

THE important contribution made by the horse drawn road haulage sector to both the growth of the railways and to Britain's rise to industrial primacy in the Victorian era has been largely ignored and neglected by historians. There are some worthy exceptions to this rule, but in the main historians have been much more captivated and excited by the role of the canals followed by the development of steam traction and the railway revolution, than by the rather mundane and unglamorous horse drawn road cartage sector. To a very large degree this neglect can be attributed to the sector's lack of records, documentation and readily available statistics. Moreover, road cartage was not subject to any significant legislation, and indeed attracted very little attention from government quarters throughout the nineteenth century, right through to the outbreak of the First World War.

Although Cumbria (i.e. the pre-1974 Cumberland and Westmorland counties together with the Furness area of Lancashire), was not a typical exemplar of either Victorian industrialisation or transport development, L. A. Williams' detailed study of road transport in the region in the nineteenth century¹ offers a worthy if somewhat dated contribution to this otherwise neglected aspect of social and economic history, albeit that his focus is mainly centred on the development of the region's road network rather than on its road transport operations, road freight carriers, or on the impact of road haulage on Cumbrian society. This article seeks to throw some light on this business sector and to show how, and why, it survived well into the canal and railway ages.

It is a fact that both nationally and in Cumbria, road freight transport had made a valuable contribution to the economic and social life of the nation long before the coming of the (so called) Industrial Revolution. There is evidence of regular packhorse trains moving goods between Kendal, a regional transport hub, and towns such as Newcastle, Bristol, London and Southampton,² as early as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Later, horsedrawn wagon services took over certain long distance and regional routes to and from Cumbria as the road network benefited from the evolution of the turnpikes in the eighteenth century.³ Meanwhile, horse drawn carts and trams provided short haul feeder services to ports along the West Cumberland and Furness coasts, thereby facilitating the expansion of coal and iron mining activities in those areas. Coastal shipping was of great importance to the development of the Cumbrian economy throughout both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, whereas canal construction was limited to only three peripheral ventures⁴ due largely to the difficult, mountainous terrain of the region. The Lancaster Canal which linked Kendal in 1819 to industrial Lancashire via Preston, was in effect the only "long distance" inland waterway to touch the region, and these canals tended to complement and supplement the region's road transport facilities. They only conflicted and competed with the road carriers where parallel routes with bulk cargoes coincided. This situation was similar to the national experience, for although canal freight rates were significantly cheaper per ton/mile than road freight

rates on a wharf-to-wharf basis, the road carriers could often compete on price in a door-to-door situation, especially on high value merchandise traffic.⁵ Moreover, road carriers tended to give a quicker, more reliable and predictable service and incurred lower incidences of transit damage and loss.

The dawn of the railway age, however, saw a fundamental change in the fortunes of the road haulage sector nationally. The railways had a much more visible and direct impact on the scope and role of the road hauliers than the canals had, though the impact did not affect all branches of the road haulage sector equally or indeed, adversely. The regional, intermediate-distance carriers were probably hit the hardest in the first instance, given that the early railways of the 1830s/40s tended to be relatively small scale, independent concerns, operating within a restricted geographical area. As railway building proceeded, individual rail concerns linked up to adjacent developments, thereby forming longer distance networks. More importantly, the various railway companies evolved administrative machinery for the handling of through freight movements, and developed common, industry-wide freight policies which, in turn, affected the long distance road hauliers.

Railway construction in Cumbria tended to conform to this initial pattern of small scale, piecemeal investment and development. Additionally, partly due to the region's difficult topography, and partly due to the underdeveloped economy and low density of population, railway building here tended to lag behind construction and development rates in other parts of the country. By 1846 the region was crossed on a north-south axis by the Carlisle-Lancaster Railway (which was linked southwards to London and the Midlands, northwards to Glasgow and the Scottish Lowlands). Throughout the 1840s and 50s there were small local developments pushing out from Carlisle southwards down the West Cumberland coastal strip towards Whitehaven, whilst the Furness Railway was developed in increments northwards towards Whitehaven, and southwards towards Carnforth and the main London-Scottish route. This west coast loop from Carnforth to Carlisle was gradually linked up and completed in the '50s. The South Durham-Lancashire Union line was completed in the '60s and added a new, important trans-Pennine route to the region's original cross country, Carlisle-Newcastle link of 1838. The last major mainline route to be built in England, the Carlisle-Settle, was opened in 1876, thereby completing the region's rail network. Meanwhile, several proposals to secure access by railway developers to the scenic heartland of the region had been challenged and contained by vociferous opposition from what today would be described as "conservation" groups. In effect, only three main tourist towns in the heartland came to be serviced by the railways, namely Windermere (1847), Coniston (1859) and Keswick (1865).

As with the canals, the region's road carriers only came into competition with the railways when they operated on parallel routes. This time however the road carriers found themselves at a serious disadvantage. Unlike the canals, the railways could compete on both price, speed and quality of service. Unlike the canals they could cope equally well with bulk and merchandise traffics. Many Cumbrian carriers were however, protected from head-on competition with the railways because of the low level of penetration by the railways within the region. Indeed, the railways often generated a demand for short haul, feeder services within Cumbria, and many local carriers enjoyed new, increased business. Some Cumbrian long distance and

regional carriers suffered a similar fate to those regional and long distance road carriers throughout the country who failed to recognise the challenge posed by the railways, and who failed to adapt their operations accordingly. They went rapidly to the wall. In the meantime, more flexible and perceptive "national" operators such as Pickfords, Chaplin and Horne, Deacon Harrison & Co., attempted first of all to become railway carriers,⁶ ultimately settling for the more dependent and subordinate role of railway cartage and freight booking agents, as the various railway companies progressively adopted direct freight carrier policies as the industry standard. Urban horse drawn cartage services flourished in the second half of the nineteenth century, and concerns such as Pickfords thrived and expanded on the back of rail borne freight traffic, despite their increased subservience to their railway "masters" and their consequent loss of independence. Indeed, the draught horse population of the country reached a peak in the late Victorian/Edwardian eras as a result of this expansion in urban cartage, and Thompson's proclamation of Victorian Britain, as being the "Horse drawn society" is just as relevant and valid as the more conventional designation of the period as the "Railway Age".⁷

Despite the boom of the cartage sector in the Victorian period, it was subject to intensive, not to say cut-throat, competition. Entry into the sector was totally uncontrolled, unregulated, and not withstanding the presence of a handful of large scale operators such as Pickfords, required relatively little initial capital investment. This low entry threshold to the sector was exacerbated by an almost constant in-flow of migrants from rural areas into the growing urban and industrial centres in the late nineteenth century as a direct result of the Great Agricultural Depression. Such displaced farm workers with their knowledge of working horses, were used to long hours, low pay and seasonal under-employment. In short, they constituted a tailor made, readily exploitable work-force for the cartage employers.⁸ All these various factors combined to create a turbulent, unstable sector comprised in the main of many small financially vulnerable businesses with phenomenally high start up and failure rates.

In contrast to the upheaval created by the impact of rail freight on the regional and long distance urban based road carriers, the railways do not appear to have had the same traumatic impact on the village/country and local carriers, who in the main continued to operate their services throughout the nineteenth century right through to the end of the First World War, in much the same ways as their predecessors had done, long before the canal and railway ages. Whilst the keeping of records and documentation was somewhat rudimentary in Victorian urban cartage operations, it was an even rarer practice amongst the ranks of the country carriers. This point is amplified in Alan Everitt's work on country carriers in Leicestershire.⁹ Here, the records of a local country carrier, Frederick Palmer of Walton-by-Kimcote, were central to his work and threw considerable light on the workings of rural carriers at this time. Such records are extremely rare. Many country carriers were illiterate. Others were small retailers or inn-keepers who invested in a horse and cart, employed "a man" (often illiterate), and thus combined their principal occupation with that of village/country carrier.

Given this general dearth of carriers records in this period, the Cumbria County Record Office at Kendal amazingly contains the records of two Victorian country carriers, namely Walter Berry of Milnthorpe, Westmorland, and those of Thomas

Ellwood of Ayside, near Cartmel, Cumbria (formerly in Lancashire).¹⁰ The Ellwood records consist of day books, ledgers, oddments of correspondence, vouchers and receipts spanning the period 1850-1880. Unfortunately, many of the records have suffered from exposure to water or excessive dampness, and are consequently in very poor condition. Despite this, the collection gives a very real insight into the business of a rural carrier in this region in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The second set of carriers' records held at Kendal, those of Walter Berry, tend to echo and confirm the structure, style and pattern of the Ellwood business, although they cover a shorter period which also partly predates the arrival and influence of the railways. The Berry records consist of four day books covering the period 1838-63, two ledgers spanning the period from 1841 to 1846, and a miscellaneous collection of correspondence and papers (however, at least one of these documents, a petition dated 28 August, 1848, refers to a Daniel Berry, – and should not be confused with the business of Walter Berry).¹¹ Williams¹² makes several references to the Berry records, but the Ellwood documents were lodged with the Record Office after the publication of his work.

Walter Berry was something of an entrepreneur, combining his carrier operations with other business activities. Berry, in addition to being a local carrier, was a farmer and a merchant dealing in salt, bricks and other building materials. Thomas Ellwood, born in 1809, appears to have been at least a second generation carrier, having succeeded his father, Isaac Ellwood, although he too seems to have been something of an entrepreneur, combining the carrier operations with farming and a certain amount of trading in cheese. The core element of his "country" carrier business was a regular service between the market towns of Ulverston (then in Lancashire) and Kendal in Westmorland. His base at Ayside in the parish of Cartmel and close to Newby Bridge was roughly equidistant between Ulverston to the south-west and Kendal to the north-east. Entries in local trade directories show that Ellwoods operated this service from the early 1850s through to at least 1911.¹³ In addition to the "country carrier" service Ellwood undertook general haulage activities and offered "daily spot-hire" facilities. Like Ellwood, Berry also operated a regular "country carrier" service, with his Milnthorpe base as the mid point between Kendal to the north and Lancaster to the south. He equally undertook ad hoc "smalls" and general cartage movements, frequently charging on a daily hire basis like Ellwood, though in some cases (unlike Ellwood) he charged on a tonnage basis.

Several traders and retailers in both Kendal and Ulverston held accounts with Ellwood. For example, a Miss Coates, milliner of Ulverston ran up a debt of 28s. in the half year up to February 1881, for the delivery of 19 hampers and eight parcels of clothing, whilst James Dixon, an old established grocery business in Ulverston, had monthly accounts for both deliveries to rural customers, and in-bound supplies brought in to his warehouse. Thomas Birkett, a Kendal draper, was billed 12s. for parcels and boxes delivered to his country customers in the nine months up to November 1881. Small consignments for rural delivery appear to have been charged out at a minimum rate of 4d. per parcel up to a maximum of 10d. per parcel around 1880. The Berry records similarly show that the retail trade was a generator of traffic for that business, too, with movements of grocery items in particular being received from Liverpool merchants at Sandside port for onward delivery to grocers and traders in Kendal.

Country carriers in this area provided a much more personal service for their clients than did the railways. The records illustrate some of the personal, added-value services that were provided by Ellwood and his employees for the benefit of their customers. For example, a note on a scrap of paper from William Gaskell jnr. of Nibthwaite, dated 11 October 1869, requests Thomas Ellwood:- "Please to bring us one quart of magenta colouring for sheep marking from Mr Braithwaite Drysalters Kendal and leave at Richard Taylors saddlery shop at Greenodd and I will pay you the first time I see you, and oblige".

This request seems to be a fairly common and typical added-value transaction undertaken by Ellwood. He appears to have regularly purchased merchandise from traders in both Kendal and Ulverston on behalf of his clients, subsequently billing them for the cost of the goods plus his transport charge. In such transactions he was offering a form of credit as well as a transport service to rural clients who were presumably either not sufficiently well established financially, or generated insufficient volumes of business to merit credit accounts with retailers in the towns. Alternatively, in cases where Ellwood clients had credit accounts with Kendal and Ulverston traders, merchandise was often ordered, collected and signed for by Ellwood's men to the client's account, and transport charges only were levied by Ellwood.

Clearly, a significant proportion of Ellwood's carrier traffic was retail/trader related, with some traffic being initiated directly by retailers and traders, whilst some was generated on the instructions of private customers. The local licensed trade was also important to the business with two Ulverston brewers, a Kendal brewer and a Kendal mineral water manufacturer using Ellwood's service for deliveries to public houses in Cartmel, Lindale, Cark and other points along the route. The Kendal brewer, Whitwell, Mark & Co., was one of Ellwood's most important clients. Here, the carrier appears to have paid the brewer for the goods on collection from the brewery, including a charge as a deposit on the kegs and barrels, recovering the cost of the beer, the deposit and the transport charge on delivery to the various publicans. The collection and return of casks appears to have generated a plethora of receipts and vouchers, and must have been something of a headache to the carrier.

The return of mineral water "empties" to Thomas Kendall, the Kendal based manufacturer, equally appears to have been somewhat fraught from time to time. Several plaintive notes from Kendall to Ellwood urge that calls should be made to particular outlets "to collect whatever empties might be available, and return them as quickly as possible to Kendal".

Apart from the regular carrier service which plied between Ulverston and Kendal, Ellwood, as stated earlier, also operated general haulage and cartage services on an ad hoc basis, charging out the hire of men, carts and horses by the job, journey, or day, as was deemed appropriate between Ellwood and the client concerned. The going rate for a man, cart and horse in the early 1870s was around 6s. per day, although by the end of the decade the rate had risen by nearly 17% to 7s. per day. Similarly, Berry's daily hire rates in the late 1860s were comparable to the rates charged by Ellwood in the early 1870s, i.e. 6s. to 7s. per cart/man day. Again, there are similarities with the general haulage activities of the two businesses, although much of Berry's general business, was based around the little ports of Sandside and Arnside, where small coastal sailing ships brought in salt, bricks, saltpetre, sugar,

flour, salted horse hides and wine, and took out cargoes of gunpowder, leather, tar, pig iron and bobbins. One letter in the collection suggests that Berry actually undertook, and charged for, through movements from local manufacturers' premises to ports such as Liverpool, Connah's Quay, etc., suggesting a degree of sophistication which was well beyond the normal rural carrier. He was in effect, acting as both a carrier and a forwarder. The brick and salt trades were, in the main, to Berry's own account, and the haulage element was generally not detailed separately in such transactions. In addition to the port-based activities Berry also hauled barrels of tar on behalf of the Minthorpe Gas Company to various local destinations. He charged this traffic out on a per ton basis, averaging a rate of 6.85d. per ton/mile. For example, barrels of tar to Lancaster, 14 miles away, were invoiced to the client at 8s. per ton. In contrast to this, the gunpowder traffic from Wakefield's works at Gatebeck were carried 6 miles to Sandside quay at 6/8d. per ton (i.e. 13.3d. per ton/mile). Horse and carts which went into the gunpowder works had to be equipped with bronze or copper shoes and tyres, and the higher rate presumably was to cover such costs and also reflected the greater risk associated with this particular traffic.

Berry undertook household removals, and carried goods to and from the railway stations at Milnthorpe, Sandside and Arnside. Interestingly, amongst this expanding local feeder traffic is an entry detailing the movement of an "abnormal" load, a one-off "heavy haulage" operation where Berry transported a large 7 ton vessel from Milnthorpe goods yard to Richard Bell's Waterhouse Mill. This movement involved the use of eight horses, two carts and several carters. The movement was charged out at a remarkable £7.

Household removals were also undertaken by Ellwood from time to time. In June 1880 for example, the effects and furniture of a Mr H. Tebay were carried from Ulverston to Cartmel, a journey of 12 miles, for the sum of 24s. Later that year, two local removals within a short radius of Cartmel village were undertaken for 22s. and 30s. respectively, suggesting that the removal business enjoyed much better rates than general haulage. As far as can be seen Ellwood had no special vans or equipment for this work, which presumably was undertaken with his normal carts.

The freight side of the Ellwood business does not appear to have suffered from railway competition as far as the scheduled Ulverston/Kendal service was concerned. Indeed, if anything, the general haulage/cartage side of the business seems to have benefited from the traffic that the railways brought into the area, although it seems likely that the passenger carrying side would lose out to rail competition. The Furness Railway Company's main line ran along the Morecambe Bay coast from Carnforth and the south, to Ulverston. This coast was in effect the southern boundary of Ellwood's territory, with Cark as the nearest station to Cartmel (less than 2 miles) and his base at Ayside (about 5 miles). The railway cut across the Leven/Crake estuary by a viaduct to Ulverston, bypassing key villages such as Greenodd and Haverthwaite, so that whilst it is conceivable that some passenger and "smalls" traffic on the Cartmel/Ulverston leg might have been lost to rail passenger trains, traffic for the intermediate villages would have most likely been retained. On the north side of the "territory" the Furness Railway ran a service up to Lakeside via Haverthwaite, and some traffic between Ulverston and Haverthwaite may have been at risk from railway competition. On the Cartmel/Kendal leg of the carrier service,

the road route passed over Cartmel Fell into the Lyth Valley, through Crosthwaite, Underbarrow and then via the “backdoor” into Kendal. There was no direct rail competition over this part of the route, and there was no direct rail link between Ulverston and Kendal. Thus, Ellwood’s route was partially immune from railway competition. Moreover, the personalised, added-value services provided by Ellwood e.g. the Gaskell magenta colouring collection, must have been a major selling point to his clients.

Meanwhile the Furness Railway’s station and goods yard at Cark generated cartage traffic for Ellwood. Many of these movements appear to have involved either the collection or despatch of small consignments by passenger train service. Here, Ellwood appears to have paid the inbound “carriage forward” charges to the railway company on behalf of his clients, or alternatively on despatches, paid their “carriage paid” charges. These were then billed to Ellwood’s respective clients along with his own local cartage charges. Apart from handling “smalls” traffics, Ellwood hauled bulk commodities from the goods yard to local customers premises, mainly on account of his locally based clients, but occasionally on behalf of the Furness Railway Company and also for two Liverpool based clients, the Mersey Artificial Manure Company and Wm. & H. M. Goulding, fertiliser manufacturers.

There is evidence that Ellwood, like Berry, had developed a number of “industrial” clients, collecting leather from several small tanneries in the Cartmel and Lindale areas for delivery to different outlets in Kendal, which of course had a thriving boot and shoe making industry in this period. Timber was also transported on occasions from woodland sites to local bobbin and saw mills. James Barker a local sawyer, wrote a brief note to Thomas Ellwood in 1870 instructing him to collect timber for his sawmill, including the following gratuitous operational advice, presumably in the hope of mitigating the cost of the haulage to the Barker business “. . . The wood all has to be off the premises by the end of May. You could lead it down to Cark and load at Cartmel or some other place as you come back which will be an advantage” (such obsessive expertise in transport economics by clients will be readily recognised by present day hauliers).

Despite the wide range of traffics handled via the scheduled carrier service, together with the ad hoc general haulage, cartage and removals operations, evidence of only one goods-in-transit claim could be found in a collection of records which spanned at least one decade in some detail. An Ulverston ironmonger, Francis Warhurst claimed on the 21 July 1884, “To one mousetrap, damaged in transit to Mrs Baldwin, 1/-”. If this really was the only claim in the decade, then it speaks much for the care exercised by Ellwood and his carters, as the regular service was conducted under “Common carrier” rules, which placed absolute and total liability for loss or damage on the operator.

It is clear from these records that a high degree of mutual trust existed between the carrier, his clients and local traders. Ellwood’s carters would order, collect and sign for valuable merchandise on behalf of rural clients. Traders would apparently charge such orders to that person’s account, handing the goods without demur to the carrier’s men, confident that there would be no subsequent disputes over loss, damage or non-delivery. In other instances we have seen that Ellwood often made purchases on behalf of clients, settled their rail carriage charges, etc., claiming repayment along with his own local carriage charges in due course. Traders who

used the Ellwood service appear to have enjoyed extended credit on their carriage accounts, with instances of settlements being run on monthly, three monthly, half yearly and even on nine monthly bases. Equally, Ellwood seems to have enjoyed extended credit with some of his local suppliers such as his blacksmiths, wheelwrights, the local vet, and the saddle and harness maker. Again, although it may not be conclusive, given that there are gaps in the records, only one case of legal action for debt recovery could be found. William Braithwaite, an Ulverston solicitor wrote on Ellwood's behalf to a client in July 1868, demanding payment of an outstanding, disputed account for 2s. 4d. The only other discordant note regarding the settlement of accounts involved the cost of returning beer casks to R. Case & Co.'s brewery at Ulverston from the Volunteers Training Camp at Cark but this was already on its way to being settled amicably, with money being sent to Ellwood on account pending clarification with Messrs. Case as to who was liable for the cost of returning "empties".

The high degree of mutual trust which existed between Ellwood and the local community, together with the honesty and integrity of Ellwood's carters, might well have been achievable only in a rural community. Certainly, the relationship between urban cartage contractors and their employees seems to have been in direct contrast to that of Ellwood and his employees. Pilferage appears to have been endemic amongst carters in the larger urban areas in the late Victorian and Edwardian areas. Moreover, street thefts from loads led in part to an upswing in the employment of van boys and van guards around the turn of the century in major town and city centres.¹⁴

The evidence from the Ellwood records suggests that there was a fairly high level of stability in the carrier's charges for "smalls" over the twenty years from the mid 70s to the mid 90s, despite the fairly significant rise in daily hire charges in the late 70s, as was noted earlier. There is insufficient detail in the records to assess Ellwood's annual operating costs or indeed his annual revenue, and it is therefore impossible to pass comment on the profitability of the business. There is, however, a Schedule D (profits on Trade, Profession and Foreign Investments) 1st Assessment form for the fiscal year ending the 5 April 1866, in the records, which calls for a payment of 13s. 4d. on profits of £100, but it is not clear if this was an accurate assessment by the Tax Collector, or merely an opening gambit on his part. There is certainly no evidence as to what Ellwood paid in the final analysis.

In addition to his haulage "fleet", Ellwood also ran a gig, which was available for hire as well as, presumably, for his own personal use. The Inland Revenue charged a licence fee of 15s. p.a. for this carriage in 1883, whereas of course, the cart fleet was not subject to either licensing or taxation. Finally, the Inland Revenue levied 4s. 4d. on Ayside for Land and House Tax duty.

Ellwood seems to have favoured several suppliers and tradesmen with his custom. It is not clear whether this policy was based on a desire to create goodwill with several traders, a means of extending credit, or whether he shopped around and placed orders with who-ever offered the best price on the day. Provender and feedstuffs appear to have been bought on short term credit, with bills being settled on a monthly basis, from six different millers and merchants located at Lancaster (delivered by rail to the goods yard at Cark), two in Cartmel, Cark, Grange-over-Sands, and Ulverston, on a best prevailing price basis. Provender prices generally fell

in the 1870s and 80s, through to the end of the nineteenth century. Typically Ellwood's purchases of oats ranged from £7 13s. 4d. per ton, to £9 1s. 0d. This wide variance seems to have been influenced more by the point in the year at which the purchase was made, rather than on the year of purchase, although prices were affected in 1893 and '94 as a result of droughts and poor harvests.¹⁵

Veterinary bills appear to have been settled annually. Robert Parkinson of Ulverston presented a statement for settlement by Ellwood for £3 5s. 0d. at Candlemas, 1883, "For medicines and attendance on horses 20th February 1882 to 14th February, 1883". Three blacksmiths appear to have used in 1882/83, and no less than five wheelwrights were used for the repair of the cart fleet at this time. The overall cart maintenance and repair bill for 1882 totalled £22 15s. 16d., a fairly hefty cost element. Tarpaulin cart covers costing £3 12s. 0d. were also purchased in that year, and saddlery repair costs and purchases totalled a further £1 2s. 7d. Wheel grease appears to have been liberally used by the Ellwood "fleet", given that "2 qtrs, 24 lbs of wheel grease" (i.e. 36.3 kilos) were supplied by John Parker of Ulverston for 11s. 8d. on 1 August 1883. This order was followed up in March 1884 with a further call for 50 lbs.

Surprisingly perhaps, there is only one horse purchase entry. Horse prices were generally rising in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and there was a level of concern with regard to the apparent shortage of horses in Britain during this period, as was evidenced by various Parliamentary enquiries.¹⁶ Auctions had evolved as a major source of horses from the early 1870s, and yet the only horse purchase entry in the Ellwood records is for a horse (breed and type unspecified) costing £52 10s., purchased at Corbishley's Auction Sale at Cockerham, near Lancaster, on 1 May 1882. This appears to have been a fairly expensive horse by prevailing trade horse standards, for even by 1906 the average price of a newly broken trade horse was held to be £50.¹⁷

Thus, despite the fact that their records are far from being complete and comprehensive, the Ellwood and Berry documents give a rare insight into the operations and activities of rural road hauliers in the south Lakeland area in the Victorian era. Walter Berry and Thomas Ellwood both combined their freight transport activities with farming and other business enterprises. Both carriers operated traditional "country carrier" scheduled services under common carrier rules, alongside general haulage services on an ad hoc basis. The survival of Ellwood's Kendal-Ulverston "country carrier" service into the second decade of the twentieth century both reinforces the conclusions reached by Everitt and Sherrington¹⁸ that the personal, added value service levels provided by such carriers enabled them to thrive despite competition from the railways, and equally illustrates the theory that road carriers could maintain routes which were not in parallel with those operated by the railways. Far from suffering from railway competition, both carriers seem, on the whole, to have benefited and grown on the back of railborne freight feeder/cartage operations. Indeed, the growth of their local railhead cartage activities echoes, albeit in microcosm, the massive expansion of horse drawn cartage facilities that took place nationally in the "railway age". It is probable that rail freight and the railways themselves would not have expanded so rapidly without the responsive support of the horse drawn cartage sector. Quite apart from rail traffic, however, both carriers also appear to have been actively involved in serving local industries, thereby

providing an interesting insight into the range and variety of local business and manufacturing activities. In short, both carriers were able to adapt to the railway challenge, whilst making a significant contribution to the social and economic life of the south Lakeland community in the Victorian era. Both the Berry and Ellwood records reinforce Everitt's earlier contention with regard to road carriers that – "In a sense the railway helped to increase their prosperity because of the growing need for road connections between the outlying villages and the railhead".

Notes and References

- ¹ L. A. Williams, *Road Transport in Cumbria in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1975).
- ² *Ibid.*, 17-19. See also B. C. Jones, "Westmorland Packhorsemen in Southampton", *CW2*, lix
- ³ Williams, *op. cit.*, 101-103.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 138-9.
- ⁵ G. L. Turnbull, *Traffic & Transport: an economic history of Pickfords* (London, 1970), 95.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 108-10.
- ⁷ F. M. L. Thompson, "Nineteenth Century Horse Sense", *Economic History Review* 2nd Series, XXIX (1976).
- ⁸ Angela Tuckett, *The Scottish Carter* (London, 1967), 32-3.
- ⁹ Alan Everitt, "Country carriers in the Nineteenth Century", *Journal of Transport History* 2nd Series, 111 (1976), describes the role and importance of country carriers in Victorian Leicestershire and refers to the note book of a Leicestershire village carrier, Frederick Palmer of Walton-by-Kimcote.
- ¹⁰ Cumbria Record Office (Kendal) WDB 1 – the Records of Walter Berry, salt merchant and carter, Milnthorpe: WDB 84 – the Records of Thomas, Isaac and John Ellwood, carriers of Ayside, Cartmel.
- ¹¹ The Berry papers contain a petition dated 29 August 1848, addressed to "the benevolent Christians of Milnthorpe" and urges them to subscribe to a fund to purchase a cart, horse and carriers business on behalf of Daniel Berry of Milnthorpe, described as "a poor but worthy man", to enable him to support his young family. It is not clear whether Daniel Berry was related to Walter; the census of 1851 shows them as heads of separate households and there is a 23 year age difference between them. Kelly's, *Directory for Westmorland* (1858), shows them both as operating services between Milnthorpe and Kendal – Walter offering a daily service, whereas Daniel operated on three days a week.
- ¹² L. A. Williams, *op. cit.*
- ¹³ Mackereth, *Furness Directory* (1911).
- ¹⁴ The circumstances leading to the employment of boys in urban cartage was described by Edward Ballard of the London Carriers Union in his evidence to the Royal Commission on Labour in 1893 PP1893 XXXIII, Q 17590/17811.
- ¹⁵ F. M. L. Thompson, "Horses and Hay in Britain 1830-1918" in *Horses in European Economic History* (1983), 70.
- ¹⁶ PP 1873 XIV – Lords Select Committee on the supply of Horses. Further concern at the supply of horses led to the setting up of a Royal Commission on Horse Breeding PP 1888 XLVIII.
- ¹⁷ PP 1907 XCVII Agricultural Statistics Report (figures for the calendar year 1906), 218.
- ¹⁸ M. Sherrington, "Preston Carriers 1841-1932: from the Railway Age to the Motor Age", unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Leicester, 1973.