the Tinnisburn area and at the head of Liddesdale, but their fortunes steadily declined. In the upper part of the valley the status of the Elliots changed in a similar way, and the change is well illustrated by events at the Shaws. Here the tenants in 1614 were "Will and hob ellotis of Schawis", the former 'kindly' occupants.¹ In 1625, and for several years after, "Wm of the Schawis" was rentalled for his old lands,² but in 1638 a debt was due by "Adame ellot callit of Schawis".³ The use of the word 'callit' indicates that a pretended hereditary right to the lands was no longer accepted.

By 1642 Liddesdale was firmly established as a division of the Buccleuch estate, and in that year the rental contained seven or eight Elliot tenants, six Armstrongs, two Crosers, and one Henderson, though some of them held more than one farm.⁴ Other names had appeared,

1. B.M., 943/7.

2. B.M., 943/1 and 6.

3. B.M., 943/2.

4. B.M., 395.

possibly those of subtenants who had lived on the farms in the sixteenth century. There were Wigholms, Wilsons, Telfers, Routledges, and others. In the midst of the valley, however, the lairds of Whithaugh and Redheugh clung on to their own estates, the latter with some difficulty.

In 1615 Robert Elliot of Redheugh possessed the lands of Redheugh, Larriston, Hartsgarth, Leahaug, Blakehope, Dinlabyre, and one or two small farms elsewhere. He was already engaged in a struggle with Buccleuch, who was probably eager to exclude an Elliot from the middle of his newly gained territory and to add the lands to his own. Robert fought to retain his property, and it was reported that he tried to assassinate Buccleuch, but, unfortunately for him, he was imprisoned for debt. His farms were added to the Buccleuch rental, in which they were included from 1625 to 1635, the rents of Larriston being allowed eventually to William Scott of Tinnis for his services as chamberlain. Then Elliot reappeared, and recovered his lands though not his fortune; about 1670 his grandson was forced to sell the greater part of his inheritance in order to clear further debts, and by 1720 the Elliots had lost all their old estate.

Ewesdale

Like Liddesdale, Ewesdale was shared by Elliots and Armstrongs, though the latter were dominant. In 1528 Ninian and David Armstrong received the lands of the

'over parish' by a charter of feu farm from George Lord Home.¹ At the same time Armstrongs possessed most of the farms in the lower part of the valley, and owned Arkleton, of which the Maxwells were superiors. The Elliots, on the other hand, were probably kindly tenants to the Armstrongs until about 1600. Representatives of the clan were entered as pledges in 1569, one of them being "Niniane Elliot callit the Portar of Ewis durris" from Glenvoren, who was a pledge on behalf of his own family and for the "hail Ellottis dwelland in Ewisdaill".² Later generations of these Elliots were tenants of the Buccleuch estate listed in the Eweshead rental of 1625. For almost another century they kept, and even strengthened, their position in the district, becoming lairds of Arkleton and Meikledale, but after 1700 they lost their place to the Aitchisons from Eskdalemuir.

A rather mysterious and scantily recorded branch of the Scotts was to be found in Ewesdale in the sixteenth century. Scott of Satchels, writing a hundred years later, refers to the 'Scots of Ewsdale' in a rather uncertain manner, for

"Ewsdale was not near the Forrest,
where brave Buckcleugh did dwell..."³

Briefly mentioned in 1494⁴ the family may have achieved a position of some local importance, and in 1573

-
1. H.M.C. Twelfth Report, Appendix VIII (Home) p. 134, no. 151.
 2. R.P.C., Vol. II, p. 43.
 3. Scot, op. cit., Part I, p. 28.
 4. Craig-Brown, T., The History of Selkirkshire, etc., Vol I, p. 111.

a "Mathie Scot callit Lang Mathie" was described as "broder to the larde of Ewisdaill".¹ Who this laird was is not clear. About 1600 some of the name held the Eweshead farms not occupied by Elliots.

Eskdalemuir

Westwards from Ewesdale, most of which Buccleuch acquired in 1620, the expanding Buccleuch estate comprised Stenniswater and Megdale, and, after 1612, Eskdalemuir. Before the early seventeenth century the leading clan in upper Eskdale was that of the 'Batesouns' or Beatties. In the pre-Reformation days they were probably kindly tenants, and by 1590 may have been in effect, if not legally, minor lairds. An obligation by several of them in 1598 in which they undertook not to molest Lord Fleming's tenants in Tweeddale, included the signatures of:

"Alie batesoun of blak esk, Rollie batisoun of Watcarrok his brother, Jon batesoun in dawentoun, William batesoun his eldest sone, Rollie batesoun of Cassok, Cirstie Batesoun his eldest sone, Thome batesoun of (?tynron) and andro batestoun of Raburn...". 2

According to Sir Walter Scott, the Scotts fought with the Beatties, driving them away if they were not prepared to settle as ordinary tenants under Buccleuch. Whether or not this was true, the Beatties certainly lost their local

1. A.L.H.T.S., Vol. XII, p. 377.

2. Fleming of Wigtown Papers, N.L.S., Acc. 3142, Box IV/B3.

importance as rapidly as the Armstrongs in Liddesdale, and their fate was shared by the Grahams. Other families flourished in their place; the farms were set in the seventeenth century to Littles, Bells, Blakes, Laidlaws and Aitchisons.

Teviotdale and the Forest

The heartland of the Buccleuch estate, as Satchels pointed out, lay further north. The tower at Buccleuch having been abandoned probably in the sixteenth century, Newark Castle in Yarrow and Branxholm near Hawick became the chief residences of Buccleuch when he was not in Edinburgh, London, or abroad. Around them were his Forest and Teviotdale lands, many of which had belonged to this most powerful of central Border families for well over a century. The earliest Buccleuch rental may be dated about 1600.¹ It lists "my Lord Buccleughes hail Leveing", and gives the hill farms by individual name except those in the district of Ringwoodfield.

The reason for this exception may have been, apart from convenient brevity, that Liddesdale Elliots were kindly tenants of several Ringwoodfield farms until the early seventeenth century. The transition from the 'kindly tenant' stage was probably in progress, since 'silver mail' expected from Ringwoodfield amounted to 4000 merks, which sum, when compared to the 1000 merks for "Frosterlie and Lenhope",

1. B.M., 393.

600 merks for "Commounsyd", and 60 merks for the "Vaillis", suggests that ordinary rent was being paid.

In the 1560s the Ringwoodfield farms of the Brugh, Stobitcote, Northhouse, Bowanhill, Sudenrig and Broadhaugh were in the hands of Scotts, though "Arche Elliot of Gorumbery" had a share of Bowanhill, while those of Priesthaugh, Cauldcleuch, Penangushope, and, in the same area, Skelfhill and Doeclench, were possessed by Elliots of the Redheugh family.¹ It was to this presence of the Elliots in Teviotdalehead that James VI referred in his instructions to Archibald, Earl of Angus, of 16th November 1586. The King required the Earl, among other things, to update a list of "the inhabitantis on the watters on the heid of Teviotdale, quhilkis ar under the commandment of the lard of Bukcleuch, the Shireff of Teviotdale, the lardis of Gledstanes, Howpaislop, Robene and Martine Elliottis, the lard of Quhittauch, and sum utheris..."²

As in Liddesdale, the kindly tenants in Ringwoodfield were replaced by ordinary, rentalled men in the early years

-
1. Romanes, C.S. (Ed.): Selections from the Records of the Regality of Melrose, S.H.S., 2nd Series, Vol. XIII, p. 143. A 'Decreet of Improbatione' dated 22nd January 1619 (N.L.S. Adv. MSS, ch. B. 21) is of special interest in relation to the disposition of the Melrose Abbey lands in the sixteenth century. There is reference (p. 12) to two instruments of sasine, of April 1552, by which Sir Walter Scott of Branxholm received the lands of Ringwoodfield, so that clearly the Buccleuch family held titles to this part of the estate long before the charter to them of the new barony of Branxholm in 1599.
 2. Fraser, Sir W., The Douglas Book, Vol. III, p. 287, no. 228.

of the seventeenth century. Immediately to the east lands that had belonged to Redheugh for many generations were sold by Robert Elliot in an attempt to clear his debts, some to Buccleuch, the others to an uncle, Gavin Elliot of the Brugh. The clash noted between Elliot of Redheugh and Buccleuch over Liddesdale lands involved this uncle, and the changes at the Brugh are worth recording.

At the Reformation, the Brugh, a Ringwoodfield farm, was held by Robert Scott of Allanhaugh the kindly tenant, and the first record of Elliots there seems to be that of 5th November 1597, when Gavin Elliot of the Brugh witnessed a deed.¹ About 1620 Gavin Elliot tried to help his nephew in the struggle with Buccleuch, and four years later was in prison for debt. He was dead by September 1631, leaving a son, Gilbert, who apparently farmed at the Brugh from about 1624 till 1631, when the lands were added to the Buccleuch rental.² From this time on the Elliots of the Brugh had little to do with their old farm, though they continued to possess the two Dodburns nearby and were tenants in the Brugh for a short time around 1660. Their departure from the Brugh was possibly part of a more general eviction of remaining kindly tenants. In a letter of March 1632, Buccleuch wrote to his chamberlain, William Scott of Tinnis:

1. Elliott, The Dowager Lady, and Sir Arthur, The Elliots, p. 195.

2. B.M., 943/1 and 6.

"ze sal cause warne my tenants of Selkirk from the lands I have ther, and the guid wyfe of Broughe from the Lands of Broughe ze sal also wreit to Johne of Synton to warne Lancelot armestrang of Whithauches from al the Lands he possesseth in Lidisdail and Mr. Gilbert aillet (i.e., Elliot) from al he possesseth ther as also hoby aillet of dinnibaith from his possessions do this with diligence." 1

Certainly the majority of the old Elliot families, in Teviotdale, as in Liddesdale, suffered loss of land at this time, and not long after Satchels wrote:

"For the Elliots brave and worthy men,
Have been as much oppress'd as any Name I ken,
For in my own time I have seen so much odds,
No Elliot enjoy'd any Heretage, but Dunlibire, Fanash
and Stobs". 2

But, as the same author noted, new branches of the clan sprang up instead:

"Cobshaw, Brugh, Prickinhaugh, and Gorinberries gone,
Yet there's more Elliots by other Stiles that supplies
their room..." 3

Not surprisingly some of the Teviotdale Elliots became tenants of Buccleuch farms; for instance, in 1625 "Gilbert ellot in stobis" and "hob ellot in langsyd" had shares of Priesthaugh.⁴ In the southwestern part of the district, to which the Buccleuch estate did not extend, Elliots continued to possess Falnash, Caerlanrig, and

1. S.M.P., 131/1.

2. Scot, op. cit., Part II, p. 41.

3. Ibid., p. 42.

4. B.M., 943/1.

more remote places like Merryllaw, until about 1700 when Scotts and others began to take over.

Further north, in Borthwick Water, Ale Water, Ettrick and Yarrow, Scotts were easily the most numerous and powerful landowning group in the early seventeenth century, and the development of the Buccleuch estate in these areas was bound up closely with the presence of the various families within the clan. The leading one was of course that of Buccleuch, but the Scotts of Harden, Thirlestane, Whitslaid and Tushielaw all possessed several farms and exercised considerable influence, especially in the valleys of Ettrick and Yarrow.¹

The leasing of Ettrick Forest in feu farm in 1510² produced what were in effect a great number of new landowners, some of whom had been in the position of kindly tenants to the Crown. As a result of the leases twelve families came to possess the Forest steads. The number of representatives from each in 1510 was as follows:

-
1. Certain Buccleuch farms were granted to Margaret Douglas, widow of Sir Walter Scott of Branxholm, who died in 1574, and subsequently wife of the Earl of Bothwell. Designed to provide her with an income for the rest of her life, this temporary estate included the lands of Commonsides, Eildrig, Milsington, Whithope with the mill (Borthwick Water), Annelshope, and Peel (Tweed). Among her tenants were Grieves at Eildrig, Commonsides and Dryden, one of whom may have been the 'grieve' who, according to tradition, served Margaret at Milsington, where she lived, and was the earliest known member of the Branxholm Park family (see Chapter 3).
 2. E.R., Vol. XIII, pp. 649-653.

Hepburn, Liddale	1 each
Stewart, Home, Turnbull, Hoppringill, Elphingstone	2 each
Creichtoun, Ker	4 each
Cranstoun	5
Scott	6
Murray	10.

The Murrays held twelve steads, sharing four more, while the Scotts had eleven, and Lord Home and his brother, being powerful men, also had eleven. By 1541 the Scott representatives had increased to fifteen, whereas the Creichtouns and Homes numbered one each. Among the Scott lairds were now those of Howpasley, Thirlestane, Tushielaw and Dryhope, as well as more immediate relations of Buccleuch. The name of Dalgleish, which was to become so well known in the Forest district over the next hundred years and more, had appeared in Deuchar. The same 1541 rental also included certain ordinary tenants, with names that were typical of the Forest for as long as the Dalgleishes - Bryden, Anderson, Laidlaw, Melrose and Blackstock.¹

Using their influence, the Scotts of Buccleuch furthered the cause of their clan by entering members of it to the various lands when opportunity arose. Purchases were also made, often under a 'wadset' or reversion arrangement, which could mean that properties changed owners with extraordinary frequency, but often they ended in the possession of Buccleuch. Thus by 1628, Buccleuch and

1. E. R., Vol. XVII, pp. 705-709.

fifteen other Scotts owned forty-eight out of sixty-seven farms within the Forest area, there being twenty-seven lairds in all.

The appearance of Scotts as landowners or, at first, kindly tenants was a noteworthy feature of Buccleuch's policy. The Scotts of Howpasley were, with those of Sinton, among the oldest, being established in their lands about the middle of the fifteenth century. Adam Scott possessed Tushielaw in 1510, and the Scotts of Thirlestane may have existed by then. At the end of the sixteenth century offshoots of these families, as well as of Buccleuch's, had been provided with hereditary tenancies or small estates, and Philip Scott of Dryhope, who had forfeited his lands for supporting Bothwell, received them back from Buccleuch to whom they had been granted. A description of all the Scott families is impossible here, but in Appendix II an attempt has been made to list the more relevant ones, and to indicate their origins, their possessions, and the period during which each flourished.

Those Scotts who were kindly tenants, coming into Satchels' category of "pensioners", suffered a fate less severe than that of the Elliots. An example was Scott of Northhouse; the last Scott 'called' of Northhouse was buried in 1633,¹ and for many years before that his lands had been used as pasture for one of the Earl of Buccleuch's own sheep flocks. Coinciding with the departure of these men

1. B.M., 936/6, p. 117.

came the end of the Howpasley and old Thirlestane families, the former through imprisonment, the latter through debt. Others, more fortunate or successful, survived as estate owners and were favoured as tenants in the Buccleuch farms, while some were given official positions as chamberlains or 'baillies'. No sooner had Eskdalemuir been acquired than Buccleuch introduced, in the role of 'tacksmen', the Scotts of Gilmanscleuch, Tushielaw, Oakwood, Harden, Deuchar, Sinton, Bowhill, and Whitslaid; and in 1642 Patrick Scott of Thirlestane and Walter Scott of Goldielands were tenants of about twenty Liddesdale farms.¹ As with the Elliots, new Scott families appeared to replace those that had dwindled away. The first Earl of Buccleuch granted Gorrenberry and Braidlie to an illegitimate son; Walter Scott, tenant in Broadhaugh and chamberlain for Teviotdalehead around 1630, became owner of Arkleton for a decade, his son Robert bought Harwood on Teviot, and Robert's son, Gideon, acquired Falnash.

After its initial growth around 1600, the Buccleuch estate extended hardly at all over the next hundred years. Instead it went through a period of consolidation, in which the minor Scott landowners played an integral part as administrators, tacksmen and tenants, latterly in the absence of their 'clan chief' who lived, remote from Border affairs, in London. It was also a period of fluctuating fortunes, of unrest and disputing, so that it seemed as if the old

1. B.M., 395.

spirit of Border violence had not completely died away. How the estate fared during the seventeenth century is outlined below in the sections dealing with chamberlains and tenants.

Proprietors in Trouble

Until the seventeenth century the landowners of the Borders were involved in the wars, raiding, and landgrabbing which characterised life before the union of the crowns. The development of estates and of farming was slowed down almost to nothing by the violence of those earlier times; but, while it may have resulted in the death of a laird or the loss of such wealth as he could accumulate, that violence had its most demoralising effect upon the struggling sub-tenants who had to suffer perhaps total destruction of their goods more than once. The background of day-to-day lawlessness has therefore been described below as part of the farmer's life, though of course his superior felt the repercussions of a raid or a burning soon enough.

Before discussing the place of estate administrators and tenants in the transition period, it is necessary to mention the difficulties faced by proprietors in the course of the seventeenth century, as they sought to establish their own position through the growth of a system of management and law.

It was a restless time. So abundant were wadsets and assignations of debts, that it is impossible to trace the

sequence of ownership through which many estates passed. Such changes marked an age in which men were discovering what they could or could not do with land, and a lack of capital was responsible for much of the instability.

Evidently there were periods when the tenants can have had little idea as to who had the right to their rents. It seems that in general the old hereditary tenants were not sufficiently wealthy to sustain the ups and downs of ownership, and that the minor lairds of, say 1660, were not able to cope with the demands made upon their scant resources when bad winters or passing troops ruined their tenants. There was the continuing problem of collecting in rents, of setting just levels amid uncertain seasons and markets, and of fixing proper allowances for building or other improvement. Political, economic and climatic disturbances made the seventeenth century a testing time for the proprietors, and, therefore, in the Border hills, especially for the Scotts.

Everyone had his problems. Cromwell, fining landowners for supporting the Royal party in the Civil War, demanded of Marie, Countess of Buccleuch, as heir to her deceased father, Francis, Earl of Buccleuch, the sum of £15,000, which was upon her petition reduced by the Commissioners in Scotland to £6,000. In 1653 the first Earl of Traquair, reduced to near poverty as a result of his royalist activities, was forced to wadset the greater part of his estate, including the Forest farms of Dryhope and Kirkstead acquired in 1635 from Scott of Dryhope, to

the Earl of Southesk, and the lands were not recovered until the 1690s. The dissension that arose between the parties was marked by an incident over the tenancy of Kirkstead which resulted in the third Earl of Traquair's imprisonment. The winter of 1673-4 was probably an important factor in the eventual bankruptcy of Scott of Tushielaw, and the main cause in many other similar cases. The 'Covenanting' years ruined James Scott of Johnstone in Eskdalemuir, who petitioned the Duchess of Buccleuch in 1689:

"by reason of the great troubles and rigid courses lately taken he was both made prisoner and thereafter necessitat to withdraw himself from his interest and the laird of Claverhouse having taken away his stock from off his land for his alledged disobedience to the government whereby his lands... were laid wast for three years." 1

It is no surprise that minor lairds were often forced to sell out, frequently to their wealthier and greater neighbours who had always been more capable of withstanding the blows. And the latter were not above compelling surrender of land. Whether or not he was entirely accurate, James Grieve, tenant in Branxholm Park, wrote rather bitterly of such behaviour in 1779:

"Property was acquired in a very unfair manner about 250 years ago - one way very common about that time was, for a man who had some Intrest at Court, to get some of his neighbour to enter into some quarrel or commit something by which he forfeit his lands, & then he got a gift of his Escheat - Another way was by converting a Redeemable Wadset right into a perpetual right, by charging the Reverser to redeem at a time when the wadsetter knew he was unable & upon his refusal adjudging his lands or persecuting

1. B.M., 943/21.

a poor divel so that he was blyth to resign his property for peaces sake. Much of the Buccleugh Estate was acquired in that manner..." 1

A landowner might also 'buy up' debts, and then require settlements when he knew this was impossible, thereby ensuring the adjudication of the debtor's property to himself. Sir Gilbert Elliot of Minto gained Shielswood in this way about 1712.

The picture of seventeenth century Border lairds has been much distorted by Sir Walter Scott, in his lengthy letter to Lord Dalkeith in 1806.² Drawing upon Satchels, whose work was published in 1688, he declared: "About this time, as appears from the writing of the same elegant poet the sheep were universally introduced." In this Scott was quite wrong. Had he read Satchels with attention he would have seen that the Scotts and Elliots and others were sheepfarmers by upbringing and by the example of their forebears. But having drawn this incorrect conclusion Scott related the coming of sheep to "The downfall of the small proprietors." Again he misread Satchels. In the poem, wrote Scott, there were named a hundred 'landed' Scotts "living on the Borders in 1688". The number mentioned was in fact between thirty and thirty-five, some of whom did not own hill land. Since sheep had long been present, whatever 'downfall' occurred must have been due to economic difficulties already mentioned, and in any case, since there

1. G.P., Journal, p. 10.

2. See Preface, p. i, n. 1.

was only a quarter of the number of lairds Scott imagined, the 'downfall' could only have been on a correspondingly smaller scale.

Failures of families there certainly were, as has been described.¹ But others appeared to replace them; and far from being ruined or ousted by the introduction of sheep, the Border lairds of the seventeenth century made their living out of them.

Estate Managers

In the sixteenth century, with society still constructed on the basis of mutual service and sub-tenancy, landowners had little need of administrative officers unless, as in the case of the Crown, there were many rents to collect. Reliance must have been placed instead on the kindly tenants and their loyalty. Subsequently, with the introduction of a rent-paying tenantry, a large estate such as the Buccleuch

1. Thomas Bewick, writing of seventeenth century Northumberland commented on the "retainers of the chieftains of old" as being much the same on both sides of the Border in their raiding and their habit of nicknaming. There were also "the Lairds, who lived upon their own lands." These must have been equivalent to the minor Scottish lairds of whom Satchels wrote. In Bewick's opinion, numbers "of these men were grossly ignorant, and in exact proportion to that ignorance they were sure to be offensively proud. This led them to attempt appearing above their station, which hastened them on to their ruin; but, indeed, this disposition and this kind of conduct invariably leads to such results". There were many of these lairds on Tyneside, who "by their misdirected pride and folly, were driven into towns, to slide away into nothingness, and to sink into oblivion while their 'ha' houses', that ought to have remained in their families from generation to generation, have mouldered away." (Bewick, Thomas; Memoir, pp. 45- 7).

was organised in divisions under the control and management of chamberlains, often called 'baillies' in the earlier days, whose task was an unenviable one since it meant acting as go-betweens and arranging compromises that might satisfy neither side. Nevertheless, as an intermediary, the chamberlain was capable of greatly influencing affairs, even to the point of deceiving both parties that he was dealing with and increasing his own prosperity at their expense. Given responsibility and independence, he could attain a social status of some importance, and, with an estate of his own, become of greater local significance than the man he served.

Where the place below the landowner came to be occupied by commissioners, the chamberlain's social position was not far different from that of the farmer. On the Border estates a chamberlain might also be a tenant, while members of his family and those of a farmer's might intermarry or become close friends, and it could be of advantage to both sides if this happened.

The baillies of Melrose Abbey and the cursors of the Ettrick Forest were fifteenth century examples of the chamberlain system. They had to ensure that the farms and steads were properly tenanted, that rents were duly collected, and that laws and customary regulations were strictly observed. For these and other duties they received the income from certain farms as their fee.

Being in a position of power locally, they could enter themselves and their friends on the rental in farms of their choice. It was in this way that the Scotts of Buccleuch had built up their position in Teviotdale and the Forest.

With the Borders more or less peaceful, the effectiveness with which estate administration was carried on increased considerably, although there were instances early in the seventeenth century that showed there was a long way to go. Robert Elliot of Unthank, for example, was a Buccleuch factor, but he could neither read nor write and "his accounts ran into confusion which seems not strange"; it is said that Unthank was added to the Buccleuch estate as a consequence of Robert's failure.¹

About 1600 Gideon Murray of Glenpot acted as manager of Buccleuch's lands in the Forest during the latter's absence abroad. But soon the Scotts took over. In 1609 the chamberlain was John Scott in Newark, whose son Walter became tenant at Broadhaugh and chamberlain for the Teviotdalehead district. Men of this kind were chosen to run the Buccleuch estate as it settled into shape, and in 1632 the arrangement of officers was:

Liddesdale:	John Scott of Headshaw
Eskdale:	John Scott in Castlehill
Teviotdalehead:	Walter Scott in Broadhaugh
Canonbie:	Robert Pringle of Stichel
The Forest:	William Scott of Tinnis

1. Beattie, Thomas, Journal, p. 15.

The preference for men of the clan name continued until after 1700.

Until the mid seventeenth century the chamberlain was responsible for the gathering of the teinds, then paid in kind. This meant arranging a team of 'tellers', who travelled the district and calculated the quantities to be paid, as well as seeing to the actual collection of the produce. These teams were mostly composed of trusted local tenants. By about 1650 many landowners held the right to the teinds of their own lands and therefore to save expenses, converted the payments to a money equivalent added to the rent, so that a tenant took his farm 'stock and teind'.

Another task, and often a hard one, was that of finding tenants, and so keeping up the rents to the level hoped for by the proprietor. In the spring of 1642 the Earl of Buccleuch wrote to William Scott: "Have a cair of Setting my Land... that when you Sett stock and tind together my rentall may not bee diminished and that some of my tenants be considerat and uther some no." ¹ Again, in August 1646, Buccleuch urged Scott: "You sall mak all the hast you can to gett the money that is in the tenants hands for my affairs now requuyres it and send to Patrick Scott." ²

1. S.M.P., 131/1.

2. S.M.P., 17.

Frequently the actual business of 'landsetting' was performed by the chamberlains, but on many occasions the landlord supervised or even took part. Later on, around 1700 and for some time after, the commissioners performed this awkward duty. When dealing with the Forest, the Buccleuch landsetters usually met at Newark, and at Branxholm or Hawick for the Teviotdalehead and Eskdalemuir districts. By the latter half of the seventeenth century it was an event of conviviality and consequently expensive for the estate.

When Francis, Earl of Buccleuch, died in 1651, his four year old daughter, Marie, succeeded him. She was in the care of tutors, who included Sir John Scott of Scotstarvet, and local Border figures such as Sir William Scott of Harden and his son, and William Elliot of Stobs with his son Sir Gilbert. The estate was managed by the chamberlains among whom were Robert Scott of Harwood, and his son in law, John Scott, a brother to Sir William of Harden. During the next few years the tutors and chamberlains sought to enhance their own individual positions.¹ Sir John Scott of Scotstarvet objected to several "Things done in the Tutorie" on 23rd April 1658. He complained against "the retaining of Gorranberrie still to be ane Chamberlaine", and the "placinge of ther own brother John Scott Chamberlaine

1. The description of events that follow is taken from the full account in T.H.A.S. (1970), pp. 38-53: The episode illustrates the powerful influence exerted by the chamberlains in managing the Border estate.

of the Forrest and setting him doune in the Newarke house and maynes for his fie he having So little experience and the rent therof exceeds Twentie thousand pounds by yeare". He also stated that "all the Chamberlaines keeps over a years rent in ther hands and So they are all made up with my Ladyes Estate." The reason for his complaints was not an unselfish one; it was because the other tutors had tried to "ingrosse her Ladiship's estate to themselves and friends without me."

Matters came to a head when Marie was secretly married to Sir William Scott of Harden's grandson, Walter Scott, who was thereupon made Earl of Tarras. A principal opponent of this match was the Earl of Tweeddale, "one of the Overseers nominated by Francis... to his Children & their Tutors", and ranged against him were the Scotts of Harden, Robert Scott of Harwood, and, apparently, Sir Gilbert Elliot of Stobs who was cousin to Gideon Scott, father of the Earl of Tarras. While the dispute was going on, Marie died, in March 1661. The Harden family stood to gain much, for it must have seemed that the Buccleuch fortune would pass to the Earl of Tarras. But Marie's younger sister, Anna, inherited the estate and two years later, aged 12, married James, Duke of Monmouth. The doubtful period between 1661 and 1663 saw a new difference arising, between those who supported Tarras and those who favoured Anna. Robert Scott of Harwood, who apparently tried to promote the Tarras cause by evicting certain tenants, introducing

others, and ensuring rent income was suitably directed, was put from his charge as chamberlain in 1661, only to reappear as curator named in Anna's marriage contract. As a curator he was commissioned to perform the landsetting for 1663, and his behaviour provoked Sir Gilbert Elliot to an attack on one with whom he must previously have sympathised.

Stobs made out, in various accusations, that Harwood had taken full advantage of his return to a powerful position in 1663. At the landsetting, Stobs claimed, Harwood, having procured a special letter from Anna, had leased many of the best farms himself at a low rent, and behaved so arrogantly that if the other two commissioners, including Stobs himself, had not given in to him there would have been no landsetting at all.

Only Stobs and Harwood were acquainted with Border affairs, the third man, Scott of Bavelaw, being an outsider. In his answers, however, Harwood pointed out to Stobs that only Bavelaw and Harwood himself had been at the landsetting, and that it was Stobs who had behaved arrogantly, for

"in the very entrie to the setting of the landis, He (Stobs) threathened that unles bavi law and Harwode wold concurre with him to procure the settleing of his brother William to be baillie and chamberlane of Liddisdaiill he wold thane presentlie desert them and the landsetting..."

It was in fact a competition in self-interest. Both men derived some benefit from the affair, and William

Elliot was appointed chamberlain for Liddesdale and the Debatable Land. The following year it was questioned whether such men should be allowed "to insult over & abuse & thrust out of there possessiones my ladies true friends old tenents & servants & inhaunse in there own..." It would be better to replace them. But even these comments came from one who would gain if Harwood and Stobs were excluded.

The chamberlains from 1670 till the end of the century were nearly all Scotts. They had bad seasons to contend with, years such as 1674, 1681 and 1683, which ruined many of the rent payers. In the circumstances they were found to be irresponsibly self-seeking, much as their predecessors had been. In an anonymous 'memorandum' of 1675¹ the "severl wrongs" done against Buccleuch and his tenants by James Scott of Bowhill and others in Liddesdale were enumerated. The chief complaint was that Bowhill and his friends had taken advantage of the devastation resulting from the 1673-74 winter by appropriating stock on many farms, placing 'poinders' in charge, and enjoying the profits. In others they had placed tenants who paid sums of rent to the chamberlain that were not recorded; a note read- "Ane hail yeirs rent for ane roume resaved & not complied for bot given up as stolen away by the tenent."

Ten years later, when the Duke of Buccleuch and Monmouth was executed and the estate was left to his widow, the administrative situation was reviewed:

1. S.A.P., 1/4/1.

"Those who have been employed by her, cannot now be made use of because it was by their Slackness in lifting of the rents, that the Tennts. have run so much in Arreare, and they having for their own ends promised to the Tenents to get £5000 sterl. rebated, have thereby obstructed the paymt. of these arreares, and wronged the affair; some of themselves being also in arreare, and all of them very insufficient and unfitt for their Employments, and the principall receiver is broke and absconded." 1

The chamberlains, who were allowed one or two farms for their 'service', did not benefit so much from the mere fact of holding office, as from the profit made out of renting farms and from seizing opportunities when they came. When bad times made tenants difficult to find and brought therefore a fall in rents, then the chamberlains, as well as other men of standing such as minor lairds, would offer to 'farm' the lands; that is, they would take long leases, with rents fixed at a low level, and guarantee the landlord a regular return rather than a fitful, if occasionally higher, one, but they would then sublet and so make a profit. They were tacksmen of a kind, resembling those of the Highlands, but their presence on the rental was largely a matter of convenience and opportunism and not dependent on any close relationship with the landowner.

About 1690 Sir John Scott of Ancrum, Sir Patrick Murray, and a few others offered to 'farm' the whole Buccleuch estate in the Borders and at Dalkeith for a period of nine or eleven years.² Sir John Scott pointed out the advantages of such an arrangement over the ordinary leasing to tenants.

1. Yester, Papers, N.L.S., MS. 14544.

2. B.M., 338; also S.A.P. 1/4/1.

The landowner could do without chamberlains and save the salaries; and "Wee are better surtise of far greter credit & not incouraged to trust to deductions & abatments", as the tenants were. Moreover, tacksmen had more money to tide over bad times, and knew better how to use it. The suggestion came to nothing, but a list of 'farmers' with nine years tacks on the Buccleuch estate in 1692 included the chamberlains:

John Scott of Woll	William Scott of Raeburn
John Scott of Gilmanscleuch	Francis Scott of Grassyards
John Scott of Renaldburn	Walter Elliot of Arkleton
Gideon Scott of Falnash	John Elliot of Thorlieshope
William Scott "cherurgion Apothecary" in Hawick	
John Laing, John Elliot of Peel, Duncan MacArthur ¹	

The majority of the estate was still set to ordinary tenants, but these men held many farms and in the absence of the Duchess of Buccleuch in London were able to abuse their position freely, until about 1713, when she determined to take things in hand.

2. Tenants in an age of Unrest

In Raiding Times

The seventeenth century could scarcely be called a century of peace, but, at least in the Border hill country, it was calm compared to the previous hundred years. Perhaps the records prior to 1600 do not serve the ordinary people

1. B.M., 338.

well, making them appear to be little more than the victims or perpetrators of endless raids and wars, living as a consequence from hand to mouth in the midst of a continuously hazardous environment. One has the impression that they were poor, with little stock and not much corn, relying sometimes on what they could steal rather than on the produce of their holdings, and gathering in 'gangs' around more powerful figures for their mutual benefit. There is some measure of truth in this picture, and it is necessary when considering the earlier period to associate unrest and plunder with the farming life.

Of course the Borderers were accustomed to violence. For the first Angles and their predecessors it must have been part of ordinary survival, while in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the wars with England brought destruction on a large scale into the wildest regions of the hills. There was nothing new in the complaint made by James of Douglas to the English king about 1400: "yhour men of Inglande has rydyne in Scotlande wyth gret company like in fere of were and has heryde lawadyrdalle Tewydalle, and a part of Etryke forest." ¹ Fifty years later a Douglas wasted the King of Scotland's lands "and wpoun the wther syde the King and his assistaris... to break thair enemeis prydfull arrogance waistit and hierieit Annerdail, Aitrick forest, with^t. all wther landis

1. National Manuscripts of Scotland, Vol. II, no. 48.

belongand to the wther faction." ¹ Such widespread devastation continued in the sixteenth century. In 1514 Lord Dacre boasted of destruction wrought in Liddesdale, Ewesdale, Ale Water, "from Borthwicke mouthe to Craikecrosse", and "from Branxhelme up into Ewse doores";² ten years later he wrote to Wolsey: "Litill or nothing is left upon the frontiers of Scotland, without it be parte of ald howses, whereof the thak and coverings are taken away, by reason whereof they cannot be brint."³ The 'exploits' of the English armies in 1544 and 1545 were the last of the invasions, though not the end of the troubles on the Border.

The various clans could and did retaliate. Kindly tenants, bringing with them so many of their subtenants, gathered under their clan chiefs. The Elliots of Redheugh, or of the 'gang' of Gorrenberry, together with Crosers, Nixons, and of course the Armstrongs, were bringing sheep and cattle into Liddesdale at the beginning of the sixteenth century,⁴ and the practice had been long established. Some of the 'gentlemen' of the Border country were just as unruly, and could be an embarrassment to the Scottish Crown; James V hanged Johnnie Armstrong, Cockburn of Henderland,

-
1. MacKay, Aeneas J.G. (Ed.): Historie and Cronicles of Scotland by Robert Lindsay of Pitscottie, Vol. I, p. 102.
 2. Wilson, James: Hawick and its Old Memories, pp. 4-5.
 3. Morton, James: The Monastic Annals of Teviotdale, p. 31.
 4. A.L.C.P.A., p. 124.

and Adam Scott of Tushielaw, and he put Buccleuch, among others, in Edinburgh Castle - "He wairdit thame because he knew weil they war the breakeris of peace and nothing was done be the comons bot be thame and thair avyce and command..."¹ The 'commons' were involved inevitably in feuds. During the sixteenth century there developed relentless quarrels between Elliots and Scotts, Scotts and Kers, Elliots and Pringles, sometimes for quite trivial reasons. On 25th June 1557 certain Scotts were charged for being among the two hundred men who on 16th April broke into the church of "St. Mary of the Lowis" in their search for Sir Peter Cranstoune, their intention being "for his slaughter upon ancient feud and forethought felony."² And in 1570 the Elliots and "Hoppringillis" would have committed great slaughter upon each other in Edinburgh, had it not been for the townspeople.³

The further away from the Border one lived in those times, the greater likelihood there was of being left in peace. In a tract of 1590 it was observed that Liddesdale was "the most offensive country", with Annandale a close rival, "for the Armestrongs, both of Annerdale and Lyddesdale, be every ryding". On the other hand, Teviotdale "doth never offend" the West Border at least, while those of Ewesdale were "a civill people and never ryde in

1. MacKay, (Ed.): op. cit., Vol. I, p. 353.

2. Pitcairn, Robert: Criminal Trials in Scotland, Vol. I, Part i, p. 400.

3. A Diurnal of Remarkable Occurrents, etc., p. 195.

England".¹ Though not entirely true, this report was just in its opinion of Liddesdale, where raiding became a custom for all the leading families and consequently for their 'men'. Some particularly offensive troublemakers appeared, none more active than William Elliot of Larriston, who after his "great open raid... into Tynedale" in 1593 was described as "a capital offender at all times".² Such men, leading parties of anything up to a thousand, acquired an almost glamorous reputation as adventurers, horsemen, and unofficial drovers. Leslie spoke of their skill in finding secret routes through the wastes, of their affection for songs telling "of the actes of thair foirbearis", and of their eloquent evasiveness when, as rarely happened, they were tracked down by the pursuit with their "sluth-houndes".³

The kindly tenants took a leading part in the raiding, and it is not surprising, in the circumstances, to find them using force to extend their lands. Moreover they could rely on the backing of the clan. In 1578 Walter Scott of Tushielaw tried to deprive a Murray of a 'room' or farm in Yarrow; he and his henchmen rode to the "steding and landis of Skaddoneis", belonging to Patrick Murray of Falahill, "and thair set down in his wrangus maner his subtennentis thair-in, plenuschit the samin with his guidis, and intendis be

1. B.P., Vol. I, pp. 394-5, no. 743.

2. C.S.P., Vol. XI, p. 212, no. 164.

3. Cody, E.G. and Marison W. (Eds.): op. cit., pp. 102-3.

plane force and reif to debar and disposses the said Patrik thairfra." It might not have proved easy to remove him if he had stayed any length of time, "the said Walter being a clannit man on the Bordour, quhais possessioun ane yeir will be comptit a kyndnes gif it be sufferit".¹ Clearly a man could, if he had sufficiently powerful 'friends' secure a 'kyndnes', that is, become a kindly tenant by force and stubborn resistance. Once established he was not easy to remove so long as he had the support of the clan.

Kindly tenants, particularly those who had a small estate of their own, therefore, did not always live on lands they held by 'kindness' but placed subtenants there to farm for them, and these they had to defend on occasions against men like Walter Scott of Tushielaw. On 30th July 1583 Robert Elliot in Dodrig complained that although the deceased Archibald Elliot of Dodrig, his father, and he "hes peceablie bruikit and josit thrie quarteris of the landis of Dodrig, pertening to the chaplanrie of the parochie kirk of Caveris, as kyndlie tennentis thairof, being kirk-land, be the space of 36 yeiris bipast and mair, having maid chargis and expenssis in bigging of duelling houssis thairin", yet Robert Elliot of Redheugh "be plaine force" had come at the end of May and at "the said complineris kyndlie steiding" had cruelly struck his servants "and put thame fra the occupying and laubouring thairof." The result

1. R.P.C., Vol. III, p. 87.

of this interference was that Redheugh kept out the servants by threat and added the ground to the farms he held around it.¹

The subtenants were at the mercy of marauders. Sometimes being supporters of a kindly tenant or laird who committed an offence, they were subject to sudden and brutal eviction. A further cause of misery to them was the practice of exacting blackmail; this meant that in return for certain sums of money paid to such a figure as Elliot of Redheugh, the subtenants would be promised by him protection from raiders and other disturbances. According to the ballad, Jamie Telfer in Dodhead could expect help from Martin Elliot in recovering his stolen property because he had paid blackmail to Martin.

In 1589 Walter Scott of Tushielaw was one of many Scotts who signed a Bond of Clanship, in which they undertook not to "presume nor take upon hand ane other friend's kindlie roume or roumes, or steiding pertaining to us or anie ane of us as kindlie there, ovr another freind's head..."² Agreements of this sort were necessary to preserve order at a time when a tenant could not normally produce any document to prove his right to his lands. Towards the end of the sixteenth century a few kindly tenants had written tacks and paid a nominal rent, but it was said later that rents were almost unknown until after 1603:

1. R.P.C., Vol. III, p. 385.

2. Craig-Brown, T.: op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 166-7.

"As for the humors of the people, they were both strong and warlike, as being inured to War and daily Incursions: and the most part of the Heritours of the Countrey gave out all their Lands to their Tenants for military attendance upon Rentals and reserved only some few manses for their own sustenance, which were laboured by their Tenants besides their service. They payed an entry, a Herauld and a smal rental duty: for there were no Rents raised here that were Considerable till King James went into England, yea along all the Border." 1

Of the conditions experienced by the subtenants among the Border hills little is recorded until the seventeenth century. In addition to the limitations imposed by poverty and by service, the subtenants of the Forest steads were originally bound by the restrictions of the Forest laws. In 1486, the steads were "sett after the auld use and consuetud of the samyn for the termes of fife yeris, or within as salbe thocht expedient".² It was of importance that the tenants should keep the Forest "forrestlike", for the protection of wood and deer, and they had thus to ensure "that thar be na fyris upon ane steid bot thre allanerlie, the quhilkis salbe twa bowis and i sper to the kingis ost efter the auld consuetude", and that the growing timber be unharmed.³ It was further required "that thar be na steid of the forrest set to ony maner of persone bot gif he remane thairupon himself or ellis ordane ane sufficient tenant and nychtbour thairto that beis abill to keip the said steid

1. M.G.C., Vol. III, p. 175.

2. E.R., Vol. IX, p. 614.

3. E.R., Vol. XI, pp. 394-5.

nychtbourlike".¹ Four baillie courts would settle complaints and ensure that each stead was properly occupied.

The people broke the laws frequently, and with a large measure of impunity, though from time to time they appeared at the justice courts for illegal woodcutting or for stealing sheep.

While on the Forest steads there may have been a limitation to three households, at least before 1510, on other farms and later in the Forest too, the subtenants lived in quite large groups, perhaps partly for mutual assistance and protection. Many individuals but few groups are recorded with names. In the 1541 rental of Ettrick Forest only the possessors of the steads are named for the most part, but at Delorain and Eldinhope the actual occupants are given:

"Dawloryane and Wardishope - Occupyit be Thomas Andersoun, Johnne Diksoun, William Laidlaw, and utheris..."

"Eldinhope - Occupit be Andro Bryden, Johnne Blakstok, William Tait, Johne Heslop, and Margaret Melros..." 2

Another, if rather unusual, example of a tenant group occurs in 1569, when on 5th May "Will Greif", Thome Greif", and twenty-one others were described as tenants to Sir Walter Scott of Howpasley in "Outtersiderig".³

1. E.R., Vol. XI, pp. 394-5.

2. E.R., Vol. XVII, p. 708.

3. R.P.C., Vol. I, pp. 660-1.

The 'Pacification' of the Borders

The last years of the sixteenth century saw raiding at its height. In 1596 Sir Robert Carey reported that "the Scots never leave riding day nor night".¹ At the same time, the raiders were concentrated in the south part of the Border area, and those further north, who had themselves been victims, did not approve. In 1569 the people of lower Teviotdale had banded against the "inhabitantis of ... Liddisdaill, Eskdaill, Ewisdaill and Annanderdaill", especially against Armstrongs, Elliots, Littles and other notorious reivers;

"nor yit sall we tryist or haif intelligence with thame in previe or apart... or suffer thame to resort to marcattis or tryistis throw our boundis; nor yit permit thame... to dwell, remane, or abyde, or to pasture their gudis upoun ony landis outwith Liddisdaill..." 2

Sir Robert Carey successfully quelled the Liddesdale men, and nevertheless so earned their respect that he was able to deal with them on reasonable terms. The relationship between Liddesdale and Carlisle was not so pleasant. In retaliation for the daring rescue of Kinmont Willie, Captain Carvell rode north with two thousand men, burned twenty-four farm 'onsets', and, seizing sundry poor men, "band them twa and twa in leisches and cordis, and that naikit", and drove them off to England, together with

1. B.P., Vol. II, p. 137 no. 281.

2. R.P.C., Vol. I, p. 652.

three thousand sheep and cattle.¹ The rescuer of Kinmont Willie, Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch, was not a soothing influence either; receiving the Lordship of Liddesdale after the forfeiture of Bothwell, his aim was to turn everything to his own advantage. He took over the more or less debateable pastures of Deadwater, Bells and 'English' Kershope along the Border, and compelled the reivers to serve him. In 1594 George Nicholson wrote:

"Buccleuch has the keep of the Hermitage,... and has caused the Armstrongs and chief men there to come to him to his own house and to protest their true services to him. He has told them plainly that if any of them deal any way with Bothwell he will hang them." 2

After going to England, James VI altered the name of the Borders to 'the Middle Shires', and set about quietening the area in earnest. The instructions and ordinances issued to the Commissioners for bringing peace and order, in 1605, were of great significance in encouraging a properly agricultural way of life. A death sentence awaited thieves. All lairds were instructed to give in to justice courts the numbers, quality, names and trades, of all the tenants or inhabitants on their estates, so that "sutche may be knawin which are not able to manteyne themeselffis but by evill purchase." All those in particularly lawless districts had to surrender all weapons and armour, and were forbidden to keep horses of more than

1. B.P., Vol. II, p. 259, no. 515.

2. C.S.P., Vol. XI, p. 446, no. 390.

£30 scots or 50/- sterling in value, the only ones permitted being "ordinarie work horses for the lauboring of the ground." ¹ The next year the Privy Council realised that "theivis and lymmairis" were continuing in their old ways because they had protection in their fortified houses, so it was ordered that all the ironwork of these houses that belonged "to any persone or personis of brokin and disordourit clannis, and to commoun people not being answerable to baronis", should be removed and turned into "plew irnis or sic other necessar werk".²

Not every one acted upon these orders, and many must have shared the sentiment expressed by Sir Robert Kerr to his son in 1632. He wrote about modernising their old tower, and feeling that peace might not be permanent in the Borders he advised that the small windows should be left "strong on the outsyde because the world may change agayn".³

In 1606 and 1607 many Armstrongs found it safe to disown their name. The strict enforcement of law, with numerous executions, meant that raids and feuds dwindled away. Landlords, answerable for their tenants and required to pursue thieves, became increasingly the law's instruments, and their means of executing control were the justice and baron baillie courts. Among those appointed justices for Roxburghshire in 1634 were Gilbert Elliot of Stobs,

1. R.P.C., Vol. VII, p. 703.

2. R.P.C., Vol. VII, p. 271.

3. Mathew, David: Scotland under Charles I, p. 119.

Robert Pringle of Stitchell, Robert Elliot of Falnash, and Mr. Walter Scott, minister of Castleton, and there was a similarly local representation in Selkirkshire. In 1642, the Commissioners seeking out criminals in the Borders, were again local lairds, including Francis, Earl of Buccleuch, Sir William Scott of Harden, and William Elliot of Stobs.

This period of 'pacification' was harsh, but it allowed the estates to introduce the rent-paying tenant system. The Buccleuch rental of about 1600 contains the first indication that money rents were being paid for sheep farms, while the occasional rentals relating to the years 1611 to 1615 indicate how such areas as Liddesdale were gradually reorganised. The Liddesdale rental of 1614 was much fuller than that of 1611, but the difficulty in finding tenants is indicated by the number of farms in that district pastured by the laird's own flocks.

Holding their farms from year to year, the tenants enjoyed more security than this short-term arrangement might suggest. They were of long established families, who had already demonstrated their loyalty to their superior, and there was no reason why they should be cast out indiscriminately. Even in districts like Liddesdale and Eskdalemuir, where the old kindly tenants lost their lands, the ordinary people did not dispute with their comparatively new landlord. Thus, in the main, the first decades of the seventeenth century were not marked by great changes in population, and sheepfarming could develop

almost undisturbed within the tradition of mutual loyalty between landlord and tenant. The landowner had opportunities to demonstrate his goodwill, since he could avoid evictions without genuine reasons, tolerate some arrears of rent, and make other allowances, though his willingness to do so might depend largely upon the state of his debts. Tenants, on the other hand, were able to show their loyalty by prompt payments and by honestly contributing their teind produce.

Buccleuch had the right to collect the teinds from the greater part of the Border hill country. Thus in some years his estate account books record the payments from every farm and from every occupant of a farm. On a sheep farm all the lambs were counted in May and noted in a single total, but the lamb contributions were accounted for tenant by tenant, so that the numbers and names of those with sheep on a farm and the relative size of each man's flock can be roughly determined.¹

Groups of tenants were still characteristic of the sheep farms. In 1615, for example, the wildly situated

1. It is possible to make an estimate of the number of ewes a tenant possessed, but the size of his hogg and wedder flocks is a matter of guesswork. The teind lambs, presumably those the tenant could best do without, were driven off from the farms to folds at Branxholm and Northhouse, and then sold. Local boys did the driving. In 1635 £3.8s was "given to seventeen Lades att the dryveing of the Lambes of the forrest", a task taking two days. Ten 'lads' drove the Teviotdalehead lambs. (B.M., 927/20)

"panangushoip" was occupied by "cristean wilsons and ye rest" ¹ and in 1625 the tenants of Priestthaugh were "hob wilsons and his nichtbouris".² It did not always follow that the individual whose name appeared on the rental was the leading member of the group. The use of the word "neighbours" may be linked to the old idea of 'neighbourly' behaviour, which appeared in the rules governing Forest steads, and the lack of which behaviour was the occasion of fines at baron baillie courts. There were seven 'neighbours' at Easter Craik in 1612³ and at least eighteen at Blackhouse in 1625.⁴

The persistence of familiar surnames ⁵ in the districts suggests that the farm people -tenants or servants- did not move far, and this is borne out by the records of 'flitters'. Five out of the six people who left Dryhope in 1630 went to farms only about three miles away, and the sixth

1. B.M., 943/7.

2. B.M., 943/1.

3. B.M., 894/1.

4. B.M., 943/1.

5. Old nicknames lingered also. Armstrongs called 'Rackes' or 'Raccas', mentioned in late sixteenth century records, were still present in the 1680s; there were several generations of Elliots known as 'Sweet Milk' on either side of 1600; and in the Eskdalemuir rentals around 1630 there appeared "George of the treis", "syme of the tryis", "Johne in the braid", "Jon of the Laike", "Wm the bastard", "Wattie baillie cald mussere", "Andro Lytle called dlunker", and others (B.M., 943/1 & 6). The custom of identifying people by nicknames or by the places where they live continues today.

went to Selkirk.¹ For the most part flitting involved only one or two from any single farm, but even so there was a considerable amount of movement, perhaps out of a wish to join friends, or to go to a cheaper piece of ground, or because a wealthier tenant remaining at the farm wished more ground for an expanding stock. The movement of people in 1634 gives the impression that they were going from fully occupied lands to more sparsely inhabited ground such as Rodono and Megget, and this would be natural enough at the time. The flitting day was at Whitsunday;² this meant that lambs were totalled and the teind portion gathered before any move, while teind cheese could not be accounted for until the tenant had settled in to his new abode and completed his ewe milking. Thus in 1638 the chamberlain for Eskdalemuir included in his accounts an allowance for the cheese he would have received from William Andisoun, "quha flitit out of Zetbyre at Wit. 1638 to Buccleuch w^t the cheiss of 23 sc. 14 milk zewes at 1/- a peice".³ The Forest chamberlain had to charge himself in his accounts with the same sum for Andisoun's arrival in his district.

One reason for leaving a farm was, of course, total loss of resources. Impoverished tenants and beggars,

1. B.M., 943/6.

2. In a letter of 9th June 1655 Andrew Hay of Haystoun remarked: "Yesterday was flitting fryday" - the only reference discovered to such a day (Haystoun).

3. B.M., 943/2.

between whom there was little difference, unable to pay debts, were forced to wander or flee the district. The chamberlain's accounts annually took note of "those that have nothing", and had such entries as (1637) "Jok stoddart that has fled to Irland" and "Johne Scot that fled till Annandaill".¹ There was no hope of recovering such debts, which had to be written off. The wayfarers might become petty thieves and poachers, and were often the responsibility of the justices of the peace, who were willing to help "the trewlie indigent and impotent", but not those able-bodied beggars who would not work.²

A farm, therefore, had a wide range of occupants, from a prospering tenant, able to pay his rent and progress, to poor servants and wandering folk who slept in outhouses. To some extent each tenant may have been his own shepherd, but it is likely that in addition to the other members of his family, there were servant girls, and men to look after cattle and horses. The leading tenant families in 1625 were generally those from which there emerged in the course of the century the new sheep farmers. Some were ruined by a severe winter, others continued to share with one or two neighbours, but for the most part it was clear by 1650 or 1660 who was prospering and who was not. The successful men built up their flocks and used more and more of the

1. B.M., 936/7, p. 296.

2. R.P.C., Vol. IX, pp. 714-5.

farm, while the rest moved elsewhere or continued as cottars and servants. Few families became so wealthy as to be able to withstand all disasters, and the landlord had to strike a balance between increasing his income by raising rents and preserving a tenantry to pay rents of any size at all. The rapid upward movement of rents in the late 1620s must have done much to sort out the tenants before the more stable conditions of the next two decades.

There is little evidence to show what a tenant possessed in the earlier part of the seventeenth century, but the property listed in the testament of James Bruntoun in Greistoun, who died in April 1622, may be fairly typical of a man living on the margin of the sheepfarming area (See Appendix III).

Uneasy Progress

The accepted pattern of one-year leases continued on the Buccleuch estate until after 1700, but there were different arrangements on other estates. In 1629 Blackhouse was set for one year only, but most of the other Traquair estate farms were set for five years, and two parts of Bold were leased for a lifetime and nineteen years. Tacks of five or nine years were common on the Traquair estate throughout the century. Written leases also became more common and detailed; there was, for instance, a written tack of "ane land in Glen" dated

4th September 1629 and several farms owned by Traquair were set on written terms in 1645.¹ The landlord, who doubtless saw some advantages in matters of self-protection by letting for one year only, would nevertheless have often preferred longer tacks, for these could bring in more regular rent; and even if the rent had been fixed he could ensure that he made something extra by requiring 'grassums' at intervals. It was very often the tenants who were reluctant to be bound for several years when they knew that one winter storm could render them incapable of paying anything.

On 9th May 1671 there was a competition for the tack of Henderland, at which Charles Balfour of Kailzie considered his offer the best because he could supply 'sufficient' subtenants "y^t wold take ane tack of the saids Lands for Severall years to come".² On the Buccleuch estate, where rents rose a little in the 1650s and then remained more or less static, many farms were set on tacks lasting for nineteen years in about 1672, but this experiment was an immediate failure, for the winter of 1673-74 ruined many of the tenants.

As the century drew on, certain notable tenant names began to dominate the scene. In 1659 Blackhouse and Craig Douglas were held by two Tods, as was still the case in 1694. At East Buccleuch, John Cowan was sole tenant from 1634,

1. T.P.

2. T.P.

and his family, like that of the Nicolls at Bellendean and later at West Buccleuch, had been in the farms of the neighbourhood for generations. The Laidlaws presided at Craik, and in Liddesdale the figure of Adam Elliot over-awed the other, lesser tenants. Elliot held Bilhope and Gorranberry in 1636, later adding Twislehope, the Bells, and the mill at Canonbie; in 1663 he was described as "the ablest greatest and oldest tennent" on the Buccleuch estate in Liddesdale.¹ Along with these there should be placed the Dalgleish family of Yarrow. From the early sixteenth century till about 1620 they possessed Deuchar, and were tenants in Whithope, Blackgrain, and Shootinglees. By 1644 they were established at Fastheugh, where they remained as tenants for two hundred years, during which time they also leased Tinnis, part of Newark, and Easter Kershope. With them must have been stored all the tradition and history of the Forest, and it was more than usually unfortunate when the last of them in Fastheugh, Adam Dalgleish, went bankrupt in 1823.

A comparison between the groups of people occupying the same farm at two main points during the seventeenth century is possible in several instances. It shows that there was no decline in population and that the same surnames remained throughout (see Appendix IV). The position as regards hill farm inhabitants at the end of the century is typically represented at West Buccleuch and Over

1. T.H.A.S., (1970), p. 43.

Dalgleish in 1694; at the former there were the tenant and his family, five servants, three herds, and two others, while at Dalgleish there lived the tenant and his family, one servant, one cottar, and two others. In addition to the herds and servants many farms had a "mout herd".¹

Life became more settled for these people, but only slowly. There was a renewal of theft and minor raiding in the southern districts after the dissolution of the Border garrison in 1621,² and the justices of the peace were kept busy. Small inns were numerous,³ and were the trysting places of the latter-day reivers, now called 'mosstroopers'. In 1637 the Privy Council, already hostile, ordained that no "ailehous keeper" should have

"anie muttoun, beeffe or lambe within thair houses but suche as they sall present the skin, head, lugges and hyde thairof to two or more of thair honest neighbours who may beare witnessse of the marke and birne of the skin and hyde." 4

Among the great number of misdeeds reported by the minister of Castleton in the 1640s several involved the alehouses. On 10th January 1646, fifty sheep were stolen from Kershope,

1. Horsburgh 2.

2. R.P.C., Vol. XII, p. 775.

3. On 23rd May 1653 the Earl of Traquair wrote that, some years before, Innerleithen "was... a considerable Contrei village. The fewest aile houses were in it at any tyme were sixteen or sevintien and sum tyme mor, gras now ther is scarce one in all the toune". (T.P.) Ale houses were also to be found far up among the hills, especially along travellers' tracks or drove roads.

4. R.P.C., 2nd series, Vol. VI, p. 404.

"which sheepe Hob Rackesse of the holl the hird had brought (because of the storme) from the dead water where they pastured...". Archie Lytle, servant to Hob, had followed the stolen sheep "with his eye in the storme untill the aill house of (blank) besyde Kirk Linton in Cumberland, where a number of the Mosstroopers were sitting drinking". The latter enquired "whence he with the blancket did come",¹ and Archie told them his errand. The upshot was that the mosstroopers made off on their horses, and Archie, having accused "the goodman of the alehouse" of reset, drove the sheep home.² Some of the Liddesdale thieves had boltholes in England; 'Black Sym Rackesse', for instance, retired to a house in Tynedale when life was too risky in Scotland.

The English regiments that came into Scotland in the late 1640s also caused disruption. The quartering of troopers and their horses on the farms, and the levying of supplies, were a heavy burden on a tenant, and the landlord had to take this into account, even to the extent of paying two thirds of the cost. Some farms were plundered, and in 1651 the Forest tenants would not, or could not, take their farms at the landsetting, so that "by Reason of the Troublis the haill Landis of the forrest was unsett".³ On this occasion the chamberlains were sent over to

-
1. The blanket is the shepherd's plaid.
 2. B.M., 907/2.
 3. B.M., 397.

"Convein the Tennentis and will them to keep their possessions as in former yearis and qt Lossis or greivances they had his Lordship would take it in his Consideratioun."

Most of the tenants did remain. The toll of provisions exacted from farms included horses, saddles, harnesses, pistols, sheep, meal, peats, hay, oats and malt.

Over the next few years troubles and thieving decreased, but the severe winter of 1673-74 revived them again. There was then need for a commission to suppress crime in the Borders. As usual its members were local lairds, and it seems to have been immediately effective. The severe penalties included such old fashioned items as burning on the cheek, transportation to Ireland or Virginia, and hanging; and among many persons of "evil fame and dissolute lives" who went to Ireland in 1676 were thirty three Armstrongs and Elliots.¹ When in 1681 Robert Elliot, a member of the family farming in Penchrise, Limiecleuch and Blackhall, was granted a remission for his illegal activities, some law-abiding people were not satisfied:

"Wee may upon good ground averr that the inhabitants of the Bordering Schyres hes not enjoyed soe much quyetnes In no tymes past memorie of man as they have done within thes five years bypast which hes proceeded from the cair his majestie hes had to authorize Comrs. for suppressing that vice... Bot now thes theives and robbers are begining againe to prey upon his majesties good subjects. And if not prevented its lyke eer long they will be at alls great ane hight as ever..." 2

-
1. H.M.C. Fifth Report. (Erskine of Dun), p. 641.
 2. E.D.P., . 21/CLXXXIV.

What this writer feared did not take place. Bad winters again impoverished tenants, and careful investigations were made by estates to discover their circumstances. Increased concern of this kind helped to reduce the amount of crime. In addition, attention was turned to the activities of the 'covenanters' and their enthusiastic supporters among the hills.

It is evident, from the records, and from tradition, that the hill farming folk participated actively. Robert Huname, officer for the bailiary of Ettrick Forest, was imprisoned for attending conventicles,¹ at which numbers of tenants and cottars were also present; and a list of fines imposed on those who went to conventicles held in the Forest on Newburgh, Ladhope, Mountbenger and Outer Huntly in the winter of 1680-1, included thirty-one people from eleven local farms. At least one farmer attended all seven meetings. Indeed it would seem that the majority of the inhabitants of Ettrick and Yarrow, as well as of those in Eskdalemuir and upper Tweeddale, adhered to the Covenanters' cause.² Certain farms such as Riskenhope, Midgehope, the Buccleuchs, and Chapelhope, came to be associated in tradition with particularly fervent families, and there

1. R.P.C. 3rd series, Vol. VI, p. 180.

2. Among those who appeared at Hawick on 15th June 1685, before Sir William Elliot of Stobs, were tenants of Kershope, Berrybush and Bellendean in the Forest district, from Blackcleuch and Howpasley in Teviotdalehead, and from Carretrig in Ewesdale. They swore not to attend conventicles. (Wilson, James, Annals of Hawick, pp. 86-7.)

are many stories of the support they gave. Thomas Linton in Chapelhope, for instance, used to leave the door unlocked at night and bread, butter and cheese on the table for any fugitive covenantor.¹ Robert Biggar, tenant in Over Cassock and known as 'Hab the auld ane', did the same, and is supposed to have convinced Claverhouse, who had caught up with him high above Overkirkhope, that he was 'honest' by his swearing.²

Such disturbances in the middle and later years of the seventeenth century, together with disastrous seasons, added to the poor. The kirk did what it could, though it warned against employing as servants those who wandered into the parish without "testimonials". Occasionally the minister interceded on behalf of an impoverished parishioner, as for example in the case of James Bryden, of whom Mr. Clapperton of Yarrow wrote in 1671:

"Being informed by Elders and Gentlemen of the Kirk Session that James Briden Late tennant in nether dolloren... was so depouperated at his removeall that his wholl goods and geire was comprised by his Grace the Duks baillyiff for bygone mailles and As also being informed that he is still debter for his mails... Theese are to testifie... that he hath nothing remaineing for enableing him to defray this deibt and yrfore desyres at the hands of those in whose power it is to discharge him of the Same..."³

-
1. Bathgate, Janet: Aunt Janet's Legacy to her Nieces, pp. 34-35. See also James Hogg's The Brownie of Bodsbeck.
 2. Wilson, George: Memoirs of Eskdalemuir (Typescript), p. 157.
 3. B.M. 400.

Tenants who were unable to pay arrears of rent had their goods 'comprised'. In May 1666 quantities of stock were removed from certain evicted Forest tenants to make up for unpaid rents. After the 1674 winter Adam Dalgleish petitioned for an allowance and time to pay his arrears. He pointed out that he and his predecessors had been "Long and old tenants... above this Hundred year, and did continew in ane verie thryveing conditione", until recently brought "under great decay in his means and fortune...". He was now, "throw the great Lose of his Cattell this Last Winter By the violent Lasting Storme" so reduced that he could no longer stock the ground. John Scott of Woll, the chamberlain, assigned a decret against Dalgleish to a subtenant, James Tod, who 'poinded' the few remaining cattle and crops and "hes not Left him so much as one Milk Cow to mentaine himself and poor familie". The commissioners ordered the return of three milk cows, for which he would be allowed pasture till the following Whitsunday, or an abatement of 100 merks.¹

By 1690 the swords and pistols had been put to the tops of walls and into sheds, where they rusted away, though a few survived within living memory. The sleuth-hounds which had been kept on the farms, along with the farmer's greyhounds, also disappeared at last: in a note to his 'Lay of the Last Minstrel', Scott wrote of how

1. B.M., 401.

"A person was alive in the memory of man, who remembered a bloodhound being kept at Eldinhope... for whose maintenance the tenant had an allowance of meal." ¹ Even in Liddesdale things grew quieter, though the reputation of the unruly southern districts lingered in Tweeddale, where, it was claimed the people were "more sober in their Diet and Drinking" than their neighbours, and did not go in for "Revenge Quarrels and Murders, which is too ordinarily in other places..." ²

-
1. Scott, Sir Walter: The Lay of the Last Minstrel, (Canto V: XXIX, Note p. 295).
 2. Pennecuik, op. cit., p. 6.

In this chapter an attempt has been made to describe the social system prevailing in the Border hills during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as a background to the development and practice of sheepfarming at this important stage. Some indication has also been given of the violence and unrest which marked the daily life of the early farming communities, especially in the southern districts. The Union of the Crowns evidently had such an effect on Border raiding and lawlessness that, along with the change in relationship between chief and clan occurring at the same time, it may be said to have ushered in the type of sheepfarming known today. Yet the old clan world, with its often outlandish characters and customs, did not die in 1603, and something of it lingered on even into the eighteenth century, during which the modern arrangement of farms and tenants became established.

Chapter three: THE DEVELOPMENT OF ESTATES: 1700-1900.

1. Development of the Rental System

From the beginning of the eighteenth century the progress of the Buccleuch and other estates depended upon management methods. With a more or less stable system of administration evolved as a basis, landlords and their chamberlains were able to try out ideas, and this they did, from time to time, over the remainder of the period. Their thinking was chiefly concerned with how to improve the nature and organisation of the estate; and an essential prerequisite to efficient management was a clarification of the terms on which a tenant should hold his farm. This meant, in particular, deciding how rents should be determined and what conditions should be contained in leases. It took until nearly 1800 to resolve these problems.

It has been observed of English rural society in the sixteenth century that among its most marked characteristics were "the development of competitive rents, the building up of the great estate, and the appearance, or at any rate the extension, of the tripartite division into Landlord, capitalist farmer, and landless agricultural labourer."¹ The same might be said of the Borders during the decades after the pacification, when landlords, having an acquaintance, no doubt, with developments in England and the success of the woollen industry there, undertook commercial rather than military enterprises. In sixteenth century Northumberland

1. Tawney, R.H.: The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century, p. 1.

ninety-one percent of landholders were customary tenants, but there was a marked growth in the area of land under lease and this quickened in the seventeenth century. The similar but more abrupt change in the Borders around 1600 has been described in the previous chapter, but emphasis must be placed here on the fact that this change, involving the replacement of the old kindly tenants, meant uncertainty about how to fix rents.

After the introduction of the rent-paying tenant system much time was needed for discovering the best way to decide the just rent of a farm. It could not be done by calculations based on acreage, since the quality of land varied enormously, and local conditions were such as to provoke endless argument. A sounder method was to relate rent to the numbers of sheep and cattle on a farm and to the prices obtainable at markets; but in the seventeenth century the experience needed to do this was lacking, so that no obvious improvement upon the system of annual land-settings was made, and formal written leases were rare. In addition there were other obstacles to hinder the rapid development of a proper 'rental' arrangement. Losses by bad winters, disease or robbery meant sudden and often disastrous falls in income, these resulting frequently in the total failures of tenants, and a landlord who wished to have tenants for all his farms had to make suitable allowances on these occasions. Thus the rents fluctuated, and only long acquaintance with such conditions could lead to recognition of what an appropriate level was. Though it

appears that during the seventeenth century several tenants were commercially successful in spite of the hazards,¹ and that money was made from wool in particular, there was nevertheless an absence of wealthy men eager to take farms, which resulted in a continuation of primitive farming methods, and of year-to-year tenancies. With markets not yet providing opportunities for a lively trade in produce, there was little chance of a farmer making profits with breeding stocks. Thus in 1700 only slow progress had been made, and one can look on the preceding hundred years as a century of trial and error.

In order to present the 'estate' background to sheep farming after 1700 as it seems to have impressed itself upon the tenants it is most convenient to describe it in sections dealing with rents, leases, and the chamberlains, including in the latter other matters of administrative policy. Special attention is again given to the affairs of the Buccleuch estate.

Rents

The first complete rentals of the Buccleuch estate, those of the late 1620s, show large annual increases in rents. These may have been a sign that the newly established peace in the Borders was having a beneficial effect

1. It is indicated in a recent article that there was "a substantial degree of development in the agrarian economy of Lowland Scotland during the seventeenth century" (Whyte, I.D., 'Rural Housing in Lowland Scotland in the Seventeenth Century', Scottish Studies, Vol. 19 (1975), p. 56).

on farming, or that the chamberlains were improving their organisation.¹ Nothing like them occurred again that century. In fact rents remained remarkably steady after 1630 (see Appendix V), but it is difficult to say whether they were ever at a 'just' level in relation to the income from the farm. There was an attempt to 'improve' the Liddesdale rents in 1656, at a time when thieving had faded away and life was more settled, but only a few small increases actually occurred.

The severe winter of 1673-4, being an exceptionally disastrous season, emphasised the problems of rents and of finding tenants. The storm obliterated stocks in many parts of the Border hills, and reduced farmers to total poverty. At first the Buccleuch commissioners offered a reduction or 'abatement' on rents of one third, threatening those that did not accept with eviction, but they were eventually forced to set many farms at or about half rent; and to leave others waste. Over the next two years there was a very slow recovery, though great quantities of rent arrears went unpaid and it was observed that some tenants would still only take a 'room' if it was given them for little or nothing. The chamberlains made what they could out of the situation on the Buccleuch estate, for instance by taking unrecorded payments for grazing on otherwise vacant farms and by entering themselves on rentals at low rates.

1. A possible connection between these rent increases and developments in the wool trade is suggested in chapter ten.

The Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch were concerned that the estate should be set to the best advantage, but they were far away in London and had to forward wishes through their local representative, Sir William Scott of Harden. Among the recommendations to the chamberlains was one requesting them not to pursue tenants for arrears too harshly in case they were thereby compelled to quit, for there were few to replace them. And there was considerable difficulty in deciding whether all tenants, honest and dishonest, efficient and inefficient, should be allowed the same size of abatement.

No sooner had the position improved than again there came disaster with the harsh seasons of 1681 and 1683. The chamberlains, along with some minor Scott and Elliot lairds, once more seized the chance to step in as tacksmen, in the belief that after securing the lands at a low rent from the landlord they could find subtenants willing to pay enough to provide them with a margin of profit. As a consequence, in 1686 the Forest tenants sought a reduction of rents, abatement of arrears, and further time to pay debts, all of which were needful "to delyver us from that slaverie and oppression" which threatened them, for they dreaded that "Her Grace may desert ws and give ws over to the hands of merciles and covetous men designing ther owne profite not her graces interest nor our good".¹ After yet another storm in 1688-9, they petitioned again, pointing

1. S.M.P. 88/7.

out that they had been content enough in former times, but now were impoverished by bad seasons, low markets and rents far above the true value of the grounds. The 'true value' of a farm seems to have been estimated only by reference to the market price of stock.

In prosperous times, rather than in bad, the landlord could threaten to increase rent or to evict with confidence, since alternative tenants were available; but raising the rent inevitably reduced the number of tenants who could pay, and so his aim was to keep the rent up while at the same time giving encouragement by avoiding excessive increases and by making appropriate allowances. The farmers, on the other hand, tried to win what reductions they could, and the actual rent reflected the balance achieved between the two sides in ever-shifting circumstances. The system seemed to work well enough on the smaller estates such as Traquair, but on the Buccleuch the presence of 'tacksmen' upset the balance, and it needed the removal of these exploiters after 1700 to put things on a more just footing.

The eighteenth century began, therefore, at a crucial stage in the history of the Buccleuch estate. Many of the chamberlains and their relations, as well as local lairds, had abused their administrative and social position by putting their own interest before that of either the tenant or the landlord. The tenant complained that he was paying too much to the wrong person, while the landlord was soon to find that his chamberlains were gathering profits that

might have come to him, and were in any case careless in managing the estate. Thirty years later, after the position had to a great extent been cleared up, it was remembered that:

"Great losses have happen'd by Chamberlaines in former times and much money has been lost by Tennants thorough the Indolence and neglect of the Chamberlains few of whom were Bred to Business and did much lye on second hands & by not getting their Accounts annually past they run on in a blind Course of Management much to their own prejudice and the Familys loss." ¹

Before matters were taken in hand, however, a curious event took place in Liddesdale. The sons of John Elliot of Thorlieshope, who was reputed to have made "very great profite" from his lands before his death in 1698, suffered from a severe fall in sheep prices during 1704 and 1705. They therefore banded together and persuaded others to join them in a plan to secure reductions of rent. In March 1706 they all resolved to resign their farms. But a month later the Duchess of Buccleuch ordered the seizure of their goods as security and their removal at Whitsunday. Immediately the brothers were deserted by their supporters, who sought to be reinstated. This the Duchess allowed, and so the leading rebels were forced to petition abjectly for their farms. The Duchess was not inclined to be merciful to the ringleaders, so, though she accepted their plea, she imposed increases of rent "as a punishment to prevent their combining for the future." ²

1. B.M., 307.

2. B.M., 479 Sederunt 1706.

The Elliots were not content with defeat, and in March 1709 they assembled a number of the Liddesdale tenants at Castleton, "where they amused them with a false story of the haill Tennants in Ettrick Forrest giveing up their grounds." ¹ They urged the others to keep firm and declared that they now had a chance of both an abatement of arrears and an easy rent. Perhaps the severe winter of 1708-9 led them all to believe that few would be able to step in if they were to be evicted from their farms, but it seems that the latter years of the seventeenth century had been prosperous ones for the sheepfarmer and there were evidently more tenants of means about. In any case, those that had been "innocently led into this Combination" again melted away, and after apologising were readmitted as tenants. As an example to the rest, Henry Elliot was removed from Hudshouse, while the others were allowed to continue after publicly "acknowledging their folly and misdeamanor".

Though there seem to have been further instances of 'combinations' in the course of the eighteenth century, only one other incident of the kind, a century and a half later, caused a similar or greater consternation. For the most part the tenant relied on the absence of competitors at landsetting, on the landlord's goodwill, or, if short of money, on the assistance of cautioners, to help him when it came to taking a farm; and it is noteworthy that

1. Ibid. Sederunt, 1709.

in general what must have been his strongest weapon, the 'combination' of tenants, was neglected. The use of cautioners was frequent around 1700, but was not popular with the landlord, who found that some men committed themselves as cautioners too freely and were overwhelmed with claims. Moreover tenants sometimes found a different cautioner for each year of rent arrears, and the landlord might find it next to impossible to recover debts.

The Duchess of Buccleuch abruptly moved into action in 1709, and over the next few years introduced various measures to put her Border estate into order. She may have been stirred to this partly by the Liddesdale rebellion, but there were other more weighty considerations. She clearly saw that the chamberlains were a hindrance and failing to serve her 'interest'. She also was seeking to purchase Musselburgh, and for this needed immediate capital. So she allowed abatements to tenants for their losses in 1708-9, providing they undertook to stay three more years, she removed 'insufficient' tenants, and she launched an attack on the chamberlains and 'gentlemen' tenants. She demanded that the chamberlains gather in arrears of rent immediately, knowing well that as tenants themselves they were deepest in debt. If they failed, they were "not to expect to continue in her Graces Service". The Duchess emphasised the point:

"lett them be assured, that whoever does not exert his outtmost to Serve me on this occasion, Noe plea of past Service or merit, or anything else Shall prevaill with me to continue him in his office, for

"I am in earnest, and will execute what I threaten.
Money I must have..." 1

A few of the most wealthy gentlemen tenants had to pay up arrears instantly or be prosecuted "with the outtmost severity for a terror to others." Those who sublet several farms were faced with the same threat. No farms were to be set to lairds whose own lands marched with those they wished to lease as too often the estate boundary had been conveniently forgotten or shifted. The surveyor, Edward Ladd, was appointed to make plans of every farm, so as to clarify the boundary situation. "Substantiall tennants" willing to pay rent in advance and to lay out something on improving their farm were to be encouraged with long leases.²

Conditions for tenants were also tightened. The Earl of Dalkeith, who possessed the Eskdalemuir district, wrote in 1716 that the tenants must "take ye bad Years with ye good", and that allowances should be dispensed with.³ The change, which was made at this time, was possible because there were tenants now with some capital, who could step in where men like the chamberlains had been, and who could survive the bad years. They were at last men with farming experience, and a memorialist of the 1730s contrasted them with the 'Gentlemen' of the recent past:

"Where there are many Gentlemen Tennants upon the Estate as they have not proven commonly the best of Payers yea rather the very worst they are a certain

-
1. B.M., 935/4, 12th December 1713.
 2. B.M., 286/2 and 479 Sederunt 1714.
 3. S.M.P., 70.

kind of Drawback upon the Chamberlains Performances who they expect should allow them their own times of Payment and give them all due respect besides - they must of course overaw any honest Laborious Tenand who happens to possess the neighbouring Farme." 1

The gentlemen, who had expected privileged treatment, had been replaced by the industrious tenants:

"It is the part of the Grandure of a great Man to have a Substantial Tennandrie living and thriving under his Protection and who so fit to Compound and make out such a sett of People as those who nature seems to have ordained for that very end and who from their youth are train'd up a course of Labour and Industry and by degrees Lett into the knowledge of Country Affairs which is a study of its own kind and not to be come by at one jump..." 2

These sentiments contain the new view of the laird and his estate that characterised the eighteenth century, reached after the slow haphazard and uneven progress of the previous hundred years. Dutiful behaviour would accompany well-paid rents;³ but the problem of how to assess the rent level remained.

Gideon Scott of Falnash, one of the few Buccleuch chamberlains to survive with untarnished reputation, had reflected on the system in 1689, and in 1719 he restated his ideas. To him, fair rents were a prerequisite for preserving a 'tenandry' in bad times, but the commissioners

1. B.M., 307.

2. Ibid.

3. On the back of the memorial just quoted (B.M. 307) is written: "Your Graces Affairs stand now upon a clear footing and method and it will be a great happiness for those who have the honour to serve If their Accounts are annually cleared and the Tennants Payments strickly examined at Land setting."

thought it would be impossible to achieve a situation in which every tenant paid exactly what the ground was worth. They considered that "the surest way of knowing the rents is from among the Tennants themselves by their Competeing for one anothers grounds." Unfortunately this method was unreliable, since it had been abused by malicious people who competed "to Gratifie their privat resentments" or by tenants bidding at a level they had no intention of keeping to for more than one year.¹ In these ways rents were artificially inflated for the first year, and then had to be reduced, and there were three examples at the 1718 landsetting. Young Scott of Gorrenberry, for instance, had made an inexplicable offer for Linhope, and "in the Struggle" with the existing tenant, William Grieve, had raised the rent £45 ster., only to give up the farm almost immediately and leave the estate to find someone else. The conclusion reached was that competitions should only be allowed if the highest bidder were made to take a tack of nineteen or twenty-one years.²

Even the effect of restricted competition was not sufficient to solve the problem of rents and the matter was frequently under discussion:

"There seems to be only two ways of knowing the true value of a Farme. A good Manager skillfull in matters of store who Possesses a Farme for some years both when the Marketts and Prices of Sheep Black cattle and Wool are high and low he must know it but that

1. B.M., 935/4, 28th March 1719.

2. Ibid.

remains a secrett with himself. The second way and that is the only way which comes out for your Graces Interest is when a Competition happens betwixt two knowing Tennants in these Affairs where nothing of humour is in the Case but both acting for their own good the highest offer should be judged to be nearest the true value of the Farme..." 1

So the competition method continued for some time.

Vacant farms were advertised at market crosses and kirk doors, and would-be tenants put in their bids, those that had been long-established on an estate being often preferred to higher bidders. Soon after 1750, however, the old concept of determining rents by the value of the stock reappeared (see Appendix V), though competitions did not universally cease. This was probably because attention was shifting from finding suitable tenants to the business of farming. George Malcolm, writing from Eskdale about 1770 explained how things worked:

"I cannot pretend to give you my opinion positively with regard to the rents paid, and how many sheep are kept by the acre: they vary with the soil of the ground, and often according to the opinion the different landlords entertain of the value of their estates. More grounds keep below a sheep to the acre than above it; and the rent stands from two shillings to three shillings and six-pence for each sheep. The rents of most farms have advanced within these twelve or fourteen years, from a third to double; which great advance has made highland farming very uncertain; as no improvements which meliorate the farms can be made; but they entirely depend upon the rise and fall of the markets, besides running a great risque from bad seasons." 2

1. B.M., 307.

2. Pennant, Thomas: A Tour in Scotland, Part II (Vol. III, Appendix vii), pp. 402-3.

The situation was more plainly put by some of the late eighteenth century writers; Findlater, for instance, in his description of Peeblesshire agriculture asserted that acreage was certainly not the way to value a sheep farm; to do that, "the only consideration... is, what number of sheep have usually been, or may be kept upon the farm, with the quality of the sheep so kept." ¹

To bring the Buccleuch estate up to date in respect of rent levels, William Keir, factor of the southern division, suggested a review of rents, and in June 1777 wrote to the Duke regarding the Ewesdale farms. From his calculations it appeared that most should be able to afford 2/6d. a sheep, so long as prices remained at least as high as they had been for the past ten years. He did not advise the Duke to ask a rent of this scale, since "a moderate well paid Rent is better to your Grace than a high rent ill paid." ² Nevertheless by an estimation of the real value it would be possible to establish a fair level of rent in spite of difficulties:

"there are some farms would require to be almost doubled to make them equal to others that are thought high, and I have no reason to think that there are any farms upon your Graces Estate sett at present at a higher rent then other Gentlemen

1. Findlater; op. cit., pp. 28-9.

2. B.M., 657. This opinion may have been a cliché among chamberlains. On 10th May 1737 Archibald Campbell of Stonefield, Chamberlain of Argyll, wrote that "a sure and well paid rent" was better than "a high one ill paid" (Cregeen, E.R., 'The Tacksmen and their Successors', Scottish Studies, Vol. 13 (1969), p. 113.

in the Neighbourhood sett their Ground. This inequallity of the Rents is attended with mischievous Consequences... It is the cause of continual discord and anemosity amongst the tenants, and has been the principal cause of all the opposition and Combinations that have been formed in order to thwart the new regulations on the other parts of the Estate. These Gentlemen who occupy these lucrative farms are extreemly Jealouse of the most distant appearance of an inquiry into the present situation of the Estate." 1

A factor's task was extremely difficult in these circumstances, for it was almost impossible to avoid offending someone. An enquiry, however, would be most worthwhile for the landlord, since it should lead to a better knowledge of the real value of the farms, an increase in income from rents, and a clearer view of how improvements might be made. Keir had various prejudices and obstacles to overcome; no farmer liked to say exactly what number of sheep he kept, nor did he want his rent to be widely known, and, if one believed cynics like Hogg's 'Old Andrew', there were still some who thought that "the lairds want naething better than for ye to rin in arrears", so that they could "get a' your stocks for neist to naething, and have the land stockit themsells..." 2 In fact Keir thought the best approach was to employ two impartial and sensible men to gather relevant information and determine rents.

It was 1790 before Keir was able to set about "the regulation of the Sheep-farms", which he had been planning for so long. He intended to set out "three different states

1. Ibid.

2. Hogg, James: The Shepherd's Calendar, Vol. I, p. 17 ("Rob Dodds").

of the Rents"; there would be the real value based on market prices, the present rent paid, and the 'regularised' or 'fair' rent, coming somewhere between the first two. He would give details of each farm, and hoped that he could demonstrate to the farmers that any indulgence they received derived from the landlord's generosity rather than from his ignorance.¹ His report was ready late in 1791.² Sheepfarm rents were to be fixed on the basis of the average annual produce, and were to be adjustable according to the situation of the farm, the fluctuations of market prices, and the alterations resulting from excambions. Other suggestions were made as to how farms should be tenanted, combined, and otherwise improved.

The chamberlain for the estate gave his approval, but felt that tenants would not be happy with rents determined annually by price levels. Indeed rents of this kind undermined the confidence of the farmer, but a rent fixed for, say, nine years could cause him an equal amount of trouble if it happened that prices fell within that period. The Duke of Buccleuch accepted the recommendations, raised the rents, and imposed one-year leases for a short period.

By 1800 Buccleuch farms were being let for nine years, which was the usual length on other estates. But before much stability had been attained, a decade of depressed markets began in 1818, and the landlords were forced to respond to the predicament of farmers. They were reluctant

1. B.M., 657, Letter dated 26th February 1790.

2. B.M., 459/1, pp. 134 et. seq.

to reduce rents in case "once depreciated, the Rents will never get up again altho' the value of Farm produce were to rise 100 p. ct." ¹ The Duke of Buccleuch allowed abatements of 20-25% in the later 1820s, in order to save some tenants from bankruptcy, but even so some old established farmers had to give up, and improvements, already well-advanced, were slowed down.

During the nineteenth century there was a gradual upward trend in rents (see Appendix V) save on the Buccleuch estate, where, after moderate increases every nine years, there occurred in 1857 a second review of farm values which radically changed the situation once more. The reviewer, a Mr. Asquith, produced results which shocked farmers. After detailing the value of the different meadows, fields and types of hill pasture, and describing the condition of the buildings, he suggested rent increases of 50-60%. Falnash would rise from £607 to £968.10.4, Skelfhill from £615 to £950.15.9, Craik from £577 to £850.4.7.² With slight modifications only, these increases were made, and provoked another 'Liddesdale rebellion' in Teviotdale.³ The chamberlain, William Ogilvie, called it "a sad commotion in the Camp." Three

1. B.M., 657, Letter dated 9th March 1818.

2. Asquith: Revaluations of Buccleuch Estate Farms.

3. The account that follows is derived from letters and documents among the Buccleuch Muniments (B.M., 492) and the Grieve Papers (G.P.).

leading farmers, Aitchison in Linhope, Moffat in Craik, and Grieve in Skelfhill delivered to Ogilvie a memorial of complaint, upon which the latter enquired "whether they came ... in the character of a Deputation.". They said they did. Ogilvie told them how the new rents had been fixed, and added his opinion:

"I do think you are placing yourselves in a very awkward position with the Duke. Here you are approaching His Grace collectively, in a body, ...telling him, that he must repudiate this Mr. Asquiths valuation altogether, as a person who knows nothing about the value of these lands, and in short, that we are the men who are to be the valutors of Your Grace's Estate..."

He observed that it was absurd of them to want the same percentage of increase as was added in Eskdale, and that each tenant's farm deserved an individual valuation. He objected to their coming "in a body", and thought the whole affair to be "a very unpleasant business" with no easy solution. In reporting to the Duke he wrote:

"We have come, as it were, into collision with the Tenants, men who for generations have been holding their Farms, under indulgences and at Rents which no other Landlord would have granted, and now that an attempt is made to raise their Rents to proper value, they rebel."

Admittedly the increases were large, but Ogilvie did not consider them unfair. Some tenants would have to surrender their farms, and if men like old Scott in Commonsides were found to withdraw there would be a local sympathy for them that would be to the disadvantage of the Duke in "any political struggles" that might occur. To some extent Ogilvie had bluffed when he said that the

Duke would gladly take the farms off the rebels' hands and put them up for public competition. There was no certainty that competitors would appear.

The estate escaped from its predicament because again the resistance lost heart. Even while Ogilvie was saying "It will never do, I fear, to give in to them altogether", the farmers were throwing away any chance of a victory by giving in themselves. They tried submitting underestimates of their stock but this trick failed, and the rebellion faded out. It was the last noteworthy disturbance on the Buccleuch estate until the dispersal of farms after the 1914-18 war.

Leases

Length

It was observed in the preceding chapter that at the close of the seventeenth century farms were leased for various periods, from one year to nineteen years, and that on the Buccleuch estate, after one or two unsuccessful attempts at long leases, there was a return to the annual landsetting arrangement. Tenants with little or no capital were unwilling to take farms on long leases, and the landlord, who would sometimes have liked to ensure an income by letting farms for several years at a time, was often reluctant to grant such leases in case he missed the benefit of improved market prices, or was saddled with a hopeless tenant.

A common complaint during the eighteenth century from many parts of Scotland was that leases were too short, and a lease for only one or three years was, undoubtedly, a hindrance to improvement. Patrick Lindsay remarked in 1733, "Farmers are kept low, by a precarious Possession upon short Leases,"¹ and many agreed. But on the Border hill farms it appears that as soon as there were tenants willing and able to take longer tacks, many landlords granted them. Like his mother the Duchess of Buccleuch, the Earl of Dalkeith proposed, in 1718, to allow leases for twenty-one years so that the tenants "may be secured in their Possessions".² The idea was put into practice, and continued on the Buccleuch estate until about 1750. Sir Gilbert Elliot of Minto granted leases of three or five years for his farms of Langhope and Shielswood in the 1730s and 1740s, while Traquair farms were let for three or four years in the 1690s, and for up to twenty-one years or even in life rent by 1740.

On the Buccleuch estate there was a reversion to one year leases about 1750, partly because of the bad seasons and markets then experienced; partly owing to disorganised

1. Lindsay, P.: op. cit., pp. 38-39. Lindsay made further remarks on the matter. "The Tenants possess indeed their Farms upon leases, and the Stocking of the Ground is their own; but should they attempt any considerable Improvement, their leases would be out before they can be fully repaid of their Expence and Labour; therefore they trade on in the old beaten Path, without ever forming any Project of enriching themselves by their Industry, while they justly imagine their Masters are to reap more Benefit by their Labour than themselves." (Ibid)

2. B.M., 286/2.

administration. A memorialist of 1757 complained about this, pointing out that it was a system "which creates not only a very high expence but the uncertainty and precarious possession of the tennent is a great discouragement to agriculture." ¹ This meant that farmers who only held their land from year to year, were discouraged from undertaking improvements, the benefits of which would only be manifest in the long term. As soon as longer leases were reintroduced, however, and this happened before 1760, the willing tenant could set about his improvements with reasonable confidence that they would win the landlord's approval and another long lease; thus, when in 1759 Walter Grieve obtained a nine years tack of his three farms of Riccarton, Linhope and Branhholm Park, he set about building dykes on the latter, it being the most improveable and his place of residence.

The writers around 1790 and 1800 recorded a variety of practices in the leasing of farms. In Wamphray the tacks were for fourteen years, and in Peeblesshire commonly for nineteen years with a few three times as long. For a short while after 1792, the Buccleuch estate again allowed only one year tacks to cover the period immediately following the drastic reorganisation arranged by William Keir, but Hogg was unjust when he wrote in 1802 that, "Since my remembrance, his Grace's tenants have only had leases from one year to another". Besides, he added, "every man

1. B.M., 388.

cultivates his farm with as much assurance as if he had a life rent tack".¹

For much of the nineteenth century the usual tacks of hill farms were for nine or nineteen years, and the principle of continuing if possible with the old established tenant families remained in favour. The known, acceptable tenant was preferred to the unknown man who might have paid more.

Terms

The terms of written leases came to reflect the landlord's plans for his estate, but in the seventeenth century, in the absence of any policy other than that of securing payments of rent, the conditions set out in a tack were few. In 1691, Craig Douglas was set for three years to James Tod at a rent of 1500 merks, and Tod's only duty was to maintain the houses.² The next tack of the farm, in 1694, stipulated that in addition to the rent, an unspecified number of 'kain' hens should be paid, eight 'carriages' be provided between Whitsunday and Lammas or 14/- scots each instead, and fifteen loads of peats be taken to the landlord, whose main responsibility was the provision of timber for repairs to the buildings.³ These extra 'burdens'

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

2. T.P.

3. Ibid.

on the tenant, over and above his rent, were a common feature of tacks at the time, and continued for many years. Some were unusual. When Walter Grieve received a lease of the marginal Branhholm Park in 1691 there were the following conditions:

"That after Michalmas he keip only sheep in yt prt qch was Laitlie hained And if there happin ane storme qrby the sheep may eatt the Topes of the Young growth (of trees) they must be removed from that place and yr is a dyke to be built about the firres upon Walters Charges and no beast most pasture within yt dyke And if it be found yt ye nolt doe Skaith he most only pasture Sheep all ye yeir over And he is to have the oversight of ye woods and to have £40 and 4 bolls of meall allowed him for it." 1

Tacks became more intricate during the eighteenth century. Blackhouse was set in 1737 to two tenants, already present, for nine years, with a 'break' after three for the tenants "if They have a mind." In addition to the rent of 2800 merks they had to provide the customary "ox grass to pasture amongst their Cows" or £4 scots, and twenty eight loads of coals or 14/- scots per load.² In another lease of the farm in 1752 the tenant was bound by the same terms, but in addition he was required "to Labour the Lands Regularly and not to Labour any new ground without liberty obtained"; he was not to "run out nor mislabour the said Lands", and he had "to grind all his Corne (the seed and horse Corn only excepted) at the miln of Traquair". The houses were to be maintained according to

1. G.P.

2. T.P.

an "appreciation" at his entry, the landlord" allowing him Great timber for raising that part of his Dwelling house which is lower than the Rest so as to make It all of one equall height".¹

On the Buccleuch estate the tacks moved similarly into a more complex form. Garwald was set in 1743 for five years. The landlord reserved the right to dispose of existing timber and to replant, while the tenant was bound to pay his rent, to maintain the buildings which were accepted as "sufficient" on entry, to protect timber and trees, to grind his corns at the mill to which he was thirled, and to remove without previous warning at the end of the tack. In particular he was ordered not to assign his tack or subset to another without the landlord's consent. It had become "a very bad practice" of recent years to subset a farm at the same rent and to let or sell the stock "at a very high and Extravagant price."²

This was the basic pattern of later leases. Other reservations to the landlord were added, especially relating to minerals and marle that might be discovered on the farm. One of the chief aims of a written lease now was to foster improvements by expressed conditions or requirements included among the various clauses. These appeared in elementary form in tacks of the 1740s, as in the case of the 1743 tack of Garwald, and rapidly became

1. Ibid.

2. Garwald.

much more elaborate. By the tack of Garwald in 1811 the tenant was bound to agree with neighbours over erecting fences on boundaries, to allow gamekeepers and foresters free access, to enclose with stone dykes areas designated for arable and meadow, to take crops according to a proper rotation, and not to "deteriorate or run out the arable part". He was not allowed to graze any black cattle or horses upon the sheep pasture save the shepherd's cows unless he had special permission, and he had to make and maintain drains.¹ These were the usual terms in an 'improving' lease of a Buccleuch sheepfarm from about 1770 and there was often a clause forbidding any extension of ploughed ground, in case it reduced sheep pasture. A further section in the Garwald lease, as in others on the estate provided for the free passage of Buccleuch tenants and their stock over each other's farms in journeying "to and from Fairs markets Summer farms washing pools and for the conveniency of sheep shearing."

The business relationship between landlord and tenant thus took visible shape in the written tack, the form of which in general satisfied both parties, though farmers might argue over the contents. By the early nineteenth century the carriages and other burdens had for the most part been converted into a money equivalent included with the rent, and most of the antiquated features of the

1. Garwald.

contract had disappeared.¹

2. Chamberlains and Tenants.

Chamberlains

The shortcomings of the chamberlains in the late seventeenth century resulted in the measures taken by the Duchess of Buccleuch between 1710 and 1720 for the reorganisation of her estate on economic lines. This process marks in an especially vivid way the final stage in the passing of an older world. Formerly the laird had been clan chief; now he was to be an aristocratic figure, presiding over a rural industry managed by 'men of business'. This 'industry' was the product of various circumstances coinciding in the early years of the eighteenth century. New and prospering tenant families emerged as the ancient clan system faded away. Peaceful conditions permitted the development of rewarding markets, which in turn were fostered by the effects of the Union in 1707. In such altered conditions the chamberlains of 1690 were an anachronism.

-
1. The old custom of releasing a horse on the farm as a sign that the new tenant's tack had begun died out towards the end of the eighteenth century. In 1765 the occupying tenants of Nether Wrae and Flaskholm in Ewes, an Armstrong family, refused to quit at the end of their lease. When the new tenants came to take possession, the Armstrongs came out to ask what they wanted. An answer being made to them, the Armstrong party "Did in a furious and riotous Manner beat and abuse the Horses" of the new arrivals, which had been "sent loose upon their said respective farms, as a symbol of their entering" (B.M., 318).

The Duchess of Buccleuch dismissed some of her officers. One was Duncan McArthur, chamberlain for Liddesdale, who did not distinguish himself at the time of the 'rebellion' in his district, and was by 1712 clearly unable to carry out his duties. Another was John Scott of Woll, who had charge of the Forest. The commissioners thought that they might replace Woll with Gideon Scott of Falnash who was responsible for Teviotdalehead. But the elderly Falnash refused, saying that "those two charges would be too great a load of business upon him...".¹ Indeed Gideon Scott was aware that a chamberlain had to be business-like. He pointed out that collection of rents was only a portion of the work:

"they have the inspection of the tenants Stocks and how they dispose of them, and the condition of their houses and how they are kept in order and determining of little differences of neighbourhood and others of that nature which frequently fall in amongst them and especially the taking care of the woods and seeing the proper persons who have the immediate inspection of them do their duty." 2

The Duchess also resolved "that none of the Chamberlains should farm more Grounds than is absolutely necessary for the conveniency of a family...".³ This, of course, meant the end of the speculation in farming that these gentlemen had indulged in for many years, and they were then compelled to turn more of their attention to management and their increasingly numerous duties. Andrew Pringle,

1. B.M., 935/4, Sederunt 1715.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

Woll's replacement, was expected to live as his predecessor had done in Newark Castle, where he was to repair two or three rooms for his own use, and was allowed to sublet lands around Newark only if they produced not more than thirty or forty pounds a year. His salary was £33.6.8 sterling rather below that received by his counterparts in Teviotdalehead and Liddesdale.

Pringle held his post for only one year. He was succeeded by Walter Laing, the first of a family 'bred to business' to take charge of Buccleuch estate affairs.

Walter Laing was born about 1680, his brother John three or four years later. They were the sons of "one Laing in Hawick who keep a change house and was... a bit of an attorney".¹ They were both trained as lawyers, Walter under Hugh Somerville, a leading commissioner for the Duchess of Buccleuch. A sister, Helen, married James Grieve in Todshawhaugh, grandfather of the later James Grieve in Branhholm Park; she was a devout, gentle woman of some literary ability. Well-educated as he was, Walter gained the Duchess of Buccleuch's favour by accident:

"It somehow happened that an alarming fire broke out in the Palace of Dalkeith when Walter Laing was there and he at the eminent hazard of his life rescued from the flames a chest containing papers of great value, in return for which the Duke (i.e. Duchess) of Buccleugh made him his Factor at Newark for the Estate in Ettrick Forest and the

1. G.P., Diary, no. 13, p. 89.

Barony of Eckford, and Clerk to his Commissioners when they came round to set the Land..."¹

From 1717 until his death in 1736 Walter Laing held office in the Ettrick Forest district. According to James Grieve, he "made a great figure in this country as Chamberlain... and lived at Newark. He had quite the Ear of the Duchess o' Buckcleugh's Commissioners and did almost what he pleased in this corner o' the country."² One of Laing's independent acts was, apparently, to dispossess the Grieves of Branhholm Park in order to accommodate his brother John. This move proved unnecessary, as a year later John Laing was appointed chamberlain of Liddesdale, and went to live at the old chamberlain's house at the Roan. Though connected by marriage the Grieves and the Laings were never very close after this episode, and it was ironical, as James Grieve noticed, that Walter died at Todshawhaugh.

Walter Laing had married a Johnstone from Annandale, and they had a numerous family, "all of whom", said Thomas Beattie, "died or turned ill out, except Mrs. Elliot Borthwickbrae who became the 2nd wife of Mr. Elliot after she was rather past her prime and bore him two sons and one daughter and in her Centred all the wealth of all the Laings."³ Another member of Walter's family was his son William, who succeeded him as chamberlain.

1. Beattie, Thomas: Journal, pp. 106-7.

2. G.P., Letter dated 25th September 1831.

3. Beattie, T.: op. cit., pp. 107-8.

William Laing inherited the various posts held by his father, and purchased the lands of Meikledale in Ewes. He was said to have been rather vain and given to drinking. He continued in office until the Duke of Buccleuch came of age in 1767, in which year "the revolution took place among the five Chamberlains and... Mr. Ogilvie was made sole Commissioner or Chamberlain over all the Estates..." in the Borders.¹ After his appointment Ogilvie, "a man who did honor to human nature",² moved from Melrose to Branhholm where he died in 1784.

Meanwhile John Laing, who lived at Roan until about 1770, bought at least two estates near Hawick, at one of which, Flex, he lived for the last ten years of his life. He had amassed some wealth while in Liddesdale:

"... he had not much salary but as the Laings had great influence upon the estate so long as the old Duke lived, John Laing took into his hand whatever farms he liked and sold the stocks and possession of the farms whenever he pleased. He never knew much about Stock Farming but was governed entirely by his shepherds, yet by this plan of country stock jobbing and living at little expense and having a very long time to accumulate (for he lived long upon his nephew and died about the age of 95 or 96) he acquired the largest fortune that ever was made in our country... John Laing was a proud, passionate, vapouring, swearing, rough, indelicate, overbearing man, to those that stood in awe of him; but even his own servants could have silenced him immediately when they opposed him with equal rage." 3

1. G.P., Diary, no. 13, p. 89.

2. Ibid.

3. Beattie, Thomas: op. cit., p. 108.

Evidently John Laing had revived the chamberlain's habit of holding farms himself, something that the Duchess of Buccleuch had found entirely undesirable. Thus in 1765, when, after a period of careless administration during the young Duke's minority, the Buccleuch estate was again put on a sounder basis, the policy that the Duchess had set out fifty years before was reaffirmed; each chamberlain was to have "for their Families accommodation a farm adjacent to their places of residence", with a maximum annual value of £25 ster.,¹ and nothing else by way of land. With the appointment of the sole chamberlain at about the same time, the local officers lost some of their independence in becoming district factors, but they had a task of great importance, to steer the Buccleuch estate through the 'age of improvement'.

The development of an estate at this time depended as always upon the landlord's behaviour and resources as well as on the efficiency of his factor. There were bankruptcies in some quarters, and eccentric enterprises in others. A Douglas of Cavers, according to Grieve, discovered a rather unusual way of raising money to buy land:

"Meadshiels was part of Crumhaugh property which was bought by the 2d brother of the then Laird of Cavers who was a Capt. in the Navy and commanded a Frigate called the Greyhound with which he took prizes to enable him to Buy Meadshills and Adderstonsheels which was the Seat of Scott of Gorrinberry..."²

-
1. B.M., 33. Report on the chamberlains' farms 1765. Thomas Borthwick in Shaws (Ettrick) was appointed "to value and Estimate these new £25 Farms with the expence of Inclosing and making them convenient."
 2. G.P., Diary, no. 24, pp. 498-9.

When the Earl of Traquair's factor, William McIver, who like his master was an enthusiastic supporter of the Jacobite cause, was apprehended for assaulting a Government soldier in Peebles, the estate suffered confusion, albeit only briefly. Progress was delayed if, as often happened, a laird ran so deeply into debt that he could spend nothing on repairs or other improvements. As James Grieve pointed out, the Buccleuch estate was burdened with debts in 1767, as a result of inefficient rent collecting and of regular investment in land on the part of the commissioners,¹ who, over a period of a dozen years or so, purchased the farms of Falnash, Lairhope, Harwood, Teindside, Gorrenberry, Braidlie, Howpasley, Lodgegill, Dryhope, and several others. In doing so, one of their chief aims seems to have been to create small freehold estates by wadsetting some of the land, so as to increase political support for the Buccleuch family.

But so far as the farmers were concerned the main feature of improvement on the Buccleuch estate in the 1760s was a firm attempt to make up for lost time. This involved particularly a clarification of the landlord's intentions regarding reductions of rent, continuation of tenancy, indemnification for building and repairs and advancement of money for future development. In his Notice to Tenants of 24th September 1768, the Duke saw no need to give any abatements or other allowances, but to comfort the tenants,

1. Ibid., p. 471.

he stated that "while they use their possessions well, and duly pay up their rents, they may depend upon my favour and protection." This meant that those who had carried out any building, enclosing, or other improvement, could expect to be continued as tenants "upon reasonable terms" for a period "sufficient to idemnify them, not only of the expences incurred, but also to reward their industry for improving and cultivating." If a tenant were forced for some reason to quit before such a period was up, then the incoming tenant would be bound to pay him a sum equivalent to the remaining value of any improvement he had made. Since only industrious farmers were to be encouraged, "the indolent and slothful tenant can expect no indulgence, whatever length of time he, or his ancestors, may have been in possession." Those who abused their farm by, say, breaking up pasture, would be turned out.¹

The severe tone of these pronouncements was meant to convey determination and the sense of a 'new start'. It was up to the factors to put them into effect with discretion. On 17th October 1774, the Duke of Buccleuch sent instructions to his officers, one of which stipulated that tenants who had not completed rent payments up to Whitsunday by the following Martinmas would be allowed three months to pay and then, in case of failure to do so, be asked to leave. Precise 'Conditions of Leases' were issued on 4th September 1778, a copy going to each tenant. They contained the terms

1. Garwald.

already described as a feature of late eighteenth century tacks; there were also detailed restrictions regarding crops. The landlord agreed to furnish lime, "foreign wood", and slates to any tenant choosing to build with lime and slate, and to allow him stones from the nearest estate quarry; and he agreed to maintain all fences round plantations, though a tenant who damaged them would forfeit his lease.¹

Clearly therefore, after 1767, 'improvement' on the Buccleuch estate was given an official support that it had lacked when there was no adult landlord in charge. Factors like William Keir, catching the spirit of progress, put forward ideas, tried to jog farmers out of the rut of habit, and wrote innumerable letters reporting on every aspect of their business. The lesser estates fringing and interspersed with the Buccleuch lands were involved in and often further ahead with the same task. Eighteenth century farm plans are few, but those of Shielswood and Langhope on the Minto Estate, drawn in 1767,² show that someone, laird or factor, was at least as concerned about different types of pasture, enclosures and buildings, as his Buccleuch counterpart, to whom improvement of the many hillfarms on the estate, including those in the notoriously 'backward' Liddesdale, must have been a daunting task.

However, under several generations of Ogilvies, and factors like Charles Riddell and the Keirs, the Buccleuch

1. Ibid.

2. Plans of Shielswood and Longhope, N.L.S., MSS. 13443/4.

estate was ornamented with the fields, fences, woods, and fine houses that were the outcome of successful management. Admittedly among the hills progress was slower, and there were still some very shabby old farmsteadings in the 1850s, especially on the so-called 'led' farms. But the chamberlain of the mid nineteenth century, William Ogilvie, visited the various districts and, in spite of inevitable bargainings over a new bridge or outbuilding repairs, often expressed his pleasure at seeing the estate prospering so well by any standards. Another satisfactory sign was the presence of a tenantry that contained many families long-established in their farms; farmers of this kind were a modern sort of vassal, giving proof of loyalty to their chief by staying on his lands for generations, and paying their rents faithfully. Furthermore the Ogilvies were successful in that most difficult task, the preservation of an acceptable balance between landlord and tenant whereby the welfare of each was promoted. By careful administration with exact conditions of tenure set out in leases, and with a reputation for fairness that earned a wide respect, each Ogilvie played his part in ensuring that all interests were as satisfied as they could ever be.

Tenants

After 1700, as the Buccleuch estate was freed from tacksmen,¹ there emerged the 'new' tenant families, some of which continued until the end of the period. Few, if any, of these were new to the Border hills, but many had been held back by bad seasons, inadequate market opportunities, and by the 'Gentlemen' and chamberlains, so that they had been forced to remain in a 'subtenant' situation, often in groups. On other, smaller estates such as Traquair, the equivalent families, Tods, Ballantynes, Lintons, Laidlaws and others, went on farming as they had been for at least fifty years.

The Buccleuch rental of Eskdalemuir in 1705 has a typical seventeenth century appearance. Garwald was set to John Grieve, who had come from Glendinning in 1683. Thickside was tenanted by John Scott of Gilmanacleuch, and Twiglees by William Elliot of Borthwickbrae, these two, as tacksmen, having subtenants on the farms. Todshawhill and Nether Five Pound Land were each shared by three tenants.

1. As in the Highlands the tacksmen on the Buccleuch estate had been of significance in the period which saw the demise of the clan system and the gradual emergence of a commercial relationship between landlord and tenant. Their administrative importance, however, seems to have been different from that, say, of the Argyll tacksman in the early eighteenth century who controlled a disaffected population and received personal services of a kind expected in a 'clan' relationship (Cregeen, 'The Tacksmen and their Successors', Scottish Studies, Vol. 13 (1964), pp. 98-103). Securing entry on the rental by favour at a time when the Duchess of Buccleuch was absent in London, their main function, so far as the Duchess was concerned, seems to have been to provide her with a regular revenue, though in this they evidently failed.

Fingland and Over Five Pound Land, both wild and remote places, were also held by tenant groups whose shares were precisely stated:

Fingland: "ane quarter to Adam Laidlaw, to Andrew Park
Adam Black and Allexr. Laidlaw each - half
ane quarter"
-£750 scots

Over Five Pound Land: "the one half therof to Edward
Aitchisone in Dewislees, One quarter to William
Beatty in Nethr five pund land and the other
quarter to William Beatty in Earswood"
-£366.13.4 scots ¹

At the same time, the Harden farm of Over Cassock was set in portions to a group of five Blakes, a family that had farmed in the neighbourhood since at least 1600. In 1720 there were still five tenants, three of them Blakes (or Blacks), and ten years later two Blakes shared the farm.

The position in the other districts at the beginning of the eighteenth century was similar to that in Eskdalemuir. However the transition to be noted at Over Cassock from five tenants to two over twenty five years occurred widely, and perhaps rather sooner in certain areas such as the Borthwick Water valley (See Appendix VI). Tenant groups of more than two almost disappeared by 1720, some tenants were successful, and it is no coincidence that, in an age of more widespread education, they were able to organise their affairs by keeping accounts. The earliest farmer's daybooks that have been preserved were kept during the first half of the eighteenth century. Those who prospered included families such as the Potts, the Grieves and the Ogilvies

1. B.M., 236.

in Teviotdale, and the Burnets and Ballantynes in the Forest, all of whom had risen to replace the Scotts of old. Elliots had come from Ewesdale to farm almost all the upper Hermitage Water lands, where the clan had never quite lost its hold, and in Ewesdale itself the Aitchisons who had moved in from Eskdalemuir, took most of the farms at the head of the valley. Welshes, Hopes and Murrays were leading figures in Tweedsmuir. Here and there the 'tacksmen' element lingered on in the shape of a Scott of Falnash or an Elliot of Borthwickbrae but such people were now indistinguishable from other tenants.

Not all was prosperity, however. Alongside the Potts and the Grieves many lesser families struggled on from day to day, especially in Liddesdale where farms remained unrewardingly small. Failures continued to occur, especially during the disastrous decade of the 1750s when even the Aitchisons were overtaken by debts.

It was in fact the impoverished condition of some farmers during this particularly bad period that allowed those who had already been in the lead to advance still further and to become the major tenants of the next hundred years. Families like the Moffats, possessed of some capital, managed to survive where others went bankrupt, and by taking tacks of several farms, all at easy rents, were able to continue on a large and profitable scale. As in the progress of estate management, therefore, the years around 1760 were a watershed in the development of sheepfarming.

Though holding the tenancy of several farms may, even before 1750, have been a great advantage, it was not essential, and not all tenants in that fortunate position escaped bankruptcy. Thomas Beattie recorded several noteworthy failures in his journal. Robert Elliot, laird of Fenwick and farmer at Arkleton, Glendivan, Cooms, Unthank, Shaws, Hislop, Ramsaycleuchburn and others, "broke in 1755 in £9000 of debt." William Borthwick, who had farmed very successfully and bought Nether Cassock, had to sell up, "and was obliged to go to school after he was 60 years of age to qualify himself for a different employment". John Armstrong in Pottholm, William Scott in Bush and his brother David in Blackhall, were ruined, and the Aitchisons in Eweslees, Burnfoot and Carretrig "went all a slop in one year."¹ One cannot blame such misfortunes entirely on external circumstances, however, for there have always been farmers who ruined themselves, and James Grieve gives the impression that many failures in the eighteenth century were the consequence of excessive drink and gambling. William Elliot of Tarras, for instance, lost his estate by placing bets on his black mare. Of his own father Grieve wrote that:

"Prudence and temperance were distinguishing features in his character... more especially when it is considered that he lived at a time when hard drinking was almost universal and the Laird o' Crumhaugh his next neighbour lived at Branhholm and led as dissipated a life as ever man did."

The Laird of Crumhaugh, Grieve went on, managed to waste an estate of some value:

1. Beattie, op. cit., p. 41.

"It was all consumed in a worthless stile among foolish people who came to his house which was always open to every idle foot who choosed to enter it and Druckenness everlasting Druckenness prevailed." ¹

The careers of several families who tenanted sheep farms throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be followed in some detail. Here, by way of illustration, those of the Moffats, Aitchisons, and Grieves (Branxholm Park) are outlined.

Moffats

The Moffats first appeared at Todshawhill in Eskdalemuir about 1690. The brothers John and William then became established at the head of Borthwick Water for some years in the early eighteenth century. John's son James moved from Howpasley back to Eskdalemuir when he entered Garwald in 1744. He farmed there profitably enough to survive the difficult 1750s, though as Thomas Beattie wrote, he was "so reduced, that he gave up his farm, but no man could be found to take it and he paid his rent just as he pleased until times grew better that he recovered." ² James Moffat died in 1779, 'a principal farmer' according to Beattie, leaving his wife and three young children. The daughter eventually married William Brown, minister of Eskdalemuir, and Beattie noted about 1790 that "Mrs. Moffat lives at present at Garwald with her two sons who are both unmarried.

1. G.P., Diary no. 26, p. 91.

2. Beattie, op. cit., p. 41.

They live very happy and in the most affluent circumstances of any in the neighbourhood." ¹ One of the sons, William, took a lease of Mosspeeble, and after his marriage, became tenant of Craik in 1817. His elder brother, John, died suddenly at Garwald in 1824, without heirs, so that William had to manage both farms until his sons were able to take over. Thereafter two branches of the family remained as tenants and subsequently as owners of Garwald and Craik until the mid twentieth century.

Aitchisons

The Aitchisons were also first recorded in Eskdalemuir; in 1625 David Aitchison farmed at Westside and Edward at Twiglees. Another Edward, possibly a grandson, was the first to move into Ewesdale, which he did in the 1670s after the marriage of his sister Margaret to Ninian Elliot in Dewslees (i.e. Eweslees). He was tenant of Dewslees himself in 1678 and until his death in 1726, but at the same time retained a close connection with Eskdalemuir, where in 1695 he and his son William shared Over Five Pound Land and a second David Aitchison held seven sixteenth parts of Kilburn.

Edward Aitchison's eldest son, Robert, was tenant of Burnfoot, Mosspeeble and Byrecleuchwater, and, after his father's death, in Dewslees. He had three sons who, between them, tenanted almost all upper Ewesdale; Robert

1. Ibid., p. 35.

had Carretrig, William, who was married to a daughter of Robert Elliot in Unthank, held Burnfoot and Mosspeeble, and Edward was farmer in Dewslees and Byrecleuchwater. These were the three who went bankrupt in the late 1750s.

Edward and William arranged to sell their stocks to some of their 'friends'. On 21st June 1763 Edward sold eighty scores of sheep and twenty nolt from his farms to George Malcolm, while at the same time William disposed of his sheep and cattle to a brother-in-law, Robert Scott in Singlie. William Elliot in Arkleton, son-in-law to Edward Aitchison, was a creditor and tried to secure payment of debts from Edward, but the latter was found to have "fled the country".¹ William Aitchison remained at Burnfoot.

The third brother, Robert, moved from Carretrig and started up the inn at MossPaul about 1765. When Alexander Carlyle passed that way in 1767 he described Robert as "a curious fellow", and went on:

"we had not conversed many minutes when we discovered the cause of his being reduced from the condition of an opulent farmer to that of the keeper of a mere halting place... Robert had been a Border rake or buck of the first head in his younger days, and to wit and humour, of which he had abundance, he added a sufficient portion of address and impudence, which he carried with an air of careless indifference." 2

Edward Aitchison had married Christian Elliot, of the Thorlieshope family. Their only daughter, Peg, known as "a drunken jade",³ married William Elliot, who was many

1. Session Papers, 150 B, no. 27.

2. Carlyle, Alexander; Autobiography, p. 480.

3. Beattie, op. cit., p. 122.

years tenant in Meikledale, and subsequently in Arkleton "which he lost by his niggardliness." There were also two sons, Robert and Charles. Robert farmed at Mosspeeble after his uncle William, and continued to do so until his death in 1799, when William Moffat entered. The younger brother, Charles, joined the army, and was "in the opinion of many a great Blackguard." Apparently he had been enlisted when he fell in with a sergeant near Falkirk, where he was seeking a job as a drover. It was said that Charles "had got a daughter of Gidion Scotts in Priesthaugh with child and run off with her".¹ This girl's aunts were the three Miss Elliots in Unthank through which connection Charles became tenant in Unthank in 1790 and built a dwelling house there. He died in 1795, aged thirty nine, leaving two sons, Edward and Charles. As Thomas Beattie wrote about 1820, Edward was an unusual person:

"Mrs. Aitchison is alive and the eldest son Ned is a strange character. When he was a boy he was reported to be more accurate at knowing sheep by the head than any shepherd in Ewes. When he went to school he had no taste for learning at all, gave himself no concern about it, but when he grew up he associated himself with Jobbers and Dealers and frequented markets both in Scotland and England to acquire skill in Black Cattle, but especially fat sheep and Nolt. The shambles he attended wherever he came, handled the cattle and endeavoured to learn the prices, observed attentively their manner of slaughtering and took great pains to qualify himself for a Butcher, a strange taste, and at this day prides himself more in killing Cattle than upon anything else, and you cannot oblige him more than by sending for him to kill either sheep, Nolt or even Goats." 2

1. Ibid, p. 175.

2. Beattie, op. cit., p. 175.

Ned cheated even his friends, told extravagant yarns, but remained well-liked. He was tenant in Unthank after his father, and in the early 1820s paid the rents of Langhope for his brother Charles, who disappeared abroad.

The most successful line of Aitchisons was that of William in Burnfoot. Known as "Auld Faish" or "Odds Fish", William was said to have been "of weakish intellect like his son by a second wife Ba' gray Ned, alias Uncle Edward, a poor silly inoffensive creature".¹ His eldest son, another William, moved to Linhope in 1792, and died there in 1836. The first Aitchison to be born at Linhope was a third William, who, at the age of twenty two, took a lease of Menzion in Tweedsmuir in 1819, and later added Glenkerry, Penchrise, and Stellshaw in Cumberland. A friend of James Hogg, a great reader and noted speaker, William Aitchison became the first president of the Teviotdale Agricultural Society, and his portrait still hangs in the Society rooms in the Tower Hotel, Hawick. He died in 1873, but his family left Linhope only recently.

Grieves

In his tale "Rob Dodds", James Hogg reflected on the disappearance of certain old tenant families, in particular the Lintons. A shepherd speaks about the possible cause:

1. Colterscleuch Papers.

"I canna tell; some overturn o' affairs, like the present, I fancy. The farmers had outhier lost a' their sheep, or a' their siller, as they are like to do now... My ain grandfather, who was the son of a great farmer, hired himsell for a shepherd at that time (i.e., 'afore the Revolution') to young Tam Linton; and mony ane was wae for the downcome... of a' the downcomes that ever a country kenn'd in a farming name, there has never been ought like that o' the Lintons. When my grandfather was young... they had a' the principal store-farms i' Ettrick Forest, and a part in this shire. They had, when the great Mr. Boston came to Ettrick (June 1707) the farms o' Blackhouse, Dryhope, Henderland, Chapelhope, Scabcleuch, Shorthope, Midgehope, Meggatknowes, Buccleuch, and Gilmanscleuch, that I ken of, and likely as mony mae.. Thomas Linton rode to kirk and market, wi' a livery at his back... and the last representative o' that great overgrown family, that laid house to house, and field to field, is now sair gane on a wee, wee farm o' the Duke o' Buccleuch's." 1

The same speaker also reckoned that towards the end of the seventeenth century the old tenants were so 'reduced' that strangers took their place. The Welshes came "out o' a place they ca' Wales, in England", the Andersons from Rannoch, the Ballantynes from Galloway - "for as flourishing folks as they are now, the first o' them came out at the Birkhill path, riding on a haltered pony, wi' a goatskin aneath him for a saddle." Also from the Highlands came "a set o' MacGregors and MacDougals", who arrived in Yarrow and changed their names to Scott: "but they didna thrive; for they warna likit, and the hinderend o' them were in the Catslackburn".² The idea that some Border tenants derived from the Highlands was persistent in tradition, but there seems to be no other evidence, and though the shepherd was correct in placing the decline of some

1. Hogg, James, The Shepherd's Calendar, Vol. I, pp. 12-13.

2. Ibid, pp. 10-11.

families and the advance of others at the close of the seventeenth century, Andersons and Ballantynes were in the district long before this time. The Grieves, too, were supposed to have Highland origins and became leading tenants around 1700, but they were in the Borders before 1550. The story of their progress in the eighteenth century shows how men of intelligence could begin farming in a small way, advance themselves gradually and, after disentangling themselves from the net of tradition and custom, improve their farming methods so as to achieve a social position not much different from that of successful minor lairds.

It was customary for a tenant's eldest son, when old enough, either to become a sharer of his father's farm, or to look around for an alternative elsewhere until his father retired. Some took a small, unpopular place that happened to be vacant, others joined two or three other men in a combined enterprise. The young man waited until his father was prepared to hand over, and landowners countenanced this arrangement, though they kept an eye on the worthiness of the son in case he should be a waster or in other ways run down the farm. Thus, when Walter Grieve, who had been tenant of Branxholm Park since 1684, withdrew from his farm soon after 1700, his son James automatically succeeded. James was also tenant of Todshawhaugh, where he lived until his death in 1781.

James's son, Walter, was born at Todshawhaugh in 1710, and began farming in his own right at the age of nineteen, when Branxholm Park was for a while no longer 'in the family'.

He was fortunate in that he had inherited some capital from his grandfather, and because William Grieve in Linhope had recently fallen so deeply into debt that he was no longer able to rent more than half the farm. So Walter,

"Being left a considerable sum by his grandfather 'independent' of his own father... began farming by purchasing a Sixth share of the Stock of Linhope from Thomas Shiel who with John Curle occupied that farm... This occurred at Whitsunday 1729. In the year 1737 he bought another sixth share from the said Thomas Shiel... At Whitsunday 1738 he bought another sixth from James Curle of Grassyards... These 3 sixths amounted to £345.6.8. At Whitsunday 1735 He got in to the possession of Rickarton buying the Stock at an open Sale - Rent £70." 1

Walter entered Braxholm Park in 1742, bought the other half of the Linhope stock in 1753, and in 1763 added to his other farms the Liddesdale Braidlie. He took the North Tyne farm of Smale in 1770, and succeeded his father in Todshawhaugh, to which he retired in 1786, leaving Braxholm Park to his son James. On his death in 1799, Adam Ogilvie, the Buccleuch chamberlain, described him to the Duke as "the oldest Tenant upon your Estate, of the oldest family of Tenants upon it, and perhaps the oldest man..." 2

The younger James Grieve was born in 1751, and took over Riccarton by arrangement with Walter when he too was nineteen, In July 1784 James wrote to his father:

-
1. G.P., Diary no. 26, pp. 88-91.
 2. B.M., 659, Letter dated 20th May 1799.

"The Profits of my farm have hitherto supplied my Pocket and other necessary expences not without the exertion of a degree of Oeconomy which few young men in the same situation would have practised. That resource is now become insufficient and you must provide some other. To this perhaps you may object and say, that so soon as I shall change my way of life and marry that you will supply me sufficiently. But I have long feared that your idea of a sufficiency and mine will differ very materially..." 1

James promised to live within his means in future, and, after inheriting Branxholm Park, fulfilled his promise. He had two sons, and eventually, when in his seventies, married their mother, as an indication that he approved of their behaviour so far and that in his view they deserved to be legitimised. By this time both had taken up farming. James Grieve himself conducted his affairs on a sound and business-like basis, tried out new farming methods, and left Branxholm Park to his elder son William more 'improved' than most farms.

On 20th July 1833, James Grieve observed that "It is truly foolish to stick to the old practices which can not be justified by reason and common sense." 2 This sentiment echoed that expressed about 1700 regarding the inhabitants of Tweeddale, who were "an Industrious, Careful People, yet something Wilful, Stubborn and Tenacious of old Customes." 3 Such remarks, however, have greater application to arable farms than to the management of sheep, which has an essential

1. G.P., Letter dated 8th July, 1784.

2. G.P., Diary no. 26, p. 154.

3. Pennecuik, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

pattern not easily altered or improved. Only two major practices, smearing and ewe milking, might be considered casualties of the 'agricultural revolution', and lost to the tradition. The other necessary, and often interdependent, improvements, such as provision of shelter and fodder in winter, the proper treatment of disease, and the breeding of better stock, all required the availability of capital and empirical knowledge rather than a change of outlook on the part of the farmer, and Napier's exhortations in his 'Practical Treatise' merely suggest that tenants and landlords were reluctant to make outlays of money.

There were two distinct categories of sheepfarmer in the nineteenth century, and perhaps there had been earlier. One consisted of those who treated their farms as estates and behaved as lairds rather than as tenants. They were quickly accused of being without any real interest in farming, and were thus placed on the perimeter of the farmers' social circle. The other kind was described by Findlater about 1800, and the portrait will aptly conclude this chapter:

"Having to acquire, not to enjoy, a fortune, his faculties are sharpened by necessity; his whole energy is called forth, as he must either do or die; his attention is ever alive to the most minute details, that can contribute, in any way, to his purpose. In this manner... he acquires more perfect practical skill in the business of his profession; his plans are laid down with judgment, conducted with accuracy, and with the most minute attention to the oeconomy in expence. Subjected to almost no public duties, his attention is not distracted

from the peculiar business of his profession;
he can personally oversee every operation, and
attend to the whole detail of practical economy." ¹

1. Findlater, op. cit., pp. 314-5.

Chapter four: THE MANAGEMENT OF THE SHEEP FARMS.

1. Sheep Stocks.

Antiquity and Growth

It is generally accepted that at least on Abbey lands there were large flocks of sheep on the Border hills during the mediaeval period, and perhaps earlier. Evidence for the other estates such as those of the Douglasses is scanty. The very necessity for an act in King William's reign expressly forbidding barons and freeholders to keep great flocks for fear of wasting man's lands may suggest that some landholders were trying to farm in this way; and deductions based on the fourteenth century customs accounts of wool indicate that Scotland then had well over half the number of sheep it had in 1814, most of which must have been in the southern uplands. Furthermore such a quantity of sheep, whether on or outside the Abbey lands, cannot have been arrived at quickly.

Increase in the size of flocks required suitable conditions, some of which came only after a certain stage in the political and economic development of the country. Good returns for the sale of wool and mutton were as necessary as the availability of markets,¹ and the dependable management of landlords or kindly tenants was essential to tide over bad times and seasons. Until 1450 at least there can have been few men able or wealthy enough

1. Markets and the wool trade, and their relationship to the development of sheepfarms after the Union of the Crowns, are dealt with in the final chapter.

to undertake sheepfarming on a large scale; apart from the Abbeys, only a handful of resident lairds or kindly tenants, mainly to be found in the Forest and Tweeddale, could therefore be compared to the modern tenant. Most of the Forest steads, too, must originally have been not much larger than the little holdings in Liddesdale, where there were as many cattle as sheep and no great numbers of either.

In 1434 the Scottish king had sheep in the Forest,¹ which was still held by the Douglas family and supposed to be reserved for hunting. Probably they pastured on the four steads of West and East Mountbenger, Catslack and Blackgrain, all on the north side of Yarrow facing the sun and all regularly recorded in the Crown rentals of the later fifteenth century as containing the King's flocks. Some of the noblemen who leased other steads paid a rent partly in lambs, and in 1473 John of Moravia held Harehead, Hangingshaw and Lewinshope with freedom to keep sheep.² Patrick Crechtoun received a lease of the four 'royal' steads in 1486, "togidder with aucht hundreith scheip pertenying to ws being apou the said stedis", and was allowed to keep his own "gudis" there.³ In 1500 there were fourteen hundred "zowis and old schepe" on these same steads.⁴ It was usual to employ the 'long' hundred

-
1. E.R., Vol. IV, pp. 5-6.
 2. E.R., Vol. VIII, pp. 142-3.
 3. E.R., Vol. IX, pp. 470-1.
 4. R.P.S., Vol. I, p.67, no. 475.

of six scores until the mid-seventeenth century at least, so that the sheep totals were larger than might at first be assumed.

When Forest steads fell vacant and were not immediately re-let, they were described as being in the hands of the King or Queen, and this meant that the extent of Crown sheep farming varied considerably. Widely scattered steads were from time to time pastured in this way, and by the beginning of the sixteenth century, sixteen had been so employed, each one usually having twenty one score, or one hirsell, upon it. At this time the Crown flocks alone on the Forest steads probably contained about four thousand animals. In addition there were the tenants' own sheep, and, in other districts, those of landlords and the Abbeys. It seems not surprising to find Ayala in 1498 saying that in Scotland "There are immense flocks of sheep, especially in the savage portions...",¹ but it may be that Major exaggerated in writing that "Many men hold as many as ten thousand sheep and one thousand cattle..."²

Records of raids provide a clue as to the size of sheepstocks in widely scattered parts of the Borders around 1500:

-
1. Brown, P. Hume (Ed.): Early Travellers in Scotland, p.44.
 2. Major, op. cit., p. 36. In a note the translator remarked that Major must have been speaking of the Highlands, but there is no evidence of large-scale sheep farming in that area, and it has been pointed out that in the 'Celtic' parts of Scotland and in Wales sheep were a minor feature of the subsistence husbandry practised there. (Trow-Smith, R: History of British Livestock Husbandry to 1700, p. 146.)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Numbers stolen</u>	<u>Whence taken</u>
1479	18 scores	Hawkshaw
1502	3 sc. wedders	Broadmeadows
1513	28 sc.	Howpasley
1535	12 sc.	Yair
1535	40 sc.	Laird of Polmood

Some of these totals show that by this time sheep-farming was indeed being conducted on a substantial scale by lairds such as Porteous of Hawkshaw and Scott of Howpasley.

By 1535 James V had suppressed troublesome Border figures like Cockburn of Henderland and even put Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch in ward, with the result that further lands came into his possession, including Sir Walter Scott's Buccleuch and Bellendean. Pitscottie, referring to these years wrote that "thair was great peace and rest... quhair throw the king had great proffeit, of the quhilk he had ten thousand scheip gangand into Ettrick forrest all in keeping be ane Androw Bell, quho maid the king goode compt of thame as they had gaine in the boundis of Fyfe." ¹ Bell was evidently an administrative officer, having to account for the flocks and hire shepherds. It is not clear how many of the sheep were on the old Forest steads, many of which had been feued out; but some of the farms recorded as in the King's hands at this time were on the edge of the Forest and considered part of it. (See Appendix no. VII)

James V's uncle, Henry VIII, did not approve of the Scottish King's adventure into sheep farming, and asked Sir Ralph Sadler to convey his displeasure:

1. MacKay, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 353.

"The Second thing whereof his Highness thought meet to advertise his good Nephew, is, that by some it is bruited, that he should gather into his Hands Numbers of Sheep, and such other vile and mean Things, in respect of his Estate, being the Livings of the poor Men, therewith to advance his Revenue." 1

Henry concluded that it was undignified and risky for a King to derive a profit by these means, and suggested that James should enrich himself by taking over some of the Abbey lands, and he would then "be able to live like a King, and yet meddle not with Sheep, and those mean Things, which he Matter whereupon to occupy the meanest of his People".² Sadler communicated all this to James, and reported the latter's vague and evasive reply:

"In good Faith... I have no Sheep, nor occupy no such Things. But... such as have Tacks and Farms of me, peradventure have such Numbers of Sheep and Cattle, as ye speak of, going upon my Lands, which I have no Regard to. But for my Part... by my Truth I never knew what I had of mine own, nor yet do." 3

Whether James knew he had sheep or not, there seems to have been a general assumption that he had, and that some were pastured on Abbey lands. Thus when he died in February 1543, leaving an infant daughter as successor, powerful Border nobles stepped in. Even before the King's death, it was reported that "the Lorde of Bowcluch hath entred into Melros Abbey,... and hath taken to his owne use all the kinges shepe that he founde their, saing he will have theyme

-
1. Letters and Negotiations of Sir Ralph Sadler, p. 6.
 2. Ibid., p. 7.
 3. Ibid., p. 38.

in parte of recompence of the shepe that the kinge toke of his, and wilhave all the grounde where they goo to kepe theym uppon".¹ The Kers similarly 'entred into' Kelso Abbey's lands and sheep.

Buccleuch also succeeded, more legitimately it seems, to the King's flocks on the Forest lands near Newark. But having gained more lands and stock than he had previously had, Buccleuch had to defend them against the English army and the raiding bands hired in Liddesdale and elsewhere by the English March Wardens. Late in 1543 Sir Thomas Wharton commanded "my servaunt Robyn Foster called 'Hobes Robin', to do a notable displeasur agaynst the Larde Bukcleuche, and if it were possible, to git sum of his sheipp in Atrick forest".² So Hobes Robin and eighty men, some of whom were Scots, burned the farm 'toun' of Singlie in Ettrick and took away eighty-four score sheep. Wharton was pleased and stated that:

"the sheip that er brought into Ynglande at this entreprisse ar better than a hundreth pounds sterling, and of the best sheipe in those parties of Scotlande. I thought bycause the Larde Bukcleugh reported he had gootin much golde in rewardes of the Cardenall, he might the better forgo part of his sheipe..."³

Buccleuch's losses continued, and at the end of 1544 more than twelve thousand sheep and ten thousand cattle

1. The Hamilton Papers, Vol. I, pp. 344-5, no. 263.

2. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 213, no. 130.

3. Ibid.

had been taken to England from various parts of the Scottish Borders.¹ The second half of the century saw continued plundering and many further instances of the large numbers of sheep kept on the hill farms. Raids as far north as the Forest and Tweeddale were rare, but the well stocked lands were there,² and the Tweedie family, for example, stood the loss of four thousand sheep and two hundred cattle from Drummelzier and Dreva.³

For such men as the Tweedies and even the Scotts of Buccleuch, sheepfarming had become a way of life long before 1600. Indeed people of wealth and standing were those who could survive the great losses of stock brought by plundering or by severe winters, and upon them the development of pastoral husbandry was to depend. Lesser men were ruined or compelled to steal in order to replenish their empty lands. The destruction wrought by winter storms was so dreadful as to compel the Scottish Privy Council to issue edicts from time to time, forbidding the eating of flesh till the end of March, and even ordering in 1561 that no lambs be killed, sold or eaten for three years because.

-
1. Oliver, J.R.: Upper Teviotdale and the Scotts of Buccleuch, p. 163.
 2. Leslie wrote of the good wool produced in Tweeddale. He noted that "In this cuntrie ar fund, evin as with nychtbouris, that sum of thame are knawen to have four or fyve hundir, uthiris agane aucht or nyne hundir, and sum tyme thay ar knawen to have a thousand scheip." Not far away to the south, he added, was "ane ample and plesand pastural called the Forest in quhilke baith the gret and smal beistes of the Prince uses to feid..." (Cody & Murison, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 18-19.)
 3. R.P.C., Vol. IV, p. 709.

"be tempest and stormis of wodder fallin this last wynter, the maist part of the scheip of Scotland ar perissit and deid".¹ If such lambs as were born should be consumed then there would be no way of building up stocks again. The situation of the small proprietor in the face of such climatic and human onslaughts was exemplified by that of the Scotts of Tushielaw. In the 1560s and 1570s they stole sheep and took land by force; in 1586 raiders seized, among other booty, a total of one hundred and forty score sheep from their various Ettrick farms; and in 1609 the laird, not surprisingly seeing things in a sombre light, wrote:

"the onlie moyane quhairupoun I leave is ane hieland rowme liand in the lordschip of Etrik Forrest, haldin in few of his Majestie, and quhairupoun thair is na arrabill land except sum peces of hauches quhilk lyis contigue to the wattir of Ettirik, that scairslie will saw thrie bollis of victuall be yeir, bot haldis ane few number of scheip thairupoun, quhilk is na propir rent, bot ane accident and casualtie yeirlie subject to the perrell of deith and wintir stormes, as in verie deid the maist pairt of thame be storme of weddir decayis..."²

It seems evident that Tushielaw and others like him depended upon sheep for the greater part of their income. In the will of Sir Walter Scott of Branxholm and Buccleuch, who died in 1574, the sheep flocks on his lands of Bellen-dean, Buccleuch, Newark, Blackgrain, Catslack and Glenpot, feature prominently, though a good number of cattle was also mentioned. Cattle were probably as numerous as sheep on

1. R.P.C., Vol. I, pp. 200-1.

2. R.P.C., Vol. VIII, p. 797.

the small farms of Liddesdale, where the people, generally poorer than those further north and thus more likely to feel the uncertain and hostile conditions of the time, were not surprisingly inclined to consider raiding as essential to their economy and survival.

The significance of Buccleuch's own flocks to sheep-farming in the Borders increased after 1600, when, with the extension of the Buccleuch estate, hirsels directly owned by the landlord appeared on more than a dozen farms in Teviotdalehead, Eskdalemuir and Liddesdale. These hirsels, usually one of 'odd sheep' and one of hoggs on each farm, were in the care of specially employed herds, and were an important source of sheep both for tenants on the same estate and for neighbouring lairds and their tenants in need of stock. In 1628 twenty farms were 'plenished' with Buccleuch's sheep, but by 1640 there were only six, and the system came to an end in 1651, when probably there were tenants willing to take every farm.

In addition, the teind accounts for the period 1625-1636,¹ provide evidence of flock size on other farms in the area. The new 'rentalled' tenant was at this time trying to build up his flock, but still found the task difficult, for no measures had been taken to counteract the perils of winter, some thieving still went on, and teinds had to be paid. Though the number of lambs 'told' before the teind 'gathering' roughly indicates the size of

1. B.M., 943/1 and 943/6.

the ewe hirsels, it cannot be concluded that these hirsels were then at their optimum size, and they probably formed less than half of the whole stock (see AppendixVIII). Several factors, such as bad winters or absence of tenants, may account for the fluctuation in totals.

It is clear that stocks of sheep were approaching their present day level by 1650, and in some places had long been at that level. There is every reason to suppose that John Scott of Gilmanscleuch's stock, described in a letter of 12th April 1656, was of typical proportions for a farm of that acreage: "Being not abell my Self to come downe for the Waluatione of my Land, thairfor I though(t) it fiting to Sett downe justlie what Soumes was one it this Last yeire, - of Sheipe ane thousand and foirtie and twentie four nout with threie horse and meires".¹ Today Gilmanscleuch has a stock of about 1000 sheep and 30 cattle. Several examples of sheep stocks in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are given in an appendix (see AppendixVIII) together with modern equivalents.

Some further comment on the effect of winters is needed before closing this section. The last thirty years of the seventeenth century produced a series of very severe seasons, among which the winter of 1673-4 remains unmatched for the destruction it brought to the large sheep stocks of the Borders. March proved to be the worst month, with what became known as 'the thirteen drifty days'. "It is said",

1. S.H.P., no. 2650.

wrote Hogg, "that for thirteen days and nights, the snow drift never once abated; the ground was covered with frozen snow when it commenced, and, during all that time, the sheep never once broke their fast".¹ A few sheep managed to survive by chewing scrub willow and peeling the bark off larger trees, but thousands died, and shepherds used the corpses to build semicircular walls, called later 'stinking stells', in order to shelter those still alive. Many farms lost all their sheep, and Phawhope at the head of Ettrick was supposed to have remained waste for twenty years. Stories of the disaster were numerous in tradition, one of the best known being that relating to Robert Scott, tenant of Priesthaugh, who "sat up with the Presthaugh sheep for thirteen nights successively, and through the day pulled heather for them."² The loss of sheep on the Buccleuch farms in Ettrick and Yarrow amounted to nineteen and a half thousand (see Appendix IX).

The Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch were granted a royal warrant for the importing of stock, after Charles II had been "informed of the great prejudice and devastation" they had suffered "by the depauperation of their tenants, who are very much disabled to continow in their respective possessions or to pay rent... by reason of that great and extraordinary storm..."³ The licence, permitting the

1. Napier, op. cit., p. 17.

2. G.P., Diary no. 16, p. 344.

3. R.P.C., 3rd Series, Vol. IV, p. 416.

importation of horses and 'nolt' from Ireland, was abused and so withdrawn. Nothing was said about how the sheep were to be replaced.

Somehow this was done, but no sooner had lairds and tenants begun to recover, than two more hard seasons arrived in the early 1680s and again reduced stock. In 1682 it was observed that Lairhope, near Falnash, "holds 360 sheep qrof 150 Ewis and payes 400 mks but all the lambs are dead this yeir".¹ An account of surviving sheep and cattle was taken in Mây 1684, in which it appears that losses were great but not as severe as in 1674.² So the sorry tale continued, although the people of the hillfarms do not seem to have suffered the degrees of misery and starvation which overtook the arable country in the last decade of the century.

The hazards faced by the sheepfarmers in the seventeenth century illustrate a situation that was ages old. To most people losses of stock were an inevitable part of life, not worth attempting to resist as long as insecurity, lack of capital, short leases or none, prevailed. It is hard to realise now the desperation or resignation with which such hardships were regarded, though one can easily see how much depended on the understanding shown by the laird. On 23rd April 1709 Gideon Scott, a Buccleuch chamberlain, described a typical state of affairs:

1. B.M., 943/23.

2. B.M., 943/23 and 243.

"a just accompt of the losses by the death of Sheep last winter cannot presently be given In respect that the Sheep being so weak are not in condition to be gathered together in order to be numbered whereby the true loss might appear.

"Allso the haill Tennants agree in their Complaints of their Sheep continuing to dye every day and some of them of their Sheep dying faster then they did in winter and asserted they could give noe certaine accompt of their losses till near the end of June..."¹

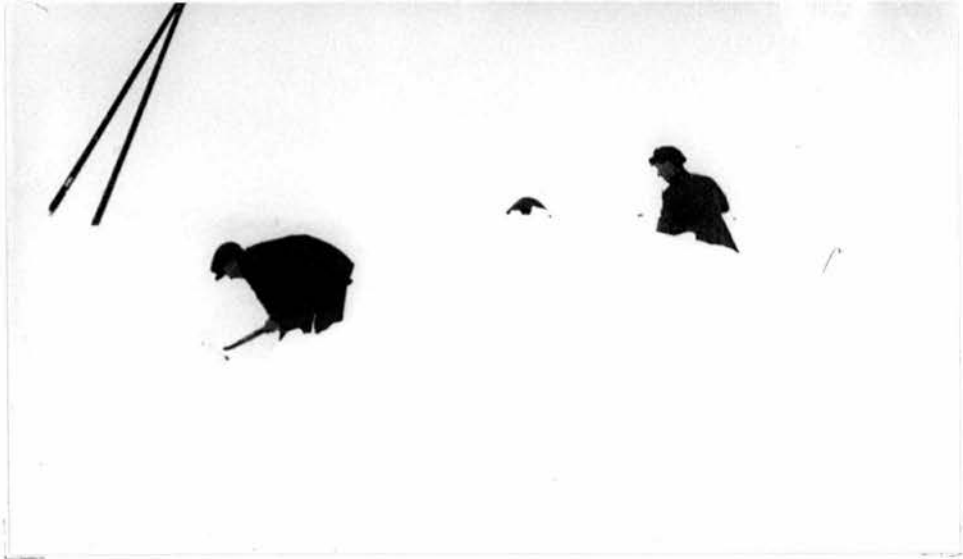
A traditional way of coping with such problems seems once to have been by 'overstocking' in winter, which was hardly a sensible practice since it often meant increased losses through starvation.² Eild sheep were very numerous. The term 'eild' is now applied chiefly to ewes that bear no lamb, though at the 'eild sheep' clipping males are included. In the days of wedder hirsels the male sheep as well as the barren ewes were called 'eild'; in 1790 there is reference to "the yeld (that is the he or barren) sheep".³

Reduction of stock in the spring was achieved by selling off 'grit ewes'; i.e., draught ewes in lamb, late in March.

1. B.M., 479.

2. The anonymous author(s) of A Treatise on Pasturage (1790) wrote comments (p. 11) which indicate that overstocking still occurred through careless management: "if a store-master does not sell off a sufficient quantity of his sheep for the market, but allows his farm to overstock itself, this will soon after cause diseases and death, till they have become more diminished in number..." He added later (p. 168) that "In many places such a thing was scarcely known, as selling ewes that were thought to have a chance to live through the winter, except those that were summer yeld; though they had ever so many sheep on their farm..." This would mean excessive numbers of sheep in good seasons, excessive losses in bad.

3. A Treatise on Pasturage, p. 122.



Pl. 3 Digging for sheep on Craik on 2nd March, 1937.

Pl. 4

A sheep is found.

In 1917 a Cheviot
ewe on Craik
survived after
53 days under snow.



However, these were outdated methods by the eighteenth century, and, as sheepfarming developed in an age of peace and economic progress, with the provision of shelters and of better supplies of winter feed it became increasingly possible to adjust the size of stock to the nourishment available. As George Malcolm pointed out, the holding of a sheepfarm was to be determined by what it could generally support in winters. The stock of Dewslees and Byre-cleughwater in 1763 was 1690 in the summer and 1456 in winter.¹

Storms continued to occur of course, none fiercer than that of 25th January 1794, but tenants were equipping themselves with the means to protect their stock, and landlords could put most of the responsibility upon the tenant and his management. Of particular concern to the man now able to look for a sheep that would live on his farm and provide a good return was the matter of improved breeding.

'Scottisheep' and other breeds.

One of the tantalising deficiencies of records earlier than 1790 is the absence of information on sheep breeds. Apart from two or three fleeting references, the earliest sufficient account is given in the first Statistical Account, and it is upon the descriptions there that one has to rely for information on breeds before the age of improvement.

1. B.M., 290/1.

In the more northerly districts of the Border hill area 'blackfaced' sheep occupied the pastures from times beyond memory. No one knew whence they came. In 1795, for instance, Naismyth observed that the blackfaced or 'short' sheep were general in the Lammermuirs. "It is impossible", he wrote, "to trace their origin, there being no tradition of the sheep here being ever of a different kind." ¹ Findlater referred to the blackfaced or 'Tweeddale' breed as having "continued the same as far back as memory or tradition extends." ² There were several alternative names for this type; in addition to 'short' and 'Tweeddale', 'Linton' was used because that was where large sales of the sheep took place, and 'Forest' derived from the prevalence of the blackfaced sheep in that district. The minister of Lyne and Megget stated that the flocks in his parish were "all of the black-faced, common Scotch kind." ³

From the Borthwick Water south to the Border the blackfaced was less usual. When in 1644 thieves stole forty or fifty sheep from Jedwaterhead and drove them to Liddesdale, two farmers were at first willing to buy them, "but seeing them to be bot Scottisheep and fearing they sould be challenged with them, they rewde the bargane..." ⁴ The inferiority of the 'Scottisheep' by comparison with those the

-
1. Naismyth, John: Observations on the Different Breeds of Sheep, etc., p. 3.
 2. Findlater, op. cit., p. 185.
 3. O.S.A., Vol. XII, p. 559.
 4. B.M., 907/2.

buyers might have got seems evident; the breed is uncertain, but it was sufficiently distinct to be an embarrassment if discovered. In 1669 the herd at Dod noticed among sheep stolen from Rule Water farms and left with him that there were "tua blackfaced scheid haveing hornes", and told his servant "to cut thair hornes Becaus they war kenspeckill scheid".¹ The offenders in this case were clearly of the Tweeddale kind, whereas the rest, without horns, must have been rather like them.

It is not clear what the other breeds might have been. There were at least two possibilities; hornless, fine woolled, whitefaced Cheviots, called by Naismyth "the long hill sheep of the east border",² or another hornless variety known as 'dun-faced'. The Cheviots flourished in southeast Roxburghshire, where they had been "for time immemorial",³ and it appears that by the 1790s they were also long established in Liddesdale, Ewesdale, and "about the heads of the Tiviot and the Borthwick".⁴ A tradition existed that the breed came

1. E.D.P., 24/CXCII.

2. Naismyth, op. cit., p.24.

3. Ibid., p. 36.

4. Ibid., p. 36. The breeds across the Border in the uplands of northern England were apparently not very good. A writer in 1770 said that "Throughout the moor farms in several counties in the north of England, their breed of sheep is more paltry than can be well conceived in the south; so wretched, that it would be absurd to expect any considerable profit from them." (Young, A: A Six Months Tour through the North of England, Vol. IV, p. 335). He was not, however, very well informed about the situation in the hills along the Border, and appears to have understood the extensive area of Simonburn and Kielder in the North Tyne to be a great flockmaster: "In the Moors of Northumberland, flocks rise to 40,000, which number is kept near the head of North Tyne, by one Mr. (I think) Simon Kidder, or some such name..." (Ibid.)

into being after the winter of 1674, when it was so difficult to find stock that "people were glad to take any sort that came to hand",¹ and 'Cheviots' resulted from the mixture. On the other hand the 'dun-faced' were apparently to be found in the same country, and some of their blood may have been in their Cheviot neighbours. Many of the latter used to have dark complexions, and these exceptions, known locally as 'brickies',² still occur from time to time. Culley considered that the dun-faced sheep were the early occupants of the hills along the Border; they were small, fine woolled, and hardy, but "far inferior to the black-faced."³

About 1700 Thomas Armstrong, a Ewesdale man, gave up droving and "took to farming with uncommon judgement and application. Before his time there was a small despicable breed of sheep in the water of Ewes. He thought the land might keep a better and larger kind and began to fetch Tups of a superior kind into the country".⁴ Armstrong bought twenty tups from the east Borders, no doubt Cheviots, and was successful for a time, but as Malcolm pointed out seventy years later the large Cheviot breed did not thrive in Eskdale

1. Hardie, J., 'Miscellanea', Extracts from Correspondence, 'P.B.N.C.', (1873-5) p. 291.

2. The name also occurs as 'brockets', 'brockie', 'brewkit'.

3. Youatt, W.: Sheep: Their breeds, management, and diseases, etc., p. 280.

4. Beattie, op. cit., p. 11.

and "turned smaller".¹ If Armstrong's original sheep were the dun-faced, his was not the only attempt to improve the breed in this way. It was also possible to try an alternative method. In 1760 Thomas Beattie made the attempt:

"We had then in Burngrains a noted shepherd called Tom Murray. In choosing our Tup Lambs, to ride our stocks, we wailed (i.e., selected) them all Black-faced Black legged and coarse skinned, and after pitching upon the darkest and coarsest we could find, still Tom thought they were not either coarse enough in the skin nor sufficiently Blackfaced. He prevailed upon my father to allow him to go to the Blackhouse in Yarrow, and buy some real short Scotts sheep Blackfaced and horned. These Thomas sais would amend their skins and make them Broader in the backs, and indeed they answered his expectation for as they had terrible horns, none of our Rams ever attempted to fight for the Ewes, but were obliged to stand quietly by... I think they had ridden the most of them and begot such a Race of Mongrels as never was seen in the water of Ewes." 2

With such experiments characterising the later eighteenth century, the 'short' blackfaced Tweeddale and 'long' white-faced Cheviot³ came to dominate the scene and exclude

-
1. Pennant, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 401, Appendix vii. The point was made again in 1790. It was observed that "When rams are changed, they are generally brought from east to west, in the South of Scotland; because the sheep in the east parts...are bigger and longer of the wool than in the west". (A Treatise on Pasturage, pp. 180-1.)
 2. Beattie, op. cit., p. 57.
 3. The terms 'short' and 'long' referred to the body, not the wool. Robson of Belford in the Cheviots, and Culley of Fenton near Wooller, were well-known improvers of the Cheviot breed. "Mr. Culey... has been at the expence of hiring tups of that famous breeder, Mr. Bakewell, of Ditchley, near Loughborough, in Leicestershire, by which means he has (I think in two years) so improved his flock, that all his neighbours are astonished, and some of them are now hiring tups of him at no trifling expence, convinced, at last, that no land is too poor to have a good stock on it." (Young, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 336).

whatever other kinds of sheep there were. The former, suited to the higher and more heathery ground, remained in its northerly homeland, and was introduced to the more exposed grounds further south, while the latter, 'improved' by early experiments in Northumberland, was extending its range to the northwest. It soon occurred to various farmers that the weight, size, and fine wool of the Cheviot and the hardiness of the Blackfaced might be joined in a judicious mixture, or that Cheviots might be introduced in place of blackfaced sheep on all but the highest hirsels. Both of these 'improvements' were attempted widely, seeming naturally to accompany the improved facilities on the farms, the turnips, the drains, the dykes and folds. There were reservations, but the far greater value of fine wool encouraged many to risk the disadvantages, and by 1815 even "mountainous, bleak lying farms" in Selkirkshire had been taken over.¹ Improved Cheviots put previous specimens to shame, and 'breeders' such as Brydon of Moodlaw so refined the sheep that at markets and shows it appeared the epitome of improvement, making the old blackfaced look like the dark incarnation of unenlightened ages past.

The blackfaced breed was rescued by the winter of 1859-1860 which destroyed many of its usurping rivals. Enthusiasm for the Cheviot had an economic basis, and, in the circumstances of the time, was great enough to make men forget their ancestors' experience of storms like 'the thirteen

1. Little, J., Practical Observations on the Improvement and Management of Mountain Sheep, etc., p. 99.

drifty days'; in the end, however, another storm came to remind them that the proper management of stock on a hill farm meant attaining a balance between all sorts of influencing factors. As a result, much re-stocking with the hardier blackfaced sheep was necessary, and the distribution of the two breeds that ensued has prevailed ever since.

2. The Land: Arable and Pasture.

People living directly on what they themselves could produce required both crops and stock, and the earliest records of the hill country show that a certain amount of arable farming went on alongside the pasturing of sheep and cattle in even the wildest districts. In tracing the history of sheepfarming in the area it is important therefore to examine the relative extent of arable and pasture and the changing role played by each.

Crops were grown quite extensively on the marginal and comparatively gentle ground of, for example, Borthwick Water and parts of Teviotdalehead, where in the wars between England and Scotland they were frequently destroyed. In 1514 Lord Dacre reported that the farms on the water of Ale, from Ashkirk to Ale Moor, where there were fifty 'ploughs', were all waste, with no corn sown; he also claimed to have destroyed "the two townys of Carlangrigges, with the demaynes of the same, which was xi pleughes".¹ Small quantities of

1. Wilson, J.: Hawick and its Old Memories, pp. 4-5.

oats and bere were raised on the steeper, wilder lands, as is shown by the teind accounts around 1625, and such crops can only have served for ordinary domestic consumption.

Shortly after 1603, with the greater opportunity for sheepfarming to make progress, the position began to change, and some hill farmers, particularly those in the higher districts, gave up much of their arable.

In 1649 two local landowners, William Elliot of Stobs and Walter Scott of Arkleton, writing about Selkirkshire which they both knew well, observed that in the hilly parts sheep and cattle were the main source of livelihood: "The over part of the shire has no arable ground, but only is montanous and full of heichts fit for store and bestial, by several whereof the people are totally sustained".¹ An absence of arable was similarly noted a little later in upper Tweeddale, where the hill country was considered "more fit for Pasturage, than the Production of Corn and Grain..."² Depositions on 25th April 1653 by farmers in Innerleithen area regarding teinds, show what the range of crop growing there was. James Hutchisone, who held a quarter of Kailzie, said that he would be sowing four bolls of bere and sixteen bolls of oats, while John Tait in "Thornilie" would sow four bolls of bere and forty six bolls of oats; five bolls of oats were sown on the higher Craighope, and the lands of Seathope and Seathope Grains "subsists altogider be store,

1. M.G.C., Vol. III, p. 150.

2. Ibidl, p. 153.

and has no Labourers". James Young said of Nether Horsburgh that "there is much of it now cassin in pasturage quhilk oft before was Corne Land." ¹

Evidently farms with riverside haughs could persist with arable, while those with less fertile ground were perhaps finding it more convenient to use profits from stock to buy in requisite grain, though they probably continued to plough small patches near the farm steading. The soldiers encamped near Peebles in 1650 took away a large quantity of oats out of the stack yards and barns of Glensax,² but most had been grown on the levels of the Kingsmeadows by the Tweed. In the open valleys of Liddesdale, Borthwick and Teviotdale ploughing was comparatively easy, so that the hill districts of Roxburghshire seemed naturally more productive than their neighbours to the north and west: "The Valley grounds abound with Corn, and the high grounds are furnished with excellent Grass and produce great store of Cattel, of all kinds, and of the best brood in Scotland, both for largeness and goodness".³

If corn-growing among the hills did begin to decline before 1650, then this change accompanied the slow economic progress made by the sheepfarmer. The years of dearth that overtook arable farmers towards the end of the seventeenth century probably hastened the process, and the comments

1. T.P.

2. Haystoun Papers.

3. M.G.C., Vol. III, p. 171.

made by Edward Ladd, surveyer of the Buccleuch Border estate between 1714 and 1721, bear this out.¹ At Bilhope, he wrote, "is no corn land" and "but little meadow". Twislehope had "but little corn land or meadow" for, like Bilhope, it was "very mountainous and ... not half of it good pasture land." About a twelfth part - seventy five acres - of Dinley and Ginglanwalls, in the same district, was cornland or meadow, and there was roughly the same proportion at Hermitage, these farms having some convenient haughs and easy slopes; but on Tanlawhill in Eskdale there "is no corn sown not in this farm now", and similar comments were made regarding Thickside, Pockleaf, and others in the same district. Some thirty years later the Military Survey maps of about 1750 show with some accuracy areas of rigs or ploughed land and meadow on the hill slopes. Those marked at Dinley and Roan in Liddesdale, for instance, seem to be approximately in the same proportion to the pasture as Ladd had described, a proportion that corresponds with the extent of corn ground said to be on the farms in 1760.²

It would not have been surprising if the amount of arable on hill ground had diminished further over the first half of the eighteenth century. Sheepfarming was expanding considerably, and it was subsequently reckoned that this development had caused the decline in corn growing which was obvious to all by 1790. The writers of the first

1. Book of Plans, R.H.P., 9629.

2. B.M., 388.

Statistical Account commented on the change as if it were quite recent. In Eskdalemuir, the Reverend William Brown said that the farmers there were formerly more fond of 'agriculture' and used to plough twice as much. They gave it up partly because of the climate but chiefly owing "to the great demand in late years for sheep and wool".¹ Over in Liddesdale, many hundreds of acres, once in tillage, had been turned into pasture for the same reason, and though on the sides of the hills, once all ploughed, the furrows and ridges still were evident, the visible signs of former fields were becoming obscure:

"About the middle of the hills, on each side the river Liddal, a deep ditch, or a strong wall, appears to have been drawn almost the whole length of the country, beneath which lay the arable ground, where the old furrows and ridges appear, and all above was either for pasture or commons".²

-
1. O.S.A., Vol. XII, p. 608.
 2. O.S.A., Vol. XVI, pp. 66-7. The rigs were eight furrows in width. In the parish of Morebattle, in the Cheviots, a like change had occurred, and the traces of old ploughing were still visible (Ibid., p. 509). In the eighteenth century hill land was still treated as common pasture or 'commons' in the north of England; about Fenton near Wooler, "Their flocks of sheep rise from 500 to 10,000;... the winter and spring food are the commons" (Young, op. cit., p. 78). Malcolm pointed out the difference in Scotland: "These grounds are not in common as in England, but are all separate properties, and divided into extensive farms, with distinct marches, from three to four thousand acres. They are mostly pastured with sheep... the farmer depends upon sheep for paying the rent and yielding him profit. The cows which he keeps, and the corn which he sows, seldom do more than maintain his family" (Pennant, op. cit., Vol III, p. 400, Appendix vii.).

At the same time William Keir, in his report on the Buccleuch hill farms, observed that many tenants, especially in Teviotdale and the Forest, continued to raise corn, and thereby to injure the sheep pasture by ploughing large tracts. He suggested that restrictions on ploughing should be imposed, and indeed clauses forbidding the extension of arable already appeared in many leases.¹ This limitation considerably restricted the use of corn rigs on sheep farms, and marked the point at which arable farming at last came to terms with the pastoral interest.

The mixture of a little arable with much pasture, which was characteristic of farming among the Border hills until the late eighteenth century, was clearly an old established system, probably dating from prehistoric times. A patchwork without the advantages of proper enclosure, it imposed a pattern on farm affairs. Stock and crops had to be raised with as little mutual disadvantage as possible. One way of achieving this was to remove the cattle and some of the sheep to wilder regions during the season when crops were growing and ripening. There was thus an incentive to make use of the 'waste', and this meant the establishment of shielings for summer occupation. So far as sheep were concerned such a pattern was not inconvenient, for to some extent the sheep 'year' fitted well with the growing of corn.

As the seed sprouted in May newly lambed ewes were being watched carefully by the herds and could be kept away

1. B.M., 459/1, p. 152.

from 'fields'. After the separation of the lambs, which used to be in June, the ewes were regularly gathered and milked, so that they were under careful control on a particular grazing while their offspring were away in a remote part called 'the summer hill', far distant from both the mothers and the crops. A large proportion of the sheep stock consisted of widders and 'eild' sheep, which were generally pastured on the higher ground after May. Thus, with the cattle out at the shieling until early August, the crops were reasonably secure during the summer months. In the autumn the sheep were encouraged to graze the extremities of the farm which would become unavailable with the onset of winter, and so they were far from the corn at harvest time. On their return from summering, the lambs were sometimes put into specially 'hained' or preserved ground called the 'hogg fence', to build up their strength further. In spite of all this, however, there was need for herd boys and girls to keep wandering sheep and cattle out of the corn where fields and pasture were intermingled.

That tenants indeed had a clearly planned system of pasturing geared to the seasons and the crops is shown by arrangements at Glensax in 1663. In a small dispute over use of ground there was reference to "The piece of ground where hogs went to be pasturit the tyme of harvest being the time after the Burne." Further, it was decided "that the old Sheepe of the Lands of Glensaxis should come downe to the under cleuch one the west syde of the Burne", and that Thomas Linton, one of the tenants, should have "als

many ewes to be pastured upon the west syde beneath the Towne als he wants of hogs one the east syde." Finally, three men were ordered "to goe up to Glensax and pairt there arrable land".¹ There were evidently different areas of the farm to be used by the various sorts of sheep at appropriate times, as well as the arable land for crops, while both arable and pasture were shared by a small group of tenants.

The crop ground or 'infield', lay mostly near the houses, and was worked under the runrig method; some little way up the hill was the 'outfield', temporarily enclosed by feal dykes to produce a crop of oats and for the remainder of the time open to stock. A few other enclosures were scattered around, for gathering sheep into or growing either lint or a little hay. Such fields as there were still existed at the close of the seventeenth century, some being the direct successors of, or even the same as, the 'parks' in which sheep were folded for the night and where, as a consequence of the animal manure, the ground had been enriched.

As has been remarked, careful herding might be necessary to keep stock out of fields and enclosures. The proceedings of the Baron Baillie's Court of Haystoun, beginning in 1661, set out regulations that resemble the old Border March laws, and record the fines demanded of those whose animals strayed:

"It is ordained yt if any tennents of the barronye sal be found to have yr horse neat or schiep lying in yr nighbours field ane night sal pay...40s"

1. Haystoun Papers.



Pl. 5 Remains of a fail dyke enclosure, and track,
on the former farm of Shootinglees.



Pl. 6 Old fields of rigs enclosed with fail dykes
on the hill above Altrive.

"It is Enacted that in caice any of the tenents or yr herds sall pasture upon yr neighbours grounds wt horse nolt or sheep for ye space of thrie houres then in yt caice it sall be lawful to poynd the goods so pasturing upon yr grounds and not to give ym bak again." ¹

The confused mixture of pasture and arable was typical of farms in the early eighteenth century. On the large farm of Garwald about 1716 Edward Ladd found four hundred acres of "corn land meadow and pasture by the burne near the house intermixed one with the other", while at the Roan fifty five acres were described as very good corn land and meadow but the various pieces were all intermixed, as at Garwald. At Dinley and elsewhere several acres of young wood helped to complicate things even more.² By this time, however, runrig divisions among the hills were being done away with,³ and sheepfarming was beginning to prove a profitable business, so that a new way of setting out the farm soon seemed not only desirable but necessary. The outcome was 'Improvement', in particular enclosure and drainage, and the final subordination of crops to sheep.

3. The Coming of Improvement

Improving Policy and Practice

On a day of misty rain among the hills of Megget or Hermitage it is easy still to picture the untamed Border

1. Haystoun Papers.

2. Book of Plans, R.H.P., 9629.

3. In 1707, for example, the Duchess of Buccleuch agreed that "the Runrigs betuext Craighill and Faewoodsheillrig be Divided betuext the two tennants by two Neutrall men at the Sight of Her Graces Chamerlaine." (B.M., 479) These were hill farms in Ettrick.

wilderness that met the eyes of the prehistoric settlers, and that bogged down the sixteenth century Scottish monarchs and English surveyors. The high, desolate uplands, unenclosed, undrained, and scattered with scrubby trees, were until the mid eighteenth century the setting in which sheep-farming slowly developed.

For centuries sheep roamed over the unfenced, undrained wastes. One or two turf walled fields and a ewe 'bught' for the milking season had been all that a farm could boast by way of enclosure upon the hill, and few of these are mentioned in the records. In the early seventeenth century the Earl of Buccleuch's sheep were clipped at the Northhouse folds, and this was doubtless a long-established practice; whether there were folds on each farm is uncertain. About 1645 a party of raiders who had stolen nine sheep from Jamie Croser, the tenant of Toftholm in Liddesdale, drove their booty eastwards over "the cockleke" near Mains and slipped them "into the cokleke walls" when they saw two men approaching,¹ References of this kind are rare, and it seems probable that the 1772 plan of Thirlstane farm, which shows no folds or other enclosures for sheep at all, represents a situation typical of many sheepfarms until well after 1750. In 1767 Langhope had about fifteen acres of arable between the house and the river, and small folds of three compartments opposite the 'Bilmingshaws Syke': Shielswood in the same year had much more arable but smaller folds, the latter

1. B.M., 907/2.

being near a 'washing pool' on the Ale Water west of the Leap Linns. In Liddesdale Sundhope, which was crossed by a principal drove road, had in 1792 one park next to the house where the droves rested overnight. The writers of the late eighteenth century made much of names like 'Dead for Cauld' and 'Dirthope' in Megget, where no shrub relieved the bareness.

The want of enclosures and sheepfolds was indeed a favourite theme of those writers. They wrote too on the ways in which sheepfarming methods could be improved and the potential of the sheep industry fully realised. They were enthusiasts for draining the pastures. Men like Naismyth, who walked the boggy wilds between Craik and the Tima valley about 1790, thought the open hills presented "a most disgusting view",¹ but suggested that after the necessary improvement the scene would be quite transformed to one of pleasant fertility. Some expressed a kinder opinion. To the Reverend Douglas the bleakness of the hills was only superficial:

"Their naked and bleak aspect, when seen at a distance in cloudy weather, is lost, upon riding among them, and beholding the rich sward with which they are covered, the clear streams which issue from their sides, the fleecy flocks browsing on their green pastures, and their lambs frisking around." 2

It even became fashionable to consider this type of country, as Douglas thought Yarrow, romantic and delightful.

1. Naismyth, op. cit., p. 43.

2. Douglas, R., General View of the Agriculture of the Counties of Roxburgh and Selkirk, etc., p. 230.

Such an approving view accompanied the optimistic outlook for sheepfarming, which Andrew Wight, in his survey of Selkirkshire in 1778, was one of the first to express:

"I conclude my survey of this county with an observation, that, however barren and comfortless it may appear to a hasty stranger, it contains in its bosom a fund of riches, that never can be exhausted while men love mutton, and wear broad cloth. Sheep are this fund of riches, which are not only inexhaustible, but afford the pleasing prospect of continually improving in value." 1

Landlords and tenants responded to developing conditions of trade in produce from their flocks and to the associated need for improvement of the farms well before the local ministers and others wrote their remarks. Elliot of Minto and the Earl of Traquair were both concerning themselves with the state of their sheepfarms in 1767; and in April of that year the Buccleuch estate produced some "Hints towards forming a general Plan of Improvements", especially for the hill districts, which composed "a country of great extent, but from its soil and climate not suited for much artificial improvement in the way of Agriculture". The chief purpose of this area, according to the writer of the 'Hints' was for breeding sheep, and consequently "whatever Plan of Improvement may be thought of, this grand purpose should ever be kept in view, and the means to be used made subservient

-
1. Wight, A.: Present State of Husbandry in Scotland, etc., Vol. III, Part 1, pp. 32-33. Wight's opinions on sheepfarming were not much admired by one writer with first-hand experience, who said, "His survey of this article is indeed such as might have been expected from a gentleman traveling in a wheel-carriage." (A Treatise on Pasturage, p. 262.)
 2. B.M., 389.

to that end." There were familiar obstacles, however:

"It is a very difficult thing to Introduce all at once a sistematical method of Culture over so large an Extent of Country which makes it Still more difficult to Cope with ... the inveterate adherence to old and established Customs, against which reason is too weak and Compulsitores are odious..."

The introduction of the improving lease and the adjustment of rent levels have already been considered as essential features of changing estate policy towards tenants, but of course they were equally essential to a programme of improvement. Two further means of basic improvement were put forward among the 'Hints'. The first was the planting of trees in strips along the edge of arable ground, an idea previously contained in some Buccleuch estate regulations for enclosing in 1760.¹ The second involved a reformation in crop management. Under the existing system² the croftland or 'infield' was sown with bere one year and with oats for the next two, the stable and byre dung being put on with the bere "and the Stronger this land is, the more it produces rank Succolent weeds of every kind." The outfield corn was obtained by folding the cattle or sheep for their dung, and then sowing two crops of oats in succession; but unfortunately "they goe on to a 3rd 4th 5th and sixth Cropt..." When left fallow this ground produced either "nothing besides wild sorrell... a most destructive plant for sheep" or some poor

1. B.M., 83.

2. The system was described a century before by Skene of Hallyards in his 'Of Husbandrie' (N.L.S., Adv. MS., 29.2.10, f.91.)

grass consisting only of "Fogg and Windlestraws". The remedy therefore was to dispense with the outfield, and to enclose a compact crop area of land near the house, "bounded from the Sheep field with a good... fence of Stone facing outward and a Hedge upon the top". This enclosed arable should then be subdivided with ditch and hedge into fields of from four to ten acres each, half for corn, half for hay, alternating with pasture. The rotation might be fallow, barley, hay, pasture, and two crops of oats. By this system the land would produce enough grain "to reward the Labourer for maintaining his family, and keep in a Stock of good Hay for Serving his Sheep in case of hard Winters." Allowances would be made for the erection of dykes and the improvement of farm buildings.

Tenants set about the re-arrangement of their farms with varying degrees of activity and enthusiasm. In 1776 Robert Scott in Skelfhill, who had already improved his dwelling house and set out some fields around his steading, observed that there ought to be, as his landlord, Buccleuch, had suggested, a stone dyke dividing arable from pasture. But he went further: "Even at every herd's house there ought to be two inclosures, one for pasture to his cow, and one to lay his dung on for hay".¹

Naismyth approved of Scott's proposal, as well as of shelter belts and clumps of trees, and to these he added small folds for sick sheep.² The latter were something of

1. Wight, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 409-10.

2. Naismyth, op. cit., p. 31.

a special addition to the working folds and stone-dyked stells or 'rounds' built from about 1760 onwards, and by 1790 to be found on most farms. The appearance on the scene of the stone dykes, associated closely with the age of improvement and the business-like method of sheep farming, receives particular attention below.

At the close of the eighteenth century the dyked fields which are to be seen today on the lower levels and haughs of a hill farm were taking shape in accordance with the needs of sheep, for, as Findlater remarked about 1800, "It appears improbable, that a demand for the enclosure of the mountains of Tweeddale, shall ever arise for any other purpose than its subserviency to sheep." ¹ He also noted that ploughing was hardly known on the large sheep farms. In 1803, according to a report in the *Farmers Magazine*, a young man possessing a wild farm in Selkirkshire stated "that his proportion of arable to sheep walks was inconsiderable", and that "he raised few oats, except what was necessary for supporting his horses, and paying livery meal to his herds." ² On a sheepfarm, therefore, a few fields proved necessary to produce oats for the horses, ³ and hay and turnips, the latter

1. Findlater, op. cit., p. 134.

2. Review of Douglas' 'General View', Farmers Magazine, Vol. IV (1803), p. 319.

3. Horses, some of which were of Lanarkshire or Northumberland origin, were kept for ploughing, leading hay and peats, drawing carts of household goods at a flitting, and to enable the owner to visit his other farms or his neighbours.

only recently introduced, for the cattle and sheep in winter. Winter feeding was of considerable value, for it allowed the farmer to give up the old and expensive custom of driving sheep away from their hill to rented ground in the low country whenever a lasting storm set in. In any case, though the winter of 1802 saw a great many sheep from Yarrow, Ettrick, Tweeddale and elsewhere down in Annandale, the practice was becoming more difficult to observe because of the enclosure of the land to which stock had been taken.

There was some resurgence of enthusiasm for arable, and thus, for ploughing of hill ground, during the Napoleonic wars when corn fetched high prices. This ploughing was not a success. The farmers paid little heed to climate and exposure, they did not apply lime, and "by their extensive ploughing have not only reduced their stock to the necessity of being kept on the most barren parts of the farm, but have profusely squandered away money on improvements which, in the present state of things, they can never hope to regain".¹ It would have been of considerable value to the hill farms during the nineteenth century if some of the pasture had, from time to time, been ploughed, limed, and re-seeded; but the farmers concentrated on their newly established fields which became a fine, ornamental feature, adding a civilised quality to the scene, much as plantations and hedgerows did in the truly arable country.

1. A Lammermuir Farmer: A Treatise upon Breeding, Rearing and Feeding Cheviot and Black-faced Sheep in High Districts, etc., pp. 2-5.

Improvements on the Buccleuch estate in 1808 and 1809 included surface draining, mole catching (by two men from Westmoreland), straightening rivulets, variously shaped stells, hay reserves, and some irrigation as the main items.¹ Surviving plans of Liddesdale farms, made in 1816 and 1818,² show that most farms there were equipped with rectangular folds and circular stells, none being better provided than Dinlabyre, which was not a Buccleuch estate farm. No one was a greater enthusiast for these improvements than Napier of Thirlestane, who described his achievements in his 'Treatise', published in 1822. The plan of his farm, which may usefully be compared to one of the same farm fifty years earlier, shows that he had provided it with sheepfolds, smearing house, cow park, lambing park, turnip park and other fields, a shepherd's cottage with outbuildings, and thirty seven stone stells.³ (Fig. 9)

In 1857 the Teviotdale and Borthwick farms surveyed by Asquith for the Duke of Buccleuch had, in addition to the several grades of hill pasture, fields described as meadow, pasture, oat stubble, potatoes and turnips. There were also gardens, plantations, yards, and steadings. The higher the farm the less enclosed land there was:

-
1. Farmer's Magazine, Vol. IX, pp. 148-155, Vol. X, pp. 336-345.
 2. B.M. (Irvine House).
 3. The evident benefits that resulted eventually overcame the hostility of shepherds, who considered that such things made their flocks soft and lazy, but a proposition that the protection sheep really required was being driven into roofed buildings in bad weather never won general approval.

<u>Farm</u>	<u>Acres of arable</u>	<u>Acres of pasture</u>
Falnash	216	2825
Milsington	203	1128
Caerlanrig	132	500
Priesthaugh	91	2480
Phawhope	-	792

Though 'improvement' was unequal, and though many a 'led' farm was hardly improved at all, the picture of the prosperous sheepfarmer amid his peacefully grazing flocks, with pine plantations and well-maintained dykes all around him, became a popular one. It derived from the late eighteenth century writers. Hogg declared that "the lives of the principal shepherds, for so I denominate the store-farmers, are very easy, and, to those who can relish such a life, elegant and agreeable." ¹ And in direct descent from that remark came the words of one who published the biography of his father-in-law, a famous sheepfarmer, in 1879:

"The pastoral farmer is a wonderful painter on the broad canvas of the ever-lasting hills. Far away up the mountain side he traces out those pleasing, wavy lines of elegant plantations, where the flocks find shelter from the storms of winter... He guides the violent rushing rills to sparkle over beautiful cascades and enrich the meadows all round...

"... He transforms the barren muir into fertile fields-the worthless moss into rich meadow pastures... he guides the most wonderful creations and transformations..." ²

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

2. Thomson, John: Life of James Scott Esq. of Allanshaws, etc., pp. 137-140.

Dykes and Stells

The widespread appearance of stone dykes on the hill farms was a principal feature of eighteenth century 'improvement', but dyking was an ancient art and walls of stone or other materials were used for enclosures and marches centuries before the improvers got to work.

Until 1800 at least, and in some places until within living memory, 'feal' dykes, made of soil and turf, were a usual method of enclosing or marking off a boundary. The ditch surrounding twelve acres of meadow which helped to indicate the boundary of Glenkerry and Gair in 1415 was probably of this kind. So too was the dyke round a pund fauld built shortly after 1650 by Thomas Telfer in Penchrise on the edge of his farm where the Barrow Cleuch meets the Dod Burn.¹ The long earth mounds can still be seen here, and in many other places such as along the skirts of the hills at Blackhall, Burnfoot and Glenvoren in Ewesdale, and at the marginal level on both sides of Liddesdale. Here and there exceptionally large feal dykes remain, one of the finest being the great, lane-wide mound lying straight across the upper parts of Harwood on Teviot, which has small cottage and enclosure foundations set against it. The age and purpose of many of these walls, often only noticed by an accident of light, but to be found on many a hill farm, remain mysterious and deserve thorough investigation.

1. S.M.P., 69.

The building of a feal dyke was ageless in method, though now it is so much a thing of the past as to be almost forgotten. In some places this type of wall was preferred to the stone dyke, especially where stones were not readily available,¹ and it is in such districts that the structure of a feal dyke can be most easily studied. 'Feal' meant any kind of sod dug by the spade from the surface of grass-covered ground, and containing root-matted soil. The core of the dyke was made with the earth taken from each side and packed firmly. Against this core a narrow facing of 'feal' was built up. The sods, neatly cut and carefully laid, were placed with their grassy side down, each one being beaten into position with the flat of the spade. A course of sods was so arranged as to cover the seams of the course below, and there were through bands of feal to give added strength. Along the top a 'coping' of long sods, projecting a little on either side and sometimes set on edge, was intended to shed rainwater and to discourage leaping sheep. Usually a 'braiding' or 'brairding' of young thorn was added to increase the height and effectiveness of the dyke, which in any case had ditches on both sides whence the earth had been dug. An alternative to thorns was whins, which were sown as seed, though clumps of whins were likely to spread out from the intended line and render the ground

1. In Yarrow, as in some other parts, the dykes were built of stones cleared from the ground that was being enclosed, and of stones quarried from suitable places on a hill nearby.

useless for stock. Willows or 'saughs' and, where cattle only were kept, sweetbriar might also serve. The roots of all these plants helped to bind the dyke and to prevent it from crumbling too far in the bank. Where whins were within reach of sheep they were cropped, so that they grew more closely and thickly. The feal dyke might often be four feet wide at the base, tapering to about eighteen inches at the top, and four or five feet high.

As Napier pointed out, "If a feal-dike is not half so durable or efficient as a stone-dike, it does not cost half the money...".¹ Indeed its comparative cheapness helped to prolong the use of feal, and a properly built and maintained feal dyke did last many years. Capital was needed to pay for the greater amount of labour involved in securing the material for a stone dyke, and farmers were unwilling to make outlays unless their land was conveniently near a rough riverbed or contained a good scree-slope. In any case none, in the days of short leases and insecure tenancy, was prepared to spend money on something that might be of more use to succeeding generations of strangers.

Some of the first stone dykes recorded in the Border hill country were those enclosing the landlord's 'park', near his mansion house or castle.² The measurements of dykes,

1. Napier, op. cit., p. 151.

2. On the hill behind Hermitage Castle was the 'Deer Park', long ago made part of Hermitage farm. Parks were also established at Branxholm, Newark, and there were lands of Park and Copshaw Park in Liddesdale. Detailed accounts exist for the dykes built at Branxholm Park in the seventeenth century. (B.M., 403, 404, 936/6, 943/23.)

stated in a bargain, were probably as much part of tradition as the boundary lines. By one of the earliest extant dyking contracts in the area, that of 1769 at Traquair, William Lawson, a local 'drystane dyker', bound himself to build a sufficient dyke of six quarters high between the Tweed and the park dyke at the high road. He was to get stones from a quarry at Grieston or from 'the Curlaw', and he could use some from "the sunk fence at the head of the Wheat park", and also "the Stones on the syde of it next the meadow". The Earl of Traquair would provide "a Slype, a pick and Gavlock and other Quarry Toolis", and allow Lawson's horse to feed at the waterside while the dyke was being built, but not to remain on the grass through the night. The wall was to be coped with "double faill", and Lawson would get 4/- sterling per rood.¹ Exact specifications were a test of the dykers skill. In 1772 James Moffat contracted with two dykers, Robert and William Riddel, for the first enclosures on Garwald, and one arrangement was "for Building a ston dick 4 foot and a half height, 26 inches the foundation, to band with long stons like three inches over each side of the dick, and to pay 15 pence for each six ells or rood."² A typically detailed agreement for a march dyke between the Fanns and Hutlerburn in 1834 stipulated that it be thirty inches at the bottom, sixteen

1. T.P.

2. Garwald Papers.

inches at the top, four and a half feet high to the cope, with a coping of two flat sods added, "one with the green-side uppermost", and one band stone every yard.¹ The terms of a contract agreed in 1872 for a march dyke between Bowanhill and Binks represent the lengthy conditions ultimately reached. Three local "stone dykers and contractors" undertook to build two hundred and fifteen roods at the rate of 7/9 "per lineal Rood of six yards". They were to take down the existing dyke and use the stones for the new one, winning the additional material in equal amounts from the old quarries on each side. The new dyke was to be built exactly on the site of the old one, and the old foundation stones could be used as long as they were still strong and properly 'bedded'. Exact measurements were given for all parts of the dyke, the number and spacing of 'bands' fixed and a certain quality of stone demanded. A finishing date was agreed, and the quarry holes had to be filled up so as to present no danger to stock.²

The men who built the dykes, feal or stone, were mostly local, though the father and son, both called James Messer, who worked at Branxholm Park in the 1680s, came from Burntisland. The Dicksons and others who enclosed the fields and plantations at Newark about 1720 were from the neighbourhood, and by then it seems that dyking had become a skill handed on from father to son, so that one finds family

1. S.H.P., no. 579.

2. Bowanhill Papers.

names among dykers as one does among smiths; Elliots were dykers in Teviotdalehead and in Liddesdale in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, while over at Moffat the Boyes family flourished around 1900. Individuals stood out from time to time; the "Auld Deacon", called 'Deacon Elliot' by James Grieve, built distinctive dykes in Liddesdale and Ewesdale,¹ and among the thirteen dykers reckoned to be working from Moffat at the end of the nineteenth century were such characters as Jimmy Marchbanks and Jimmy Carruthers, who, working as a team, were known as 'The Tar and the Shanker', Archie Proudfoot who had no right hand and yet, wearing a leather cup fitted with two steel hooks over the stump, worked at great speed, and Geordie Boyes and Tom Gracie who rebuilt the extraordinary dyke that comes sweeping down the face of the Mirk Side in Moffat Water.

In 1717 William Oliver of Dinlabyre wished to lease the neighbouring Buccleuch farms of Clintwood, Flight and Harden, and it was important that the march between the two estates should be distinct. It was suggested, therefore, that "some Merth" be "yearly cast up all along the Marches... to keep it constantly known which is the only method that can be thought of..."² But it was well known that such earthen heaps could be ploughed away, and that stone dykes could not. Thus as soon as men were able to make the

1. His dykes were smooth faced on one side and irregular on the other, and can still be seen at Gorrenberry, Eweslees, etc.; perhaps he managed to avoid bargains with exact specifications.

2. B.M., 479.

financial outlay they started to build with stone, and by 1760 landlords were encouraging tenants by sharing the cost of stone dykes. In 1762 and 1763 a march dyke of stone was built between Nether Wrae and Mid Wrae in Ewesdale, and at the same time Walter Grieve was busy enclosing fields with stone dykes at Branxholm Park. As more and more farmers followed suit, fields took precedence over marches since the separation of the arable from the pasture seemed of greater importance. Though the miles of dykes on Craigieburn in Moffat Water were erected by 1786,¹ march dykes were mostly built after 1810, by which time Findlater's view that they were hardly worth any expenditure by a sheep farmer was giving way to that of enthusiasts like Napier who saw that they had many advantages. Above all, Napier thought, such a dyke saved the expense of a shepherd.

"To a sheep farm a 'march-dike' may be considered as the means of a more equal, undisturbed, and economical consumption of the grass, - a more extensive holding upon the ground, - a mark or boundary for that distinct line to which the 'drains' may be laid on without waste, ... as affording an extended line of shelter on proper occasions, - one ready side for any subsequent inclosure..." 2

Between 1800 and 1824 march dykes were built on many farms. By the middle of the century the pace had slackened, though they were still being built around 1900. On a few farms the process of enclosure was never completed, or spanned many years; at Meikledale, for instance, there were eight fields before 1828, a march dyke was erected up to

-
1. Prevost, W.A.J.: 'Dry Stone Dykes of Upper Annandale', T.D.G.N.A.S., 3rd. Series, Vol. XXXIV, p. 89.
 2. Napier, op. cit., pp. 145-6.

Burngrains about 1830, another up the steep slope east of Stibie Gill in 1896, and wire fences completed the boundary after that. By 1880, it was necessary to renew some of the dykes completely, or to replace them with fences. Seventy years has been reckoned the 'life' of a stone dyke, after which age major repairs are needed. The Learmonts of Lochmaben rebuilt the Roundstonefoot dykes shortly before 1914, when the stones were beginning to give way after more than a century of service.

The energies of dykers were applied to the building of sheep-folds, and of 'stells', which remain perhaps the most noticeable feature of a Border sheep farm. The word 'stell' was originally used for small plantations of trees enclosed with stone dykes. But according to Napier, "in the extended sense... 'stell' in pastoral language, may be adopted generally as a place of 'artificial shelter', whether composed of trees, stone, or other material."¹ The square 'stell', providing shelter for a small number of sheep, was used long before the days of Napier's improvements at Thirlestane, and so too was the circular model, intended to ward off drifting snow. Variations of shape included crescents, T or X designs, and oval enclosures for larger numbers. Many round stells were provided with an arm wall jutting out by the entrance to 'wear' or guide in driven sheep.

The belief existed, nevertheless, that Napier was the inventor. He himself wrote:

1. Ibid., p. 90.

"We do not here mean to lay claim to any discovery; as circular stells, or rounds, as they are sometimes styled, have already been recommended as preferable to all other figure or disposition of stone-dike...; and there may be also seen upon individual farms, constructions of this nature aspiring to considerable antiquity, as well from their ruinous condition, as the moss-covered surface of the stones. It is the smallness of their number upon every farm of which we complain..." 1

At first the stells were indeed sparse. There were hardly any on East Buccleuch in 1796 when James Grieve wrote in his diary:

"The greatest possible improvement that could be made on this Farm would be building stell dykes - of stone and fail where stones could be had and fail alone where stones could not be procured. They should be in places where none of the herds' cattle are in use to come and made to shelter them (i.e. the sheep) from the arts from which the sleets come." 2

Grieve had only one or two in mind for Sundhope when he planned improvements for the farm in 1798. In June 1802 he set about fulfilling his intentions, in a more ambitious way. He marked out the site of one stell by the drove road, another "above the sheep-fold on the west side of the Burn", and a third "to the North east of that, where some remains of old Houses had been". This last was to be six roods in circumference, with a wall thirty inches across the bottom, eighteen inches wide at the top, the first three feet being of stone and thirty inches of feal above.³

-
1. Ibid., pp. 118-9.
 2. G.P., Diary no. 10, p. 130.
 3. G.P., Diary no. 13, p. 17.

In this way the hill farms were gradually provided with the scattering of stells that can be still seen today in various conditions of repair. Their stone walls were usually vertical inside and had a 'batter' on the external face, but in other respects the style of building was similar to that of march and field dykes. Many stells acquired names, and some found a place in a local story. The names are of particular interest. They are derived most commonly from association with the sheep that use them or with the place at which they stand. The 'Ringan Sykes Stell' (Arkleton), the 'Puddin' Burn Stell' (Redmoss), the 'Piley Hass Stell' (Craik), the 'Goose Bog Stell' (East Buccleuch), and the 'Clydes Law Stell' (Badlieu), are of this latter kind. More curious and often mysterious names are those like the 'Thief Stell' (Linhope), the 'Royal Stell' (Craik), the 'Paisley Stell' (East Delorain), and the 'Dern Stell' (Dryden). A few stells were made out of old enclosures on the hills, such as 'Guyan's Gardens' (Riskenhope), the 'Anton Park' (Caretrig), and the 'Barlee Faulds' (Redfordgreen). A 'sod' or feal stell stood in Bilhope Coomb until recently, within living memory renewed each year by the shepherd.

Draining

The 'rig' system of agriculture involved draining the ground, so that arable patches on the lower slopes of the hill farms usually became good dry grazing when turned over to pasture. These old drained areas can often still be picked out today, as much by their distinctive green colouring

as by the undulating pattern of the former rigs and their enclosing feal dykes. The expansion of sheep farming in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries meant a more extensive use of the hill pastures, and the more thoughtful farmers realised that their flocks fed better on 'lea', naturally or artificially drained, than they did among the waterlogged bogs whence little seemed to be derived but discomfort and disease. Thus draining the hill ground became an important feature of improvement.

In his survey of the Buccleuch farms Edward Ladd, who may have been applying the standards of his home Wiltshire, was evidently not impressed by the state of the hills. His remarks on 'Over Stenniswater' were typical; there were seven hundred acres of "indifferent good land", including the dry, green 'gairs', "but the other is but very sorry land." At Roan "the greatest part of the west side it being A high hill or mountain is bogie and sorry Land". He rarely rose above "indifferent good" as a compliment, and generally found the greater part of each hill farm to be very "sorry".¹

Though much the same comments might still be made, and though heather and wet mossy places were both in their way valuable features of a sheepwalk,² the hill farms were

1. Book of Plans, R.H.P., 9629.

2. The varieties of vegetation composing the pasture available to sheep were well known to the shepherds. They distinguished between the qualities of 'draw moss', 'rashes', 'bent', 'sprett', 'pry', 'risp', and others, and knew how to make best use of each at the appropriate season.

certainly improved by the drains that were dug mostly between 1770 and 1830. However, it was not so much the desire to remove swamps as the urgent need to eliminate the disease called 'rot' that set tenants to work on this particular improvement.

William and James Dickson were digging some of the first drains on Garwald for James Moffat in 1773, and further accounts show that draining was in full swing there during the 1790s;¹ by 1776 drains had been dug on Skelfhill. As with dykes, much depended on the farmer's security of tenure; for among those who had reasonable leases few neglected so essential an improvement. On 6th March 1797 Reverend James Arkle described the situation in Liddesdale:

"Drains were begun to be cut in the sheep pasture many years ago. When the leases given by the Duke of Buccleuch to his Tenants in 1778 began to draw near the end, they being for nine years, and the Tenants having no certain prospect of their being renewed, they did not think they had the same encouragement to drain, nor was it carried on to so great extent as formerly. Many alterations were made in the Stock of the farms in 1792, and tho' they had no tacks the tenants considered their Situation more certain. From this period draining has been carried on with spirit and to a very considerable extent. The largest half remains to be drained, but the proportion of pasture that is drained is the most valuable, and most capable of being improved by it. If Leases were given the remaining part would probably Soon be finished." 2

1. Garwald.

2. Correspondence of R. Douglas, N.L.S., MS 3117, f. 10.

Wide open drains were cut. If they were too narrow they filled up and grew together again. The average width was about twenty inches or two feet, and the depth ten to twelve inches. Around 1800 the cost of cutting such channels was roughly 1d per rood. The best method was that in which the drains were made to run along the hillside, slanting gradually in an upstream direction into the burn. If they were cut directly downhill the increased flow in rainy weather wore them into deep trenches dangerous to sheep. On fairly level ground a criss-cross pattern of drains was thought best. The lines of neglected drains dug around 1800 are still visible on many a hill slope.

Napier worked out that on fifteen hundred acres of "wild unimproved wet farm", carrying a thousand sheep, a total of thirty thousand roods of drains at 8/- per hundred would be needed. This meant an outlay of £120; one third of the farm's area would be improved, and, with the corresponding increase in stock possible as a result of the additional nourishment, an annual return might amount to over £36. Set against this was the cost of maintaining drains and of keeping down moles.¹

Moles burrowed into the sides of drains, spilled earth into them, and seemed "to delight more in working among a soil naturally wet, which had been drained" than anywhere else.² A molecatcher had therefore to be employed during

1. Napier, op. cit., p. 141.

2. Ibid., p. 139.

the summer months at a cost of roughly £6, and ideally the same policy would be followed by neighbouring proprietors so that moles found no refuge. Much more damaging to the drains, in some people's view, were cattle, which in grazing the hillsides knocked in the channels. There were opposing opinions on this, however. To the faction who considered no cattle to be essential, "the shepherd's cow is undoubtedly one too many", though it could hardly be avoided.¹

On the other hand, James Hogg was one of those who held that as draining led to an excess of 'succulent' grass, cattle must be kept among the sheep, and "In all these boggy drained districts, the more cattle a farmer keeps from the beginning of May to the middle of August, the more sheep he will be enabled to keep through winter."²

The general practice was probably that recorded by the Reverend William Singers, who observed that the cow pastures were usually separated from the sheep grazing, except on "dry heathy sheep farms, not liable to sickness or braxy".³

-
1. A Lammermuir Farmer, op. cit., p. 160.
 2. Hogg, J., 'Statistics of Selkirkshire', T.H. & A.S.S., Vol. IX (1832), p. 298.
 3. Singers, W., 'General Observations on the Practice and Principles of Irrigation' (incl. Report), T.H. & A.S.S., Vol. III (1807), p. 333. In his article Singers reported on experiments in watermeadows. Anderson in Cramalt had tried 'watering' at Cramalt about 1799, to assist the growth of spring grass for ewes, but the trial did not succeed. (Findlater, op. cit., p. 183). On the Buccleuch estate a Mr. Charles Stevens was employed as "flooder"; meadows were put under water in October, and the resulting grass, if not eaten by the sheep in April, would be fine hay. Singers considered the Yarrow the poorest river for "irrigation". He saw watermeadows at Eldinhope (14 acres) and Dryhope (12 acres), but neither was successful. The idea was not developed among the hill farms.

Even though, by 1830, some felt that draining had been perhaps too extensive, and that it had produced poorer and coarser grasses, yet it was undeniable that bogs had been made more productive, and rot and other diseases had been reduced, so that the practice was continued to the end of the nineteenth century, by which time the cleaning out or 'redding' of existing drains was the chief task.

4. The Structure and Arrangement of a Sheep Farm.

The Size and Combination of Farms.

The present size of a Border hill farm has been determined by the changes and chances of conditions and policy over the centuries, and is not necessarily what its tenant or owner today would wish.

When they were originally established, and even well into the Middle Ages, the holdings, or 'rooms' as they were called, were mostly small, though some additional size was given by seasonal use of the wastes. The practice of going to the shiels, useful in many respects, reflected the different requirements of a farmer in summer and winter; in June and July his stock, whether at home or at the shieling, was more numerous after the spring addition of calves and lambs than it was in autumn when reduced by markets or at the end of winter when storms and disease had taken their toll.

Increase in actual farm size was sought after when conditions permitted and was at first possible in two ways. In districts such as upper Tweeddale or Yarrow, where the farms were spaced out along the main river, more waste ground could be included by extension up the tributaries into the hill fastnesses. In Liddesdale and wherever else many small holdings were packed closely together, size could be most easily gained by combination or merging. Of course the larger farm required either a bigger group of tenants or one or two tenants of greater social standing and economic prosperity.

In the sixteenth century and earlier, when the hill farms were either gifted or feued estates on the one hand, or small holdings in a lordship occupied by kindly tenants on the other, almost the only change in farm size was of the second kind. Thus, for instance, the various small farms up the Tinnis Burn in Liddesdale were held together by the Armstrongs of Mangerton; and the Forest steads up the Dryhope Burn in Yarrow were similarly united under the Scotts of Dryhope. Even so, members of the kindly tenant family, subtenants and cottars continued to live on each of the once separate 'rooms', so that any one of these holdings, though forming part of a larger unit, retained its cluster of small dwellings, its huts, its corn rigs and pasture. When the kindly tenants were displaced, a regrouping of their farms occurred, in which some became separate again before a further combination.

With the emergence of the enlarged Buccleuch estate after 1600, and the development of the rental tenant system throughout the hill area, the wealth or 'substance' of the tenant became significant to the fate of a farm. Those who by ill-luck or mismanagement failed to acquire any wealth at all gravitated towards the smaller and less desirable farms, and continued to share, while the better-off took larger tracts of land, and extended their operations by leasing several farms, some of which were quite far apart, or by making use of hitherto waste country. In the latter case they sometimes took what was called a 'heidroom', that is, an area of hillland in the uppermost part of a valley isolated by the lower 'rooms'.¹ Wolfcleuchhead, which had been linked to Howpasley in the sixteenth century, was such a 'heidroom', as was Craikhope. The former came to be set regularly to the tenant of Milsington, which was some miles away, and the Scotts, who entered Milsington in the 1660s, held the same 'heidroom' for over a hundred years. Since Milsington was the tenant's place of residence, in effect that farm could be said to have been extended by the addition of Wolfcleuchhead.

The small farms were mostly in Liddesdale, where the original settlement had been more dense and where Border

1. The different types of sheep - ewes, hogs, wedders - in a farmer's stock were suited to different types of pasture, and, as Malcolm wrote about 1770, "This accounts for most farmers having more farms than one, as one seldom contains all these different soils and situations". (Pennant, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 401, Appendix no. vii).

unrest had delayed progress longer than elsewhere. Less prosperous tenants were to be found in that district, and the valley earned the reputation of being rather backward compared to the areas further north.¹ Even in Liddesdale, however, much combining of farms occurred over the years, and by 1790 the upper part of the valley was divided among tenants whose farms were as large as many in Yarrow or Borthwick.

As has been seen in the case of Wolfcleuchhead, the high and remote 'room' was useful, but not popular as an independent unit. Several of this type, therefore, were inhabited by no more than a single shepherd and his family after the middle or late seventeenth century, the tenant always preferring to live on his more fertile and accessible farm lower down and only occasionally visiting his 'led farm' to see how the stock was doing.² Those who leased these

-
1. On 13th August 1812, James Grieve, annoyed to find neighbours' sheep on his farm of Sundhope, wrote (G.P., Diary no. 17, p. 211): "It is true the old goVernour says of the Liddesdale lads that they can herd none. Indeed there never has been within my remembrance any store master in that country who either knew or payed any attention to the Herding or management of their farms. They are certainly far behind almost every other country, where sheep are keep't - a parcel of strong drinkers and in the intervals they sink into indolence extremeor talk of their drunken bouts and what was done and said while under the influence... never knew a man in that country of ordinary parts except John Elliot of Whithaugh and the men in the lower ranks are only strong savages or little superior to 'em."
 2. Until firmly discouraged by the landlord, the tenant sometimes leased several 'led' farms, much as the tacksmen had done, in order to make a profit by sub-letting.

led farms did so because their system of sheep farming required it, and because they were wealthy enough to pay the various rents, but the landlords were none too keen on the arrangement. In his report of 1791, William Keir noted that "letting three, or perhaps four farms to a person who lives many miles distant from them" was a comparatively recent practice, with obviously bad effects, for "The person who resides upon a farm, is always doing something for his own comfort and convenience, that is connected with the improvement of it. Upon these led farms as they are called ... the Houses in particular, and everything about them will generally be found in a state of ruin and desolation." The tenant's money, he pointed out, was in the case of a led farm deposited with a banker or "dissipated", so that neither the land nor the local inhabitants gained much advantage. However, some of these farms were "so situated, that a tenant could not reside upon them with any degree of comfort".¹

Adam Ogilvie, the Buccleuch chamberlain, agreed with Keir. These farms "often produce a temporary Rise of Rent; they tend to enrich Individual farmers, but are not the best calculated for the improvement or population of Your Grace's Estates."² On the other hand, nothing should be done to dispense with them, Ogilvie thought:

1. B.M., 459/1, pp. 179-180.

2. B.M., 659 (Letter dated 15th November 1791).

"It has always been part of the System of Management of Your Grace's Estate to admit of led farms; You Yourself have rather encreased their number. By this your Tenants have been encouraged to fix their Views upon them, to lay out their Stock (i.e., capital) to square their expence of living, to educate their families, and to breed their sons to their own profession, in expectation of continuing to hold such as they have already, and in hopes of obtaining more perhaps. Were you at once to disposses all your Tenants of led farms, their condition would be altered much to the Worse; a great part of their Stock would become unemployed, for which they must seek employment upon the Estates of other Landlords less patriotick; and as many of the living farms are not worth holding of themselves, at their present Rents, many of your best Tenants would be under the necessity of leaving your Estate altogether, whose ancestors have paid rent to your Family, almost as long as your Family have been proprietors of the Lands they occupy." 1

So the led farms remained, and neither tenant nor landlord would spend money on them.² William Ogilvie, writing to the Duke of Buccleuch in April 1841, did not think it was worth spending much on small farms with resident tenants either, especially since the tenants sometimes felt that they should be living in a style to match their grander neighbours.³

In sorting out the Buccleuch hill farms in 1790, Keir, like factors on other estates, adjusted size and shape by excambions, alteration of marches, and a few further combinations. He also suggested the permanent residence of tenants on certain farms that had been 'led', such as Braidlie in

1. Ibid.

2. In 1833 the minister of Yarrow wrote that "the principle of non-residence has been largely acted on: and out of forty-five farms in the parish, twenty are led farms." (N.S.A., Selkirkshire, p. 57)

3. B.M., 491.

Liddesdale. As a result of such reorganisation boundaries became mostly fixed to the present lines, a few farms became permanently 'led', and, under the influence of continued 'improvement', the setting was finally created for the sheep-farming known until recent times.

The Types and Distribution of Sheep Stock.

The prehistoric peoples who settled among the hills from Tweeddale to the Border depended for most of their food and clothing upon the stock they could safely look after. In a sense, therefore, shepherding in the Borders is as old as the earliest occupation,¹ and one can associate sheep husbandry with small farmsteads named in the first written records. Equally old may be the enthusiasm for the sheep as a provider of necessities, and the terms and system of pasturing, recorded in later times.

To those who depended on their stock for the bare essentials of life, every part of an animal was of importance, and the general usefulness of a sheep has been praised many times in the historical period, not least by Satchels in his *Postral*:

-
1. Trow-Smith noted that a marked increase in use of sheep occurred among the Bronze Age Beaker people, who farmed in the Borders and elsewhere. (Trow-Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 16). Pointing out that the eleventh century sheep population of Britain was very large, and long established even then, he also observed that "the convenience and the value of sheep in a rural society that was still pioneering a relatively uncultivated country were considerable", since the animal could be easily controlled, had few and inexpensive needs, and provided "three of the commodities that were of supreme importance in a peasant life—milk, wool, and fertility" (Trow-Smith, R.: Life from the Land, pp. 60-1).

"There's nothing doth unto a sheep pertain,
But 'tis for man's commodity and gain...
Their Guts serve Instruments which sweetly sound,
Their dung is best to make most fruitful Ground,
Their Hoofs burnt will most venomous Serpents kill,
Their grated Horns are good for Poyson still,
Their Milk makes Cheese that has no fellow,
The best that's made in Etrick or in Yarow...
Of all beasts in the World's circumference,
For meekness, profit, and for innocence,
I have approv'd a Sheep most excellent,
That with least cost doth give most content..."¹

Satchels frequently mentions the value of wool, and rarely that of mutton, but a few years later Pennecuik observed that the small sheep of Tweeddale were "very sweet and Delicious". They were, he wrote, "the greatest Merchant commodity that brings Money to the place with their Product of Lambs, Wool, Skins, Butter and Cheese."² Certainly there was scarcely any portion of the sheep neglected. The parts of the stomach and the entrails, for instance, were carefully named, being known as the 'paunch', the 'bonnet' (also 'King's Hood' or 'honey comb'), the 'reed' ('red') and the 'manyplies' ('monopies'); among these the 'reed' of a lamb was used as a rennet, and the 'bonnet' was washed and used as the haggis bag.³ The testicles or 'stones' of 'cut' lambs were also a valued food.

The terms for the different sexes and stages of sheep are at least as old as the records:

-
1. Scot, op. cit., Part II, pp. 88-92.
 2. Pennecuik, op. cit., p. 3.
 3. Some of these terms appeared in traditional rhymes and songs; see "Willie Wude" (Wilkie MSS, N.L.S., MS. 123, ff. 49-52)

Lamb (to first autumn):

- ewe - sold or kept for stock
- tup - mainly kept for breeding
- wedder - castrated tup lamb
- top - the best
- mid - of middle quality
- pallie - the poorest
- riglin (rig) - hermaphrodite or 'chaser'
- chaser - male lamb with one 'stone', and generally not used for breeding. Also called 'halflin'.

Hogg (first autumn to clipping):

ewe,
tup,
wedder.

	<u>Ewes</u>	<u>Tups</u>
<u>Second year</u> :	gimmer, twinter.	dinmont, young sheep, shearling.
<u>Third-sixth year</u> :	old sheep	old sheep.

Once sheep became an article of trade, wedders were generally sold in their second or third year, while poor sheep were 'drawn' or selected for sale and then called 'shots'. Old ewes, past breeding, were sold off as 'crocks' or 'draft sheep'. (See Glossary).

The distribution of the several sorts of sheep over a hill farm was arranged with careful attention to the nature of the ground and the needs of the farmer. The sheep belonging to the tenant group in the 'toun' were divided not according to their owner but to their type, a system that continued in the period of the single tenant. Thus in the seventeenth century and apparently earlier, ewes, hogs, wedders and speaned lambs pastured on specially designated areas of the hill ground. In the 1660s, for instance, the three tenants of Glensax each had charge of a portion of the stock. An

order of 8th May 1665 shows the distribution:

"It is ordeanit that William Hog in glensax herd and kieve the hirsell of Lambs and yeild sheipe in glensax this present yeare; And it is ordeanit that Thomas Lintowne yr and James Melros yr kieve and herd the ewes and the Nolt pastouring upon the saids Lands... And ordeanes them to change yearelie dureing thair Remaining together in the said Towne." 1

Place names in Glensax such as "ye Lambe Law" and the "Ewe Hill Rig" reflect this arrangement. The pattern in August 1674, after the stocks had been severely reduced by the severe winter, was:

"In Glensax in the lawerbank 10 score yield ewes
sucklers and tupes
"In the yew hill 16 score yewes
"above in the hope 8 score kebs
"on the other syd 24 score yield outcomd hogs,
gimmer and twinter yewes, 15 score lambs." 2

The sheep 'division' and the ground it needed, were together called a 'hirsell', for which one shepherd was responsible. To be economical it had to keep the shepherd fully occupied, and to the commercially-minded tenant farmers of the eighteenth century and after this meant that hirsells consisted of about twenty-five score, though some might be above that. There were therefore, depending on the type of hirsell, men employed as 'ewe herds' or 'hogg herds', and someone, perhaps a boy, was given seasonal employment looking after lambs. Farmers, in a traditional manner, came to terms with nature by suiting their stock to the ground. Hoggs "should have dry pasture, well mixed with heaths", and be

1. Haystoun Papers.

2. Ibid.

well sheltered. Ewes should have grassy, not very high land, and widders were "fittest for the very high ground, as being strongest and most hardy".¹ There was variation between districts. In the Ewes and Westerkirk areas, "we mostly keep a Ewe Stock, and our Produce is Lambs, Ewes, and Wool. We cannot keep a weather Stock, because we cannot breed Hogs, on Account of their not living well. We commonly lose from a fifth to a third of them..." In Eskdalemuir, Teviotdalehead, and Tweeddale, widders flourished, and hogs "live as well as old Sheep."²

This pattern was still normal at the close of the eighteenth century. On 4th June 1792 James Grieve

"Went to Buccleugh along with Robie Grieve to settle the marches between the Hirsells etc. The Gimmers and hogs to go along the Southwest side by Craik march till clipping time and to summer there mostly with a little more liberty downwards after that.

"The lambs to Summer on the Blackrigg and to the Eastward the Tups to go upon the top of the Kirkhill and the whole hill to be carefully kept from this time forward."³

Six years later Grieve walked over most of Sundhope in Liddesdale, which he had recently leased. On 11th September 1798 he set out his policy for this farm. After comments on draining and bog hay, he considered the stock:

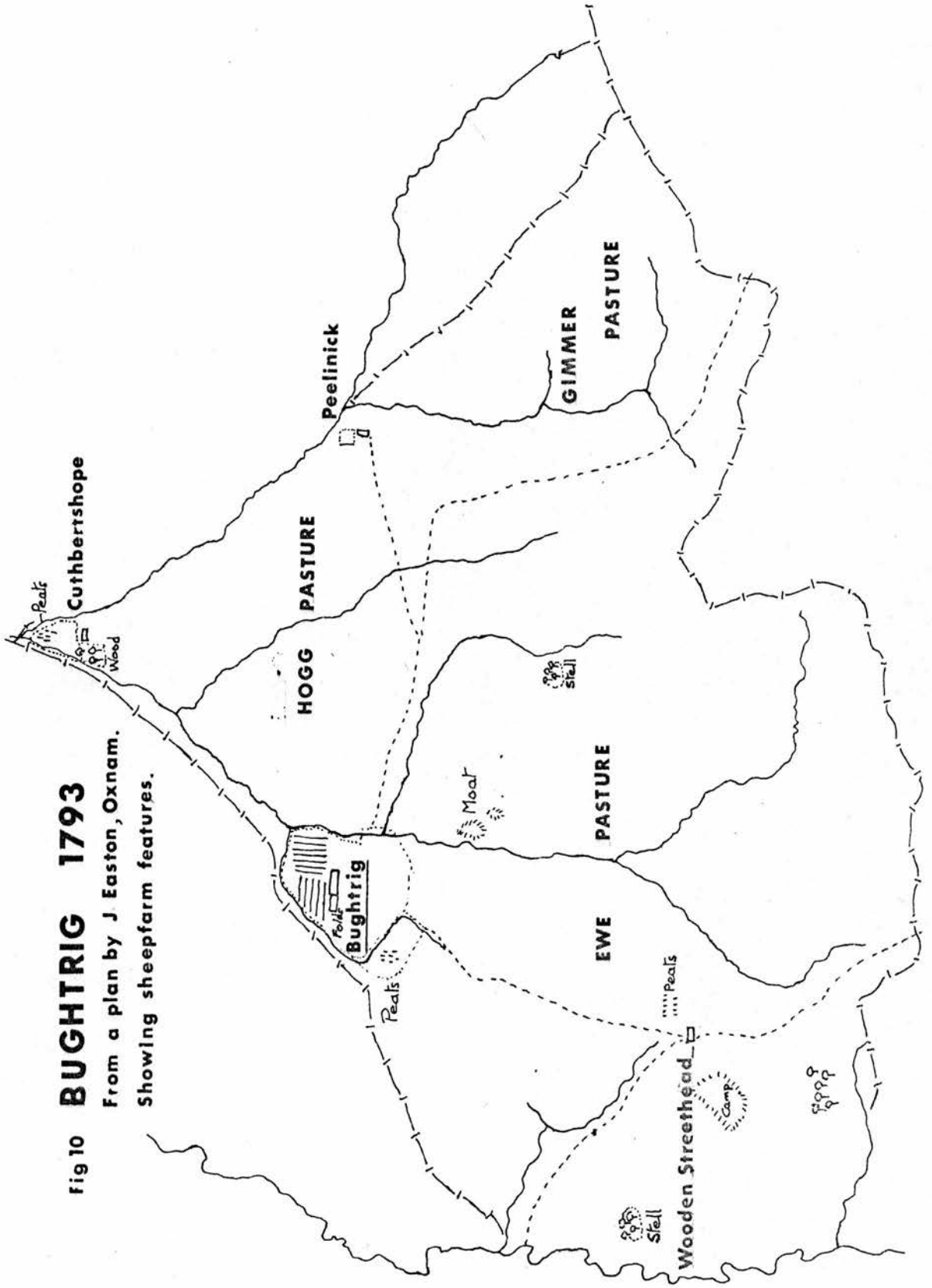
1. Pennant, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 401, Appendix vii.

2. B.M., 290/1.

3. G.P., Diary no. 8, p. 107. (See Fig. 10)

Fig 10 BUGHTRIG 1793

From a plan by J. Easton, Oxnam.
Showing sheepfarm features.



"There should be HE sheep keep't upon it only, and all of them clipped here. Neither Nolt nor Horses keep't there on any account. They champ the drains and do much mischief. It's Quite over stocked now, the ground is all cut over, and bare as a common. The ewes are old and lean and damned ill assorted, and not near the seize that they should be. It would keep a much heavier Ewe, but the land is far too high and Stormie for Ewe sheep. Wedders it will answer and well too." 1

Early in the nineteenth century Grieve remarked on a revision of management, which occurred throughout the Border hill region- "The mode of Stock farming in this neighbourhood", he wrote, "has within the last six or seven years been considerably changed. Wedder stocks are almost entirely laid aside and Ewe stocks substitute, and on farms where it can be done the Ewes are Ridden by Bred Tups."² This alteration was made possible by the provision of winter fodder for ewes and by successful experiments in breeding. It received encouragement with the demand for stock to establish flocks in the Highlands. At the same time most farmers were giving up the practice of milking ewes, which meant that lambs were left with their mothers till the sales. Thus the hirsels on most sheep farms all came to consist of breeding ewes, the lambs kept for stock pasturing with them as hogs. No reduction in the number of shepherds was necessary, and the old hirsel system remained.

Whatever type of sheep composed the hirsel, it is important to note that it was only at certain 'gatherings' that

1. G.P., Diary no. 11, p. 150.

2. G.P., Undated note, c. 1820.

the whole flock came together. When out on the hill the sheep of a hirsell pastured in small subdivisions called 'cuts', which contained on average roughly three or four score animals. Each cut had its own piece of hill to which it kept fairly closely, so that straying, even on entirely unfenced ground, was quite rare.¹ It is not clear whether the distribution in cuts dates back to the first part of the seventeenth century or earlier; if it does, then it is possible that cuts represent a way in which each member of a tenant group kept his own small flock of, say, ewes, distinct amid the ewe hirsell. In addition the definitely limited size of a cut, and of a hirsell, determined by what the ground can 'carry' or support, is probably connected with the old practice of 'stenting' or restricting the ground to so many 'soums'.² Each cut had a name, usually that of the slope or cleuch where it was located but sometimes of a quite different character, and today these names, constituting one of the oldest and most stable features of a hill farm, may be the only records of places or associations otherwise forgotten.

Stock introduced to a farm had to be 'hefted on', a process of putting sheep into their cuts which required the shepherd to stay out day and night for a week or so in order

-
1. There are many stories of single sheep finding their way back to their own ground, but none of wholesale wandering.
 2. It may be that cuts were only found in ewe hirsells, their existence and size being therefore determined by the capacity of a tup in the breeding. Sheep are generally gathered by cuts.

to ensure that the sheep kept to their proper pasture.¹ For this reason, and because over a period of time the sheep could be adjusted and bred to suit the ground, it was not thought sensible to move or to change a stock. A new tenant therefore usually took over by purchase the existing stock at 'valuation', the valuers consisting of one man chosen by the seller and another by the purchaser, with a third, called 'arbiter' or 'oversman', agreed by both sides, to provide a final opinion. The valuation was normally carried out shortly before the change of tenants at the May term, by which time an outgoing tenant could have raised his stock to the highest, safe number in order to win a greater price from the purchasing incomer.

1. The word 'heft' was in some places used as an equivalent to 'cut', and always includes in its meaning the strong association between a particular group of sheep and its area of pasture. In the Lake District the 'heaf' is the pasture to which certain sheep are attached. The attachment is fundamental to the whole history of herding in the Borders; it could only be broken if the sheep were sold off to another farm, thus interrupting a continuity that extended over many generations.

The reduction and alteration of scattered arable patches to the enclosed hay and turnip fields of today was one of the major changes to the sheepfarming scene. Others included the building of dykes and stells, the draining of boggy ground, and the re-arrangement of sheep stocks. All these were imposed upon the farm during the eighteenth century, and all were closely interdependent. Made possible by the changed economic and political circumstances of the time, they came after centuries of unrest in which the land altered little, and they remain in the visible appearance of the modern farm. One can set out three stages in the appearance of sheep farms: the first, full of the great social developments described in the two previous chapters, is represented by the 1772 plan of Thirlstane, where nothing in the landscape seems to be different from what it must have been five centuries before, except perhaps for a loss of trees. The second, illustrated by Napier's map of Thirlstane in 1822, contains the comparatively sudden 'clothing' of the land in the age of improvement; and the third appears in the present-day map, which shows what has happened since. Taken together, these stages provide the background against which the shepherd and sheepfarmer over the years have built up and improved their stock, and developed a system of management capable of change according to circumstances.

Chapter five: FARM HOUSES AND COTTAGES

1. Before 1700

The several buildings forming the sixteenth century farmstead included cottars' dwellings, miscellaneous out-buildings, such as barns, byres, peatsheds and pigstyes, and in some instances a towerhouse or peel. This 'toun' had the appearance of a small village, in which the sub-tenants and their servants clustered together for convenience and self-protection. There were few signs of prosperity, but this should not disguise the fact that domestic conditions varied from place to place according to the locality and to the substance of the inhabitants. Dwellings ranged from the comparatively luxurious mansion to the decaying hovel. It is probable that little in the composition of the touns had changed since the Border estates were first granted to the great noblemen, though the stone towerhouses were mostly a sixteenth century development.

Towerhouses

The noble landowners of the fifteenth century and earlier rarely lived on their Border estates. The Douglasses had some kind of a 'strength' called 'Crag Douglas' on the Douglas Burn in Yarrow; it was destroyed by the King's force in September 1451, but the old Craig Douglas farmstead remained on the site until the mid nineteenth century. Similarly the Scotts of Buccleuch had a 'castle' beside the Rankle Burn in the wild country south of the Ettrick valley, and there is little doubt that it was destroyed

by "Symon routlage i' the Trowis " and his accomplices when in 1492 they plundered the stock and enjoyed "the birnyng of the place and manor of bukcleuch".¹ Another place of the same kind seems to have been 'Oliver Castle' at Tweedsmuir, the home of the Frasers.

While the Douglasses and perhaps the Scotts and Frasers, in those early times benefited only indirectly from sheepfarming through receipt of rent in money or kind, the lesser lairds and their kindly tenants were more immediately involved in sheep husbandry, and lived on their lands. Many of them, being minor members of important families, acquired wealth and position only slowly, so that it was the late fifteenth century before their mansion houses appeared on the scene. They built the stern, grey Border towers which became the fortified farmhouses of their day.

Some towers existed before 1500. Howpasley was plundered in 1494², raided again in 1513³ and "spoyled" in 1543.⁴ Whitslaid was burned in 1502.⁵ Perhaps most were erected as a result of the Parliamentary decree of 1535, which stated that "for saiffing of men thare gudis and gere upoun the bordouris in tyme of were and all uther trubulous

-
1. A.L.C.C.C., Vol. I, p. 338.
 2. Craig-Brown, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 110.
 3. Morton, op. cit., p. 21.
 4. Armstrong, R.B., The History of Liddesdale, etc., Appendix XXXVI, p. lvii.
 5. Pitcairn, op. cit., Vol. I, Part i., p. 30.

tyme", every man with land to the value of £100 or more "sall big ane sufficient (barmkyn) apoun his heretage and landis... of stane and lyme contenand thre score futis of the square ane eln thik and vi elnys heicht for the resset and defenss of him his tennentis and thair gudis in trubulous tyme with ane toure in the samin for himself gif he thinkis it expedient." The lesser people, "of smaller rent and renews" were to "big pelis and gret strenthis as thair pless..." Everything had to be completed within two years.¹

The more substantial kindly tenants also thought it 'expedient'. Towers appeared in all the Border hill valleys, and most can be linked to a landowning or kindly tenant family, the former building and furnishing in a more expensive manner.²

Tower destruction went on simultaneously with tower building. No demolition was more violent than that of Newhouse in Ettrick early in the seventeenth century, when, during a deadly feud between the Scotts of Harden and of Bonnington about 1617, a Harden party came to Newhouse, belonging to Lady Bonnington, seeking vengeance. They

-
1. Scott, (Sir) Walter, The Border Antiquities of England and Scotland, Vol. II, pp. 150-1.
 2. According to a sixteenth century note, "the most respected castells, and Gentlemens housses" in the Forest were "Teinis", "Tuschelaw", "Elibanke", "Aikewood", "Thirlstaine", "Hanginshaw", "Kirkehoope", "Huntley", and "Witchland" (i.e., Whitslaid). Similarly in Liddesdale the most important houses at the end of the century were "the ancient Castell of Harmetage, prickin-haugh, mangerstoune & Whittow" (Balfour's 'Collection on Shires', N.L.S., Adv. MS., 33.2.27, f. 278, no.22, f. 266, no. 21.

"pullit furth the haill quonyie stones of the said hall and undermyndit the same sua that the said hall within the space of ane houre thairefter fell to the ground." The occupants escaped by running out when they heard "the tymmer crak", and hid all night in "the cloise" by the house. Apart from the hall, or tower as it was also called, there were the "uttir housis", including barns and byres,¹ In 1592 the King himself, for political reasons, ordered the destruction of the tower houses of Tinnis and Dryhope, both in Yarrow, and of Harden, though this order was not completely carried out, and in the same year "the howses of Whithaugh and the Rone" in Liddesdale also escaped demolition.²

Allowing for such episodes, it seems nevertheless that most towers came to ruin more gently, following the 'pacification' of the Borders and the order of the Privy Council for the removal of iron gates and windows. The fate of a few is recorded.

In Liddesdale the towers of Mangerton and the Roan were still habitable in the early eighteenth century; a warrant was made out in 1696 "to repair the house of ye Roan and to putt a roof upon the toure yrof and to build a new bairne yr",³ while in 1710 a sum of £24.15.3 scots was spent on "sclaiting Mangerton tower and the old house

1. R.P.C., Vol. XI, pp. 99-100.

2. B.P., Vol. I, p. 416, no. 784.

3. B.M., 239.

of Roan".¹ The disposition of Gorrenberry by John Scott to the Duke of Buccleuch in 1761 included "the Castle or mannor-place thereof",² but by the mid nineteenth century only the site could be pointed out. Whithaugh tower was pulled down about 1770 and, like many others, was used for dykes and folds. According to the Castleton minister, writing in 1795, "The only peel house that remains entire is Hudshouse; the vault is immensely strong, and has had double doors, bolted on the inside".³ Soon after, it too became ruinous.

Further north, in the Teviotdalehead area, most of the towers were disused by 1660, though on 13th April 1691 William Scott requested an allowance for "repaireing the tour of Milsingtoun".⁴ The 'vault' of "ane old House" was still to be seen at Slaidhills in 1710, when the tenant was told to "putt a roof upon it that it may be preserved",⁵ and the ruin of the tower at Allanmouth, which traditionally was used as a dwelling by the vagrant women Bessy Bell and

-
1. B.M., 227/5 & 239. Two outer doors of new iron were made for the tower of the Roan at this time. A year later, in 1711, a fire destroyed the dwelling house at the Roan, and therefore a sum was spent on "lofting and repairing the tower" (B.M., 277/5). In 1714 the unofficial chamberlain of Liddesdale, William Scott, was given "the use of the room in the old tower" (B.M., 935/4).
 2. B.M., 387.
 3. O.S.A., Vol. XVI, p. 83.
 4. B.M., 943/21, p. 27.
 5. B.M., 479, Sederunt 1710.

Mary Gray,¹ was thought by James Grieve to be a fine source of stones for a bridge when he visited it in 1830.²

The Harden tower of Kirkhope in Ettrick was in decay when it was sold in 1726, but it was made habitable again, and less than a hundred years ago a family living in it had a child at Ettrickbridge school. In Yarrow Dryhope tower was still occupied in 1671, for a paper dated 9th May records events "wtne the mansion house of dryhope in ane... boure betwixt elevine and tuelff hours".³ An account of Selkirkshire written about 1720 refers to "ane old house called Dryhope"⁴ as if it were in use then, but in 1802 the farm tenant "spoke of pulling down the Peel to build some Dykes that were necessary".⁵ A rather more useful purpose was found for the tower at Fastheuch in Yarrow. In 1716 it was converted into a farmhouse by two Selkirk masons and two wrights. They took down "a great pairt of the old Tour walls" which were insecure and too high, broke out three windows, "ther being non before but slit holes in it", and made a roof, stairs, partitions, doors, and "a Catted clay Chimney two Storry high".⁶

-
1. These women were celebrated in a song by Allan Ramsay (Ramsay, A., Poems, p. 80), and the story is told locally both by John Leyden in 'Scenes of Infancy' (pp. 55-58) and James Grieve (G.P., Diary no. 14, p. 196).
 2. G.P., Diary no. 25, pp. 128-9.
 3. T.P.
 4. M.G.C., Vol. I, p. 459.
 5. Laidlaw, W.: Recollections of Sir Walter Scott, U.E.L. Laing MSS. II, 281/2, p. 17.
 6. B.M., 244.

The distinction between towerhouse and mansionhouse is not always clear. The mention of "ye mansion house of Essinsyde" in 1553¹ leads one to suppose that the building was similar to that at Todrig nearby, and possibly of a less fortified character than was exhibited by the towers. By 1700 at the latest those old houses that had been improved were appropriately called mansions; Todrig itself was then described as "a Gentleman's Dwelling pleasantly situate"² and as "ane very fine house with orcherds avenues parks and planting, very plesant...".³ Many such buildings had orchards and parks, and the old mansion at Hangingshaw possessed in the early eighteenth century a gravel walk along the front, kitchen gardens, fruit walls, brew house, chaise house and "magnificent Iron Gate".⁴ But with Hangingshaw we are again remote from the business of the sheep-farming that went on around it, for this mansion was the residence of Sir John Murray of Philipphaugh, Sheriff of Selkirkshire.

Here and there among the hills, and chiefly in the southeast of the area, were smaller fortified houses, two storeys high, to which kind the 'peel house' at Hudshouse already described probably belonged. The ruins of three or four remain on the rising ground a few miles south of

-
1. Todrig Papers: Titles no. 1.
 2. M.G.C., Vol. III, p. 183.
 3. M.G.C., Vol. I, p. 451.
 4. B.M., 85.



Pl. 7 Oakwood Tower in the 1930s, with the 19th century farmhouse nearby.



Pl. 8 Todrig, a 17th century house, in 1891. Once the residence of a Scott laird, it became the farmhouse.

Jedburgh, and another seems to have been situated at the Brugh, immediately north of Priestthaugh. Robert Scott, third generation of the family to occupy Skelfhill and a very old man in 1809 when his stories were recorded, remembered "the House at Brugh" quite well. It was, he said, "a Muckle Ha' House of two storys" which was "pulled down by Gideon Scott of Priestthaugh to build some dykes".¹ So completely was it removed that its exact site is not known, but it stood in full view of Skelfhill. It is possible that the old-fashioned farmhouse at Milburnholm in Liddesdale, which survived till the late nineteenth century, was of the same style.

The furnishing of the fortified houses was as varied as the state of the buildings, but the evidence indicates some degree of comfort. When the thieves of 'Levyn' broke into Thomas Myddilmast's house of Plora in 1494 they stole lances, swords, halberts, bows, and other arms, featherbeds, linen sheets, worsted coverlets, several lengths of cloth, handkerchiefs, silver spoons and other silver, gold rings, vessels of tin or pewter, and riding boots.² In 1656 the range of goods that had been removed from "the place of bankreif and eliebank" included "suittes of outlanddash hangingis", carpets, fine beds, "ane great cabinet browthered all wtout wt silk wt a gilded loak", seven trunks full of holland sheets, blankets, and Spanish quilts.³

1. G.P., Diary no, 16., p. 343.

2. Pitcairn, op. cit., Vol. I, Part i, pp. 20-21.

3. T.P.

On the other hand when the Hays came into Haystoun in 1658, after English troops had gone, they found only a few poor items, a chamber glass, "ane couch Cloath", some clothes and blankets, cups, a ladle, and items familiar wherever wool was used - "a Muckle wheill and a pair of Kairds".¹

Tenants' Houses

While the 'mansions' of the lairds and kindly tenants could pretend to some strength and comforts, the houses of the subtenants and, in the seventeenth century, of the ordinary tenants, were of a makeshift and mean sort. In the sixteenth century and earlier some were built of timber, a custom possibly stemming from prehistoric times. No example appears to be recorded in the Border hills, but in 1542 the "heddesmen" in the wild Tynedale valley just across the Border had "very strong houses whereof for the most parte the utter sydes or walles be made of greatt sware oke trees strongly bounde and Joyned together with great tenors of the same so thicke mortressed that yt wylbe very harde wthoute greatt force and laboure to breake or caste downe any... the tymber as well of the said walles as rooffes be so greatt and covered most parte with turves and earthe that they wyll not easily burne or be sett on fyre".² No doubt this fashion in building went out with the disappearance of the natural forest, and it must have been rare even in

1. Haystoun Papers.

2. Hodgson, op. cit., Part III, Vol. II, pp. 232-3.

the 1540s. Much more common were the 'touns' seen near the Border in 1551 by Sir Robert Bowes, which consisted of miserable "cottagies or cabbagnes"; if burnt one day, they were rebuilt the next, and the people would not remove- "so wretchedlie could they live and induir the pain that no Englesheman could suffre the lyke".¹ Andrew Borde, also writing at about the same time, said that "the people of the borders toward England lyveth in much povertie and penurye, havying no houses but such as a man may buylde wythin iii or iiii houres".² The distinct difference between these wretched dwellings along the Border and the tower-houses appeared on the 1590 plan of Liddesdale and Eskdale, on which only the tower and stone houses were marked, with their possessors; "for the reste not put downe", ran the attached comment, "they ar but onsetts or straglinge howses, th' inhabitants followers of some of these above described..."³

The majority of the subtenants lived in these huts - "not to be compared to many a dog kennel in England"⁴ - and it was in these that most of the rentalled tenants and the cottars lived throughout the seventeenth century. In 1629 Christopher Lowther stayed a night at Langholm, where "we laid in a poor thatched house the wall of it being one course of stones, another of sods of earth, it had a door of wicker rods, and the spider webs hung over our heads as

1. Armstrong, op. cit., p. 75, n. 2.

2. Lythe, S.G.E., The Economy of Scotland 1550-1625, p. 196.

3. Archaeologia, Vol. XXII, opposite p. 161.

4. Armstrong, op. cit., p. 75, n. 2.

thick as might be in our bed".¹ Other travellers from the south made similar comments about their lodgings in Scotland until long after 1700, when at last tenants' houses began to improve.

There is little information about the farm touns in the Border hills before the eighteenth century. More than one toun might be found on a farm in, say, 1630, by which time perhaps four or five original holdings, each with its cluster of cottages, had been combined. On Dryhope, for instance, there was the toun of 'Nether Dryhope' near the tower, and two smaller settlements further into the hills called 'Over Dryhope' and 'Ferniehope'. The traces of the houses can still be seen, as they can at 'the auld toun' and the 'Mark Lair' on Howpasley, and at various places on Blackhouse, where a different development had occurred, as a note on a paper of 15th July 1636 shows:

"The lands now called the lands of blakhous douglas craig and garlacleughe wer formerly all set and called be the name of blakhous, and the tennents all dwelt in a little village called Blakhous, Bot yrefter the said blakhous was divyded in thrie thrids, and houses built upon the same for the occupyars yrof accordingle..."²

Thus three 'touns' replaced one, and the remains are still evident. Some of the houses here measured roughly thirty feet by fifteen feet; smaller structures, possibly byres, stables and pens, are close by.

1. Lowther, op. cit., p. 12.

2. T.P.

In 1668 a tenant on the Haystoun estate was allowed half the cost of building a "Sithous (i.e., dwelling) byre and barne", the account for which included sums for leading of stones and clay, making mortar, erecting walls and 'knitting' the timber for eight roof couples. The roof was covered with turf divots.¹ Such assistance from the landowner was rarely recorded before the end of the century.

Records of raids and levies provide scanty evidence of the furnishing and provisions to be found in tenants' dwellings and of their farm 'gear', during this earlier period. The 'insicht' taken by raiders from the 'onsets' or 'onsteads' in the 1580s was similar to that removed by the English regiments around 1650, and the plunder from Milsington and Glensax in 1650 and 1651 will serve as examples. In the former year the English left what was doubtless the tower of Milsington "but ane bair plundered house without any sort of plenisheing qlk wes knowne to have beine in any such a house."² In early August 1651 another party, four thousand horse, came and "eatte and destroyit the haille cornes grase and hay." They took away eighty stones of cheese, eighteen stones of butter, six bolls of meal, a pair of new plaids, and a pair of new boots. They broke all the "vessels", burned all "the pleughs and plewgraith", and spoiled twelve stones of wool. Finally they spoiled by

1. Haystoun Papers.

2. B.M., 397.

trampling of horses the pasture of the "yew fence" at the crucial milking time.¹ The troops who robbed the barnyards of Glensax took from the dwelling houses cheese, meal, salt, "gray claithis", blankets, sheets, and other "small insicht".² What is missing here is a detailed list of the small household 'insicht' and the farm implements, and for this it is necessary to turn to an early eighteenth century inventory, composed of essentially traditional items. (See Appendix X)

Shiels

Before entering upon the developments of the eighteenth century, it is worth commenting on the use of shiels or shielings. It has already been observed that going to the shieling was possible in the days of the 'wastes', when some vital extra summer grazing could be won from the remote pastures of the hills. The practice was recorded on the English side of the Border at Kershope in the twelfth century, and Camden described it after visiting Cumberland and the Roman wall in 1599:

"Here every way round about in the wasts as they tearme them, as also in Giliesland, you mey see as it were the ancient Nomades, a martiall kinde of men, who from the moneth of Aprill unto August, lye

1. B.M., 397.

2. Haystoun Papers. At Northhouse Colonel Seidcoat's regiment and the soldiers of Alwick garrison plundered one hundred stones of cheese, twelve stones of butter, five horses and a mare, twenty bolls of oats for sowing, fodder, blankets, sheets and "fedder beds" (B.M., 397.

out scattering and summering (as they tearme it) with their cattell in little cottages here and there which they call Sheales and Shealings." 1

The eventual abandonment of shielings in the English wastes was hastened by the Anglo-Scottish wars and raids of the sixteenth century, for in such circumstances the lonely shiels were exposed and helpless. When the Borders became peaceful, the wastes were then held as common pasture or comprised within farms, and employed as more or less permanent grazing, so that by 1650 or 1700 the old custom was almost dead. On the Scottish side it lasted rather less long, for, except in Liddesdale, the people were able to make regular use of the wilder hills earlier in the seventeenth century. It appears, however, that on certain farms the shielings were still used after 1700 by the tenants and their servants; in March 1708 Bessie, daughter of Adam Fletcher in "Buckcleughsheils", affirmed that she had been assaulted in the fields at the end of the previous July, three days before 'Lambas' and eight days "e're they of Buckcleugh went from the Sheils".²

Original occupation for the summer only seems in some instances to have become permanent before 1600, with small farmsteads being established as at Foulshiels in Liddesdale, and at "Christalsheell" near the head of the Black Esk. Subsequently both of these became shepherd's dwellings, the latter being known as Garwaldshiel(s) after the land had

1. Ramm, H.G., and others: Shielings and Bastles, p. 1.

2. Presbytery of Selkirk Records, S.R.O., CH2/327/3, p.58.

been joined to Garwald about the 1620s. One cannot be sure that the shepherd's cottage with a name like 'Birkhill shiel' or 'Deloraine shiel' always stands on old shieling ground, since the word 'shiel' came to be applied to any small hut, but it is likely that the link did exist in many cases. Other summer shielings became herds' houses and even farms in the course of the seventeenth century, or were abandoned altogether. Places like Craikshiel and Priestthaughshiel, deserted only in recent times, first appear in the records about 1670, probably as the dwellings of outbye herds rather than as shielings.

A feature, therefore, of the Border hill country in the historical period has been the scatter of small huts or cottages in the wilds. The shiels were followed by the shepherds' houses, the one being as humble and frail as the other, and probably of the same construction, until the age of improvement altered everything.

2. After 1700

Farmhouses

In 1710 the range of houses to be found on Border hill farms was no less extensive than it had been a hundred years before and not much different in character.

The man who owned his farm was living in a large, gaunt, grey house, perhaps many years old. John Elliot of Thorlieshope had built his, it seems, in the 1680s, but the Scotts of Todrig, and the Murrays of Sundhope in Yarrow had

dwellings of some antiquity. People in this position continued to build similar houses, though not so tall, during the next fifty years or more. By 1720 Michael Anderson of Tushielaw had "ane fine new building with orchards and planting",¹ and the present houses at Meikledale in Ewes and Larriston in Liddesdale date from the same period.

Tenants were also concerned to improve their accommodation. William Scott in Milsington, who had the advantage of being a member of the Todrig family, accompanied his repairs to the tower in 1691 with a "sithouse" and offices; when he entered the farm in 1665 there had been no dwelling place apart from the tower.² Less fortunate men in other farms continued to live in poor huts, which they did not grace with the name of 'sithouses'. The tenant groups were breaking up, but 'touns' still existed. On the basis of one family to a house, there were in 1694 four cottages on Meadshaw, eight or nine on Bellendean where there were cottars, and more typically, three on Cacrabank.³ Although there were evidently several people living in the toun on Craik in 1710, the new tenants who entered then, Walter Scott of Merrylaw and William Ogilvie, immediately set about building two "sitt houses" during the summer, "there being noe houses their at ther entry."⁴

1. M.G.C., Vol. I, p. 453.

2. B.M., 943/21.

3. Horsburgh, 2.

4. B.M., 252.

Perhaps under the influence of a more hopeful stage in Scottish affairs, both landlords and tenants contributed towards the better steadings that certainly appeared. That at Girnwood for instance, surveyed in 1713 but built about eight years earlier, consisted of a stone and mortar dwelling with five couples, stone barn, stone and divot byre, stable, "victual house", "ox houses", and "the house that the herd dwells in".¹ Within the next few years an abundance of building and repairs occurred on the Buccleuch estate; in Yarrow and Ettrick alone such activity was to be seen on nearly every farm. The alterations at Ladhope in 1715-1716 fairly represent the standard and extent of the work. The house was harled on the outside and plastered within, and had lime mortar in the walls and two stone chimneys, as well as a stair to an upper storey. There were wooden floors and partitions, the latter including one with three doors, seven windows with glass, "locks bands and snecks", and a roof containing nine couples and nine joists. The kitchen was, as usual, built with a "Cat and clay" chimney. A stable and a large byre completed the whole stading, the total expense being £263.17s. scots. The dearest single items were the mason work (£45.10s) and the "deales" (£66.13s.4).²

Few of these improved houses survive today, most of them having been turned into byres and barns and, in due

1. Ibid.

2. B.M., 244.

course, replaced altogether. One may be seen at Peel in Liddesdale, a farm abandoned recently, while an examination of various steadings would probably reveal more.

Improvements occurred on the Traquair estate thirty years later, in the 1750s, when a wide variation in the standard of tenants' houses was to be found among the Border hills. Inventories of the buildings at Blackhouse and Dryhope in 1758 suggest that they were rather below average:

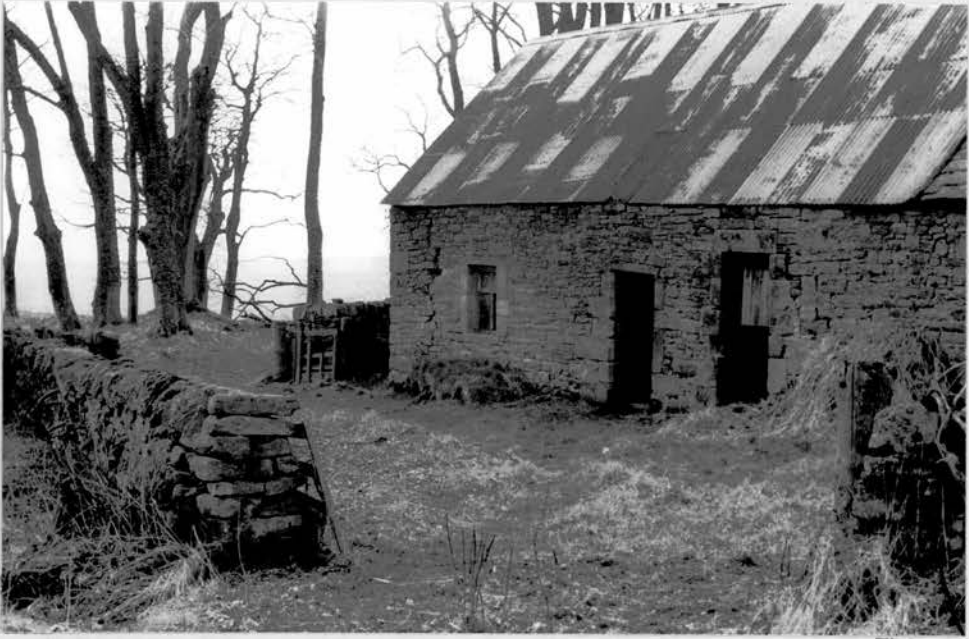
BLACKHOUSE

The Dwelling House:

"The Mason work of it"	-	£ 2. 2. 0.
11 "couple and joyst over the Kitchen & East room"	-	£ 1. 2. 0.
6 "couple and joyst" over the west room	-	£ 1. 4. 0.
"The floor over the Easter room"	-	10. 0.
"One Sash window and Shutters in East room"	-	4. 0.
"Two windows in the Kitchen"	-	4. 0.
"The window in the passage and others put in by the tennent"	-	-
"The Outter Door and two inner Doors"	-	3. 8.
Thatching	-	3. 0.
		<hr/>
		£ 5.12. 8. ster. ¹

The two houses at Dryhope were similar, but they had lofts and 'cat and clay' chimneys. In one "The Lofting" belonged to the tenant, as did one or two of the doors, while in the other there was an old "Trap Stair". At both farms there were barns, byres, stables, and smearing houses, collectively called by the old name of 'onstead'. At the

1. T.P.



Pl. 9 Part of the 18th century house at Peel,
latterly used as a byre and shed.



Pl. 10 Blackhouse; farmhouse, steading, tower in
ruins, and Craighope cottage.

same time a herd's house on Kirkstead was valued at 8/6d.¹

The "Mansion house of Skelfhill", repaired and improved in 1764, was at the upper end of the farmhouse scale. After the work was finished, it contained:

- i. 'Lower west room' ---- floorboards, mouldings round ceilings, windows with shutters, alcove bed and partitions.
- ii. 'Wester high room' ---- the same; also chimneypiece border for hearth, and new joists.
- iii. "High east room" ---- similar; windowseat, no bed.
- iv. Closet, Lobby ---- main door with glass panes; Doors off to easter room, cellar, passage.
- v. Five windows in the front of the house, all painted.
- vi. Kitchen, with garret above, and milkhouse. Also a staircase with window and plastered walls. 2

Other farms had new building carried out around 1760, but few of a kind to match Skelfhill, the tenant of which had been a minor laird. The economically disastrous years after 1750 meant that improvement was a remote prospect for many farmers, even if the idea had occurred to them, and landlords were not willing to indulge in expensive projects. The ups and downs of the sheepfarmer's economy were controlling factors in the progress of his stading. Large old houses could fall quickly into disrepair, and their occupants were unable to do much about them. In 1751 Gilmans-

-
1. T.P., "Coat" houses built for cottars at Nether Horsbrugh about 1752 had walls of "stone and faill", and only two roof couples, the roof cover itself being thatch and divots (T.P.).
 2. B.M., 256.

cleuch was in bad shape, with broken couples propped on the joists, leaning walls, and leaking roof; the occupants declared it was "so uncertain that we dare not ly in the house when the wind is loud but had to sit up all the night and there is great danger in the dwelling in the house..."¹ The roof was renewed and covered with thatch, and the chimneys were repaired. A hundred years later the old house and steading at Gilmanscleuch were described as "entirely useless", and though the tenant, an old man, was content with the one-storey, thatched dwelling, which had two apartments only six feet high because "he dislikes high rooms", a modern house was considered necessary.²

The theorists of the late eighteenth century encouraged the social aspirations of the farmers, ushering in thereby the sturdy manse-like farmhouses³ that one sees today, often rather too big for the family's requirements. What they saw around them as might be expected, varied in quality, and their remarks ranged from the disdainful to the admiring. In their eyes, new improved standards of building, by contrast, emphasised the faults and diminished the virtues of the old style.

1. B.M., 378.

2. B.M., 491, Letter, William Ogilvie to Duke of Buccleuch, dated 25th April 1841.

3. The comparison with a manse was made by Findlater. The houses, he wrote, were built "in a style similar to, but somewhat inferior, both as to size, height of ceilings, and quality of finishing, to the... manses of the clergy". (Findlater, op. cit., p. 38)

The faults of the old had been clear enough, but it has been shown that some farm houses were more substantial than the "affair of wood, sods, and wattling" that some have suggested.¹ The ministers writing in the 1790s tended to notice the faults, and it is important to balance their picture with a comment such as that of an East Lothian farmer in 1777, who observed of Belford near the head of Bowmont Water that "The house and offices are remarkably good; and great was my surprise to find so clean and neat a habitation in the midst of mountains."² The remarks of Douglas and Russell on Selkirkshire farms must be read with an awareness of the writers' assumptions and expectations. Douglas disapproved of the poultry and ill-built houses "of one story, low in the roof, badly lighted, and covered with thatch", but he did note that the most exposed "were built the smallest, but of a desire to make them warm, comfortable, and weather-resistant", and that stone and lime walls were common.³ He was pleased to record that "A happy change" was taking place, that there were several good two-storey buildings, constructed with "foreign timber", roofed with slates, and with suitable doors and windows, and that the 'offices' too were being improved. In the new landlords' houses, he wrote, "elegance is united with

1. Roxburghshire Inventory, p. 3.

2. Tait, J., Two Centuries of Border Church Life, Vol. I, pp. 116-7.

3. Douglas, op. cit., p. 245.

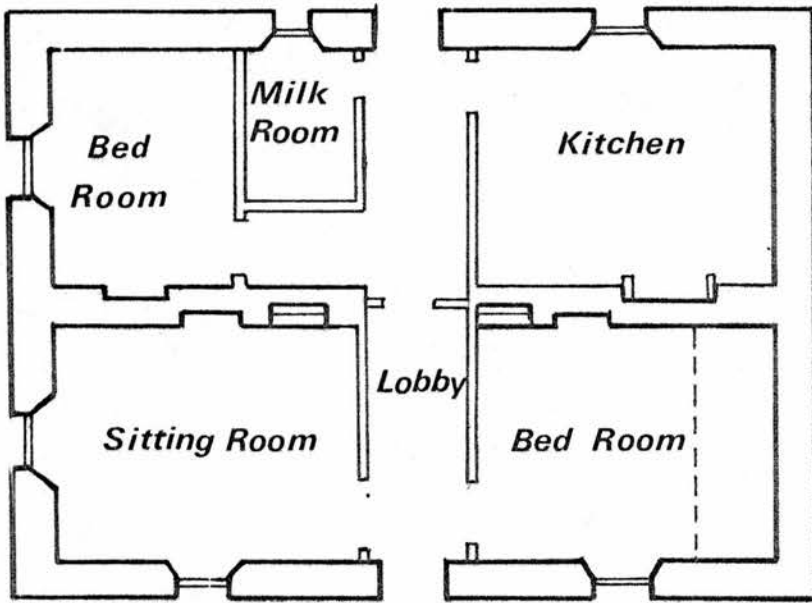
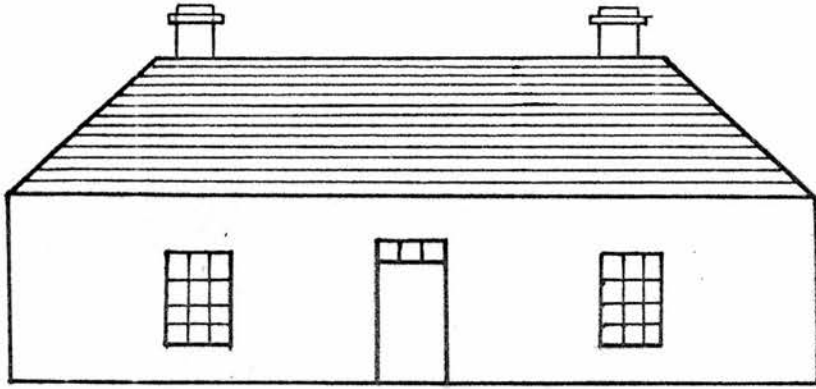


Fig 11a
Sketch of a farm house for Langhope 1820

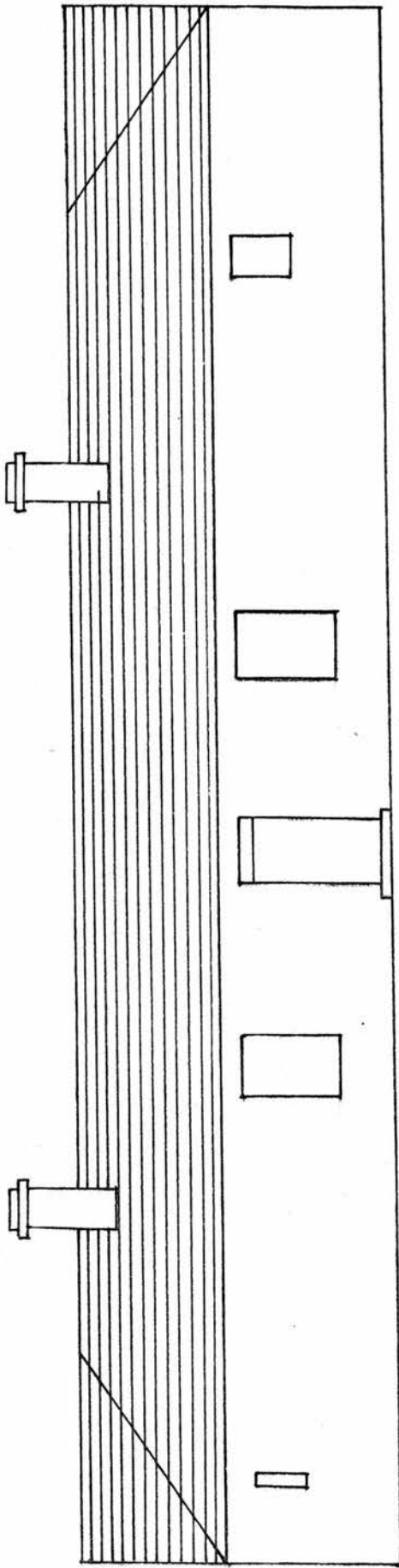
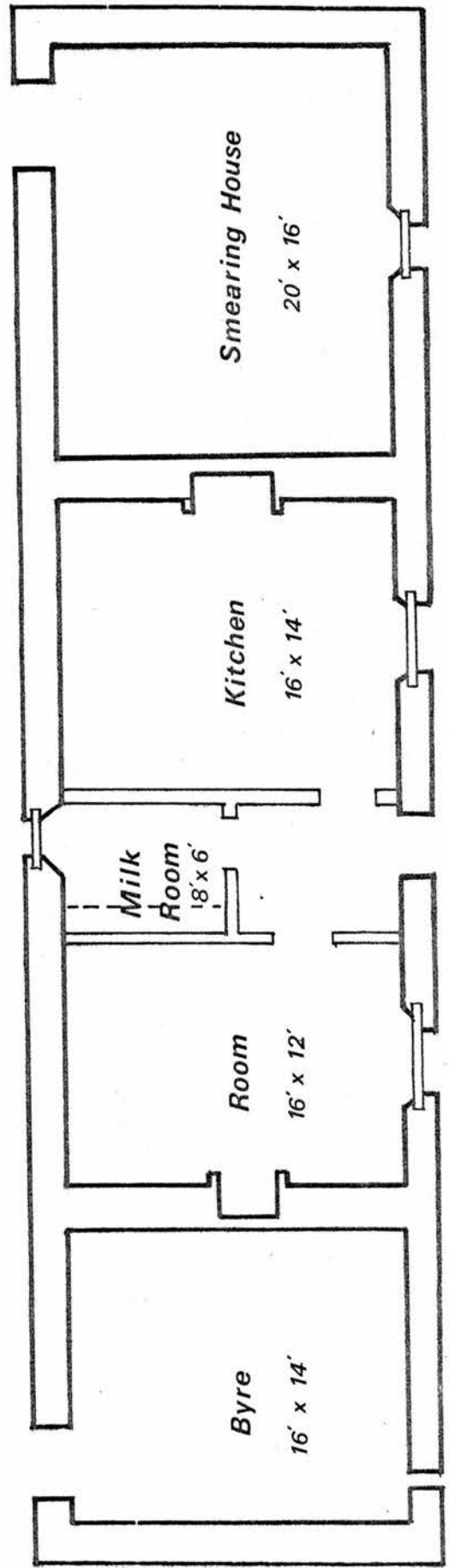


Fig 11b
Plan of herd's cottage for Berrybush c.1840



utility".¹ New building was all part of the proper improver's task, for, as Johnston remarked, "A man that has not a spirit for a good house has commonly as little for improvement."²

Douglas had ideas, too, for improving the remote led farms, which were frequently the victims of neglect. Houses could be resited on dry, sheltered ground, the gable towards the wind, a barn or other 'office' against the gable. Landowners should furnish most of the building materials, and grant longer leases to encourage the tenant to improve. Indeed the main responsibility lay with the landlord for inducing the tenant to settle and to lead a cleaner and more healthy life. "Proprietors mistake their own interest, in not giving tenants commodious and substantial houses and offices."³ It was, however, on the wilder and the smaller farms that old houses lingered on. Muselee, for instance, was in 1840 an antiquated exception among the Borthwick farms: "it had the cat and clay chimneys; was two storeys high; a but and a ben on the ground floor, the second storey being reached by a trap ladder, where, also, there were two cat and clay chimneys, but joined to the two from the under flat, so that one outlet served the two fireplaces."⁴

1. Ibid., p. 245.

2. Johnston, T., General View of the Agriculture of the County of Selkirk, p. 16.

3. Douglas, op. cit., pp. 246-7.

4. Scott, G., 'Reminiscences of Borthwick Water Sixty Years Ago', T.H.A.S. (1909), p. 79.

Asquith's survey of the Teviothead and Borthwick farms in 1857 shows the usual mixture of old and new steadings- out of a dozen farms, eight had houses that were recently built or in very good repair, and these remain today, while the least satisfactory farmstead was Priestthaugh:

"The Dwelling House is an old clay building with thatched roof, almost a wreck. The offices are old and contracted but in tolerable repair... There are two Shepherds Cottages with Byres, the one at Shankfoot is a good Stone Building with Slated roof, the other at Priestthaugh Shiel is an old building with thatched roof". 1

The culmination of farmhouse building, the large solid square that satisfied men like the minister Douglas appeared in some places before 1800. In Tweeddale, as in Selkirkshire, the increased wealth of sheep farmers brought the better houses and, according to Findlater, sheep farmers were the very people to spend money on their dwellings, since they required fewer outbuildings than arable men.² The fine new residences had a central front door leading into a small lobby or hall and a staircase, with the kitchen, scullery and servant's bedroom on one side and the 'best room' on the other. Upstairs were two small bedrooms over the kitchen, the drawing room, and a small "sleeping closet". A garret had space for lumber and two beds. The style was in the main simple and direct, though fireplaces as well as ceilings might be decorative.

1. Asquith, Revaluations of Buccleuch Estate Farms.

2. Findlater, op. cit., p. 38.

The history of a farmhouse in the Borders usually involves several changes of site. From the prehistoric situation when settlements were at a level well above the valley floor, as is still the case at Caerlanrig, the tendency has been towards the lower, more sheltered positions. After about 1750 the house on the old site often became a shepherd's dwelling, while the new farmhouse was built in a 'better', more accessible place. "The new houses of the tenants", wrote the Yarrow minister in 1833, "have for the most part been built in better style and situations than the old." ¹

This development has given rise to pairs of place-names such as 'Old Kirkstead' and 'Kirkstead' or 'Old Howpasley' and 'Howpasley'. If no herd's cottage occupied the old site and it was abandoned, then commonly it can still be pointed out, as at Saughtree, Eldinhope, Badlieu and elsewhere. Maps of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries show that many changes to modern positions came around 1850 when the present houses were being built. Thus, on Tennant's map of Roxburghshire (1840) Merryllaw, Howpasley, Braidlie (Liddesdale), and others are shown at their 'old sites'!

The course of events is typified in the history of the farmhouse on Branxholm Park. Here a house was built in 1718 on the traditional site high up the hill.

1. N.S.A. (Selkirkshire), p. 57.

"At first it was covered with Sclate, dug from a Quarry on the Farm at the head of the Mirk: path, called the Bogle hole, but its weight was so great as to twist the walls and (it) was found necessary to be taken off again, when it was covered with thatch". 1

The building remained until the farmer, in 1796, grew tired of putting up with discomfort. After a heavy spell of rain, "This House is soaked with wet as ever you saw a slice of bread & damp most insupportably damp, everything mouldie and wet".² So he planned a suitable dwelling lower down the hill, the precise site being fixed on 31st March 1797. The foundations were begun on 20th June, the mason work on 19th July, and, after much delay, he was able to move in on 12th June 1800. The "auld town", of which the traces are plain, was occupied by farm servants for many years. In 1851 "John Murray Ploughman lives in the old dining room, Betty Gladstones in the room over that... In the Governors room Ann Hog a widow, works out during summer. The fourth room I gave to Geordy Helm to put his furniture into."³ The new mansion was burned down in 1875, when it was replaced by the present one. There have thus been at least two sites and four houses on the farm.

1. G.P., Diary no. 13, p. 88.

2. G.P., Diary no. 10, p. 120.

3. G.P., Copy Letter Book - Letter, William Grieve to George Oliver, dated 9th October 1851.



Pl. 11 Howpasley farmhouse and steading in 1888;
typical of the best mid-late 19th century
buildings on sheepfarms.



Pl. 12 Jimmy Tait's house at Dryhopehaugh, Yarrow.
1896

Shepherds' Houses

At the opposite extreme of Border farm life was the little mountain hovel, hardly changed over the centuries, such as the "wretched hut, called Howford, in Ettrick", in which William Thomson was born at midnight 1783/4;¹ it was built with divots and covered with heather and resembled the early nineteenth century cottage at Hartleap described by Janet Bathgate after a gale had torn off part of the roof. "The house is taken down, and the neighbouring shepherds volunteer to lend a hand in putting up a new one..." Divots were cast, foundations laid, "then a row of stones and two rows of divots, and so on till the walls are the proper height..." The roof was put on, and thatched with rushes and divots. Clay was carried from the burn and mixed with cow dung for the plaster of the inside walls. A large window was put in, "a sort of fireplace" formed with large stones, and the furniture replaced. A byre was erected separately for the cow.²

Cot-houses of this kind composed ~~the~~ the village of Deanburnhaugh about 1840, and others survived much later. Early in the nineteenth century, however, herds' cottages were being built with slated roofs though remaining simple in design. Like the new farmhouses they were sturdy buildings, as a few surviving plans of about 1830-40 show. There were usually two main rooms on either side of a central lobby,

1. Thomson, J.: Life and Times of William Thomson, p. 5.

2. Bathgate, J.: Aunt Janet's Legacy to her Nieces, pp.78-9.

behind which was a third room called the milkhouse. In some a small stair led from the lobby to a long attic that could extend over the connected byre and smearing house. Of this kind, though perhaps without the attic, was the cottage at Berrybush. One at Linhope was smaller. Those at Anelshope and Whitehope were typical. The cottage at Whitehillshiel on Burnmouth in Liddesdale, like many others, has not been much improved from 1840 standards. That the standard of building was then high is shown by the specification for the walls of Shankfoot cottage on Priestthaugh:

"The whole of the Masonry inside and out to be built with stones and Lime properly prepared... Free Stone Rebates Soles and Lintels to be put into the two front windows, the other windows Doors, and Corners to be of Whinstone -- the tenant is to lead all the Materials required... the Contractor to prepare the Materials... and provide all the Stones Lime and Sand required, at his own expense, he having the Stones in the old House to be at his disposal. The Lime to be from Laristone..."¹

Of such a kind were most of the herds' houses around 1900.

The older, thatched cottages lingered on. Associated mostly with the servant group, occupied by a miscellany of people including shepherds, ploughmen, molecatchers, weavers and postmen, they caught the disapproving eye of the minister. James Russell said they were "little better than dark smoky hovels",² though this was not necessarily true of all. They needed constant occupation and frequent repair; otherwise they were liable to collapse. On 12th January 1796 James

1. B.M., (Irvine House.)

2. Russell, J.: Reminiscences of Yarrow, p. 76.



Pl. 13 The herd and his family at Hawkhass, an outbye cottage on Penchrise, c. 1920. Between the house and garden are peat stacks.



Pl. 14 The cottage at Blackburn, Liddesdale, with small 'pigeon-house' and a cluster of salted herring hanging on the wall. c. 1900.
cf. Fig. 11b.

Grieve noted in his diary that "Davie's House fell last night - no damage done to his furniture or ought else." ¹ What a contrast, Russell thought, were the new four-apartment cottages with milkhouse, byre and piggery attached - "Though", he reflected, "these changes may not be thoroughly appreciated by some of the denizens of the soil, who, tenacious of old customs, prefer still crowding into one apartment..." ² The new buildings were, however, good for morality.

The 'denizens of the soil' were at times proud of their 'hovels'. Clay walls were drier, it was claimed, than lime ones, for the clay did not draw the damp. In the boxbeds that partitioned the room the people slept with the doors nearly closed, the men with 'pirnies' and the women with 'mutches' over their heads, "and yet they leaved a' their days withoot ony bother".³ Thomas Beattie, later the laird of Meikledale, was at school in the Ewes valley in 1744 and lodged "in a small cot house with a woman called Helen Nicol, sister to old Robin our shepherd in Burngrains"; here he stayed two years, and "as the old woman was very kind to me I was never happier than I was in this miserable smoky hut." ⁴ The occupant's opinion differed from that of the onlooker. "How fine all things

1. G.P., Diary no. 10, p. 119.

2. Russell, op. cit., p. 77.

3. Barrie, W., 'Border Rural Life in the Olden Time', T.H.A.S., 1932, pp. 13-14.

4. Beattie, op. cit., p. 22.

look!", exclaimed Mrs. Bathgate;¹ "wretched habitations, dark, smoky, and insufficient defences against wind and rain...", said the Reverend Douglas.²

Some of these old dwellings were still to be seen in 1900, and one or two remained in use for longer after alterations. The cottage at Old Swindon, up the Bowmont, had a "theekit" roof, stone walls plastered with cowdung and clay, and a clay floor, while that at Old Alderybar, on North-house, had a cow dung plaster three inches deep, white on the surface, green below, and "dry as powder." One disadvantage of a clay floor was that it let the rats in. At an old cottage in Ettrick its occupant once lay in his boxbed and broke up a fight between a rat and a weasel on the living-room floor by flinging a pillow. A mixture of lime and cowdung was used to block up rat holes, but it was well known that rats might not be there one night and there in the morning for they travelled from house to house. The last thatched cottage in Yarrow, at Dryhopehaugh, was occupied by a retired herd, Jimmy Tait, whose house, scantily furnished but cosy, became something of a tourist attraction until his death in 1904. (See Plate 12)

In 1793 Russell, minister of Yarrow, presented a brief but cheerful picture of local conditions. The people, he wrote, "enjoy in a considerable degree the comforts of life, and appear to be contented with their circumstances and

1. Bathgate, op. cit., p. 79.

2. Douglas, op. cit., p. 247.

situation." ¹ Perhaps the same thing might have been said many times before and since. However, in the opinion of some, happiness increased with the improvement in living conditions, and the Liddesdale schoolteacher, William Scott, expressed in 1821 this optimistic view:

"The dark and gloomy castles and strong towers, the abodes of rapine and cruelty, are long ago leveled with the ground. The dark impervious forests are converted into sheep walks and corn-fields, where formerly the free-booters hoarded up their plunder, and bade defiance to their prisoners. Instead of the mean smoky huts and hovels, the abodes of poverty, wretchedness, and ignorance, the Borders are interspersed with neat comfortable dwellings, inhabited by a class of intelligent, industrious, and hospitable people." ²

1. O.S.A., Vol. VII, p. 512.

2. Scott, William: Beauties of the Border, p. xiv.

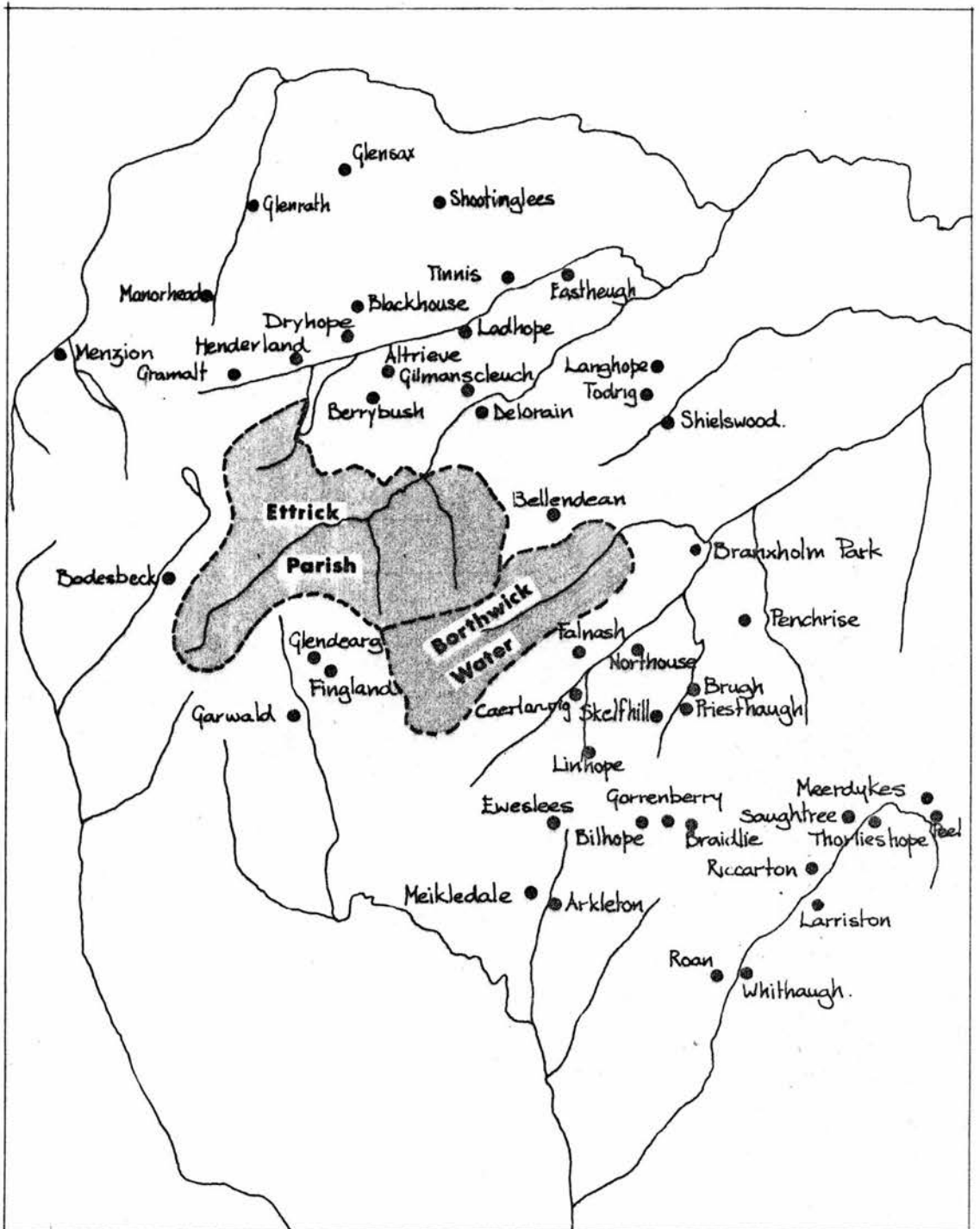


Fig 12

Map showing the location of the main farms to which reference is made in the text

Farms in Ettrick Parish and the Upper Borthwick Water (shaded areas) are shown in figure 7