

Cattle-droving through Cumbria after the Union: the Stances on the Musgrave Estate, 1707-12

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Although cattle-droving from Scotland was a major activity in Cumbria for 250 years from the early 1600s, systematic primary evidence is scarce. There are estimates of scale, and the chief routes have been identified, as have the fairs and markets where the cattle were sold. However, we know relatively little about the trade's texture, who conducted it, and the costs involved. This case-study analyses records of the use of stances on the Musgrave estate during the years 1707-12, immediately after the Union. Large herds stayed overnight from April to October. From southern Scotland, particularly the border areas, a close-knit group of drovers arrived regularly, making frequent, short-distance droves, and estate officials facilitated repeat business. In addition to intermittent fairs, regular markets featured prominently: and, the evidence suggests, earlier work has significantly underestimated the scale of the trade.

I

FROM the early seventeenth century until beyond 1850 there was a growing, peripatetic movement of cattle through Britain – from the sparsely populated, pastoral regions of the north and west to the more heavily populated and largely arable areas of the south and east. Scotland, Wales and Ireland produced more cattle than they needed and farmers there sold livestock for cash from elsewhere. They could do so profitably because, unlike other heavy goods which were very costly to transport, cattle walked to markets and fairs. Guided by drovers, thousands of beasts moved themselves along the droving routes to and through England in one of the longest-standing and most-valuable trades in agricultural produce Britain has ever seen.

Although the eastern routes from Scotland through Northumberland were important for sheep-droving, the western routes through Cumbria were extensively used by cattle. From the early seventeenth century, until the Irish cattle trade was banned in 1667, the western routes were readily accessible by cattle from Ulster, most of which were shipped from Donaghadee in Co. Down to Portpatrick in Wigtownshire – the official and shortest crossing between Ireland and Scotland – and thence through Dumfries and Carlisle.¹ During the same period the western routes were also followed by the many cattle reared in the breeding grounds of Galloway and Dumfriesshire in south-west Scotland. Thus, these routes were closer to the chief sources of supply for cattle. Moreover, in the early weeks of a season which ran from mid-April to mid-October, grass grew more quickly in western Britain than in the colder and drier east, and droving was dependent on the availability of adequate feed for cattle en route.²

Later research, tracing significant change in Scottish agriculture back into the seventeenth century, elaborated and elucidated these developments. Once the previously stiff competition from Ireland had ceased, longer-distance droving from the

Scottish Highlands to England got underway; previously such cattle had been driven to Lowland Scotland, but usually not further. Moreover, the traffic from south-west Scotland steadily expanded. Growth there was led by enterprising proprietors, who engaged in selective breeding and the more efficient management of good pasture, including enclosure; and who responded to a lowering of customs duties designed to encourage exports, and to the rapid growth of urban markets in England. In the four years during the 1680s and early 1690s for which customs accounts are virtually complete, 94 per cent of exported cattle came from the western precincts. Up to 30,000 cattle a year are thought to have been crossing the Border towards the end of the seventeenth century, with an average of 25,000 a year in the period 1696-1703. Cattle-droving was 'one of the most significant developments in Anglo-Scottish trade' between 1603 and 1707: it operated via a 'highly organised system' and constituted 'an element of dynamism' in Scottish pastoral farming.³

Following the Act of Union in 1707, official barriers to the trade in Britain disappeared. Because of this and the fact that cattle carried themselves, public records of their movement, especially after the Union, are scarce. The major droving routes have been identified, as have the chief markets and fairs where cattle were sold. Historians have long been challenged, however, to chart more precisely fluctuations in the chronology and scale of the trade; and have fallen back on estimates which, though generally accepted, are of long standing. According to these, 20-30,000 head a year were proceeding south from Galloway alone in 1675; by 1707 at least 30,000 head were annually crossing the Scottish border; and by 1750 the number had risen to some 80,000 head a year.⁴ While subsequent research has revealed a great deal about the nature and process of this growth, due to the lack of further numerical evidence these figures have not been revised.

Moreover, we still know relatively little, especially for the decades after the Union, about the texture of the trade: not just about how many cattle were involved at various points; but also about the size, frequency and length of individual droves, how journeys were managed and by whom, and the costs involved. In the absence of official records, it is necessary to turn to private sources, relating, for example, to the extensive network of stances along the droving routes – areas where the cattle were fed, watered and held securely overnight. If cattle were to be sold profitably, they had to arrive at markets or fairs in the best possible condition, though their journeys might militate against this. Stances, therefore, were essential to the smooth functioning of the droving trade.⁵ One group of stances which accommodated droves throughout the season lay on the Musgrave estate in Cumberland and Westmorland. There were many others: for instance, the lands of the Parker family and their neighbours in Upper and Nether Hesket, which straddled the main droving route south from Carlisle, the current A6.⁶ However, surviving records of the servicing of the droving trade on the Musgrave estate are remarkably detailed for the six seasons from 1707 which immediately followed the Union.

II

The Musgrave estate was among the more substantial in Cumbria. The family's origins were Anglo-Norman and they took their surname from the hamlets of Great and Little Musgrave in Westmorland. In the fifteenth century Thomas Musgrave's marriage to Joan, elder daughter and co-heir of William Stapleton, brought Edenhall in Cumberland into the family's possession and heads of the family discharged county offices during the later middle ages. James I awarded them a baronetcy in 1611 and, in addition to holding major regional posts, family members were subsequently elected to Parliament. The second baronet, Sir Philip (1607-78), had a distinguished career as a Royalist during the civil wars and it was he who, in the 1650s, moved the family's principal seat from Hartley Castle in Westmorland to Edenhall in Cumberland. The fourth baronet, Sir Christopher (c.1631-1704), was successively MP for Carlisle, Westmorland, Appleby, Oxford University and Totnes. He was succeeded in the baronetcy by his grandson, another Sir Christopher (1688-1735). By then heads of the family had grown accustomed to spending most of the year in London, avidly pursuing public careers, and the fifth baronet did likewise, becoming MP for Carlisle, 1713-15, and for Cumberland, 1722-27.⁷ Estate management was left largely to employees, a key consideration being how much money they could periodically remit to London.

Although the estate was involved with drovers before then, records of its servicing of them from 1707 onwards may have been created because the prospect of Union raised expectations about the future prospects of the cattle trade. Local people warmly welcomed the legislation and the townsfolk of nearby Penrith enjoyed a public holiday.⁸ It seems likely, however, that detailed records were compiled for a more prosaic reason: in 1707 a new steward, Rev Jeffery Beck, was appointed to manage the Musgrave estate. At the death of Sir Christopher, the fourth baronet, in 1704 his grandson and heir was a minor aged 16. Until he attained his majority in 1709, the estate was under the care of his guardians, with one of whom (of unknown identity) Beck corresponded in 1708: some money was due to the heir for his maintenance, but the rest went to the guardians who, like others in similar positions, were formally responsible to the Court of Chancery for their management as guardians.⁹ Evidently, it had taken some time to recruit Beck. On other than the largest properties the profession of steward of an entire estate (as distinct from bailiffs, who managed individual properties) was still in its adolescence and sometimes those employed in this capacity were not up to the task. That Beck was a cleric is perhaps indicative of the difficulty involved in securing appointees with the requisite blend of social standing and administrative competence.¹⁰ By the time he took up his position, estate affairs were in some disarray, with very substantial arrears of rents and fines. The family owned blocks of property at Edenhall in Cumberland and at Hartley, Soulby, Great and Little Musgrave, and Bleatarn, all just across the county boundary in Westmorland. On all of these properties, except Soulby, arrears substantially exceeded receipts. Indeed, one reason why the estate facilitated droving was that much land was 'in hand' – untenanted and at the disposal of the steward. Some land, later to furnish substantial farms, remained undeveloped for that purpose; good tenants were hard to come by; and there was every incentive to raise money from alternative sources such as droving. Surviving accounts appear, therefore, to reflect Beck's determination in his new job to get a grip on things.

He was clearly nervous about the reaction of the guardians to his first accounts, which dealt with the half-year from July 1707 to February 1708:

I hope your Honour will pardon my faults if this account be not exactly the method of former. And what I have done amiss I humbly pray your Honour will let me know that I may amend the next. There is not one penny in the disburs[em]en[en]ts but what I have a particular to produce or acquittance for. Indeed, the disbursements for repairs at Hartley is something large but those was most of them done and contracted for before I came. Your Honour will find great arrears, but when I think it[*]s dubious I will speedily and pressingly demand them.¹¹

Collecting arrears, however, proved extraordinarily difficult: at the close of the first half-year of 1712 (when this series of rentals ends) some £375 of them remained outstanding, while receipts amounted to only £235. Despite persistently heavy arrears, receipts from rents and fines constituted by far the largest category of estate income, and there was no means of fully compensating for such a substantial shortfall. Nevertheless, Beck did his utmost to maximise income from other sources, not just at Edenhall but also from other land ‘in hand’ at Hartley and Great and Little Musgrave.

TABLE 1. Money due, received, and outstanding ‘For lands lett’ 1708-12¹²

	Due	Received	Outstanding
1708-09	£1,477 2s. 11d.	£544 5s. 9d.	£932 17s. 2d.
1709-10	£1,430 10s. 10d.	£604 7s. 6d.	£826 3s. 4d.
1710-11	£1,360 1s. 9d.	£624 11s. 9d.	£735 10s. 0d.
1711-12	£1,323 17s. 8d.	£586 4s. 10d.	£737 12s. 10d.

A defining feature of life at Edenhall during these years was the absence of the fifth baronet. Rarely in the north and still a 19-year-old minor in 1707, he was, perhaps, not permitted to be resident until he had attained his majority: but even after doing so, he clearly felt that life in or near London, besides being enjoyable, offered the best means of advancing his career. And so, with little of the activity normally associated with an owner’s presence – there were, for example, few visitors to entertain – household needs were modest. In this situation Beck played to the strengths of local farming by fattening beasts for sale rather than for domestic consumption.

Significant numbers of livestock were bought and/or reared on the estate; and the majority of them were later sold. In mid-May 1708 the demesne lands at Edenhall held seven cattle (including five ‘Scotch bullocks’), two cows and a calf, 100 sheep and 155 lambs, all ‘belonging to the Hon. Sir Christopher Musgrave’. A year later there were three cattle, four cows, 114 sheep and 164 lambs. Cattle and sheep were sold from Edenhall, Hartley and the Musgraves, sometimes directly to customers rather than at market. In 1711 Abraham Stooks bought three ‘Scotch bullocks’, two calves, 40 sheep and 40 lambs for £44 17s. 6d.; Christopher Jackson got a dozen oxen for £69; Abraham Turling 16 steers for £65; and Thomas Dennison 20 wethers, a ewe and some ‘stray sheep’ for £12 1s. 0d. Also at all three sites, Beck sold grazing rights for their cattle, sheep and horses to various local people. From 27 April to 2 July 1708 a Mr Lees had hay, oats and bedding straw for his three horses for £3 0s. 8d. In 1711 Beck let pasture for the livestock recently purchased by Abraham Stooks. There was a strong local demand for grazing rights at Edenhall. In the summer of

1708, for instance, in addition to Sir Christopher's own livestock, the demesne hosted seven cattle, eight cows, 27 sheep and three horses owned by 13 separate individuals. Likewise, oats and rye were sold direct to visiting customers. There was some income from sales of rabbits from the warrens on the estate: their meat supplemented local diets and their skins went to the hat trade. Farmers bought willow sets from the estate, as well as stakes and posts; and local tanners got oak bark from the woods near Edenhall.¹³

Although other estates operated similarly, such sales appear to have been pursued with particular vigour on the Musgrave properties, though some of the money due for them proved as difficult to collect as arrears of rents and fines. While individual items brought in very little, their cumulative effect was to blunt the financial impact of heavy arrears. Such sales also ensured that estate activity was closely connected to the economic life of the local community, though many retailers in the vicinity would no doubt have preferred the more conspicuous expenditure of a regularly resident baronet. Jeffery Beck did not solve his employer's fundamental financial problem during these years: but he did manage to conduct a stubborn holding operation; and there is little doubt that the estate was more tightly managed than hitherto. This was the context within which he serviced the droving trade: in the years following the Union this was a substantial and growing endeavour.

III

The estate was ideally situated for servicing the trade, on the side of the country more frequented by cattle-drovers – west of the Pennines – and adjacent to some of the most popular routes: those coming south through or past Carlisle from the Highlands or, more especially, from south-west Scotland; and those proceeding in a south-westerly direction from Jedburgh, Hawick or Bewcastle through Brampton and down the east bank of the River Eden. The river ran through part of the estate near Edenhall, where there was a ford, and where cattle could be watered towards the end of their day's trek. Moreover, all parts of the estate – which straddled the main route eastwards from the Lake District across the Stainmore Gap – were close to important markets and fairs: Penrith immediately to the west, Brough Hill and Appleby to the south east, Kendal to the south west and, further south, the north Lancashire towns. Finally, as we have seen, besides meeting the estate's needs and those of sundry locals, there was ample additional grazing to let on three parts of the estate during the years following the Union.

Members of the Musgrave family had long been familiar with the droving trade. After his Royalist exploits, the second baronet was appointed Governor of Carlisle at the Restoration, when the trade through the city from both Scotland and Ireland was growing vigorously. Simultaneously, his younger son, Christopher, later to succeed as the fourth baronet, was employed in re-establishing the customs service, following the abrogation of Cromwell's short-lived union between England and Scotland.¹⁴ Later, the location of the family's property led to their close private involvement and there is clear evidence that their estate provided stances in the years before the Union.¹⁵ Moreover, Jeffery Beck's draft summary accounts of the income derived from servicing

the trade during the seasons from 1707 to 1711 reveal that their involvement then grew progressively.

TABLE 2: Income from drove cattle on the Musgrave estate 1707-11¹⁶

	Edenhall	Elsewhere	TOTAL
1707	£32 0s. 6d.	£23 12s. 8d.	£55 13s. 2d.
1708	£59 4s. 6d.	£23 8s. 1d.	£82 12s. 7d.
1709	£79 1s. 9d.	£25 14s. 2d.	£104 15s. 11d.
1710	£81 19s. 4d.	£26 3s. 4d.	£108 2s. 8d.
1711	£104 17s. 0d.	£31 11s. 0d.	£136 8s. 0d.
TOTAL	£357 3s. 1d.	£130 9s. 3d.	£487 12s. 4d.

Before exploring this growth, it is necessary to comment on the nature of surviving records. Unlike the rentals summarised in Table 1, they were not formal accounts finalised for submission to the guardians or, later, Sir Christopher, all of whom probably saw only outcome figures in general accounts. They were working documents and, as such, pose specific problems of interpretation. Not of a uniform type, some of them dealt with all or most activity with drovers in a particular year; and others with only minor parts of it. While the Edenhall demesne and the lands ‘in hand’ around it were the site of the chief stance, drove cattle were also pastured at Hartley, and at Great and Little Musgrave. Beck presided at Edenhall and two bailiffs, Thomas Jackson and a Mr Sleddall respectively, at the two other locations. It is often impossible to judge with which property, or mix of properties, a particular document was concerned; and a comparison of documents indicates that, even at Edenhall, some activity with drovers occasionally went unrecorded. Yet, precisely because these records are akin to camera shots at different places and from various angles, they may reveal more of what transpired than if they all viewed matters from the same angle and a common standpoint.

Apart from the summary accounts of income from droving (Table 2), chief among them is the ‘Drove Book’, which deals with the five seasons 1707-11.¹⁷ Except for consecutive annual headings, it provides no dates: there is no indication of the duration of visits by droves of cattle; nor of the numbers of livestock involved. The document simply lists visits by named drovers, apparently in the order in which they occurred, together with the sums which they were charged for grazing. Sometimes two or three sums are listed opposite a single name: in such cases, more than one pasture area was probably required to accommodate a particular drove; alternatively, at times it was no doubt necessary – for other reasons – to separate some animals from others. In addition to illustrating the growth of the trade in terms of the number of drovers and their visits, analysis of the ‘Drove Book’ leads to two conclusions.

The names listed, both first names and surnames, are quite different from those in the records of grazing by locals, and are not English. Nor are they Highland Scottish – of 122 names, only two (‘Dongkin’ Mackintosh and John Mackclarin) are possibly those of Highland Scots, each of whom turned up on the Musgrave estate only once during these years. The overwhelming majority of the names (for example, Armstrong, Bell,

Carruthers, Crawford, Dobie, Ferguson, Graham, Johnston, Liddell, Maxwell and Rea) are recognisably Scottish, but from Lowland Scotland and, particularly, from the Border regions. This first conclusion is supported by analysis of the visits made by these individuals, the results of which are summarised in Table 3. There were far fewer individuals than visits. In the 1707 season some 38 drovers made a total of 60 visits to the estate, a pattern which intensified until, in 1711, 50 individuals made 106 visits. In fact the table somewhat underestimates this trend: in a few instances two drovers paid a joint visit, presumably sharing the management of a large drove. Taken together, this evidence suggests that, whatever the cattle's origins, these droves had not been brought over very long distances. They would appear to have set out for market or fair, via various stances including the Musgrave estate, from points south – probably far south – of the Highlands: from border towns such as Jedburgh or Hawick; or from Dumfries, which was on the route from the cattle ranches of south-west Scotland southwards through or past Carlisle.

TABLE 3: Visits by drovers to the Musgrave Estate 1707-11.

	1707	1708	1709	1710	1711
Visits	60	68	81	76	106
Individuals	38	41	44	46	50

Both conclusions are underpinned by evidence from estate vouchers (described by Beck as 'particulars' in his letter to one of the guardians). One voucher reveals that the 1708 season began on 12 April with the arrival of William Carruthers. He and four drovers who followed him until 3 May all bought hay for their cattle, though another took grass on 1 May, as all the rest did until the season ended towards mid-October. However, this voucher also provides the dates of arrival of most, and possibly all, of the drovers involved in that year. While a number visited a stance only once, others appeared more frequently. Seven turned up twice and five on three occasions. William Wright appeared on 28 April, 19 June, 4 August and 13 September. And William Carruthers, the first to arrive on 12 April, returned on four further occasions – 1 June, 20 July, 3 August and 18 September. In the following year Richard Wrightman appeared on no fewer than eight occasions between 5 May and 10 October. And in 1711, though beginning only on 4 August, Joseph Graham paid four visits between then and 6 September.¹⁸

This evidence throws fresh light on the extent to which the droving trade had developed during the previous half-century. Long-distance droves were becoming more common: for example, from Dumfries (gateway to south-west Scotland) or Crieff (gateway to the Highlands) to St Faith's Fair in Norfolk. Recourse to such large-scale, periodic set-pieces continued into the nineteenth century. There were, however, other developments. Northern fairs grew prodigiously, those at Rosley Fell in Cumberland and Brough Hill in Westmorland being prime examples; and markets, which were held regularly and much more frequently than fairs, grew in number and activity.¹⁹ Consequently, droves over shorter distances were often the norm. Trading arrangements also became more sophisticated as dealers built up their network of contacts. During the later seventeenth century, for instance, the Flemings of Rydal

Hall near Ambleside (regular correspondents of the Musgraves during these years) bought cattle at Ravenglass Fair in west Cumberland and had them driven over the Lakeland passes, either to Ambleside or Kendal, where they were bought, often by prior arrangement, by dealers who moved them on further south to the north Lancashire towns.²⁰ The evidence here supports the view that much of the trade was articulated through a complex system of medium- and short-distance droves. This is not particularly surprising. The difficulties of moving large numbers of cattle over very long distances, especially the need to identify suitable stances in advance, were substantial. As demand and then supply grew and prices became more predictable, there was increased incentive to sell at intermediate stages on the routes from the far north to the deep south; and as time went on local demand grew in the north and the midlands. Evidence from the Musgrave estate suggests not only that the trade expanded after the Union, but also that the trend towards droving by intermediate stages had already become more firmly established. With long-distance droves it was impossible to shuttle backwards and forwards across the border, as many of Beck's customers did.

Those who managed stances also provided a sharper service as they became more adept in their dealings with drovers. Beck was clearly open to advance bookings and, for obvious practical reasons, is likely to have welcomed them. There is an undated draft letter from him to a Mr Batty. David and Robert Batty were among his regular customers: each of them used his stances in every year but one between 1707 and 1711, with Robert's droves arriving three times in 1709 and five times in 1710. Like William Carruthers, they tended to begin operating early in the season, and on this occasion – before grass was expected to be plentiful – one of them enquired about the availability of sufficient hay. Beck replied:

I am favoured with yours where in you desire to know if wee be stocked so well with hay as to take 40 or 80 Bease for some time. I must needs say the winter has been sharp and very long; so that those that has now hay to sell begins to value itt very highly. And God be thanked wee have a very good and great quantity, and you may be sure [we] shall be ready to serve you and all those that eats our grass in somr att a more moderate price then any other person wee sell to her[e]. I shall propose no price for hay since you do not mention it. So if you send the number you intimate with a servant, hay shall be provided for them, and all shall be done as becomes your most obliged humble servant.

Beck was not prepared to name a price for hay at that stage but firmly, and courteously, undertook to ensure that his regular customer was satisfied. His postscript is also revealing: 'I have one piece of news to acquaint you withal: your horse you left here is gone blind'. Perhaps this Batty, probably Robert, was such a regular trader that he chose to stable horses en route in advance; it is more likely, however, that when he left it the animal had been sick with New Forest disease, a condition closely associated with cattle flies and leading to blindness.²¹ An attractive additional facility provided by Beck was his willingness to lend money to drovers, perhaps as they neared the end of their journeys. He did so – for sums ranging from a few shillings to, in one case, over £4 – to around 5 per cent of them; repayments were made from the proceeds of their sales as the drovers returned northwards. Indeed, some loans were made to drovers who, though usually regular customers, did not use the Edenhall stance during the year in question (although they may have used those at Hartley and the Musgraves).²² Thereby, they were strongly encouraged to return.

At least in two cases the names in the 'Drove Book' and elsewhere suggest a further possibility. Jackson, not a Scottish name, is more likely to have been Cumbrian. No fewer than five Jacksons were involved – Christopher, John, Joseph, Thomas and William. They may not all have been related, but some of them probably were. Was Christopher the individual, apparently from the estate's locality, who bought a dozen oxen from Beck in 1711? And was Thomas the same person who, almost certainly on a part-time basis alongside his own farming, acted as bailiff at Hartley?²³ The former used the Musgrave stances three times in 1707, once in 1708, and once in 1711: the latter, once in 1709. It was common in later decades for Cumbrians to go north to buy cattle, and then to drive them south. An initial journey in one direction rather than the other was no more arduous; indeed, an intimate knowledge of the area to which the cattle were being driven was possibly more valuable. So journeys in the alternative direction may also have occurred at this stage in the development of the trade.

We do not know where drovers spent their nights during their visits to the Musgrave estate though, especially in the summer, they perhaps slept *al fresco*. Further north at Old Town near Upper Hesket a few years later, the Parkers provided accommodation in the huge barn which they built next to their house in 1725,²⁴ but there is no evidence of arrangements at Edenhall, Hartley or the Musgraves.

The quality of the relationship between drovers and those who managed stances was important. Both parties were involved in a tricky business, facing various hazards but, in view of their mutual interdependence, often facing them jointly. Distant from his base, and correspondingly vulnerable, a drover might be confronted with a sudden emergency, arising from theft, illness affecting himself or his animals, climatic conditions during a particular season, or other possible eventualities. If the manager of a stance failed to respond appropriately, or particularly if his general arrangements were judged to be unsatisfactory, he risked losing future business. The evidence here suggests that the Musgrave estate served its customers well. Beck carefully nurtured the enterprise: income from servicing grew steadily, to the point where, in comparison with receipts from rents and fines, it was significant; and, above all, there was a steady growth in repeat business – which no doubt stemmed partly from the convenience of the stances, but some of which, at least, must have reflected satisfaction with the services provided.

Drovers also relied on other drovers, and many of those who used the Musgrave stances seem to have known one another well. Analysis of the 'Drove Book' suggests that a high proportion of them were related; and indicates that others, who, apparently, were not, managed droves jointly. Among the reasons why Beck had to be punctilious in his inter-personal dealings, especially if, as the evidence suggests, drovers came from the same family or locality, was that news and views among them would have travelled fast. Of 122 names in the 'Drove Book' (all with different first names per surname), there were seven Grahams; five Carruthers and five Jacksons; three Armstrongs, Bells, Reas, Wightmans and Wrights; and two Battys, Bealys, Beaths, Calverts, Corrys, Crawford, Dobies, Edgers, Elliotts, Fergusons, Flemings, Irwins, Irwings, Johnstons, Murrays, Nelsons, Palmers, Scotts and Tinklins. Thus, 70 drovers (well over half) shared a surname with at least one other member of the group, and many with several.

Moreover, many individuals with the same surname were listed next, or close, to one another in the 'Drove Book', suggesting that, while each brought cattle which were separately accounted for, they were travelling together or in close proximity. And some individuals with different surnames managed droves jointly: Wrightman and Law in 1707; Murdoch and Law in 1708; Ferguson and Gillbray in 1710; and Dobie and Harknesse, and Carruthers and Irving, both pairs in 1711. Thus, while it is impossible to be more precise, this appears to have been a homogeneous and, indeed, a close-knit group, linked by more fundamental factors than the route which they followed and the stances which they shared. Not all of them passed through the area regularly: but a majority of them did, often several times during a single season, and in one season after another. Not only did they know their trade well, being involved in it from April to October each year: most of them knew each other, worked together and maintained a sound relationship with Beck. This, therefore, was a well-organised activity whose pattern had been established before the Union.

IV

None of these sources, however, reveals the duration of drovers' visits to the Musgrave estate, precisely what they paid for, or the scale of their operations. A final document, dealing with the season of 1712, does so.²⁵ Unlike any other, this is a consecutive record of financial transactions with individual drovers, compiled by Jeffery Beck. Confirming David Batty's practice of starting early in the season, the first entry is as follows: '8 April 1712. Then oweing and indebted by me Mr. David Batty the sum of six shillings to the hon[our]able Sir Christopher Musgrave Bart. for one night[s] hay for 60 drove cattle as witness my hand'. This formulation was sometimes replaced, either by 'which I promise to pay on demand as witness my hand', or by 'which I promise to pay on demand'. The document covers the usual annual droving season and runs from 8 April to 9 October. It records 68 visits to the estate by 69 drovers though, echoing earlier material, activity was not quite as uniform as this suggests. Each of four droves was led by two drovers. On 6 May John Marshall and John James arrived with 500 cattle, a very large herd, which explains their travelling together. They were followed on 9 May by John Irwin and William Carruthers with 110 cattle and 50 cows: this drove was almost certainly a short-distance one and is the only instance in this series of records where cows were involved. On 5 June John and James Irwin turned up with 40 cattle and 180 sheep, again the only instance of this mix of beasts, and a difficult drove if ever there was one. And finally, on 3 July, the same pair appeared with 80 cattle. These cases of short-term, repeat business further confirm that these droves were not over long distances; also, clearly, some drovers, who might not have been related, worked together. However, the number of individual drovers in these joint endeavours almost equalled the number who appear more than once in the document – hence the apparent uniformity.

While the document records the bulk of that season's business, we know from other sources²⁶ that it was not comprehensive. It deals solely with those drovers who paid for their grazing on their *return* from market or fair. Their debts were recorded; and once repaid – on their return journey – the entry was crossed out. Moreover, these transactions related only to Edenhall, where Beck presided; and not to Hartley or the

TABLE 4. Transactions with drovers in the 1712 season.

	Individuals	Visits	Dates per Month	Cattle	Cows	Sheep
April	3	4	3	429		
May	11	9	5	1,765	50	
June	13	12	5	2,305		180
July	15	15	4	1,935		
August	17	18	5	4,035		
September	7	7	5	?		
October	3	3	2	79		
Totals	69	68	29	11,267+?	50	180

Musgraves, where day-to-day management was in the hands of Jackson and Sleddall. Only 12 of the names recorded – less than one-fifth – were of individuals who had not used the Musgrave stances in earlier years: the rest had done so regularly, and in many cases frequently. The names that are missing are of those who paid on their outward journey; or who, in 1712, used one of the two other stances. The document reveals what is likely to have been regarded as a major additional service provided by Beck: his willingness to allow drovers to pay for grazing *after* they had sold their animals, rather than during their outward journeys. The key feature of the document, however, is the additional information it provides (Table 4). Almost uniformly, it gives the precise dates of visits; their duration; and, above all, the number and types of beast involved.

Analysis of the season's chronology is particularly revealing. Only 29 dates were involved in 68 visits, though these bald figures partially conceal what happened. Beasts did not come to Edenhall in a steady stream from spring to early autumn: rather, with a few exceptions, they came in concentrated and, at times, huge waves. On 5 May, 770 beasts arrived in five droves; and from 6 to 9 May a further 855 appeared in three droves. So, of the 1,765 beasts in that month, 1,625 came in a period of five days. This pattern persisted. Of the 12 visits in June, seven occurred on 5 June, accounting for 1,549 of the 2,305 cattle in that month. In July the flow was even more concentrated. Of the 15 droves which arrived at Edenhall, one was of unknown date; seven came on either 2 or 3 June, and all but one of the rest on 19 June. These three dates, therefore, accounted for all but 169 of the 1,935 cattle in July. The pattern for August was not dissimilar. Again, the date of one visit – by William Wright with 120 cattle – is unknown. That apart, drovers arrived on only five dates during the entire month: six, with a total of 1,336 cattle, on 1 August; three with 860 on the 4th; five more with 840 on the 6th; there was a single drove of 267 cattle on 11 August; and finally three droves, with a total of 612 cattle, arrived on 18 August. Unfortunately and curiously, the document provides no details of cattle numbers in September. However, five of the seven visits during that month took place on the 6th, 7th or 8th; there was one on 10 September, and another on the 19th. The season closed with three droves, involving 798 cattle, in early October. Numbers peaked sharply in August and then, to judge only from the number of visits, tailed off.

We must remember that Table 4 does not encompass all dealings with drovers in 1712 – only with those who used Edenhall and paid their bills on their return journeys.

The income for Edenhall in 1712 listed in this document was £79, compared with £82 for the whole estate in 1710, and £105 in 1711.²⁷ This is inconclusive, but it seems highly likely that a number of drovers paid their bills on their outward journey and are lost to sight. Despite this, and although the entries for September lack cattle numbers, the information available leads to clear conclusions. These drovers managed large numbers of cattle, and not merely because many of them made several round trips in a single season. The size of individual droves was substantial, and many were huge. Of the 61 droves whose numbers were recorded, only 11 contained under 100 beasts: 28 were of 100-200 cattle and 16 of 200-300. There was one drove of 323 in August; and three of between 400 and 500 – 462 and 464 in June and 408 in August. John Marshall and John James turned up with 500 cattle on 6 May; and on 4 August Robert Ferguson arrived with 600, the season's largest single, recorded herd. Again, these large-scale figures support earlier indications that these were not long-distance droves. Above all, the fact that so many droves arrived in such close proximity to one another strongly suggests that many, if not all of them, shared the same starting-point. Surname evidence argues that they came from southern Scotland, all or most of them from a point not far north of the border. On some late afternoons across that summer the tracks converging on Edenhall from the north must have been crammed with cattle. This was big business!

The duration of visits was made explicit. A few debts were recorded as being 'for grass' or 'for drove cattle', but the rest, even throughout September, were for 'one night's hay' (up to and including 9 May) or for 'one night's grass' (thereafter). Thus, Edenhall was not a location where cattle recovered after long journeys and were conditioned for sale – as appears to have been the case, for instance, on land to the north west around Upper and Nether Hesket and Broadfield Common, all close to Rosley Fair. Edenhall was an overnight stance: cattle arrived one day, and moved on the next. The details of cattle numbers and the duration of visits allow calculations of the cost of feed per beast per night, the sums charged simply being divided by the number of cattle involved. Predictably, there was some difference between the cost of hay and of grass: an average of 1.30d. and 1.28d. per beast for hay in April and May respectively, and 1.21d. and 1.20d. per beast for grass in June and July. However, grass was more expensive in August (1.49d. per beast) and October (1.31d. per beast). Grass was lusher in high summer and the cattle would have consumed more of it. Yet, custom and repeat business were so regular as to suggest that prices were regarded as reasonable. They certainly compared favourably with evidence from the cattle business of the Flemings of Rydal Hall. In 1660, bringing nine oxen from Ravenglass over the Lakeland passes, their steward had paid 2d. per beast for a night's stance. Grass was a scarcer and more expensive commodity there than elsewhere, but this price was high; in 1688 only 1d. per beast was paid for 11 oxen over the same route. Yet at Rydal Fleming himself regularly charged drovers 2d. per beast per night, twice what he charged local people for grazing. Later at Edenhall cattle numbers were very different, as was the terrain of the two areas. Nonetheless, Beck's prices appear to have been moderate, confirming the undertaking in his letter to 'Mr. Batty'.²⁸ Unfortunately, his prices for drovers cannot be compared with those he charged to locals for grazing: his local grazing accounts are not convertible into prices per beast per night. One's overall impression is that Beck managed the business astutely. Given persistent arrears of rents and

finer, he needed to generate income from alternative sources: but the wisest means of doing so, he evidently judged, was via expansion in cattle numbers rather than higher prices. This may have reflected keen competition from others in servicing the trade. Along with his general management, his strategy was successful and he retained his appointment for many years.²⁹

Several people would have been required to manage large droves. As usual, Beck lent money to some of them beyond the cost of their grazing: a total of £7 11s. 0d. to five drovers who used the Edenhall stance in 1712, and £7 4s. 0d. to seven who did not. The signatures and marginal comments accompanying the recorded debts tell us more. Many were signed by the drovers concerned, but a few were vouched for by others, some of whom led their own droves earlier or later. Also, some unfamiliar individuals signed 'for my maister' or 'for the use of my maister', suggesting that some droves were led by other than the named drover concerned: indeed, in his letter to 'Mr. Batty', Beck had acknowledged that Batty might send his animals with 'a servant'.³⁰ This further underlines the interdependence of members of this group. They and their employees worked together, though in different permutations as the season progressed. Moreover, in employing numbers of people to manage large herds in repeated traffic, many of these drovers were clearly men of some means. This was an established and very well-organised trade whose leading participants were men of substance.

Frustratingly, there is no firm evidence, either of where the droves came from or of their intended destinations. Crieff, only overtaken as a key tryst (or fair) by Falkirk during the later eighteenth century, is likely to have been too far north to allow repeated droves in a single season; also, some cattle from there, Hawick and Jedburgh proceeded to England via the eastern routes. Regular, short-distance droves by Scotsmen are more likely to have originated in Dumfries, much nearer Carlisle, a major gathering-point for cattle from the breeding grounds of south-west Scotland and the source of many of the cattle which followed the western routes across the Scottish border.³¹ Judgements about destinations are also difficult because we do not know whether the cattle were rested and fattened nearer the point of sale and, if so, for how long; though, in view of the frequency of round trips, this seems unlikely. Regular early-season travellers, of whom there were few, may have been making for the large cattle fair at Penrith on 24-25 April. The evidence for June 1712 may indicate that the large fair at Appleby on the second Wednesday in June was targeted. Most of the traffic through Edenhall in September had arrived by the 10th, so it is doubtful if the Brough Hill Fair on 30 September and 1 October was a destination. The safest surmise, in view of the co-ordinated enterprise of these drovers, is that most of these cattle were sold, not at the intermittent fairs, but at markets, which occurred much more frequently and, therefore, stimulated regular traffic. We know from the activities of the Flemings of Rydal Hall that by the later seventeenth century there was an active trade through and beyond Cumbria to the north Lancashire towns, where the largest market was at Preston. Perhaps, indeed, there was no need for some of these drovers to attend a market. The trade was sufficiently articulated and sophisticated by then for this to have been a possibility. They may instead simply have rendezvoused with the successors of dealers like Thomas Tickle, with whom the Flemings did pre-arranged

business, and who had operated in the Cumbria/north Lancashire area during the later seventeenth century.³²

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This evidence reveals that cattle-droving across the border and through Cumbria grew significantly as soon as Union was promulgated, and continued to do so. Yet, while the 11,267 cattle recorded as passing through Edenhall in 1712 is a very substantial figure for one stance, it must fall significantly short of the total for the estate during that season. There are no figures for Edenhall in September; those for the other months relate *only* to the herds whose drovers paid for hay or grass, not when it was consumed, but on their return journeys north; and there are no details of activity on the estate's other stances. Moreover, the stance at Hartley was used much more frequently in 1712 than it had been in earlier years. In view of all these factors it seems reasonable to estimate that the grand total of cattle passing through the entire estate in 1712 approached 15,000; and it may have exceeded that figure. This in turn suggests a need for some upward revision of previous, more general estimates: in particular, in the light of the Edenhall figures, the long-standing suggestion that 30,000 cattle were crossing all parts of the Scottish border in 1707 now seems very low as, perhaps, does the estimate of 80,000 for 1750.³³ The search for fresh evidence must continue: for, quite apart from other considerations, any upward revision of numbers would carry significant implications for analysis of the trade's impact on the development of the regional economy.

Both the scale and the regularity of the trade, quickly evident from 1707, also suggest that it was very firmly established before then, as has been demonstrated by earlier work. Though individuals of some substance, these drovers could not have begun to operate as a group overnight. There was a degree of confusion in the years leading up to the Union. Legislation in 1704 forbade the import of Scottish cattle into England and, although this was quickly repealed, the customs records suggest that few cattle were sent to England until Union was promulgated.³⁴ Yet, tellingly, the subsequent response was immediate. Probably from Dumfries, a group of well-organised drovers – many of them related and/or regularly working together – brought large herds through the Musgrave estate. Their droving was over short distances, allowing many of them to make several round trips in a single season. Following a brief hiatus from 1704, many of them, it seems, resumed a former way of life; and thereafter they steadily expanded their trade, probably specialising in the supply of beasts to north Lancashire. Like many of their neighbours, Jeffery Beck and his colleagues welcomed, facilitated and profited from them. In this age-old enterprise continuity had been re-established and a new era was underway.

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References

1. The cattle trade from Ireland was restricted in 1664 and banned from 1667; the ban was suspended in 1759 and repealed in 1776. The trade grew impressively into the 1660s; then, for over a century, there was some but, the consensus is, little smuggling; and after 1776, with most Irish cattle servicing the provisioning trade across the Atlantic, Donaghadee/Portpatrick became the chief route for Irish live cattle exports into the nineteenth century, the southern provisioning ports, such as Cork, requiring too long a trek for cattle from the north of Ireland. H. Allen, *Donaghadee: An Illustrated History* (Dundonald, 2006), 21-22, 32, 51-52; L. M. Cullen, *Anglo-Irish Trade 1660-1800* (Manchester, 1968), 3-4, 47, 67; and D. Woodward, 'The Anglo-Irish Livestock Trade in the 17th Century', *Irish Historical Studies*, XVIII (1973), 489-523
2. A. R. B. Haldane, *The Drove Roads of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1952), 59, 148, 161-69; J. D. Marshall, 'Drovers, Fairs and Cattle Routes' in *Old Lakeland: Some Cumbrian Social History* (Newton Abbot, 1971), 76-96; and D. Woodward, 'A Comparative Study of the Irish and Scottish Livestock Trades in the 17th Century' in L. M. Cullen & T. C. Smout, (eds), *Comparative Aspects of Scottish and Irish Economic and Social History* (Edinburgh, 1977), 150-51. For the trade through England, see also A. Raistrick, *Green Tracks on the Pennines* (Clapham, 1961) and K. J. Bonser, *The Drovers* (London, 1970). For Wales the key publications are R. J. Colyer, *The Welsh Cattle Drovers: Agriculture and the Welsh Cattle Trade before and during the nineteenth century* (Cardiff, 1976) and F. Godwin & S. Toulson, *The Drovers' Roads of Wales* (London, 1977)
3. I. D. Whyte, *Agriculture and Society in Seventeenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1979), 234-45 (quotations 235 & 241); G. Whittington & I. D. Whyte, (eds), *An Historical Geography of Scotland* (London, 1983), 119-40 (quotation 135)
4. Haldane, *Drove Roads of Scotland*, 169-70, 178
5. For the critical importance of stances, see in particular Haldane, *Drove Roads of Scotland*, 36-38
6. P. Roebuck, 'The Parkers of Old Town and District in Cumberland: Yeomen Farmers, Industrialists and Landed Proprietors, 1630-1900', *CW3*, x, 177-83
7. C. R. Hudleston & R.S. Boumphrey, *Cumberland Families and Heraldry* (Kendal, 1978), 237-38; 'Sir Philip Musgrave, 2nd baronet' and 'Sir Christopher Musgrave, 4th baronet', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, xl, 15-17, 19-21. The fullest narrative pedigree of the Musgraves is in W. Whellan, *The History and Topography of the Counties of Cumberland and Westmorland* (London, 1860), 535-37
8. W. Furness, *History of Penrith* (Penrith, 1894), 126
9. CAS (C), CB/ME, Box 24, n.d. but 1706. Following the abolition of the Court of Wards and Liveries in 1646, confirmed in 1660, responsibility for the oversight of the affairs of minors passed to the Court of Chancery: P. Roebuck, 'Post-Restoration Landownership: The Impact of the Abolition of Wardship', *Journal of British Studies*, xviii, 1 (Fall, 1978)
10. For the evolution of the profession of estate steward, see E. Hughes, 'The 18th-Century Estate Agent' in H. A. Cronne, T. W. Moody & D. B. Quinn, (eds), *Essays in British and Irish History* (London, 1949) and G. E. Mingay 'The 18th-Century Land Steward' in E. L. Jones & G. E. Mingay, (eds), *Land, Labour and Population in the Industrial Revolution* (London, 1967); and, for further northern examples, P. Roebuck, *Yorkshire Baronets 1640-1760: Families, Estates and Fortunes* (Oxford, 1980), 255-56 and *passim*
11. CAS (C), CB/ME, Box 24, n.d. but 1708
12. CAS (C), CB/ME, Box 4, Bundle 2, 'A Particular Acct. of the Money due, rec'd and rests due for lands

- lett in Cumberland and Westmorland belonging to the Hon. Sir Christopher Musgrave Bart'
13. CAS (C), CB/ME, box 4, Bundle 1, 'Account of the Jeast Cattle and Sheep in Ednall Demesne, 17 May 1708' (there are two copies here and a third in Box 19, Vouchers for 1708); 'Accounts of the Jeast Cattle and Sheep in Ednall Demesne, 17 May 1709'; 'Continuance of Mr. Beck's Account from August 1712 towards February 1712[-13]', which includes figures for earlier years; 'Account of monies received due to Sir Chr. Musgrave, 29 November 1712'. 'Jeast' and variants of it were dialect terms for agistment, (J. Wright, (ed), *The English Dialect Dictionary*, i). Agistment was the temporary letting of land 'to graziers from outside the community' (I. D. Whyte, *Transforming Fell and Valley: Landscape and Parliamentary Enclosure in North West England* (Centre for North-West Regional Studies, University of Lancaster, 2003), 10. In their accounts, however, Beck and his colleagues always explicitly distinguished between 'jeast' animals and 'drove' animals, perhaps an indication of the importance which they attached to the latter
 14. *Calendars of State Papers, Domestic Series*, 1660-61, 353, 431; 1663-64, 245, 274
 15. CAS (C), CB/ME, Box 4, Bundle 1, 'Continuance of Mr Beck's Account', entries for 1704, 1705 and 1706
 16. CAS (C), CB/ME, Box 4, Bundle 1, 'The Totall for Drove Cattle from 1707 exclusive to 1711 inclusive'
 17. CAS (C), CB/ME, 3/1/1, 'Drove Booke Anno Dno. 1707, 1708, 1709, 1710, 1711'
 18. CAS (C), CB/ME, Box 19, Vouchers for 1708, 1709 and 1711. Evidence of frequent, short-distance droves down the western routes has survived for the second decade of the seventeenth century. See Whyte, *Agriculture and Society in Seventeenth-Century Scotland*, 236
 19. Marshall, 'Drovers, Fairs and Cattle Routes', 76-96; Haldane, *Drove Roads of Scotland*, 133-49; Bonser, *The Drovers*, 122-47. For a regional analysis of these developments in the longer term, see J. D. Marshall, 'The Rise and Transformation of the Cumbrian Market Town 1660-1900', *Northern History*, xix (1983), 128-209
 20. B. Tyson, 'The Cattle Trading Activities of Sir Daniel Fleming of Rydal Hall, 1656-1700', *CW3*, ii, 183-93
 21. CAS (C), CB/ME, Box 24, n.d. but c. 1709. I am grateful to Mr John Gall for information about New Forest disease
 22. The 'Drove Book' includes a list of loans from 1707 to 1711 – CAS (C), CB/ME, 3/1/1
 23. See above, pp.146, 148
 24. P. Roebuck, 'The Parkers of Old Town and District', 181
 25. This document was in the private possession of Mr John Mattley of Phenotype Books, Arthur St, Penrith, who kindly allowed me to work on it and is now at CAS(C), CB/ME 3/1/2. It has been evident for several decades that many documents from the original Musgrave archive at Edenhall found their way on to the private market. For example, in A. Humphries & B. Mossop, (Compilers), *Guardians of Eden: An Illustrated Celebration of the Influence and Role of Farming in East Cumbria* (Penrith Agricultural Society, 2000), 20, there is a quotation from one of the transactions (of 18 August 1712) recorded in the document owned by Mr. Mattley. A Mr William Jonston [was indebted for] the sume of £1 8s. for the gras of 260 drove cattle unto Sir Chris. Musgrave . The source of this quotation is cited as 'An account book of Sir Christopher Musgrave of Edenhall, bound in old vellum, private collection'. On the evidence available, this would appear to have been a formal, fair copy of Mr Mattley's document, which was an informal working one. A search for this vellum-bound document is underway, but so far to no avail.
 26. See in particular CAS (C), CB/ME, Box 4, Bundle 1, 'An Acct. of wt. Grass Lett to ye Drovers Anno. 1712', which distinguishes between money received by Beck at Edenhall, Jackson at Hartley, and Sleddall at the Musgraves
 27. CAS (C), CB/ME, Box 4, Bundle 1, 'Totall for Drove Cattle 1707-1711'
 28. Tyson, 'Cattle Trading Ativities of Sir Daniel Fleming', 183, 186, 189, 193. See above, p150
 29. Several letters to Rev. Beck (or 'Beech', as it was occasionally misspelt) in the mid-1720s are extant – CAS (C), CB/ME, Box 24, 'Estate Letters 1685-1788'
 30. See above, p150
 31. Haldane, *Drove Roads of Scotland*, 43, 56-57, 148, 164-67; Bonser, *The Drovers*, 124-25, 132-36
 32. W. Parsons & W. White, *History, Directory and Gazetteer of the Counties of Cumberland and Westmorland* (Leeds, 1829), 499, 522, 535; Bonser, *The Drovers*, 132-35, 145, 156, 165-66; Tyson, 'Cattle Trading Activities of Sir Daniel Fleming', 188
 33. See above, refs. 2 and 24
 34. Bonser, *The Drovers*, 75