

Agriculture in Allithwaite and the surrounding areas in the early modern period using information from C17th & C18th Inventories.

There are few original documents providing information on agriculture in the early modern period in this area. Manorial documents are usually good source but there are none for Allithwaite. There are, however, many inventories dating to this period. J.D. Marshall in "Agrarian Wealth & Social Structure in Pre-Industrial Society" describes inventories as "a list of movable personal goods, credits and debts compiled under oath by friends and neighbours (appraisers or apprizers) of a person newly deceased, as a central part of proving a will". The inventory did not include buildings and land that was owned but should have included leases. However, in the inventories examined only one lease was mentioned in Michael Bell's inventory of 1666 but no detail was recorded.

We looked at 72 inventories dated from 1598 to 1773 mainly in the Allithwaite area but a few from other parts of the Cartmel Peninsula were included. These consist of:

- 34 from Allithwaite
- 17 from Templand, Allithwaite
- 6 from Wraysholme, Allithwaite
- 2 from Upper Newton
- 2 from Cartmel (Church Town)
- 2 from Flookburgh
- 2 from Ulverston
- 2 from Cark

One each from Cartmel Fell, Nether Newton, Lyndale (Lindale), Kirkhead, Kents Bank and one of an unknown location.

The area of Allithwaite, including Templand and Wraysholme, was chosen because we are researching the early history of that area in depth. The other inventories are included in the study are included for comparison.

Less inventories have survived from the earliest period; the majority are dated between 1650 and 1750, and very few after 1750 were examined because they lacked the detail found in earlier ones. The number of inventories studied in each period were:

1593-1650	11
1650-1700	35
1700-1750	23
1750-1773	3

Clearly we do not have surviving inventories for all the population. However, the inventories studied are from the rich and poor, males and many from females. Marshall, also looking at Cumbria in this period, compared inventories with burial records and concluded that, although coverage varied according to area, less than 40% of the adult male population had surviving inventories. The richest and poorest seem to be excluded. It seems reasonable to assume that the poorest members of society would not have

sufficient possessions to merit an inventory, however, some of the poorer members of the population were included. Among the inventories we looked at was the inventory of William Harris of Allithwaite, (1666) a blindman whose property was valued at £2 8s 8d, Richard Holmes £5 2 0 (although his inventory included a gold ring) and several more with property worth less than £5 the lowest being Thomas Ridely £1 1s 6d. We did not limit ourselves to males only as we included many of the female inventories for the Allithwaite area.

A few inventories indicate varying degrees of wealth. John Saul, a dyer's inventory totaled £159 15s 9d (1674), Thomas Barr (1727) £474, Thomas Spencer £109 10s plus £200 on loan and William Spencer the house carpenter had £140 mostly in money.

For most people there is no indication of their social status but listed were 7 yeomen and, 2 gentlemen (land owners and assumed to be senior figures respected in the community) and 3 husbandmen (farmers who do not own land). A few of the deceased, probably smallholders, had trades: 3 shopkeepers, 1 mariner, 1 innkeeper, 1 blacksmith, 1 weaver, a dyer and 1 house carpenter.

It seems reasonable to assume that inventories, because they are made soon after the death of the principle, will include more than the average number of elderly and infirm members of the population. Although possibly not to the same degree as today as in those days people were more likely to die young than they are now. That being said it is noticeable that almost all the inventories belong to people who were still engaged in agriculture when they died.

A clear picture emerges of a predominantly self-sufficient society mainly involved in small scale farming. Also worthy of note is that in this area where farming is now predominantly pastoral, most of the inventories include clear evidence of mixed farming.

Looking through the inventories there is no clear evidence of cattle being used as draught animals as they would have been in earlier centuries. The only possible exception could be Hugh Dickinson 1637 whose inventory starts with Oxen £20 and later "oxen gear in the far chamber".

Horses were a pivotal part of life in the early modern period. They provided power for agricultural activities and were the only means of transport apart from walking. Just over 50% of the inventories included horses despite the earlier caveat about there being a preponderance of old and infirm in the numbers. We might expect some of these to have given their horses to other family members before their death if they were ill and infirm. Nine inventories have evidence of having had horses but none were listed, for example, James Swainson (1603) who had a saddle but no horse.

There was some change over the period. 36 % of the inventories in the first 50 years had one or more horses while there were 60% 1650 to 1700 and 48% 1700 to 1750. Most people had just one or two horses although about a dozen had more. Hugh Dickinson, a gentleman and perhaps a breeder, had horses and mares worth £28 13s 4d. George Waller

(1690) had 4 mares. It seems from the language used that horses were viewed with more affection and treated more as individuals than were other animals. Robert Seatle (1623) had a little nag and an old mare; Thomas Dickinson of Wraysholme (1664) had a grissell (possibly a breed) mare and one little mare among his horses.

Most people had a number of items related to horses in their inventories. For example, many different types of saddle are included most of which are unfamiliar to us. The only one I was able to identify with confidence was the lode saddle (a pack saddle) owned by Richard Wilson (1603). There are many ark saddles, hark saddles and harkon saddles the name of which could be a combination of ark (a chest) and saddle so this could also be a saddle for carrying goods. This could also be the meaning of the frequently listed park (could it be pack) saddle. William Wilson (1711) and Ann Bare (1690) own a padd which is a type of saddle usually used by women they also included a pillion, a back seat on a horse. William Spence (1694) inventory also listed a pillion. No one it seems was "grand" enough to own any type of carriage although I am unsure of the meaning of Hackney in Thomas Dickonson of Wraysholme's inventory dated 1664. It is probably a riding saddle as it is listed with a "car sadles" but it could also be a high stepping horse or pony used in harness or a horse drawn vehicle kept for hire.

Most people also had carts. Carts for some reason were usually listed separately from their wheels. Possibly this is how they were stored. Many "carrs" were listed I have been unable to find the significance of this it is probably just be a variation on the word cart. There were 5 variations of the word cooper. A cooper is a tub or cart with sloping sides. Ann Bare's inventory listed 2 corne carts, 2 peat carts and 2 congs. As well as other items relating to horses several people had swingle trees which is gear to harness 2 horses to one plough. One person had a yoke which could be a wooden frame for holding 2 oxen together for ploughing, or a bar used with a double harness to connect horses to a waggon or a frame for carrying a couple of buckets. Only one person had a sled (used to move heavy loads). This shows that unlike the Lakeland valleys the terrain was good enough for wheeled vehicles or animals to be used for moving heavy objects despite the reference in the "Annals of Cartmel" to the poor quality of the roads.

Along with horses, cows were the major items of value on most early modern inventories. Most inventories listed at least one cow (72%). There were a wide variety of terms relating to cattle. In the Cumbrian Fells the traditional type of cattle were small and black. I am not sure if this is also true of the coastal areas as no description is given in the inventories. The local terms for cattle were beasts and kine. Some inventories also indicate the sex and age of cattle with terms such as heifer, stirk, calf, old cows etc. In William Gardner's inventory (1689) a redd cow and a black cow were listed. Of the inventories that included cows over half had between 2 and 10 cows, just under a quarter had only one while just over a quarter had eleven or more. Families were self-sufficient and used milk from their own cow to produce butter and cheese for the family and they would possibly rear an animal for meat also. The larger herds suggest that there may have been some limited commercial production of dairy and meat products.

Most inventories listed sheep. Often there was no indication of how many sheep the

deceased had. It sometimes specified whether they were old sheep or hogs (sheep under a year old). I used the inventories with numbers and valuations to estimate the value of one sheep. The values varied from 5s 6d down to 1s 6d which probably was related to the age of the sheep. I took 3s to 4s as an average.

25 people had no sheep but this included 19 who were women (only one of whom had sheep) or tradesmen eg James Bailman and John Fell who were weavers and Thomas Benson a dyer of Ulverston. Also there were others whose inventories indicated they were reasonably wealthy. Only 6 seemed possibly to have no sheep as a result of poverty. About equal numbers had 1 to 10 sheep, 10 to 30 sheep and 30 plus sheep plus a similar number with an unspecified number. 3 had substantial flocks for the period. These were John Barrow of Allithwaite (1660) who had 65 old sheep and 2 hogs (his inventory is dated 9th March so maybe last year's hogs had gone to market and the new lambs had not been born); Edward Waller of Templands (1703) whose sheep were valued at £13 5s; and Thomas Gasgarth gentleman of Allithwaite whose sheep were valued at £16. It is not known if the sheep were being grown for meat or wool production. However wool yarn was found in some inventories and all families would have produced their own clothing. Wool and linen yarn was used to produce a hard-wearing material known as linsey-wolsey and Kendal was known for its linsey-wolsey material.

Poultry are probably the next most common type of livestock. It seems likely that almost all the tenements had hens scratching around in their yards. Judgments about numbers are complicated in earlier inventories by the use of the word pullen which can mean poultry or any young animal. In later inventories the word poultry supersedes it. In inventories after about 1700 poultry are rarely listed but at this time many inventories were quite brief and probably did not list such low value items. Geese are sometimes listed separately eg Brian Fell (1670) had a goose worth 2s 6d compared with William Harris' henns (1666) valued at 1s. In all 18 inventories list poultry.

Only 7 inventories list pigs or swine, surprisingly few, especially as these seem to be among the slightly higher value inventories. It would have been tempting to assume that the poorer members of society would keep a pig but this does not seem to be the case.

Five people list bees including Thomas Benson's (1670) half swarm of bees valued at 3s 4d and William Gardner's (1689) "2 hive bees, henns and one fork 7s". Honey was the main means of sweetening food as only the very rich could afford sugar, a luxury product. Bees were kept in straw skeps in bee bolls, which were alcoves in south facing walls. It is again surprising to see so few listed.

Almost all the pre 1700 inventories listed stocks of arable crops and most of those post 1700 also listed them. I think the reduction post 1700 is more to do with the brevity of the inventories than any change in farming practice. Those inventories without crops include William Harris the blind man, 3 women (whose inventories often but not always included mainly household goods, clothing and loans). James Swainson (1608) and Thomas Seattle had no crops listed despite them having husbandry gear. Probably the last two were old or infirm as was William Spence who had already given his husbandry gear

worth £1 18s 6d to his heir. The almost universal inclusion of arable crops reinforces the idea of a peasant type subsistence economy.

The type of crops showed little variation. Everyone had hay, oats and barley; most had peas; and many had beans. I have excluded crops of hemp and flax as that is the subject of a more detailed study of the textile industry in the Peninsula. Only seven people had wheat. This may be considered unlikely as it is generally considered that the climate is unsuitable for growing wheat. However, an item in the inventory of William Braithwaite of Cark (1690) could call this to question: It says, "In Barley Wheat & pease upon ground £9". Those listing wheat were all wealthier members of the community most with total inventories of over £100 and just two with slightly lower inventories of £82 15s (John Punder 1692) and £72 7s 11d (John Barrow 1690) respectively. Wheat, it seems, was a luxury product.

Some of the other crops were also listed as still in the ground. George Hayle (1665) had "hay gotten and to get". Not surprisingly this varied according to the time of year eg Edward Waller in June 1703 had oats upon the ground; John Punder, in August 1692, had "a dale of oats in Bros Toff and a dale of barley in the same close"; James Finsthwaite in April 1759 had "4 acres of oats" and "2 acres of barley"; Richard Wilson, in May 1603 had "oats lying upon ground with ye Townburg in Longlands". Other inventories also specify where crops were growing eg George Hayle (1665) had "oats and barley at Boarbank, Meadow and barley growing at Allithwaite also corn growing at Templand". It seems rather surprising for crops to be spread over such a wide area and some distance from their farm. In some inventories we are told where the grain was being stored. We know that Wraysholme Tower contained hay in 1685/6 and in 1690, according to the inventory of Ann Bare. The Tower also contained "tugy widdys (variously tugwithe, trigwiddy, tugwidd the band to attach the swingletree to the head of the plough, or cart or harrow) and iron gear". George Waller had his produce in a variety of places, "Barley and malt in the butery loft", "Corn threshed and unthreshed in Bateman Barn Hay there", "Barley threshed and unthrashed in the other barn", "Hay in the old barn", "Barley and oats in the Garner Loft" and "Oats at Aynsom threshed and unthreshed". It would be interesting if we could identify where the various sites were.

Fourteen inventories made between 1621 and 1711 included a dung heap or manure. The value varied between 1 shilling and 13 shillings and fourpence. At Wraysholme Hugh Dickonson in 1637 had £2 worth of dung in the field and £1 of manure around the house but in later inventories for Wraysholme the value fell to 13 shillings and four pence in 1664 for beast dung and other manure, 10 shillings in 1685 and 5 shillings in 1689. Were the Dickonson's reclaiming marsh land or improving the existing land?

The vast majority of the inventories included husbandry gear. Unsurprisingly the inventories which did not include arable crops were those that did not include husbandry gear. Usually the type of husbandry gear is specified sometimes in quite incomprehensible detail as commas were not used eg John Burscough "all the iron gear & husband int tools of iron iron harrow wood harrow 3 ploughs yoak and swingletrees", Augustine Simpson (1672) "two forks a spade a colrake harkry sycth sirkles trigwiddy &

other iron geara plough plough irons & a spitt and, George Wainhouse (1673) "forks wombles sythes iron mill & othe husbandry gear...iron harrow wood harrow tugwidd & shakells....two ploughs coultre & urk". Ploughs were the most frequently listed item along with plough goods, plough irons and one plough grave. Harrows, scythes, sicles and wombles were also common. Wombles, according to John Dawson in "Torver" are tools use for making circular holes in the ground. They are listed in many inventories of this period. There was also a large range of smaller goods such as chisels, axes, forks (including pitchforks), shovels, crowbars, rakes (including a cornrake and a colrake). Sieves were included in many of the inventories. Were these used to remove stone from the soil? Also common were winnowing cloths (used to separate the chaff from the grain or pests from the grain) often, confusingly, called windowcloths which can also be cloth used to fill a window instead of glass. Perhaps it was a dual-purpose cloth

It would be interesting to know where the individuals mentioned in the inventories lived and how large were their holdings. I have looked at inventories in the Duddon valley and other parts of Kirkby Ireleth and John Dawson has looked at inventories along with other primary sources in "Torver The Story of a Lakeland Community". In both these areas each inventory includes the name of the farm or at least the small group of farms with the same name but this is not the case in the inventories we looked at on the Peninsula. Wraysholme is the only named farm but it is possibly the largest farm in the immediate area known as Allithwaite. Elsewhere on the Peninsula the larger, isolated farms were named. Templand, a small hamlet of several small farms and smallholdings, lies on the ridge between the coast and Cartmel Valley. Small farms, smallholdings and some cottages were located close to the mill in Allithwaite on the road to Flookburgh and another cluster of small farms, smallholdings and cottages also described as Allithwaite were located at the crossroads between Kents Bank and Flookburgh (running east to west) and Kents Bank and Templand (running south to north). A road also ran south to north from Wraysholme to Templand. Between each cluster of dwellings there lay common land which was poor, uncultivated land used by all for grazing. Allithwaite clearly housed a number of families. The implication is that everyone knows everyone else but surely this is also the case in other areas. Possibly it is just a matter of local custom.

J.D. Marshall (see above) studied 1,550 inventories in both upland and lowland Cumbria including detailed studies of Hawkshead and Cartmel. His main focus was on changes in overall wealth but he noted several features that accord with our findings. Reassuringly, his valuation of sheep and cattle in this era accords with mine. He too noted that there was no sign of "mass Martinmass slaughter" of animals. He also agrees that we are looking at a peasant subsistence economy, both arable and pastoral and that the society was relatively homogeneous where "differentiations in personal wealth were not reflected closely, if at all, in ways of life". He says his conclusion was also supported by reference to the hearth tax. He comments "Possessions tend to be standardized". When you look at the inventories of the most and least wealthy there is certainly much less variation than you would see today.

One feature that did not show up in our selection of inventories but did in his slightly

wider selection was the use of lime to improve the soil. Marshall noted four local inventories that referred to lime kilns at Hampsfell (1661), Flookburgh (1664), Birkby (1669) and Cartmel (1692). He also noted that overall wealth increased during the period covered by the inventories but that "fixed farming capital and investment in livestock seems to have grown relatively slowly". Another change that was occurring in this period that does not show up in the inventories but must have been an important feature of agricultural life was the widespread rebuilding of farmhouses and buildings. Finally, many areas were showing the early stages of industrialization with which people began to supplement their agricultural income but, compared with Hawkshead, Cartmel had, " few trading, industrial or craft by-occupations in this age".

The conclusion is that we are looking at a generally small scale, homogeneous, self-sufficient preindustrial economy composed of both pastoral and arable farming. This was soon to enter a period of radical change. Although there had been some significant variation in wealth the Dickinsons and Bears at Wraysholme and the Wallers of Templand had more animals and possessions than most of their contemporaries. But this division was about to get wider, accelerated by modern developments in agriculture - new crops, crop rotation, improved agricultural equipment and the enclosure of the common land. Farms were to become larger and the landless poor were to increase in number.

References

The inventories were viewed at Lancashire Record Office (Preston)

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Sept 2020