

The Decline of the Cumbrian 'Yeomen' Revisited

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THIS paper attempts to chart the fortunes of the Cumbrian 'yeoman' from the end of the 18th century over the next 100 years, firstly through the eyes of contemporaries, who saw a progressive decline in numbers, and then by 20th century historians claiming a sudden collapse at the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Lest the debate should be deemed to be over, additional evidence at the beginning of a new millennium seems an opportune time to re-examine the question to see if firm conclusions may be drawn.¹ Two important caveats must be considered before embarking upon this review. The first is to see the Cumbrian experience in a national context, and the second to explore how far Cumbrian 'yeoman' is analogous to the national understanding of the term.

From a national perspective of owner-occupiers of land three major strands emerge: that they disappeared by the early 18th century due to land market pressures; that they were victims of enclosure later in that century; or that they became economic casualties in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars.² Most previous work has dwelt on a region of considerable homogeneity in a Midlands arable setting, and the assumption has been that whatever the cause, their decline was effectively complete by 1815. Certainly after 1830 interest in the agricultural owner-occupiers wanes: Grigg notes that they were 'uncommon'; other books on British agriculture fail to mention them, and Beckett notes that their continued decline extends into the 20th century.³

The second caveat concerned the local definition of the title 'yeoman', which differs markedly from the general connotation. In Cumberland the term 'yeoman' developed in a hierarchical society, filling the gap between the thinly spread 'gentry' and the lower levels of rural society, the husbandmen and cottagers, who formed the base of the social pyramid.⁴ As a class they were initially the lynch pin of agricultural society. The title was appropriate to those holding an estate of inheritance, and therefore embraced both freehold farmers and customary tenants, irrespective of the size or value of their holdings, and therefore spanned much wider boundaries than the less flexible national concept.⁵

Farmers claiming 'yeoman' status fail to appear as such in public records, hence the degree of their decline or otherwise is largely subjective. The self-styled title of 'yeoman' depended for its validity on the acceptance of one's peers, without which it was meaningless. The inclusion of customary tenants, whose numbers are unknown, in the yeoman ranks, complicates the situation; and some freemen and customary tenants did not seek yeoman status.⁶

The very looseness of the definition in the Cumbrian term 'yeoman', with its varying amalgam of social and economic factors, exposed it to the vicissitudes of usage

and perception. The early 19th century movement romanticising Lakeland found it impossible to dismiss them as a class without lamenting the loss of their positive qualities. They embodied traditional virtues: honesty; frugality; humility; and sturdy independence. Yet with the impetus of the Victorian age towards innovation and modernity, their public image suffered to the point where the yeomen were regarded as an archaic reactionary rearguard. As a result their title was jettisoned, though the same class of people survived as modern 'farmers', a metamorphosis suggested by Walton in his provocative paper on the strange decline of the 'yeoman'.⁷

Contemporary observers

By virtue of its topography and distance from London, Cumbria had fewer great magnates, resident or otherwise, than most other counties. During the 18th century there had been a net loss of aristocratic families in Cumberland, and overall their sales of land exceeded any purchases.⁸ Nationally, the density of aristocratic settlement varied considerably throughout the 19th century: in 1865 there was a seat for every 31,000 acres in Rutland, heading the county list; Cumberland came 37th in the county table, with a seat for every 281,000 acres, only two places above last placed Westmorland, and the gap widened over the century.⁹ Cumberland was predominantly a county of small farms and small landowners. Estates of 300-1,000 acres occupied 16 per cent of the total area; estates of 100-300 acres, 22 per cent; and the smallest units of 1-100 acres, 16 per cent. Thus the last three groups accounted for 54 per cent of the total area of the county against the national average of 38.5 per cent.¹⁰ A survey, the Return of Owners of Land in 1873, lists the principal landowners somewhat haphazardly.¹¹

Some major landowners felt strongly that there was an excess of customary tenants, who were considered a brake on agricultural progress.¹² All Cumbrian writers describing the yeomanry at the end of the 18th century paint a melancholy picture of a once numerous class in apparent terminal decline. A correspondent to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1766 claimed that a quarter of Cumberland was owned by about thirty lords and gentlemen. Some of these drew rents as lords of the manor from the other three quarters, while there were 10,000 landowners or customary tenants with properties ranging from £10 to £100 a year. Although this sounds a random guess, it is, nevertheless, in keeping with the general comments of other observers. He goes on to say that these 'petty landowners' who:

. . . work like slaves, they cannot afford to keep a man servant, but husband, wife, sons and daughters all turn out to work in the fields . . . they very seldom taste meat or wheat bread . . . not withstanding this miserable way of life they save nothing . . . they cannot either feed or dress meaneer.¹³

About the same time evidence of decline in a specific Cumbrian locality was noted by the Revd William Hutton, vicar of Beetham, who in 1770, after a summer walk in the Winster Valley, names a series of substantial properties and comments, ' . . . but I find everywhere the Yeomanry extinct, not one Owner lives on his farm'. The impression he creates is one of dereliction as well as depopulation, though he goes on to say that ' . . . nothing is found but poor Farmers racking their Grounds, because racked by their landlords.'¹⁴ It is not clear from this whether the yeoman lands have been taken over by rack-renting landlords, and let out to poor tenants, or that the residual 'poor Farmers'

had been there all along, and have suddenly become visible through the disappearance of the yeomen, their superiors. No other author mentions land abandoned. Indeed throughout the whole period, the overriding impression is that all agricultural land entering the market was rapidly purchased.

In 1777 Nicholson and Burn comment that:

Every man lives upon his own small tenement, and the practice of accumulating farms hath not yet here made any considerable progress.¹⁵

About the same time, Hutchinson considered that the income of many customary tenants in Cumberland was less than £10 per annum, implying that their holdings were very small, and felt that 'these base tenures greatly retard cultivation'.¹⁶ The agricultural 'management consultants' of their day, Bailey and Culley, from Northumberland, writing at the end of the 18th century note that:

There are probably few counties, where property in land is divided into such small parcels as in Cumberland, and those small properties so universally occupied by their owners, by far the greatest number part of which are held under the lords of the manor, by that species of vassalage, called customary tenure . . . The annual value of these tenements varies from £5 to £50, but the generality are from £15 to £30 . . . We cannot pretend to be accurate, but believe, that two-thirds of the county are held by this kind of tenure, principally in those small tenements.¹⁷

They estimated the average annual rent per acre at 15 shillings, giving farm sizes of 20-40 acres. Pringle, their counterpart in Westmorland, also notes the proliferation of small farms in the north of the county with an annual rental value of £10-£50.¹⁸ The general consensus appears to be that in the late 18th century the yeomanry in Cumbria were plentiful but poor.

Is it possible to get a general idea of the character of the yeoman? Bailey and Culley give a sympathetic description of these small farmers, but are unimpressed by their enterprise:

To small proprietors, Agriculture, we presume, is little indebted for its advancement: these 'statesmen' seem to inherit with the estates of their ancestors, their notions of cultivating them, and are almost as much attached to the one as the other: they are rarely aspiring, and seem content with their situation, nor is luxury in any shape an object of their desires; their little estates, which they cultivate with their own hands, produce almost every necessary article of food, and clothing, they in part manufacture themselves; they have a high character for sincerity and honesty, and probably few people enjoy more ease and humble happiness.¹⁹

Houseman gives an equally fulsome tribute to their characteristics in 1800.²⁰ Pringle also describes the villages and the 'statesmen' of Westmorland. The term 'statesman' was locally synonymous with 'yeoman', a literary conceit recently imported chiefly from East Anglia. It had its origins in the Romantic Movement currently creating the aesthetic for the region's newly recognised natural beauty, and is to be found in the work of writers responsible for the new guidebooks to the Lakes.²¹ It was a term not used by the 'statesmen' themselves, and was largely abandoned after the first half of the 19th century.²² Both Bailey and Culley with Pringle are, rather surprisingly for such prosaic writers, among the first to use it. The latter writes of Westmorland in 1794:

. . . little straggling villages, very inconvenient for farming . . . (they) live poorly and labour hard . . . independence renders them impatient with oppression or insult, but they are gentle and obliging when treated by their superiors with kindness and respect . . . This class of men is daily decreasing. The turnpike roads have brought the manners of the capital to this extremity of the kingdom. The simplicity of ancient times is gone. Their clothes, better dwellings, and more expensive viands, are now sought after by all. This change in manners, combined with other circumstances which have taken place within the last 40 years, has compelled many a 'statesman' to sell his property, and reduced him to the necessity of working in those fields, which, perhaps, he and his ancestors had for many generations cultivated as their own.²³

Two major points arise from this short passage; firstly that the spectre of decline had been visible for more than a generation prior to 1794; secondly their increasing dedication to an improving lifestyle, perhaps the first allusion to this in contemporary writing. The Wordsworths must have been familiar with decline. An entry in Dorothy's Journal for May 1800, mentions a conversation with a neighbour, John Fisher, in which he claims that 'all those with small estates are forced to sell and all the land goes into one hand' (i.e. the Lowthers). It appears that the yeomen are not only being forced out, but their lands are being amalgamated.²⁴ Next year Wordsworth wrote a vigorous and moving plea on behalf of the threatened yeomen to Charles James Fox; it is clear that he was aware of the works of Bailey and Culley, Pringle, and Housman and used their information.²⁵ Wordsworth also voices his regrets at the loss of local 'estatesmen' due to the failure of domestic textile production, now in competition with mass production: 'the invention of the spinning jenny which concentrated spinning in the factories and so took away profitable work from the peasant's wife and family'. This was a secondary but vital by-employment, involving all the family members, essential to keep them above the subsistence level.²⁶ If the reports of these respected observers are correct, it is clear that in Cumbria the decline was in full swing at the turn of the 18th century.

Subsequently, in Wordsworth's mind, the farmers of the remote dales were elevated to the iconic status of a 'perfect Republic of Shepherds and Agriculturists' to whom 'the chapel was the only edifice that presided over these dwellings, the supreme head of this pure Commonwealth' the members of which 'these humble sons of the hills had a consciousness that the land . . . had for more than five hundred years been possessed by men of their name and blood'.²⁷ Further examination of central Lake District society reveals that substantial yeomen, resident in a specific locality for perhaps several generations, could form an effective ruling elite through the parish vestry of the Anglican Church, active and influential both in local politics and the church itself.²⁸

An authoritative contemporary voice was that of William Blamire (1790-1862), of Thackwood Nook, the nephew of J. C. Curwen, a landowner and farmer himself, who was a Whig Member of Parliament for Cumberland from 1831 to 1836, when he resigned his seat to become the chairman of the Tithe Commissioners. More than anyone he had a unique overview of agriculture in Cumberland, and should have been alert to the plight of Cumbrian yeomen. In the early 1830s he gave evidence before a Select Committee on Agriculture to the effect that since 1815 he had noticed a sharp fall in small landowner numbers:

. . . and the situation of those who are still in existence is considerably worse than it was; there are very few of them whose properties are altogether unencumbered . . . their number is constantly diminishing.²⁹

In his opinion the decline since Waterloo was greater than in any other period. He reiterated these views to another Select Committee: that the condition of the Cumbrian yeomanry 'at the present moment is truly lamentable; a vast number of those properties have passed from the possession of the yeoman, and there are others that must ere long pass away'.³⁰ Nowhere does he regret the passing of this class on the grounds of their invaluable contribution to agriculture, but he does emphasise that the major decline began some 20 years after the previous commentators. Why then did he not speak out, but delay unburdening his anxieties until a select committee on the matter in 1833? Was he trying to impress his parliamentary colleagues (which seems quite unlike what we know of him)? Was he putting a marker down for high office? Or did the paucity of 'figures' lead to the hyperbole of his times?

Visible evidence that farming prospered for a decade either side of 1800 may still be seen today. When wandering the less well-manicured Cumbrian landscape in winter, with the sun at a low angle and a hoar frost or the faintest sprinkling of snow dusting the ground, one may be surprised to find etched out on some marshy strip, steep incline or north-east facing slope small areas of the characteristic narrow 'rigg and furrow' pattern of arable cultivation two centuries ago. At that time, Cumbrian farmers were doing their utmost to convert ancient pasture into arable land, to benefit from the rapidly rising price of cereal. These activities frequently necessitated borrowing additional capital just to improve their existing tired land. Disaster struck with the sudden fall in cereal prices in 1813. Those who were over-extended faced ruin, and farming did not emerge from the doldrums until the middle of the century.

Midway through the 19th century Dickinson contentiously claimed in a prize essay that the typical small Cumberland owner held 40-100 acres, and that those owning fewer could not be described as 'farmers'. He revisits the topic in another essay in 1853, specifically dealing with East Cumberland, in which he notes that:

During the last century the majority of farmers were owners of land (yeomen) . . . Their numbers are evidently diminishing, and the small estates passing gradually into the hands of capitalists, some of whom are essaying the tillage of land in no mean style.³¹

The implied criticism of the yeoman is treated with less finesse by his contemporary, James Caird, who asserted that they were inferior in intelligence to tenants with the same acreage, and, generally speaking, more ignorant and inefficient than their tenant peers, who could both pay a rent and turn a profit.³² Another negative view appeared in an 1859 issue of the *Carlisle Journal*, which contained a short series of questions and answers taken from a 'Blue Book' on Parliamentary Papers, on the examination of Richard Abbott, Esq. He asserted that the number of 'statesmen' in Torpenhow had fallen drastically in the 30 years that he had known it. He recollected that initially all the 45 houses in the village were in the hands of those who lived on their own property, now only two or three did, most of their lands having fallen in to a London businessman. The former 'statesmen' remained locally but were reduced to

labouring status. Their fathers left them variously encumbered on their lands, and they showed no wish to redeem their inheritance if it meant borrowing. In fact they had no aspiration to change their reduced status in life. Their small farms (40-60 acres) had been purchased by large farmers, and then let to Irishmen as 'hinds' because they would 'work cheap'.³³

By mid-century any regrets for the yeomen's disappearance came mainly from the literary classes. Harriet Martineau writing in her *Guide to the Lakes* declares that 'the decline of the fortunes of the statesmen as they are locally called, has been regular and mournful to witness'.³⁴ This view is supported by an article in *Chamber's Journal* of 1858 that paints an evocative picture of the yeoman's idealised, but vanishing, way of life which to modern eyes may seem unduly mawkish. The writer does not offer any explanation of this seemingly irrevocable process.³⁵ Falling yeoman numbers becomes a well-rehearsed refrain throughout the 19th century, particularly in neighbouring North Westmorland, where writers noted evidence of decline in small landowner numbers in the 1860s, and again in 1912.³⁶

Firm opinions that yeoman numbers were in serious decline emerge from the foregoing accounts, though different dates are suggested: the end of the 18th century; disastrously in 1815; and finally that the process was a 19th century continuum. These are only subjective impressions. Could 20th century writers reach a firm conclusion?

Twentieth century interpretations

In the 1960s G. P. Jones defined the yeomen and contributed to the debate on their decline in the Lake Counties.³⁷ He noted that the customary tenants had fought with great tenacity to avoid becoming leaseholders in Jacobean times and later, but were more receptive to the prospect of enfranchisement in the 18th and 19th centuries. Some could afford it, though others preferred to drag their feet. For landowners the conversion of these myriad customary tenants, with their tiny annual rents, into market rate leaseholders made excellent financial sense. Their customary tenants were less enthusiastic.

Jones finds it incontrovertible that from the 16th century the yeomen and farm numbers began to fall. He gives the number of tenements from c. 1600 up to 1829 for ten Cumbrian parishes, of which five were situated in Cumberland.³⁸ It is possible to re-work the figures to show that 28.4 per cent of tenements had disappeared from these five parishes.³⁹ Jones states that his results confirm Wordsworth's somewhat casual claim that the size of farms had doubled and the number of yeomen halved in the 50 years 1770-1820.⁴⁰ In fact it does the opposite by showing only a quarter of yeoman farms have vanished at some point in 230 years. Their acreage is not mentioned.⁴¹

Jones cites figures giving the proportion of yeomen amongst farm occupants in Cumberland by 1829 as 37 per cent, though the reliability of these figures is questionable being derived from a Directory.⁴² He states that the number of yeomen remained relatively stable during the Napoleonic Wars, though they fell at the cessation of hostilities, but no figures are given. He tries to demonstrate this decline by comparing

two different Directory sources from 1829 and 1849 to show the extent of the post-war loss.⁴³ Using only Westmorland data he found a fall in farm numbers of less than 10 per cent, but the number of yeomen fell by 38.5 per cent.⁴⁴ It is impossible to illustrate any alleged immediate post-war decline by a study starting some 15 years afterwards. The implication is that the remaining farms were still occupied, either by their original owners, who, perhaps, styled themselves differently, or by incoming tenants. The title 'yeoman' appears to have lingered longest in more remote fellside villages such as Dufton, Murton and Millburn where, despite a decrease in the number of farms, the percentages of yeomen struggled against the trend and actually increased.

Jones concludes by attributing the decline to multiple factors: encroachment on agricultural land by the expansion of towns and railways; falling prices early in the 19th century; loss of domestic textile by-employment which accentuated liabilities in the post-war depression; and/or weariness of the hard and unprofitable lifestyle and a desire for change. While urban encroachment and loss of by-employments occurred gradually in mid-century, the post-1815 depression was most likely to precipitate immediate reactions. As for aspirations toward a softer way of life, the evidence is only suggestive. This leaves Jones in an equivocal position when considering causation, because like other studies there are no dated figures. His omissions are noteworthy, however – no mention of enclosures or the Land Tax.⁴⁵

Some 20 years later Beckett revisited the subject and attempted to answer three questions. Firstly, why did Cumbrian yeomen survive the savage losses of 1660-1780 experienced elsewhere? What, if any, role did enclosure play? And what significance does the timing of their demise in the north have for the general arguments relating to the disappearance of the small landowner?

Beckett begins by rejecting Habukkuk's arguments as applied to Cumbria and, following Thirsk's impression, he believes that falling grain prices in the late 17th and early 18th centuries were in fact beneficial to the developing pastoral economies. Surplus consumer income due to cheaper bread increased demand for meat and dairy products, thus maintaining stable farm prices in predominantly pastoral areas.⁴⁶ This argument rests on two dubious assumptions: firstly that all Cumbrian farmers had access to markets of adequate size and sophistication, and secondly that they were well advanced on the road to pastoral agriculture at that early stage.

Heavy direct taxation in the form of Land Tax, the nightmare of small landowners in the south, had much less effect in Cumberland: it was said that in arable regions the tax was levied at four shillings in the pound whereas in the northern counties it was nine pence; in the early 18th century, the county quotas showed that in Middlesex £1 of tax represented less than an acre of land, but in Cumberland it was equivalent to 262 acres, the type of land being unspecified.⁴⁷ Customary tenants were only supposed to pay Land Tax on land rented at less than 20 shillings, but local practice was that they paid on the whole rental value.

From inventory evidence in the south of the region Marshall demonstrated a gradual tendency in the 18th century towards greater yeoman wealth. Although the sums were

small, some wealth must have been acquired since new building became widespread in Cumbria at the end of the century.⁴⁸ There is no obvious reason why the yeomen accumulated capital without concomitant improvement in agricultural practices on their estates.⁴⁹ Yet two factors may have favoured them. Firstly low 'ancient' rents, often derisory, and eroded further by inflation over a prolonged period, left customary tenants with more money in hand, though to offset these were occasional arbitrary fines designed to relieve financially embarrassed landlords.⁵⁰ The second factor was by-employment, and many yeomen had secondary occupations that pushed family incomes above subsistence level. At the upper end of the scale, prosperous yeomen could serve as manorial officials, while lower down they may have functioned as village craftsmen, additionally undertaking domestic textile manufacture involving the whole family. Depression in agriculture, or secondary employment, or both, could spell ruin. In the 50 years between 1750-99, the contribution to family wealth from these secondary activities varied between localities. Probate inventory studies showed that in the Eden Valley (mainly Leath Ward) the value of the agricultural element in a deceased's estate averaged 66.8 per cent; whilst in the Lake District it was 44.2 per cent; in Bewcastle 45.3 per cent; and in Kirkandrews and Arthuret 55.2 per cent; obviously the higher this figure the less dependent they had been on alternative employment.⁵¹

Early 20th century writers whose 'national' picture was noted in the introduction blamed the decline of small landowners on the effects of parliamentary enclosure. Cumbria was not exempted from this legislation, and enclosure on a vast scale occurred between 1780-1830. There was, however, a crucial difference between the enclosure of common open fields in arable counties, ultimately so ruinous to the small owner-occupiers, and the situation in Cumbria, where only 1.2 per cent of the total acreage was in open fields, most of which had been enclosed by prior private accommodations.⁵² What Cumbria had in abundance was common wastes and rough pasture, some 281,000 acres of which was enclosed in the 1780-1830 period. In Inglewood Forest alone 28,000 acres were enclosed in 1819, with the creation of many leasehold farms of approximately 100 acres.⁵³

Running in parallel with this was the eradication of the smaller yeoman farms. This is borne out in the Dalston experience where, in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, the yeomen farming 15-40 acres in Dalston totally disappeared, but simultaneously in the same area seven new tenanted farms averaging 122 acres were being created, and nearby at Broadfield the enclosure of a portion of Inglewood produced 14 farms with an average 97 acres each.⁵⁴ Displaced yeomen may not have been considered suitable tenants, or, alternatively, lacked the capital to invest in them.

Apart from Hutchinson, who recorded possible depopulation following enclosure at Skelton in 1767, and Pearson, there is a general unanimity amongst Cumbrian writers that enclosure did not precipitate a fall in yeomen numbers. Searle was of the opinion that small landowners were as keen as larger ones to see enclosure put an end to overgrazing and Whyte notes that in Westmorland there was neither a sudden nor dramatic fall in the number of small proprietors as a consequence of 19th century enclosure.⁵⁵

Beckett had previously formed this view, and went on to explore other avenues to account for decline. He claims that yeomen were 'uprooted' immediately after 1815. The brief prosperity stimulated by the French wars had encouraged small owners to borrow, to improve rather than expand their exhausted holdings, and to purchase their enfranchisement, though some had it virtually as a gift, e.g. the 35 customary tenants of Blencarn were enfranchised in the will of Lough Carleton, lord of the manor, who died in 1792.⁵⁶ The post-war collapse in agricultural commodity prices, particularly for grain, butter and wool, turned once manageable yeoman debts into crippling burdens.⁵⁷ Beckett suggests that many yeomen faced insolvency and were forced to sell, enabling them to seek a life of retirement elsewhere, especially as improved freehold estates fetched attractive prices. Blamire gave this impression as evidence before the Select Committee, and it may be that he is over-egging the pudding, but it has been used to build the case for decline.⁵⁸ If this is true it means that, paradoxically, in the midst of an intense agricultural depression an active land market was flourishing, with purchasers eager to invest. A recent paper finds some supporting evidence for this, with landowners appearing keen to purchase owner-occupied farms in the turmoil of the post-1813 market.⁵⁹

Nineteenth century observers fail to note farms standing idle, indeed at the bottom rung of the agricultural ladder there was usually a queue of farm servants who had been saving their wages for years to obtain a tenancy, and farm servants of both sexes needed no lessons in frugality from their employers. In 1868 the Penrith branch of the Carlisle Savings Bank had deposits totalling £9,259 from 260 male farm workers and £7,904 from 240 females.⁶⁰ At 20 year intervals secondary employments fell into terminal decline: domestic textiles disappeared after 1840, it was noted in 1837 that 'no domestic manufactures are now carried on, and in other respects the "statesman" have approached much more nearly to the common level'; coalmining, never a large-scale activity, was effectively defunct by 1860; and lead mining followed suit in 1881.⁶¹

Another point Beckett makes is that an improved lifestyle had overwhelmed the domestic finances of the 'yeoman class' by conspicuous consumption, and this was allied to the provision of extravagant endowments and marriage portions for all the younger children. The eldest son on inheriting the family farm, with inadequate financial reserves, could face ruin trying to fulfil the expectations of his siblings.

Jones had already noted several of these points, and they also came to be adopted by Searle, though with a different emphasis. Searle is in broad agreement with the opinion that the yeomen fell into steep decline after 1815, and also with the potential causes advanced for the collapse. He argues that the capitalist landowning class was actively encouraging their customary tenants to purchase enfranchisement, thereby accelerating the pace of enclosure to enhance their own rental incomes, while simultaneously they took every opportunity to buy out new freeholders unable to fund their borrowings. He attributes 27 purchases of manors on the Lowther estates directly to this cause. Using Land Tax Returns as his data source, he argues that when a large landowner's contribution suddenly increased it could be assumed that he was gaining land at the expense of the small landowner.⁶² The contradictions inherent in the workings of the tax do not support such a didactic view: there is neither a linear

relationship between the two nor a reliable means of checking who was involved in these transactions. Based on this source Searle examined several areas of Cumberland and found there was no change in numbers of landowners between 1795 and 1829 in his Eden Valley parishes, nor in the north of the county, the domain of the largest estates.⁶³ There were some sales of a piecemeal fashion in the mid-Eden parishes, with the most active being Kirkoswald where Charles Featherstonhaugh was buying at the expense of other large landowners, not the 'peasantry'; and landowner numbers fell in Inglewood, scene of much recent activity in land.⁶⁴

In Searle's analysis, the principal cause for any decline was that small landowners were being destabilised by exposure to a rapidly evolving national economy, with too little capital to sustain them whilst waiting for the most propitious, and often fleeting, moment for buying or selling. He feels that to secure these optimal conditions they had to borrow at high interest, and this left them vulnerable to the fall in grain, butter and wool prices after 1815. Even if they survived this hazard, agricultural returns remained low through to the late 1840s, allowing no time for respite, let alone recovery. Yet another contributing factor was the large bequests devised to their younger children. Searle established this by examining wills for a five-year period at intervals of 25 years from 1750 to 1850, from which he demonstrates that the value of bequests multiplied fourfold; he felt that inheritance customs led to the 'death warrant' of the 'peasantry' as a class. The trend began in favourable economic conditions in 1750, continued unabated not only through the inflationary spiral of the Napoleonic Wars, but even after the post-war collapse. Indeed this odd penchant persisted throughout the 19th century; William Bear, reporting to the Cobden Club in 1893, blamed the Cumbrian farmer's ruin on the charges on land he, as heir, had to allocate to fellow beneficiaries, and tempting prices being offered for his property. And, if they wished to continue farming, they could do no better than sell their farm and rent a larger one.⁶⁵

In common with other writers Searle says little on the topic of the owner-occupiers post-1815, when he brackets them with tenants, and gives no estimate of their numbers. When he comes to examine the landowning situation in 1910 from the Inland Revenue Field Books (a exercise with pitfalls)⁶⁶ he converts them into landholdings rather than people, so it is impossible to identify the owner-occupier. There is a reference to them at the outbreak of war in 1914 when he sees 'the outline of a novel social formation' where a class of independent owner-occupiers (no numbers given) farmed the land without hired labour, but this seems to relate to the breaking up of large estates.⁶⁷

There are differences of approach between Searle, who is attempting to demonstrate a fundamental re-ordering of the traditional rural Cumbrian economy in transition from a feudal peasant landowning class to a highly individualistic, capitalist, commodity based agriculture, with the attendant fall in yeoman numbers occurring as a consequence of these changes; whilst both Beckett and Jones are examining the decline from a quantitative (though non-numerical) standpoint, without attempting to demonstrate that important shifts in the social fabric lay behind this phenomenon.⁶⁸

Duxbury charts the decline of the Cumbrian 'yeoman' in Ravenstonedale, using various sources to create an extended land register from 1716 to 1871, identifying land

holdings there up to 1851, when they may be compared with census figures. The census appears to validate the records, and Parish Registers are used to distinguish between yeomen with identical names. The records are consistent over a long period, justifying for him their acceptance as accurate. He notes that from as early as 1716 the yeomen and their families constituted an intermarrying social group, thus concentrating the number of holdings, but not necessarily reducing the number of yeomen, as their younger sons on smaller farms adopted the title. His criteria for yeoman status was a customary tenant, male or female, with a customary rent of more than 3s. 4d. per year who farmed their own land. Ravenstonedale is rather an oddity compared with its neighbours in that it was almost entirely pastoral during the years 1716-1851. Duxbury found that the number of yeomen fell sequentially from 112 in 1778 (84 per cent of all landowners [*sic*]) to 89 (69 per cent) in 1790, to 82 (70 per cent) in 1803, and 68 (60 per cent) in 1826, thus failing to demonstrate a major collapse in numbers as a result of post-war factors. This relative stability is compatible with expectations in a predominantly pastoral area.

The author examines the potential causes of decline and finds that it was neither attributable to enclosure, which was complete by 1579, nor to the fact that the domestic by-employment was no longer viable, as the area was a stocking-knitting centre unaffected by industry at this stage. It may have been that the decline of the smaller yeomen was associated with extravagant provision of portions to children, together with the collapse in prices after 1815, but the larger yeomen in this isolated and self-contained area only began to suffer when exposed to wider market forces.⁶⁹

Another view comes from a study of the Upper Eden Valley by Margaret Shepherd, who examined the survival of the small landowner in Cumbria between 1840 and 1910. She selected nine parishes from the upper Eden Valley in Westmorland centred around Appleby and Kirkby Stephen, examining the Tithe Awards of *c.*1840, the Return of Owners of Land 1873, the Valuation Books of 1910, the Census Enumerations from 1841-1891, Enclosure Awards where appropriate, Electoral Registers, and Directories. Experiencing difficulties in correlation due to the format of the various data strands, she discusses the anomalies in detail. All the parishes have some arable land despite being predominantly pastoral.

She challenges the view that small farmers as customary tenants had virtually disappeared after 1815. Indeed, she shows that in some parishes substantial numbers persisted beyond 1910, and this has since been confirmed in Cumberland.⁷⁰ In Stainmore *c.*1840 there were 47 owner-occupiers out of 104 owners (45 per cent); in 1890, the figures were 34 out of 90 (38 per cent); and in 1910, 24 out of 68 (35 per cent), although the original number of small farms remained almost unchanged throughout the period, but were now farmed by tenants. One of her conclusions was that owner-occupiers survived in diminishing numbers, but the total still exceeded 10 per cent in some communities even in 1910, although elsewhere in her text she shows the presence of larger numbers. There was little economic hardship, the farmers rarely employed agricultural workers, and dairy produce and livestock were dispatched by rail to urban destinations. Indeed small farms increased in number towards the end of the 19th century.

Complex family arrangements could bedevil landholdings, but even when these were augmented by local purchase (and the local gentry were not keen to buy) they were re-let as the original separate entities. She reaches the conclusion that in 1910 the general profile was very similar to that of 1840, in so far as few farms had been amalgamated, and that agriculture in Westmorland thrived until the late 1880s, when it tightened its belt to survive into the 20th century.⁷¹ In Cumberland the same view was reached by Wilson-Fox in his report to the Royal Commission on Agricultural Depression of 1895 when he says that there was 'relative security, if not prosperity' for farmers, many of whom were owners, at this time.⁷² In another part of her paper Dr Shepherd says that the 'number of owners, especially the owner-occupiers, decreased, more in the later years, perhaps due to financial pressures even in this livestock rearing area'.⁷³ However, her overall conclusion was that the small family farm, whether freehold, under customary tenure, or leasehold, managed to survive until the First World War.⁷⁴

Some parts of Cumbria experienced different conditions. In west Cumberland the 18th century saw the departure of many small owner-occupiers as the Lowthers and other landowners bought up their farms for the sake of mineral rights and way leaves, neglecting attempts at concomitant agricultural improvement.⁷⁵ In the early 19th century, improving landlords reduced their customary tenant roll by enlarging their farms and importing more progressive leaseholders, with the prospect of higher rentals. Success was achieved by Sir James Graham, at Netherby in north-east Cumberland, where his tenant roll was reduced from 300 in 1823 to 140 by 1851, and as the farm sizes increased, so did the yields, and the rents.⁷⁶ In the last half of the 19th century the creation of a 25,000 acre estate at Underley in south Westmorland by the Earls of Bective swallowed up a total of 226 individual properties, and is said to have depleted the number of landowners in Kirkby Lonsdale and New Hutton by more than half.⁷⁷ There is no group comparable to the Cumbrian small owner-occupiers in the neighbouring northern counties.⁷⁸

After 1850 it is widely believed that the lot of the small owner-occupier began to improve. Conventional wisdom has it that Cumberland weathered the Great Agricultural Depression: it followed a predominantly pastoral farming regime, and therefore should have been spared the fate of the arable regions, but the process of conversion had been slow. However, when a variety of agricultural parameters are studied, the average figures for Cumberland compared to the other individual English county averages show deviations that spelt potential trouble. The Cumberland farm rentals fell much less drastically (11 per cent) than the average of all the other counties taken together (almost 27 per cent) over the period 1872/3-1910/11, and although the Gross Farm Output Value remained steady over these years, the Gross Farm Output at 1873 prices fell by 24 per cent, as did the Farm Labour Force (excluding farmers), though this last item was probably insignificant in Cumberland, as the small farmers had few workers other than family. Thus for tenants, rents remained high at a time when output was falling without a compensatory rise in its value. Small owner-occupiers faced similar financial pressures, particularly if they had a mortgage or other borrowings. During this 40 year period they must have felt vulnerable and small wonder if some considered leaving the land.⁷⁹ Throughout the period of this

study it is noteworthy that appeals to landlords to lower rents temporarily in times of distress were generally ignored.

Polarity entered arguments on the Cumbrian yeoman with a provocative paper at the end of the 20th century. Walton suggested that the apparent decline was an illusion, and that the yeomen had in fact not disappeared but undergone a metamorphosis into 'farmers', a view supported by the relative stability in the number of Cumberland farmers throughout the last half of the 19th century. A similar suspicion had been raised earlier by Campbell, who, from her limited study of 18th century accounts, suggested that the English yeoman class did not actually disappear to the extent believed. She wondered whether, with the triumph of landlordism, it merely ceased to exert so great an influence in rural communities, and suffered thereby a psychological 'disappearance' rather than a wholly numerical one. Walton's argument emphasised the unreliability of Directory sources, and the limitations of census records where the term 'yeoman' was actively discouraged.⁸⁰ Census data is invaluable for identifying the habitat and occupation of individuals at regular intervals, but has its limitations in terms of a study of this nature by recording only occupiers, sometimes their secondary occupation, never the owner, and often fails to note the size of the property or its address.

It is time to evaluate the work of recent attempts to quantify the Cumbrian 'yeoman class' from the late 18th century through to 1913, by examining data in national archives as applied to Leath Ward in Cumberland. The methodology employed has been described in an earlier paper.⁸¹ The first phase involved the period 1780-1829 using the comprehensive Land Tax Duplicates that exist for these dates. For the first two thirds of this interval agriculture flourished, but Blamire and 20th century historians claim that yeoman numbers fell sharply in the agricultural turmoil that followed the Napoleonic Wars. It was possible to show that the number of owner-occupiers who formed the 'yeoman class' declined by almost 30 per cent during this time, with most of this activity after 1817. This represents a huge loss, but is it entirely attributable to a wave of mass bankruptcy?

Land Tax Quotas were immutably allocated in 1693 for each county, hundred and township, though individual valuations could vary within a township so long as the quota remained constant. Thus the quota may, at different assessments depending on purely local circumstances, include or exclude members of the group of poorer farmers hovering around the basic taxable level, and minor changes here could cause the recorded number to fluctuate significantly.⁸² Could this have happened in Leath Ward between 1780 and 1829? Closer examination of the individual townships reveals a random distribution of gains and losses in the individual townships: five did not change; of the remainder, twice as many lost members of the 'yeoman class' as gained them, and part of this effect could be ascribed to small farmers moving from one township to another. Net change within a township was usually in single figures; though there were extremes: in Melmerby numbers increased from 40 to 59 (48 per cent); but fell from 39 to 22 (45 per cent) in Unthank. When adjacent farming communities with similar climate, terrain and practices produce such contradictory results, the suspicion arises that complex mechanisms may be responsible for the disparities: the positive

effects being due to intra-township quota adjustments; which could also contribute, together with bankruptcy, to the overall negative balance in numbers.

Is there a way of clarifying matters? A search through the local newspapers should reveal contemporary evidence of the problem, and its impact on the local community. The Eden Valley fell within the sphere of influence of the *Carlisle Journal*, a local weekly newspaper. Three years (1815, 1822 and 1833) for which there is a full complement of issues were selected at random to investigate how the press reflected the local agricultural situation.⁸³ There was a signal failure to report a rash of bankruptcies or indeed other types of financial distress amongst the small owners in the area at any time. In 1815 and 1822 there were eight and nine farms advertised for sale respectively, less than 1 per cent of all Leath Ward farms in those years. Only one, in 1822, was a small estate, Outhwaite at Renwick, consisting of about 250 acres. Soon withdrawn, it reappeared later for letting; the rest were small farms usually between 20-50 acres, and the same picture was seen in 1833.

Typical of the *Journal's* agricultural contents are those from 1822, where nine parliamentary reports are included dealing with agricultural distress, but all at a national level, with the focus on financial relief for landowners and farmers, and no mention of local difficulties at lower economic levels. Full accounts of proceedings at County Meetings in arable regions are given dealing with cereal prices, but none come from the north. Five leading articles appear on topics such as the regulation of corn prices or tithes, again all at a national level, with not a word devoted to alleged local privations.⁸⁴

The price of wheat and other cereals remained low throughout the period when compared with those of 1812. In January of that year a bushel of wheat at Carlisle market was 35 shillings and by July this had leapt to 60 shillings; in contrast farmers found the prices in 1815 to be 25s. 6d. in January and 25 shillings in July, prices in 1822 were even lower at 17s. 11d. on the two occasions. In each of the chosen years poor prices for livestock were consistently recorded both in unnaturally quiet local markets and at large annual fairs, where few cattle were put forward, and only the best animals found buyers, though at reduced prices.

Over the years no alarming local crises appear to disturb the equanimity of the *Journal's* weekly columns, which tends to dispel the impression of a rising spate of bankruptcies inundating the Eden Valley, and eradicating a sizeable segment of the agricultural community.

That those paying tithes outnumbered the Land Tax payers in the fourth decade of the 19th century is perhaps not surprising. In each township, the former, under the aegis of the Anglican Church, embraced indiscriminately all those involved in agricultural production, whilst the latter had to raise a fixed quota based solely on its acreage. Hitherto the baleful effect of tithe levies on subsistence rural agriculture seems to have been ignored, but it was one of the many debilitating factors affecting the economy of the small farmer, and recognised as early as the turn of 18th century, when 90 per cent of Cumbrian townships still paid in kind.⁸⁵

It is clear when examining the tithes that a different (and more inclusive) yardstick had been used to assess those eligible for payment. Only 42 of the original 56 townships were eligible for commutation, but when the tithe imposts are compared to the Land Tax for the same townships a decade earlier the figures demonstrate that the tithe group has 37 per cent more members. Now that acreage can be measured a smaller 'yeoman class' emerges, at 44 per cent, as compared to the figures of the less rigorous Land Tax criteria with no stated acreage. Though statistical analysis is invalid, given the disparate nature of the two taxes, it serves to show that even in 1840 small owner-occupiers still formed a significant portion of the landowning class.

The cadastral survey of 1910-1913 was the most far-reaching, in terms of coverage and requirement for detail, which had hitherto been conducted in England. For many observers it was akin to the second Domesday Book (in most of Cumbria the first), and represents a very powerful tool for the local historian in all manner of economic and social aspects of life a century ago.⁸⁶ In this study only the questions of landholding and ownership have been examined. The owner-occupying class has shown further contraction, and now the 'yeoman class' occupied only 27 per cent of the individual landowning class. The brunt of the losses were borne by the small farmers with 2-50 acres, whose numbers had decreased from 386 of 1,698 landowners in 1840 (23 per cent) to 155 of 1,435 in 1913 (11 per cent). Those with 50-100 acres had been reduced from 5 per cent to 3 per cent, but the owner-occupiers with holdings in excess of 100 acres were unchanged at 3 per cent. The mean holding in 1840 of 56 acres had increased over the years to 81 acres in 1913, though the median had only risen from 23 to 26 acres, indicating that the majority of holdings remained very small, and of questionable viability, given the agricultural advances underway.⁸⁷

The consequences of yeoman decline must also be reconsidered. Two conflicting strands of thought developed around the yeomen's fate. The Romantic Movement springing up at the end of the 18th century mourned their passing as custodians of traditional virtues. Was this a reaction to the revolutionary fervour gripping their European counterparts at the time? The 'Pure Republic' of shepherds as celebrated by Wordsworth and his fellow writers was credited with being the embodiment of a bucolic ideal embracing reassuring qualities: independence, honesty, frugality, simplicity and stability. Their contribution to Cumbrian agriculture went unquestioned by the Romantics; from their perspective it was sufficient that they were seen to be living a Utopian, but frequently unrewarding, existence, in harmony with their idyllic surroundings. To agricultural writers they were an increasingly irksome anomaly from 1800 onward. They were regarded generally as poor farmers, with an almost Confucian devotion for their forbears and their archaic agricultural practices, working small inefficient properties. New methods were anathema to them, compounding their shortcomings by being present in promiscuous numbers.

Their stock in the local community had fallen still further by the middle of the 19th century. Some went so far as to advocate that they should be removed from the land. Others expressed their views more subtly by unfavourably comparing them with the vigorous and enterprising tenants replacing them, who had the double obligation to pay a realistic rent and still make a profit.⁸⁸ Certainly yeomen fought a losing battle against

adverse circumstances in the 19th century: prolonged periods of agricultural depression; tithes; an inability to follow market trends; small, inefficient farms; insufficient capital for new buildings, repairs or machinery; loss of secondary employment opportunities; and unrealistic bequests to younger siblings causing acute financial embarrassment to new heirs in desperate need of capital. A variable combination of these factors played a part in their disappearance. There were no significant harmful sequelae; and indeed the corollary to their demise was improving agricultural production. Their largely unlamented disappearance freed Cumbrian agriculture to shrug off past inertia and seek new opportunities.

Conclusions

Over the last three centuries Cumberland, in common with the rest of England, experienced a decline in yeoman numbers, albeit involving a different type of individual, taking place in a pastoral (rather than arable) region, occurring at a later date, and caused by other factors. Though all regional historians agree that there was a 'dramatic' reduction in the ranks of the Cumbrian yeomanry post-1815, there is less agreement about the scale of this event. A major obstacle, hitherto, is that quantification has been lacking, and this article has attempted to remedy the situation, despite the problem of how large a loss merits emotive adjectives such as 'disastrous'. A single small farmer going to the wall is tragic for the family, although perhaps barely noticed by the county community, which, given the intricate network of Cumbrian kinship, would react with instant alarm faced with literal 'decimation'.

Much worse appeared to happen over the 50 years of Land Tax Duplicates in Leath Ward. An apparent fall of 30 per cent in the 'yeoman class' occurred mainly in the post-war years, though other factors discussed in the text may have contributed to this loss. Corroborative evidence is lacking. Any sense that they were victims of an acute financial crisis failed to excite even a tremor of anxiety in the contemporary local press. Few farms were advertised for sale in the *Carlisle Journal*, despite ample evidence of hardship arising from post-war falls in agricultural commodity prices in local markets. Nor was there an outcry from the Cumberland press in 1833, when Blamire, in front of a parliamentary Select Committee, claimed that yeomen farmers had, and were, vanishing from the Cumberland countryside.⁸⁹ Twentieth century historians came to adopt his views, though recent work has questioned them. It is hard to see how, given the limited records, the discrepancies may be resolved, except on common sense grounds: a generation of agricultural depression leads to more bankruptcies; but a silent press means that conditions were less dire than imagined.⁹⁰

Assuming that the 1840 and 1913 figures are reliable, particularly the latter, and though unable to bear the full weight of statistical analysis, they may be used for crude comparative purposes during this longer interval to show trends: the number of land holdings fall by a sixth; the landowning class by a third; and one of its components, the 'yeoman class', by almost two thirds. Over the full span of the study, from 1780 to 1913, their proportion of the landowning class as a whole halved from 58 per cent to 27 per cent.

At no point in this period did they appear to wield a positively beneficial influence on agriculture, indeed their inherited subsistence mentality was increasingly regarded as an obstacle to progress by their commercially minded colleagues. At the apogee of their fame in the late 18th century they were regarded as a bastion of traditional virtues in a revolutionary world, so well regarded that a new word was imported to describe them - 'statesmen' - although they never used it.⁹¹

In both absolute and relative terms there was a marked fall in numbers of the 'yeoman class' throughout the long 19th century, which occurred as a gradual process of attrition due to a combination of natural causes and human decisions rather than a single apocalyptic event. Although farm size appeared to be increasing, this study failed to reveal a glut of farms on the market at any time, or that farm numbers were changing, which would have been the case in a mass exodus from the land. Indeed the number of Cumberland farms remained remarkably stable through the last half of the 19th century.⁹² After weighing the current evidence Walton appears justified in his claim that the decline of the 'yeoman' was largely illusory: they had become 'farmers'.⁹³

Notes and references

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- ² The first of these views was expressed by E. C. K. Gonner, *Common Land and Inclosure* (1912), 369 and J. H. Rae, 'Why have the Yeomanry Perished?', *Contemporary Review*, xlv (1883), 551-3. The role of enclosure at the end of the century is found in a quotation in E. Davies, 'The Small Landowner, 1780-1832, in the light of the Land Tax Assessments', *Economic History Review* (hereafter *Ec.H.R.*), Set 2, 1st Series, i (1927-8), 87; enclosure was studied by A. H. Johnson, *The Disappearance of the Small Landowner* (Oxford, 1909), 132-6, and the 'old enclosure' theory was added by H. L. Gray, 'Yeoman Farming in Oxfordshire from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth', *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, xxiv (1909-10), 293-326; they were criticised by H. Levy, *Large and Small Holdings in England* (Cambridge, 1911), Chapters i and ii quoted in E. Davies, 'The Small Landowner', 92. E. Davies, 'The Small Landowner', 87-113, J. C. Chambers, 'Enclosure and the Small Landowner', *Ec. H. R.*, 1st series, X (1939-40), 118-127. J. M. Martin, 'The Small Landowner and Parliamentary Enclosure in Warwickshire', *Ec.H. R.* 2nd series, xxxii (1979), 328-343. A fall in number after the Napoleonic wars was noted by H. G. Hunt, 'Landowning and Enclosure 1750-1830', *Ec. H. R.* 2nd series, xi (1958-9), 497-505; J. H. Rae, 'Why have the Yeomanry Perished?', *Contemporary Review*, xlv (1883), 551-3, and D. Grigg, *English Agriculture: An Historical Perspective* (Basil Blackwood Ltd., Oxford, 1989), 100. J. V. Beckett, 'The Pattern of Landownership in England and Wales, 1660-1880', *Ec. H. R.* 2nd series, xxxvii (1984), 18; but caution was urged by G. E. Mingay, 'The Land Tax Assessments and the Small Landowner' *Ec.H. R.*, 2nd series, 17 (1964), 381-388.
- ³ D. Grigg, *English Agriculture: an Historical Perspective* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1989), 141, there is no mention of them in C. S. Orwin and E. H. Whetham, *History of British Agriculture, 1846-1914* (Longmans, London, 1964), J. V. Beckett, 'The Decline of the Small Landowner in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century England: some Regional Considerations,' *Agricultural History Review* (hereafter *Ag. H. R.*), xxx (1982), 111.
- ⁴ For a discussion of the rural social hierarchy see M. Campbell, *The English Yeoman* (Yale University Press, 1942, reprinted by Merlin Press Ltd, 1983), Chapter 2.
- ⁵ For definitions of the customary tenants see: A. J. L. Winchester, *The Harvest of the Hills* (Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 16. Extended commentaries are found in R. W. Hoyle, 'An Ancient Right and Laudable Custom: the Definition of Tenant Right in North-Western England in the Sixteenth Century'. *Past and Present*, 116 (1987), 22-55; and G. H. Tupling, *The Economic History of Rosendale* (Manchester University Press, 1927), Chapter 5.
- ⁶ For example, the 20th century writers G. P. Jones, 'The Decline of the Yeomanry in the Lake Counties', *CW2*, lxii, 201; and J. V. Beckett, *Landownership in Cumbria, c. 1680-1750*, (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Lancaster, 1975), Chapter 5 adopted this view along with C. E. Searle, *The Odd Corner*

- of England: A Study of a Rural Social Formation in Transition: Cumbria c.1700-c.1914 (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Essex, 1983) who otherwise considered them as peasants.
- ⁷ J. K. Walton, 'The Strange Decline of the Lakeland Yeoman: Some Thoughts on Sources, Methods, and Definitions,' *CW2*, lxxxvi, 221-233.
- ⁸ J. Thirsk, 'Cumberland, Westmorland and Furness' in E. J. T. Collins (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales Vol V(1) Regional Farming Systems* (Cambridge UP, 1984), 11.
- ⁹ F. M. L. Thompson, *English Landed Gentry in the Nineteenth Century* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1969), 30-33.
- ¹⁰ F. M. L. Thompson, *English Landed Gentry*, 113-117, with tables calculated by J. Bateman, *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (1883 edn.). It is unusual to find landowners, except the nobility, owning more than one property in a parish, see Land Tax Duplicates: CRO(C), QPR/1/Leath/1780/Township Name, CRO(C), QPR/1/Leath/1829/Township Name.
- ¹¹ Return of Owners of Land (England and Wales), lxxii, (1874), 80.
- ¹² CRO(C), D. Lons. W. Sir James Lowther to J. Spedding, 7 May 1752.
- ¹³ *Gentleman's Magazine* XXXVI (1766), 582.
- ¹⁴ W. Hutton, *The Beetham Repository, 1770* (Rawlinson Ford, ed., 1906), 135, quoted in C. M. L. Bouch and G. P. Jones, *A Short Economic and Social History of the Lake Counties, 1500-1830* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1968), 237.
- ¹⁵ J. Nicholson and R. Burn, *The History and Antiquities of the Counties of Cumberland and Westmorland* (London, 1777), I, 9.
- ¹⁶ Hutchinson, Vol I, 39 and 131.
- ¹⁷ G. Bailey, and J. Culley, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cumberland with Observations for the Means of its Improvement in A General View of the Agriculture of the County of Northumberland* (3rd edn., London, 1813), 205 and 210.
- ¹⁸ A. Pringle, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Westmorland with Observations for the Means of its Improvement in A General View of the Agriculture of the County of Northumberland* (3rd edn., London, 1813), 299.
- ¹⁹ G. Bailey and J. Culley, *General View of the Agriculture*, 209-10.
- ²⁰ J. Houseman, *A Topographical Description of Cumberland, Westmorland, Lancashire and a part of the West Riding of Yorkshire* (Carlisle, 1800), 104-5.
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- ²² J. D. Marshall, 'Statesmen in Cumbria: The Vicissitudes of an Expression,' *CW2*, lxxii, 248-273.
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- ²⁴ W. Knight (ed.), *The Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth* (London, 1897), vol I, 33.
- ²⁵ C. L. Shaver (ed.), de Selincourt, *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, 1787-1805* (Oxford, 1967), 312-314.
- ²⁶ W. Wordsworth, *A Complete Guide to the Lakes* (Hudson and Nicholson, Kendal, 1842), 68-70; and quoted by G. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History* (2nd ed., 1946), 375 n, though he gives no reference.
- ²⁷ E. de Selincourt (ed.), *Wordsworth's Guide to the Lakes* (5th edn., 1835) (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1906), 67-68.
- ²⁸ A. J. L. Winchester, 'Wordsworth's "Pure Commonwealth"? Yeoman Dynasties in the English Lake District, c.1450-1750. *Armitt Library Journal* (K. Hanley ed.), (i) (1998), 86-113.
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- ³⁰ Report of the Select Committee on Agriculture, PP (1837), v, 315-17.
- ³¹ W. Dickinson, 'On the Farming of Cumberland', *JRASE*, XIII (1852), 220; and W. Dickinson, *Essay on the Agriculture of East Cumberland* (A. Thurnam, Carlisle, 1853), 12.
- ³² J. Caird, *English Agriculture in 1850-51* (London, 1852), 364.
- ³³ *Carlisle Journal*, 27 December 1859, 3.
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- ³⁵ *Chamber's Journal*, 28 August, (1858), 137-139.
- ³⁶ C. Webster, 'On the Farming of Westmorland', *JRAS*, 27 (1867), 8, and from the vicar of Kirkby Stephen: RC on Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture, Parliamentary Papers (hereafter PP), (1867-8), xvii, Revd Simpson's evidence. Appendix D 548-53, and F. W. Garnett, *Westmorland Agriculture, 1800-1900* (Kendal, 1912), 15 and 251.

- ³⁷ G. P. Jones, 'The Decline of the Yeomanry in the Lake Counties', *CW2*, lxii, 201.
- ³⁸ The 1829 figures are taken from W. Parson and W. White, *A History, Directory and Gazetteer of the Counties of Cumberland and Westmorland* (Wm. White & Co, Leeds, 1829).
- ³⁹ G. P. Jones, 'The Decline of the Yeomanry', 211.
- ⁴⁰ G. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History* (1946), 375 n.
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- ⁴² This figure is taken from W. Parson and W. White, *A History, Directory and Gazetteer*
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- ⁴⁵ G. P. Jones, 'The Decline of the Yeomanry', 220.
- ⁴⁶ J. Thirsk, 'Seventeenth Century Agriculture and Social Change', in *Land, Church and People*, supplement to the *Ag.H.R.*, xviii (1970), 148-177; J. V. Beckett, 'The Decline of the Small Landowner in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century England: Some Regional Considerations', *Ag.H.R.*, xxx (1982), 97-111.
- ⁴⁷ From an anonymous contemporary source quoted in G. E. Mingay, 'The Land Tax Assessment and the Small Landowner', *Ec. H.R.*, 2nd series, 17 (1964), 382; and M. E. Turner, J. V. Beckett, and B. Afton, *Agricultural Rent in England 1690-1914* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997), 62.
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- ⁵² J. V. Beckett, 'The Decline of the Small Landowner', 107.
- ⁵³ R. S. Dilley, 'The Enclosure Awards of Cumberland: A Statistical List.' *CW2*, c., 229.
- ⁵⁴ J. G. Waddington, *Dalston, 1720-1880* (unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Lancaster, 1972), 80-82, and A. B. Humphries, *Agrarian Change*, 232.
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- ⁵⁷ Report of the Select Committee on Agriculture, PP (1833), v, 309-11.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁹ D. Uttley 'The Decline', *CW3*, vii, 128.
- ⁶⁰ F. W. Garnett, *Westmorland Agriculture, 1800-1900* (Kendal, 1912), 95-6.
- ⁶¹ For textiles see J. R. McCulloch, *Statistical Account of the British Empire* (London, 1837), I, 174; and J. D. Marshall and J. K. Walton, *The Lake Counties*, 71; for Pennine mining, M. E. Shepherd, 'The Small Owner in Cumbria c.1840-1910: A Case Study from the Upper Eden Valley', *Northern History*, 35 (1999), 170; she expands this work in a book based on her Ph.D. thesis entitled *From Hellgill to Bridge End: Aspects of Economic and Social Change in the Upper Eden Valley, 1840-1895* (University of Hertfordshire Press, 2003).
- ⁶² C. E. Searle, 'The Odd Corner of England: A Study of a Rural Social Formation in Transition: Cumbria c.1700-c.1914', (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Essex, 1983), 231-62.
- ⁶³ C. E. Searle, 'The Odd Corner of England' 212, he calls it Fells and Pennines, and the parishes are Lanercost, Stapleton, Renwick, Kirkoswald and Ousby.
- ⁶⁴ C. E. Searle, 'The Odd Corner of England', 211-12.
- ⁶⁵ C. E. Searle, 'The Odd Corner of England', 255, Table 5.18; Bear's report was reproduced in the *Carlisle Journal*, 13 October 1893.
- ⁶⁶ B. Short, *Land and Society in Edwardian Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 265-269.
- ⁶⁷ C. E. Searle, 'The Odd Corner of England', 385.
- ⁶⁸ J. K. Walton, 'The Strange Decline', 228-9.
- ⁶⁹ A. H. Duxbury, 'The Decline of the Cumbrian Yeomen in Ravenstonedale: A Case Study,' *CW2*, xciv, 201-213.

- ⁷⁰ D. Uttley, 'The Decline', *CW3*, vii, 130.
- ⁷¹ M. E. Shepherd, 'The Small Owner', 161-184.
- ⁷² M. E. Shepherd, 'The Small Owner', 171, and the Royal Commission on Agricultural Depression, PP (1895), xvii, Mr. Wilson-Fox's Report on Cumberland, 22, para 36, and 32.
- ⁷³ M. E. Shepherd, 'The Small Owner', 174.
- ⁷⁴ M. E. Shepherd, 'The Small Owner', 183.
- ⁷⁵ E. Hughes, *North Country Life in the Eighteenth Century, vol 11 Cumberland and Westmorland 1700-1830* (Oxford University Press, 1965), 214-216.
- ⁷⁶ J. V. Beckett, *Coal and Tobacco: The Lowthers and the Economic Development of West Cumberland, 1660-1760* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981), 19-24; D. Spring, 'A Great Agricultural Estate: Netherby under Sir James Graham, 1820-1845', *Northern History*, xix (1955), 74 and 77.
- ⁷⁷ F. W. Garnett, *Westmorland Agriculture, 1800-1900* (Kendal, 1912), 250-1; and G. Shaw-Lefevre, *Agrarian Tenures* (1893), 11-12 quotes from Select Committee on Small Holdings in 1888.
- ⁷⁸ O. Wilson, 'The Blanchland Estate of Lord Crewe's Charity in the Nineteenth Century', *Durham County Local History Society* (Bulletin 45, 1990), 23-50; 'The Wemmergill Estate of the Earls of Strathmore in the 19th and 20th Centuries', *Durham County Local History Society* (Bulletin 46, 1991), 46-89; O. Wilson, 'The Bishops of Durham and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners as Landlords in Stanhope in the 19th and early 20th centuries', *Durham County Local History Society* (Bulletin 47, 1991), 40-67.
- ⁷⁹ F. M. L. Thompson, 'The Anatomy of English Agriculture, 1870-1914.' in B. A. Holderness and M. Turner (eds.), *Land, Labour, and Agriculture, 1700-1920. Essays for Gordon Mingay* (Hambledon Press, London, 1991), 223-240.
- ⁸⁰ J. K. Walton, 'The Strange Decline' 228-231; for farming numbers see J. D. Marshall and J. K. Walton, *The Lake Counties from 1830 to the Mid-twentieth Centuries. A Study in Regional Change* (Manchester University Press, 1981), Appendix 4, 249; and M. Campbell, *The English Yeoman*, 280-281, n 55.
- ⁸¹ D. Uttley, 'The Decline', *CW3*, vii, 124-127.
- ⁸² D. E. Ginter, *A Measure of Wealth*, 107-114.
- ⁸³ *Carlisle Journal*, CRO(C): 1815, 1822 and 1833, all issues.
- ⁸⁴ *Carlisle Journal*, CRO(C), 1822, all issues.
- ⁸⁵ F. E. Eden, *The State of the Poor* (3 Vols, London, 1797), quoted in E. J. Evans, *The Contentious Tithes: The Tithe Problem and English Agriculture 1750-1850* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1976), 21.
- ⁸⁶ For a thorough review of the subject see B. Short, *Land and Society* (1997).
- ⁸⁷ D. Uttley, 'The Decline' *CW2*, vii, 121-133. In addition, this study highlights the inadequacy of the County Directories for numerical analysis and the large number of customary tenants in Leath Ward who formed 19 per cent of all land holdings in 1913.
- ⁸⁸ One of the yeomen's severest critics was J. Caird, *English Agriculture in 1850-51* (London, 1852), 364. But a more subtle approach was (sensibly) adopted by a local resident W. Dickinson, *Essay on the Agriculture of East Cumberland* (A. Thurnam, Carlisle, 1853), 12.
- ⁸⁹ Report of the Select Committee on Agriculture, PP (1833), v, 309-11.
- ⁹⁰ D. Uttley, 'The Decline', *CW3*, vii, 121-133.
- ⁹¹ See for example: H. Martineau, *Complete Guide to the English Lakes* (1st ed., Windermere, 1855), 139 and *Chamber's Journal*, 137-139.
- ⁹² J. D. Marshall and J. K. Walton, *The Lake Counties*, Appendix 4, 249.
- ⁹³ J. K. Walton, 'The Strange Decline', 221-233.