

FARMING TO HALVES IN THE NORTH-WEST OF ENGLAND¹

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Introduction

The context of this discussion is the Lune valley in north-west England. The river Lune rises on the western side of the Yorkshire Dales and flows west till it reaches the Tebay gorge where it turns southwards through Cumbria. At Kirkby Lonsdale the Lune runs beneath the Devil's Bridge into Lancashire, down to Lancaster and onto its mouth on Morecambe Bay in the north east corner of the Irish Sea. North of Kirkby Lonsdale, the Lake District lies to the west and the Howgills (part of the Pennines) to the east. It is an area of great topographic contrasts with riverside meadows appearing below the bridge which links Kirkby Lonsdale and Sedbergh. These meadows widen as the Lune continues south. The range of topographies and geologies is reflected in the agrarian potential of the region.

Traditionally, the arable crops were oats and a form of barley called bigg rather than wheat.

Currently the only common arable crop is maize which is grown as cattle fodder. Historically, the region was a breeding area for cattle, horses and sheep. One of the main drove roads for Scottish cattle came down the Lune before splitting into various routes eastwards into Yorkshire. The sixteenth and seventeenth century farmers of the Lune valley were heavily involved in the cattle trade. The riverside meadows along the Lune from Kirkby Lonsdale to Lancaster were, in the 1790s, regarded as being the best grazing in Lancashire.² However, the uplands which are used as summer pasture are measured in terms of acres to the sheep rather than sheep to the acre.³

¹ I should like to express my thanks to the following people who gave their valuable time in order to help me understand the sheep farming in the uplands in 2010; all errors are necessarily my own. Peter Asbury, farmer in Abbeystead; Douglas Chalmers, Country Land Owners Association; Nicholas Hill, National Trust Regional Land Use Manager for the North of England; John Hughes, Lancaster Auctions; Edward Johnson, Assistant Factor on the Roxburgh Estates; William Johnson, National Farmers Union; Stephen Lord, Gaythorne Hill Farm; Terry McCormick, Cumbria Action; Anthony Mickle of Perry Moor, Tatham and (not least) Victoria Wellesley-Smith who found many of the foregoing and persuaded them to talk to me.

² John Holt, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Lancashire* (1794) p. 184.

³ Heather grazing would be expected to carry one sheep on three acres but on better quality fell it might be possible to have one sheep per one acre.

The bulk of the evidence given here comes from the two large parishes shown on Map 2. Melling in Lonsdale had ten townships covering about nine and half thousand hectares. These lands ran from the Lune up to the Ward Stone which is highest point in modern Lancashire. Historically, the parish was coterminous with the Hornby Castle estates. Kirkby Lonsdale parish with its nine townships was about forty percent bigger and covered a similar range of topographies. At its most easterly point is the Three Counties Stone where the former county of Westmorland (now part of Cumbria) met Lancashire to the south and Yorkshire to the east. All the places discussed here lie in these two parishes or within adjacent parishes.

I

I first found clear evidence of farming to halves several years ago whilst researching income streams and levels of wealth in the early-modern period across the Hornby Castle estates. The main sources were the wills and inventories with some data coming from such estate records as still remain. My starting point was not, in fact, evidence of farming to halves but flock sizes and structures. It was common practice in the sixteenth century and the early part of the seventeenth century to leave livestock to children with a gimmer (female) lamb as the normal bequest to godchildren, grandchildren and other young people. In other (less frequent) cases, a milk cow or a beef stirk was to pass to the beneficiary. This was not a case of the testator distributing surplus livestock for, in some cases, the testator directed that, in the event of a shortfall, the executors were to buy the necessary animals. (For instance, in 1604, John Baldwin of Kirkby Lonsdale directed his executors to spend two shillings and four pence in order to ‘bring the eldest daughter of William Smith a lamb’.⁴) It was also quite usual for the legacy to state that the animal was to be ‘put forward for their profit and commodity’.⁵ The volume of such bequests made me wonder just what happened to these animals. It was such a wide-spread, almost automatic process, that we may suppose many

⁴ Lancashire Record Office (LRO) WRWL/L/1604 John Bawdwen of Kirkby Lonsdale

⁵ John Wilden of Kirkby Lonsdale died in 1603 leaving ‘to Joane my brothers daughter ten gimmer lambs and for her father to put them forward to her most commodity’. LRO WRW/L/1602 John Wilden.

of the recipients (or their families) would not have land on which the stock could feed.⁶ A series of complex cases took place in 1587 when Thomas Scott and Thomas Glover (both of Roeburndale) brought cases which demonstrate that one man might put cattle to half parts with another and, at the same time, place cattle on a straight-forward grazing contract whether by the year or just to over-winter.⁷ There are a number of other cases which should probably be interpreted as putting livestock to parts.⁸

However, the bulk of the evidence comes from the inventories made on death. In 1569 Thomas Harris the priest of Arkholme Chapel had one cow in the possession of Thomas Nelson ‘for three years’ at the end of which time Harris would get back the cow and half her offspring.⁹ Nelson can be identified as the freeholder of Gunnerthwaite in Arkholme; his was a wealthy family and his eldest son married one of Parkers of Browsholme. When John Dawson of Docker within Whittington died in 1590 he owned half of one calf taken to parts valued at four shillings and another ‘lesser’ calf taken to parts and valued at two shillings. James Dodgshon of Whittington died in 1633 and his inventory records that he had due to him ‘for a cow let to Thomas Robinson to half parts upon a deal’ which was valued at 50 shillings.¹⁰ In 1645 Magdalen Bateson, a widow of Botton, had one cow set to Jane Bateson for three years.¹¹ Whilst Michael Walters of Gressingham who died in 1677 had half a cow at feeding which was valued at 20 shillings.¹² The simplest route to providing one animal with grazing would seem to have been to rent pasture and there are clear instances of this although it was not the most popular method in the sixteenth century - presumably because the other options gave the owners of both animal and grazing the same interest in the

⁶ The situation is complicated by the number of young people who went as servants to other households where they might be allowed to run their own animals with those of their employers. It is intended to explore the whole question of servants at a later date.

⁷ The cattle included a white-headed steer, a black cow and a red cow. Honour of Hornby Castle Archives, Vol. 17, ff. 141v, 143. (Afterwards HHC.)

⁸ These are not unique examples for, when John Herkay of Birkdale in Grinton died in 1553, he recorded that he had put ‘certain shepe to Ronald Allderson for the terme of fyve yeires for hallffe part and I will that my wyffe and my chyldren shall have all the wolfe yt shall fall to my part during the said terme’. E. Berry, ‘Swaledale Wills and Inventories, 1522-1600’, *Yorkshire Archaeological Society*, Record Series, vol. CLII, p. 87.

⁹ LRO WRW/L/1569 John Harris of Arkholme

¹⁰ LRO WRW/L/1633 James Dodgshon of Whittington

¹¹ LRO WRW/L/1645 Magdalen Bateson of Botton

¹² LRO WRW/L/1677 Michael Walters of Grashingam

animal's well-being. There is evidence of changing attitudes as the seventeenth century progresses and after about 1660 there are far fewer examples of the landless owning livestock. Many of the people who rented grazing for individual animals were probably in the landless category. Whether it was Dodgson of Casterton who paid two shillings and four pence in 1605 for 'joist of a stirk', Gibson of Keastwick who in 1607 paid five shillings for gist of two foals or one Robinson, a servant to John Thirnbeck of Middleton in Lonsdale who had a young horse wintering in Middleton Park.¹³

II

The evidence of arable farming to halves is not so extensive but I think this reflects more on the nature of the records than an absence of the practice. One of the earliest instances on record is that of William Dawson (a webster in the hamlet of Over Biggins near Kirkby Lonsdale) who, when he died in 1581, had two separate parcels of land: three roods of oats which Roger More sowed to half parts 'whereof the one half is valued at six shillings' together with one acre sown by Oliver Ustonson to half part where of the whole was valued at ten shillings.¹⁴ In 1586 Alice Townson, a widow of Farleton in Lonsdale, sued a number of people; amongst the defendants was the widow of Robert Townson who had withheld 'corn sown to half parts'.¹⁵ In 1588, Henry Croft and Robert Atkinson made an agreement under which Atkinson was to sow Lower Tofts to half parts.¹⁶ Henry Croft was a fairly high status individual as was Thomas Wright of Kirkby Lonsdale who died in 1633. Wright was heavily involved in the grain trade but the oats he had sown to half parts with John Conder and valued at twenty-four shillings and four pence may well have been for the high-grade horses he traded across north Lancashire.¹⁷

¹³ WRW/L/1605 Dodgson of Casterton, WRW/L/1607 Gibson of Keastwick, WRW/L/1644 Anthony Robinson of Middleton.

¹⁴ LRO WRW/L William Dawson of Over Biggins, webster

¹⁵ Townson was a very common name in the area and the two women need not have been part of the same family. HHC-17 f. 114v.

¹⁶ HHC-17 ff. 142, 144.

¹⁷ WRW/L/1603 Thomas Wright of Kirkby Lonsdale

A later example, but one of particular interest since it involves those of higher status can be found in the cashbook of Sarah Fell of Swarthmoor Hall in Ulverston parish. Under circumstances which are unclear, Fell's uncle Matthew Richardson of Roanhead in Dalton in Furness parish esquire owed Fell £400 with the result that, on his death in August 1677, Fell (as principal creditor) took charge of his affairs and sold his goods; these included a field of bigg at Ellerscales sown to half parts which he held with one Isabell Pennington.¹⁸ We can be confident that Richardson was the landlord in this case for Ellerscales formed part of his wife's marriage portion.¹⁹ Richardson's share of the crop was valued at £4 in August 1677. Due to the meticulous nature of Sarah Fell's record keeping, we can see much of the fine detail of the process rather than just the snapshot which is all that is available in other cases. One James Postlethwaite was paid for threshing the crop with one shilling paid in November and one shilling and six pence in the following month.²⁰ Fell's own attorney also paid out sums in connection with this crop for which she reimbursed him £2 2s. 6d.²¹ Fell paid ten shillings direct for the shearing of the whole crop and was herself reimbursed by Isabell Pennington.²² One John Pennington of Ellerscales was paid one shilling and sixpence for 'barn room' for Fell's part of the crop and for helping to 'get it into house'.²³ The details given here do show how complex - and time consuming - such a transaction could be even for the landlord. It was not a case of making an agreement and waiting for the net profit to roll in.

There was one other form of livestock for which farming to halves seems to have been the normal practice. Bees were frequently referred to within the inventories with a high proportion of those owning hives noted to have a half share of a hive, with a number having a half share in two or more hives. A man from Newton within Whittington parish is noted to have had one half of four hives (value seven shillings) at his death in 1623 whilst a man from Barbon township was possessed of

¹⁸ Norman Penney (ed.) *The Household Account Book of Sarah Fell of Swarthmoor Hall*, Cambridge, (1920) entry for 10 Jan 1677 (afterwards S Fell).

¹⁹ Cumbria Record Office (Kendal) WD RAD/T18.

²⁰ S Fell, entries for 17 Nov 1677, 12 Dec 1677.

²¹ S Fell entry for 10 Jan 1677.

²² S Fell entry for 10 Jan 1677.

²³ S Fell entry for 26 Jan 1677.

four and half hives with a value of £2.²⁴ Other writers have also noted the frequency with which half hives were owned.²⁵ It may have been the case that one man provided the bees and took care of them whilst the other contributed the space and resources.²⁶ In any event, after the middle of the century bees are listed in inventories much less frequently though Sarah Hardy, a singlewoman of Barbon whose inventory dates to August 1678, had half a swarm of bees valued at three shillings four pence and which she left to one of her sisters.²⁷

III

We can now turn to the main theme of this paper and explore the role of sheep in the history of farming to halves in the north-west of England. The key to understanding the significance of the sheep here is through the nature of sheep-farming in the hills and the need to create a heafed or hefted flock. The existence of a hefted flock gives the fell it occupies a much higher economic value than it would otherwise possess. The value of the flock, being hefted, is enhanced in the view of the incoming tenant who pays a premium over and above the animal's market value. We do not know what that premium was in earlier times but the current formulae for a hefted animal (post the Foot and Mouth outbreak of 2001) is the animal's market value plus three percent plus £10.

Heafed or hefted sheep are those that, being bred within a farm and on its fell, will not readily stray so a physical division of the fell need not take place. Each farmer knows where his section of fell lies and must ensure that his flock learns this too. The modern norm is that the ewes drop their lambs on any inbye the farmer may have and then return to the fell with their young; joining the rest of the flock for the summer. Wethers were normally left on the fell all the year round. However, 'gathers' are carried out at intervals as agreed by all those whose flocks graze a specific fell. Stray sheep are identified and returned to their owners. Such gathers may be more frequent now than was once the case because of legal requirements to dip the flock to prevent pests.

²⁴ LRO WRW/L/1623 Dawney of Newton; WRW/L/1638 Holme of Barbon

²⁵ P. Walker and E. Crane, 'English beekeeping, c1200-1850' *The Local Historian* 31.1, Feb 2001.

²⁶ When Thomas Wildman of Wennington, weaver, died in 1635 he had 'the fourth part of a hive of bees 2s.' amongst an extremely varied inventory. LRO WRW/L/1635

²⁷ LRO WRW/L/1678 Sarah Hardy of Barbon

The creation of a heafed flock is a slow and labourious business. Traditionally it was said to take five years of more or less constant monitoring to teach the flock the limits of its fell, at the end of which time all the animals within the flock had been born on that farm. Subsequent lambs would learn the boundaries from their ewes. Wethers were often regarded as critical; they formed a substantial proportion of the flock, could be the longest-lived component and were more territorial than the ewes. “Many an old wether is retained on account of his usefulness in ‘keeping the heaf’ even when his teeth are gone, not only does he keep strangers off, but he educates the young sheep of the flock till they are accustomed to their heaf ...”²⁸ They also grazed the boundaries of their fell which discouraged trespassing from neighbouring flocks. Typical flock structures in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can be summed up as one lamb for every two or more adult sheep. The precise ratio of wethers to ewes depended upon a number of factors including the quality of the fell grazing. Modern hefted flocks (typically Herdwicks, Rough Fell or Swaledale sheep) may survive on such poor grazing that the ewes are not put with the tup until the end of their third summer - dropping their first lamb around their own third birthday. The ewes will normally be put on better grazing before being tupped in order to bring them into breeding condition. Traditionally, twin lambs are virtually unknown.

The records show that there has long been a link between a flock and its pasture though most of the evidence comes from leases for monastic lands which included livestock. The demesne lands of the Abbey of Winchester were being leased in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Some of these leases are known to have included the provision of seed corn and livestock. In his discussion of the European experience (based partly upon this evidence) Cooper suggests: ‘From the tenant’s point of view, the stock was an advance of working capital; from the landlord’s, it kept open the option of resuming direct farming.’²⁹ We do not need to travel very far to find evidence of a similar practice in the north for a lease, dated to about 1250 and granted by Cockersands Abbey in connection with

²⁸ F W Garnett, *Westmorland Agriculture 1800-1900*, Kendal (1910) p. 159.

²⁹ J P Cooper ‘In search of agrarian capitalism’ in T H Aston & C H Philpin, eds *The Brenner Debate* pp. 161-2.

their lands in Preesall, included '40 sheep with one year's offspring'.³⁰ The creation of early forms of tenantright (a form of customary tenure peculiar to the north of England) can probably be dated to the mid-fifteenth century. Consequently, we can suggest it was at this point that the flocks of the upland areas of the north-west of England were transferred from the lord of the manor to his new customary tenants.³¹ Certainly, the most robust evidence we have for heafed flocks comes from the estate records relating to tenantright holdings or their enfranchised successors.

Whilst the flocks are visible in the sixteenth century, the evidence that they were heafed only begins to appear after 1600 with the acquisition (and subsequent sub-letting) of additional tenantright holdings. These secondary holdings - especially if located at a little distance from the main farm - could be leased out together with their flocks.³² It is at this point that they clearly enter our category of lands farmed to halves. In 1605, Atkinson of Hallbeck in Killington had 'sheep at home £16' and 'sheep from home at half parts £24'.³³ (Taking an average value then these figures represent 75-80 sheep 'at home' and 200-230 'from home'.) It is possible that the same situation is being described in the inventories of Ward of Birkfield in Firbank who died in 1623 with a sheepheaf on Langdall Fell, Dodgshon of Whittington who died in 1633 having ten sheep at home and sheep at Leck worth sixteen shillings.³⁴

The seventeenth century witnessed the development of a more formalised arrangement whereby the incoming tenant agreed to a lease for a term of years. This would include a given number of ewes/wethers/tups and the lessee was to 'return the same again' at the expiry of the lease. Thomas Dowbiggin of High Winder within Roeburndale kept a pocket book in which he detailed the terms upon which, in 1692, a hefted flock was leased out to one Christopher Procter. Procter was to have the farm for seven years at a rent of £20 per annum including a flock of 113 sheep. There were

³⁰ LRO RCHy 3/3/1.

³¹ No evidence is known that would indicate the precise timing of the creation of tenantright in the study area, let alone the terms upon which the tenancies were originally granted.

³² In 1674 Miles Bower of Firbank left 'to my second son Miles the sheepheaf and liberty of common on the sunnyside of Bramrigg upon Sedbergh Fell. LRO WRW/L/1674

³³ LRO WRW/L/1605 Thomas Atkinson of Hallbeck, Killington.

³⁴ LRO WRW/L/1623 James Ward of Birkfield in Firbank; WRW/L/1633 James Dodgshon of Whittington.

sixteen wethers valued at six shillings each, fifty-five ewes at five shillings and six tups and thirty six hogs valued at four shillings giving a total value of £26 19s. By 1697, Dowbiggin was dead and his widow was running the farm for the children. She let to William Procter eighty four sheep (ten wethers at six shillings, forty eight ewes at five shillings; sixteen ewe lambs, nine wether lambs and one tup all valued at four shillings each giving a total value of £20 4s.) Beyond the obvious point of the relative values of wethers/ewes/tups and hogs we should also note that the capital burden of the flock was carried by the landlord. At about the same time an agreement was made by Thomas Dowbiggin's sister in relation to her ten sheep at High Winder. The tenant was to pay 4d. per sheep per annum.³⁵

In February 1740, Luke Pearson of Gressingham gentleman died and the flocks of his five farms - which were all tenanted - are fully detailed in his inventory. There are two significant aspects to these valuations . The first is that the flock structures vary enormously - presumably in line with Pearson's management policy. Secondly (other than the tups) the value of the sheep on the two farms in Littledale are consistently six pence each higher than on the other three farms.

Fieldhead (Littledale)

ewes 195 @ 4sh 6d
wethers 97 @ 5sh 6d
hogs 69 @ 3sh 6d
one tup @ 5s
Total value £82 17s.

Tongue Moor (Littledale)

ewes 12 @ 4s 6d
wethers 5 @ 5s 6d
hogs 9 @ 3s 6d
one tup @ 5sh
Total value £5 18s.

Salter (Roeburndale)

hogs 100 @ 3s
ewes 180 @ 4s
tups 20 @ 3s
wethers 100 @ 5s
Total value £79

Lower Keasdenhead (Mewith)

³⁵ LRO LCL ms 3689. Change to LRO ref

wethers 24 @ 5s
hogs 34 @ 3s
ewes 60 @ 4s
Total value £23 2s.

Higher Keasdenhead (Mewith)
wethers 10 @ 5s
hoggs 30 @ 3s
ewes 60 @ 4s
tups 5 @ 4s
Total value £20
Grand total £210 17s. 6d.³⁶

In December 1768, Ann Fenwick (a cousin of the Dowbiggin family of High Winder) leased her lands at Scambler within Roeburndale. The flock comprised:

38 ewes @ 7s. (Note the price differential has gone.)
17 wethers @ 7s.
21 hoggs @ 5s.
Total value £24 10s.

The land and flock were leased for seven years at £18 18s. per annum.³⁷

The changes in the terms of leases for such farms provide evidence of the tension between the landlord (that is, the customary tenant) and the actual farmer as they each negotiated from positions of changing strength which depended upon the relative availability of farms and farmers.

Regrettably, it has (so far) proved impossible to find any farm that carried a hefted flock and for which a series of leases remain in the record. The best that can be managed is a short run of late-nineteenth century leases for two farms in Barbon. By 1588 the manor of Barbon had been purchased by Sir Richard Shuttleworth of Gawthorpe Hall in Lancashire; at some later date the family bought in or otherwise acquired a number of their own customary estates in the township; these included High Fell and Barkin Fell.³⁸ We know that Barkin carried a hefted flock in the late-sixteenth century for it is mentioned in a conveyance between two customary tenants in 1588.³⁹ A

³⁶ The total value of Pearson's inventory came to £2782 8s. 7d. and contained a substantial number of cattle including '19 Scotch cows at £1 11s 6d.'. LRO WRW/L/1740 Luke Pearson of Gressingham

³⁷ LRO RCHy 2/1/55

³⁸ W. Farrer, *Records of Kendale*, Kendal (1924) vol 2, p.370.

³⁹ CRO(K) WD WHELP 2/T 5

summary of stocking levels and values relating to the flocks on the two farms was prepared for the Shuttleworth landlord and is given in Table 1 below

Table 1 Stocking levels and values for High Fell & Barkin Fell Farms⁴⁰

	No	Oct 1873		No	Oct 1887		No	Sept 1892		No	Oct 1902	
		Value	Total		Value	Total		Value	Total		Value	Total
		sh.	£		sh.	£		sh.	£		sh.	£
Both farms												
Ewes	1014	32	1622.4									
Gimmer lambs	182	20	182.0									
Wether lambs	156	12	93.6									
Wethers	360	23	414.0									
High Fell												
Ewes				959	30	1438.5	1000	25	1250.0	1029	30	1543.5
Ewes							⁴¹ 138	10	69.0			
Gimmer lambs				116	20	116.0	143	16	114.4	188	19.5	183.3
Wether lambs				0			133	8	53.2	178	11	97.9
Wethers				232	21	243.6	269	17	228.65	Nil		
Barkin Fell												
Ewes				Nil			Nil			438	30	657.0
Gimmer lambs				52	18	46.8	85	15	63.75	132	19.5	128.7
Wether lambs				213	11	117.3	75	6	22.5	102	11	56.1
Wethers				81	20	81.0	150	15	112.5	Nil		
Totals	1712		£2312.0	1653		£2043.05	1993		£2114.0	2067		£2739.55

The rapid changes in the price ratios and the insight given into the complex changes in stocking practice on a professionally-managed estate are quite fascinating.⁴² The neighbouring farm of Bullpot in Casterton township was owned by the Gibson family of Whelprigg and had been let to John and James Maudsley in 1869 on a nine-year lease which included provision for two indifferent persons to undertake livestock valuations at the end of the lease.⁴³ Only the notice to quit survives where the flock is described as 510 pre-breeding sheep (that is, 170 each of the year's lambs, one shear, two shear) plus 240 old sheep. The emphasis here is on a proper spread of ages which would be expected in a hefted flock at the end of a lease.

⁴⁰ LRO DDKS 25/21/87

⁴¹ It is not clear why these ewes were given a lower value.

⁴² CRO(K) WD Whelp Box 1.

⁴³ It is worth noting that in 1675 the Maudsleys applied for the tenancy of Shuttleworth's Fell House Farm in Barbon. The summation prepared by the Shuttleworth's agent reveals that the brothers were farming land in Newton in Whittington so combining lowland grazing with a hillfarm - they only wanted the Fell House land not the buildings.

However, in terms of this paper, the really significant aspect of these leases is that at some point between about 1750 and 1870 the substantial capital burden of the flock had been transferred from the landlord to the tenant. On the face of it this contradicts the fact that without its flock of hefted sheep the fell (the landlord's asset) has a negligible value. The way round this threat to the value of landlord's property was quite simple. Leases acquired an additional clause which gave the landlord first refusal on the sale of the flock by the outgoing tenant. It is not known when this transfer of the capital burden took place. Judging by modern practice, the changes arose from an accretionary process. In fact, the situation was never quite so clear cut as the data given here would suggest for when good tenants were hard to come by, a number of ways around the question of flock ownership were worked out - including a temporary reversion to leasing the flock or (the preferred option) selling the flock to the tenant in yearly stages.

At the same time that the Shuttleworth leases were running, F W Garnett was preparing what was intended to be the agrarian history section of a proposed Victoria County History of Westmorland - a publication which is still eagerly awaited. Garnett had the following to say about hefted flocks which gives insight into the changes which we see reflected in the Shuttleworth livestock values and flock structures.

It used to be customary not to put the young ewes to the ram until they were 3_ years old and they might be kept for as long as they would bear lambs - 15 or 16 years old - but now they are sold after 4-6 seasons to be used for breeding cross-bred lambs by lowland farmers.

Wethers never used to be sold before they were 4_ to 5_ years old but now go off as lambs or shearlings.⁴⁴

Having gained some understanding on the changes taking place a century ago, we can now move swiftly on to the present day. Many of the multiple estates formed from former tenantright holdings were sold up in the 1920s and 1930s. In a high proportion of cases, the purchaser was the existing tenant so the situation largely reverted to a pre-1700 experience. It is estimated that about 50% of hefted flocks remain on tenanted lands. However, there have been big changes in farm sizes as they

⁴⁴ F. W. Garnett, *Westmorland Agriculture 1800-1900*, Kendal (1910) p.160.

have been amalgamated so that a valley which in 1900 held five farms may now be run as one unit. The increased demands on the farmer's ability to manage flocks of many hundreds of sheep is only one factor in the conflicting requirements they now face. Furthermore, the shortage of young farmers coming through to succeed their fathers, is an additional factor for landlords to consider when they worry about from whence the next generation of hill farmers will come.

Conclusion

The uplands which feed the flocks discussed here, mainly lie within the Lake District National Park, the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Consequently, the farmers are normally eligible for grants under various Government stewardship schemes. However, a reduction in stock numbers is a fairly standard requirement of these agreements in order to allow the vegetation to recover. Typically, the farmer must reduce his summer stocking levels on the fell by half and/or keep his livestock off specific areas until rare plants have seeded. But the landlord wants the hefted flock to be maintained at the level specified in the lease for a lessening in the size of the flock generates a fall in the underlying value of his land. And, although the landlord may be entitled to benefit under a stewardship agreement, the terms of these can change from year to year but returning a hefted flock to its previous level takes longer.

The tenant, in order to get round the problems arising from a reduction in stocking levels, may place (say) half his ewes off the farm but the improved grazing, from which those ewes benefit, leads to them dropping twin lambs. But it is not possible to put a ewe with twins on the fell since, even during the summer, the quality of the grazing is too poor to sustain them. Consequently, the ewes with twins must be kept on the farmer's inbye (assuming that he has one) or sent off the farm. But this means that the lambs only go on the fell at the end of the summer and are not hefted - so they will roam. One solution is to erect stock-proof fences - and abandon the process of hefting. For a number of reasons it may not be possible or practicable to introduce walls or fences onto the fell; in any case, there are cost implications for what is already marginal farming.

We see therefore, a system which has continued to evolve throughout history in response to market forces and the relative positions of landlord and tenant. But now we have significant intervention by the state to protect the landscape that we, the public, value so highly. With three actors now on the stage - four, if we include a vociferous public voice - five if we include the effects of changes in the Common Agricultural Policy - six if we include Her Majesty's Treasury with changing Inheritance Tax Rules on agricultural land values - we can only make guesses as to the future of farming to halves in the north west of England.