_It's_ not the land, _it's_ the people: deconstructing the cultural heritage of community land buyouts in the South of Scotland.

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Wherever possible, I have tried to emphasise the human aspect of great events by listening to the voices of individual people whose lives *became caught up in the storm…*

Orlando Figes, A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution.[1]

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[1] Orlando Figes, A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891-1924 (United Kingdom, National Library for the Blind, 2002), in James Hunter, The Making of the Crofting Community (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2018 [1976]), p. 34.

Abstract

Today just 432 families own 50% of Scotland's private rural land, which makes up 98% of Scotland's total land area. Thus the welfare and prosperity of large swathes of Scotland's rural communities, are left to the responsibility of a small number of private landowners, with little democratic accountability. The concept of ownership is therefore deeply connected to ideas about power and control, concepts inherent in the exercise of democracy. Until now, most studies of land ownership have been confined to a crofting dynamic, where community right-to-buy purchases have been driven by a grievance or harkening back to a time when land was owned by the community. This narrow inquiry into Highland history has prevented historians from establishing a broader view on the nature of rural identity in Scotland and presents a clear gap in the literature that needs addressing by forwarding the experience of communities in the South of Scotland, where this crofting or grievance dynamic is largely absent. Furthermore, the clear emphasis on top-down legislation and ownership-driven approaches in the current literature indicates the need for more studies grounded in the experiences of the communities affected by land reform themselves. That is what this paper intends to do by constructing an oral history of the cultural heritage of community land ownership in the South of Scotland.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family, Avril, Finlay, George, and Maddy, without whom I would have found this last year incredibly challenging. I will forever be grateful for the strong sense of social justice and the passion for the plight of others you have instilled in me.

I would also like to thank the staff at Hawick Heritage Hub, and Dr. Catriona Macdonald, whose strong guidance and support were invaluable to me in providing a sense of direction and keeping the research grounded in its historical underpinnings.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this paper to the communities about which it is written. As a Borderer myself, I found it an incredibly eye-opening experience to explore the local identity I grew up with from a new perspective. I will forever be grateful to the people I interviewed in Langholm, Newcastleton, and Wanlockhead for letting me into their world, and their lives.

I hope this paper does their stories justice.

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Tables

List of Acronyms

CDT	Community Development Trust
CRTB	Community right-to-buy
JMT	John Muir Trust
NBR	North British Railways
NDCT	Newcastleton and District Community Trust
NSA	New Statistical Account of Scotland
NTS	National Trust for Scotland
OS	Ordnance Survey
OSA	Old Statistical Account of Scotland
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SBALC	Scottish Borders Archive and Local History Centre
SLF	Scottish Land Fund
SPBW	Society for the Purchasing of Books in Wanlockhead (also referred to as the Miners' Library)
TSA	Third Statistical Account of Scotland
UN	United Nations
WCT	Wanlockhead Community Trust

Contents

Introduction

Land in Scotland is a highly symbolic feature of the country's physical, political, and cultural landscapes. Sociologist David McCrone observed in his 1997 John McEwen Memorial Lecture that, '[c]alling for the democratisation of Scotland concerns itself with 'land' which is so fundamentally part of our national identity.'[2] It is so because it sits on the crossroads of a number of key issues which are of critical importance to the social, cultural, and political history of the nation. Two years prior to McCrone's lecture, Professor James Hunter asked the question, '[c]ould land reform [...] provide the energy required to set a constitutional project fairly racing down the tracks?'[3] His address anticipated the establishment of a Scottish Parliament for the first time in 300 years, and reflected the proliferation of key texts in land reform research that had occurred from the late 1970s. Undoubtedly, historical scholars saw this as an opportunity for their work to influence the legislative agenda of the first Scottish Parliament. Indeed, land reform and democracy have been tied together for some time, as John Bryden and Keith Hart have suggested land reform is ultimately about 'the extension of democracy and democratic practice.'[4]

The work of John McEwen and Robin Callander has been crucial in establishing clear patterns of ownership in relation to power and democracy in Scotland. McEwen's Who Owns Scotland? is frequently held as a breakthrough in formally mapping the extent of large estates and who owns them. Despite its flaws, McEwen 'showed that landownership in Scotland was still dominated by a relatively small number of very large landholdings.'[5] Callander's A Pattern of Landownership in Scotland, expanded on this work ten years later, with added insight to what this concentration of ownership actually means for communities and democracy,

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[2] David McCrone, 'Land, Democracy and Culture in Scotland', John McEwen Memorial Lectures on Land Tenure in Scotland (Perth: A.K. Bell Library, 1997)

[3] James Hunter, 'Towards a Land Reform Agenda for a Scots Parliament', John McEwen Memorial Lectures on Land Tenure in Scotland (Perth: A.K. Bell Library, 1995)

[4] Bryden, John, and Charles Geisler, 'Community-based land reform: Lessons from Scotland', Land Use Policy 24 (2007), p. 9.

[5] Andy Wightman, The Poor Had No Lawyers: Who Owns Scotland (and How They Got It) (United Kingdom: Birlinn, 2011), p.137.

The survival of Scotland's long-standing pattern of large-scale landownership reflects the continuing importance of landownership's influence on rural Scotland. This makes landownership a central factor in any consideration of the future for rural Scotland, both to meet the aspirations of the rural communities and of society at large.[6]

Importantly, these works laid the basis for establishing today's concentrated and narrowing pattern of land ownership with just 432 families owning 50% of private rural land, which makes up around 98% of Scotland's land area.[7] Thus the welfare and prosperity of large swathes of Scotland's rural communities, who will be the main focus of this paper, are left to the responsibility of a small number of private landowners, with little democratic accountability. The concept of ownership is therefore deeply connected to ideas about power and control, concepts inherent in the exercise of democracy. Andy Wightman's The Poor Had No Lawyers (2010) was a seminal piece in bringing key threads of this discourse together,

Ownership of land really means the possession of a bundle of rights over land including rights to occupy, to use, to cut peat, to cross or to fish. […] Landownership, by contrast, is all about how the rights defined by the tenure system are possessed.[8]

Arguably this book was instrumental in propelling the plight of the land reform movement out from the academic sphere, into the public discourse, by making complex legal terms accessible to the lay person. However, its legalistic frame of reference obscures the understanding of these concepts from the perspective of the communities themselves. Given land reform 'implies changes in the balance of power between individual property owners, communities and the state,'[9] a greater understanding from the perspective of rural communities themselves is lacking in the historical assessment of land reform.

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[6] R. F. Callander, A Pattern of Landownership in Scotland (Finzean: Haughend Publications, 1987), p. 137.
[7] Common Weal, New Economics Foundation, 'Our Land: A Vision for land reform in Scotland and how we get there', (REVIVE Coalition, 2020), p. 8.
[8] Wightman, The Poor had No Lawyers, p. 8.
[9] Bryden and Hart, 'Land reform, planning and people', p. 3.

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 introduced the community right-to-buy, allowing 'communities of fewer than 10,000 persons to register an interest in land and thereby to have a pre-emptive right to buy that land should it come up for sale.'[10] The Act was one of the earliest pieces of legislation in the new Scottish Parliament, and reflected the long-standing grievances of crofting communities in the Highlands and Islands. The relationship between crofters and the land, is significant for more than the injustice of precarious working conditions and forced removal of the eighteenth and nineteenth century Clearances. Land held (and still holds) symbolic, as well as functional, importance for crofters, owing to the development of the crofting system out of traditional clan structures and the cultural specificities associated with them. This line from the Report of the Committee on Land Settlement in Scotland in 1928 indicates the connection between land, culture, community, and even social relations: 'Land is the basis of its existence and determines the forms of its social life.'[11] As such, many studies of community land ownership are confined to a crofting dynamic, where desire for community ownership is driven by a grievance or harkening back to a time when land was owned by the community. This presents a clear gap in the literature when it comes to recent purchases in the South of Scotland, where many of the same features appear in the context of community land buyouts. Indeed, as John Bryden and Keith Hart have asserted, 'the cultural legacy' of the dispossession of crofters' lands 'feeds into contemporary debates on land reform', and 'must be part of any explanation for why the Highlands, today as for the last two centuries, have been at the forefront of the land reform movement.'[12] Until now, this focus on the Highlands and Islands has largely been justified. However, this narrow inquiry into Highland history has prevented historians from establishing a broader view on the nature of rural identity in Scotland and the cultural heritage of community-based land reform.

In the chapters which follow, this paper will give a new perspective to contemporary debates that have centred around community land ownership, by situating recent

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[10] Hoffman, Matthew, 'Why community ownership? Understanding land reform in Scotland', Land Use Policy, 31 (2013), p. 291.

[11] in Iain MacKinnon, Decommonising the mind': historical impacts of British imperialism on indigenous tenure systems and self-understanding in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland', International Journal of the Commons 12 (2018), pp. 278-300.

[12] Bryden and Hart, p. 7.

community right-to-buy (CRTB) purchases in the South of Scotland in the context of their own cultural heritage. The dynamics of these purchases differ from those in the Highlands and Islands: in 2019, Buccleuch Estates, the administrator of Scotland's largest landowner, the Duke of Buccleuch, conducted a review of its Borders Estate and concluded with the intention to sell 25,000 acres of land.[13] This led to two successful CRTB purchases in Langholm in Dumfries and Galloway, and in Newcastleton in the western Scottish Borders, with one further deal in Wanlockhead on the Duke's Queensberry estate in north-east Dumfriesshire to be finalised. These communities present a unique opportunity to readdress questions about the meaning of land ownership, given how contemporary their buyouts are, and given their geographical context. Furthermore, the paper will make an important contribution to the literature on land ownership through its use of a cultural history perspective, in an area where little research has been done to link community heritage to the issue of land and local democracy outside the Highlands and Islands.

Such is this relationship between land ownership and democracy each new study or government bill reopens a wound relating to the character of the nation. Scots continue to juggle with concepts of the oppressor and the oppressed in relation to Scotland's development from disparate militarist society to organised capitalist labour. Critical to this is the mass feeling of injustice imbued in the national psyche as a result of a collective memory of the Highland land clearances. These wounds have arguably been more prominent in the last 25 years than ever before, given the period of constitutional self-reckoning Scotland has been addressing since the beginning of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, and the subsequent 2014 independence referendum. Indeed, this collective memory of injustice, for many, sits at the answer to deep ontological questions about the sort of country Scotland wants to be.[14]

As such, it is important to reassess the historical role of land ownership in connection to the identities of Scotland. Naturally, such a reassessment should seek to address the nature of social and economic relations embedded in the transition from a feudalist society to a capitalist one. This transition, as shown in the two phases of the Highland

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[13] BBC News, 'Buccleuch to sell off large slice of south of Scotland estate', BBC, 2019 [accessed 8 March 2022]
[14] McCrone, Land, Democracy and Culture in Scotland.

Clearances, had a significant impact on the cultural heritage of agricultural communities. It is argued by some scholars that the cultural specificities eroded by the change in land tenure systems echo the colonial violence imposed by the British state in its overseas colonies; namely the conversion of tributes into rent, which removed the theoretical egalitarianism of clan society by replacing it with an exploitative hierarchy based on property relations and 'tied labour.'[15][16] However, notions of internal colonialism should be seriously questioned, particularly in this instance, given the state's limited hand in the application of land tenure changes. Moreover, a Marxist historical interpretation provides a better account of the nature of exploitative landlord-tenant relations:

> peasants had effective possession of the means of production (land, tools, animals), and would not have handed over part of their produce without external pressure, the relationship between lord and peasant was inevitably coercive, involving either the threat or actual application of force.[17]

The destruction of dùthchas, a system of collective inheritable rights whereby land was conferred to members of the clan society in exchange for loyalty, is an important example which demonstrates the role of cultural heritage in contemporary CRTB purchases. Indeed, the variety of approaches adopted by scholars, proves useful in constructing a full picture of this cultural heritage in relation to the coercive structure described above. For example, James Hunter's community-level approach supports Marxist interpretations of the relationship between culture, profit, and land ownership, which formed the essence of the crofting system that persists today. From this perspective, Hunter is able to establish one reason as to why the crofting experience in the late eighteenth century was so traumatic, and therefore why its legacy plays a key role in the identity of crofting communities today:

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[15] Graham Boyd, 'To Restore the Land to the People and the People to the Land', Scottish Journal for Community Work and Development 3 (1998)
[16] MacKinnon, 'Decommonising the mind', pp. 283-4.
[17] Neil Davidson, 'The Scottish Path to Capitalist Agriculture 1: From the Crisis of Feudalism to the Origins of Agrarian Transformation (1688-1746)', Journal of Agrarian Change 4 (2004a), pp. 227-268; see also Brenner, Robert, 'The Social Basis of Economic Development'. In Analytic Marxism, ed. J. Roemer, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) pp. 23–53.

the landlord […] both controlled the industry's raw material and was the sole buyer of the kelp produced on his estate, [therefore] was able to direct his tenants to work where and when he liked, and to fix their wages at the level he found most convenient.[18]

Hunter's approach also reveals key contrasts between the first phase of clearance and the second, namely the importance of manpower in economic production.[19] Descriptions of the crofters as a 'redundant population' reveal much about the attitude of landlords clearing said population.[20] The reduction of a population to economic value combined with a profit-driven logic can, in part, explain the long-lasting influence of the clearances on Highland identity, 'Sheep cannot be cultivated to a profit unless in large flocks […] thus arises the necessity of large sheep farms.'[21]

Hunter's emphasis on experience contrasts with that of Tom Devine, whose own emphasis on institutional structures, like dùthchas, can explain why this change in institutional structures produced such a lasting legacy. Owing to the development of this exploitative economic relationship out of clan-based ties, many crofters 'maintained traditionalist expectations,'[22] as such, landlords were able to exploit the good will of their tenants, as well as their economic dependency. Therefore, the reason the Clearances imbue such a feeling of injustice in the Scottish national consciousness is this sense of 'cultural trauma,'[23] borne out of 'the erosion of any sense of 'moral obligation'' on the part of clan chiefs-turned-landlord which amounted to betrayal.[24] Thus land plays important functional and symbolic roles for rural Scottish communities, and a deeper understanding of what this role is should be sought in relation to non-Highland communities. Connecting the psychological trauma of the clearances to the experiences of communities past and present is therefore important in establishing the cultural footprint of historical changes in institutions of land tenure. This heritage is

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[18] James Hunter, James, The Making of the Crofting Community (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1976 [2018]), pp. 66-7.

[19] Neil Davidson, 'The Scottish Path to Capitalist Agriculture 2: The Capitalist Offensive (1747-1815)', Journal of Agrarian Change 4 (2004b), p. 436.

[20] Hunter, Making of the Crofting Community, p. 90.

[21] Ibid, p. 63.

[22] T.M. Devine, Clanship to Crofters' War: The Social Transformation of the Scottish Highlands (Manchester University Press, 2013 [1994]), p.17.

[23] Ibid, p. 41.

[24] Callander, A Pattern of Landownership in Scotland, p. 56.

enshrined in the legislation that followed this traumatic period; however, its cultural legacy is a crucial consideration in concepts of ownership and community in a contemporary context.

A direct product of the Clearances, the Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act 1886, marked the beginning of the willingness of political actors to agitate for and then legislate formal change in the nature of land tenure in Scotland. As such, it is often heralded as the crucial piece of legislation that initiated the process of land reform. The Act is grounded in the grievances of Highland crofters and their claims to land and employment. It 'granted to tenants the rights known as the '3 F's', fair rents fixed by a land court, fixed tenure […] and free sale of the tenant's interest in the farm which allowed for compensation for improvements.'[25] Hence it remains an important piece of legislation which changed the nature of property relations in the late nineteenth century. Academic research, therefore, has sought to ground many of the community land purchases in the late twentieth and early 21st centuries in this Act. The social changes which preceded the Crofters' Act entrenched a concentrated pattern of land ownership and an exploitative relationship with the land in the Highlands. While the Act sought to change this, critics have argued, as Devine notes, 'the 1886 Act became a powerful force for conservatism and condemned crofting society to a future of inertia and stagnation.'[26] Indeed, Devine and Hunter, agree on this resulting conservatism, the former suggesting it 'froze an existing structure of smallholdings,'[27] while the latter argues, 'instead of reforming crofting agriculture, they perpetuated, even extended, the traditional crofting system,' and the exploitative mechanisms that accompanied it.[28]

Arguably, this conservatism is upheld by the lack of discourse on the legislation which followed the Act. As suggested by Ewen Cameron, 'despite an interesting historical debate on the 1886 Act, the period from 1886 to 1919 has not been well served by historians of the Highlands.'[29] However, Cameron's own work, amongst others, has to an extent addressed this, namely through the attention paid to legislative intervention

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[25] Devine, Clanship to Crofters' War, p. 223.
[26] Ibid, p. 234.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Hunter, p. 295.
[29] Ewen A. Cameron, Land for the People? The British Government and the Scottish Highlands, c. 1880-1925 (East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 1996), p. 9.

required as a result of Highland Land Raids in the period surrounding the First World War. As Gibbard and Robertson note,

> the legacy of the 1919 [Land Settlement (Scotland)] Act was a fundamental transformation of both landscape and social and tenurial relations across much of rural Scotland. […] Scottish land reform is, therefore, the inheritor of not only the legacy of the various earlier Acts, but also of actions taken during the Highland Land Wars.[30]

This shows that research of early twentieth century land reform continues the historiographical tradition which orients itself towards legislative analysis; analysis which is primarily linked to the cultural heritage of Highland and Island communities. Likewise, subsequent research concerning the period from the First World War to the community land buyouts in Assynt and Eigg in the early 1990s has tended towards exploring the proliferation in not-for-profit ownership of land. It is important to establish the role of the National Trust for Scotland (NTS), The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), and the John Muir Trust (JMT) in shaping Scotland's land, particularly in the contemporary context of climate change.[31] However, while this approach has its advantages, to a certain extent, it has obscured 'community' from the picture, and, as such has tended towards an environmental history of Scotland, rather than a political or cultural history. Recapturing is this cultural gaze is crucial, however, given the emphasis on shifting more power to communities in the wake of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, as well as the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. These contemporary changes in land tenure have created a space within which we can capture new histories from the perspective of the communities. By developing this space, we can better understand the nature of rural identity in Scotland, without being confined to the Highlands and Islands or to a crofting dynamic.

As observed in the literature on the Clearances, there is a tension between scholarly approaches to study these issues. Notably, that between Tom Devine, whose

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[30] Micky Gibbard, and Iain J. Robertson, 'Highland Agency and Land Settlement Schemes', *Northern Scotland* 11 (2020), pp. 97-98.
[31] Trevor A. Croft, 'Conservation charity land ownership in Scotland', *Scottish Geographical Journal* 120 (2004), pp. 71-82.

approach might be described as instrumentalist, owing to his inclination towards 'top-down' data such as statistics and institutions, and James Hunter, who's 'bottom-up' or constructivist methodology oriented him towards the experiences felt by communities. Hunter's foreword to the 2000 edition of his seminal work, The Making of the Crofting Community, indicates clearly where these scholars draw their distinctions,

> [Devine's economic and demographic] analysis has its place. So, no doubt, has the 'evaluation of élite behaviour' and the setting of 'landlord activity in its social and cultural context'. But unlike Tom, I prefer to concentrate, [on] the people on whom it is essential to focus in a Highland context are those whose shattered lives, I believe, books like Tom Devine's tend to conceal below their endless layers of data.[32]

As Hunter observes here, there is a place for a multitude of scholarly approaches to studying land ownership and rural identity, and indeed, marrying these approaches is important to building a full picture of history. However, the clear emphasis on top-down legislative and ownership-driven research present in the current literature indicates the need for more constructivist studies grounded in the experiences of the communities affected by land reform themselves. That is what this paper intends to do by constructing an oral history of the cultural heritage of community land ownership in the South of Scotland.

Methodology

Oral history presents the opportunity to 'recover the voices of those who have been hidden' by 'access[ing] material that simply may not exist in any other form, from individuals who might otherwise leave little trace of the details of their existence.'[33] The narrative of cultural heritage described in this paper has therefore been constructed using the stories, experiences, and memories of community members retold through semi-structured interviews. It aims

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[32] Hunter, p. 34.
[33] Corinna Peniston-Bird, 'Oral history: the sound of memory', in S. Barber, and C. Peniston-Bird (eds), History Beyond the Text: A student's guide to approaching alternative sources (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), p. 106.

to develop an explanation of how people socially […] construct and understand the worlds in which they are embedded and the logics they use to navigate those worlds.[34]

The resulting oral history is a co-creation between the interviewer and interviewee. This type of relational interviewing does not aim to 'extract information by questioning participants, but to learn how they make sense of the world by engaging them in dialogue.'[35] Naturally this requires reflexivity on the part of the researcher and an awareness of positionality, understanding how power, privilege, and status can influence the product of an interview. Indeed, this sort of subjectivity is often highlighted as a methodological fault of oral history, and this criticism can spill over into the creation of the primary sources themselves. A propensity for factual accuracy among many historians might lead a researcher to rely more on that which is 'knowable' such as statistics and legislation, without acknowledging that these sources are not free from subjectivity themselves. While this paper has already shown there is a place for this kind of research, 'the critique of oral histories as subjective and inaccurate therefore risks discarding one of their greatest values, the insight they offer into subjective experience.'[36] Additionally, critics often highlight the challenges posed by the process, as well as the theory. Most notably, what happens when interviewees say nothing at all: 'Silences, oral historians fear, may signify a loss of information, a threat of incompleteness, a breakdown of rapport, a loss of trust, or an interviewer's ineptness.'[37] In this particular study, where the unit of analysis is the community, silence may be hidden by conformity to a collective memory that binds the community. However, the utility of an interpretivist approach lies in its ability to overcome this obstacle as the silence itself constructs part of the narrative about what we are allowed to remember. In an area of Scotland which has largely been neglected, silence in itself

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[34] Lee Ann Fujii, Interviewing in Social Science Research: A Relational Approach (London: Routledge, 2017), p.74.
[35] Ibid, p. 8.
[36] Peniston-Bird, 'The Sound of Memory', p. 110.
[37] Alexander Freund, 'Toward an Ethics of Silence? Negotiating Off-the-Record Events and Identity in Oral History', in Ritchie, Donald (ed), The Oxford Handbook of Oral History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 224.

would not be an unsurprising find, however, the role of the researcher is to elicit the hidden data that lies behind it.

Unfortunately, this over-emphasis on the limitations of oral history obscures its rich and valuable benefits, not least that it 'provides insight into why [people] think certain events happened one way and not another.'[38] It is this advantage which makes clear how a study of cultural heritage in communities in the South of Scotland can answer broader questions about rural identity, particularly in relation to the longer history of land reform. What does community land ownership mean in the South of Scotland? How does this affect community desire to own land? By answering questions such as these from a community-led perspective, historians, will be better able to understand the development of property relations and land claims outside of the Highland crofting context, as well as more contemporary questions about how community land buyouts affect communities.

The resultant oral histories were constructed through interviews with community members in Langholm, Newcastleton and Wanlockhead which took place across several weeks between June and August 2022. Participants were sourced via pre-existing connections in the cases of Wanlockhead and Newcastleton and via an interlocuter in Langholm. In total, three persons in each community were interviewed, a mix of six women and three men, all of whom were white. To be as accommodating as possible participants were given the option to be interviewed in person or via Zoom. Each interview was recorded, audio only for in person interviews, but using audio and video for Zoom. No transcripts were made, and the recordings were deleted following submission of the paper. Participants were made aware of these conditions and gave their consent to take part prior to interview.

In Langholm, whilst remaining anonymous, all the participants were female, all had moved to the village in the last 60 years, and all of whom wished to be interviewed via Zoom. One interviewee had moved to the community in 1964, and went on to have a significant role in the community. Of the other participants, one had worked in West

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[38] Fuji, Interviewing in Social Science, p.3.

Africa as a nurse for a time, while the other had moved to Langholm in 1974 after studying in Edinburgh and getting married.

In Newcastleton, Barbara and Greg, who were both interviewed via Zoom, were both office bearers with Newcastleton and District Community Trust (NDCT), serving as Secretary and Chair respectively at various points. Greg, aged 58, had lived in the village all his life, whilst Barbara had moved with her husband in 2000 after previously running an advertising agency. Meanwhile, Isabel, interviewed in person, was born in 1958 and brought up near to the village, returned in 1989 and has run a small shop on the corner of the main square ever since.

Finally, interviews in Wanlockhead were all conducted in person. Just as his lead-mining father and grandfather had, Peter, aged 55, had lived in the village all his life. Mac had moved in the last ten years from the United States with his young family, and Anne has lived in the village or in nearby Leadhills since 1985 when she married her husband, a descendent of Italian miners who had come to the village in the 1920s.

Primary source evidence created through interviews were supported by additional manuscripts accessed through local archives at Hawick, Newcastleton, Dumfries and Wanlockhead, as well as using the online services of Hansard and the National Library of Scotland to access relevant legislation and maps; and also the use of the three Statistical Accounts of Scotland and the British Newspaper Archive.

Since the conditions for CRTB purchases require the community to establish a democratically accountable body which represents the interests of those affected by the purchase, i.e. the residents, the community development trusts (CDTs) of the communities proved useful points of contact, whether to interview office bearers, or as interlocutors. This was an important consideration in the context of Wanlockhead where the differing conditions (fully explained in Chapter Six) meant that unlike in Langholm and Newcastleton where the buyouts were generally supported by the community as a whole, in Wanlockhead there has been opposition from some in the community. The interlocutor, the Chair of the Wanlockhead Community Trust (WCT), was proactive in supporting efforts to source 'anti-buyout' participants, however

difficulties were faced in organising these interviews, despite many efforts to accommodate their availability.

Valerie Yow recommends making a visit to meet participants prior to the interview as part of rapport-building, however, this was logistically challenging for many reasons.[39] Instead, in Langholm and Wanlockhead, 'scoping visits' to speak to the interlocutor and get a feel for each location was deemed sufficient, while this was not necessary in Newcastleton owing to a prior connection with Barbara. Nevertheless, it was crucial to visit the location of each case study, given the importance placed on understanding rural identity in the context of remoteness and connectivity in the study. As such, '[t]ravelling through the physical landscape broadened my knowledge of what 'local' meant in everyday terms.'[40]

The interviews themselves proceeded with relative ease, and while '[i]ndividuals may well exaggerate, reinterpret, confuse issues, err or even lie,' this can be mitigated through a combination of interpretivist analysis, and comprehensive preparation for each interview. This includes building a good rapport with interviewees, as well as adopting a flexible position as a researcher so that multiple strategies can be planned and used to respond dynamically in interviews to such problems.[41] The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed the interviewer to let the narrators guide the conversation, whilst also being able to draw discussion back to key points and probe for further information. A template list of questions is included in Appendix A to indicate the questions that were used for structure. Using consistent questions across each interview was important for facilitating comparative analysis of answers, this included using 'easy' questions to open and facilitate discussion as well as bring interviews to a natural end.[42] Other interviewing techniques such as motivating the narrator through positive appraisal, and allowing ample pauses for narrators to consider their answers proved useful in ensuring conversations were natural and free-flowing, whilst supporting the agency of the narrator.[43] A key underlying principle that

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[39] Valerie Yow, 'Interviewing Techniques and Strategies', in Perks, Robert, and Thomson, Alistair (eds), The Oral History Reader, 3rd edition (New York: Routledge, 2015).
[40] Fuji, Interviewing in Social Science, p. 43.
[41] Peniston-Bird, 'The Sound of Memory', p. 110.
[42] Fuji, Interviewing in Social Science.
[43] Yow, 'Interviewing Techniques and Strategies'.

helped guide this approach was 'treat[ing] everyone as 'ends' in themselves and not as a 'means' to some other end, such as a book or dissertation'.[44]

In what follows, the three communities will be addressed in separate chapters to trace and analyse their cultural heritage in relation to their CRTB purchases. This structure will allow the reader to build a profile of each case without an incohesive flow to the paper, whilst addressing the specificities of each community by drawing comparisons between examples and identifying key themes that crosscut them. We address the cases in descending population size, beginning with Langholm, the largest community and concluding with Wanlockhead, the smallest. To varying degrees, the cases present several similarities with established buyouts in the Highlands and Islands: small holdings being bought from big estates in areas where farmers and crofters were once cleared; the areas are also remote rural communities, which many consider to be isolated. However, as the following chapters will show, there are also differences in the social, cultural, and political heritage of the areas, notably the varying industries that previously supported the communities.

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[44] Fujii, p. 6.
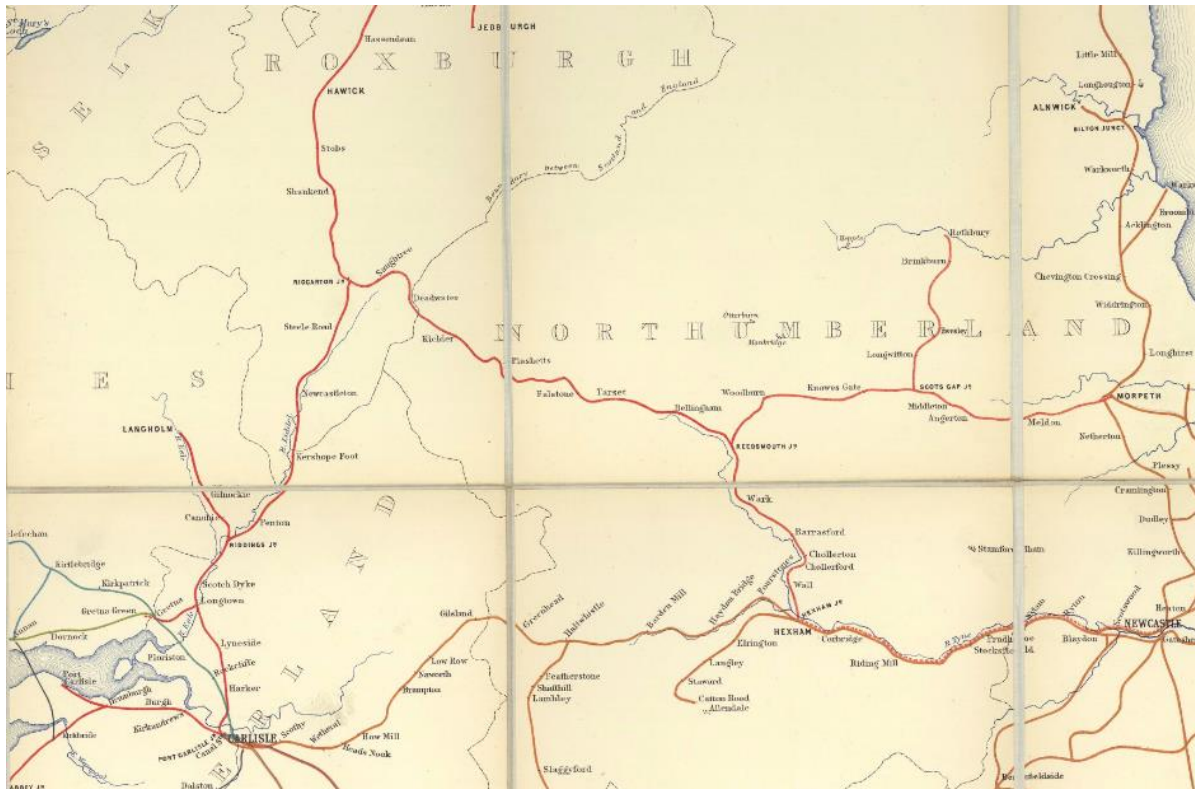
Chapter One – Langholm

Figure 1.1: Map of the North British railway system, North British Railway (NBR), 1882.[1]

Like many of the Border towns, Langholm is a former industrial mill and textile production centre. Situated on the banks of the River Esk in the Ewes Valley in the south of Dumfriesshire, it connects the Cumbrian city of Carlisle, with Edinburgh via the A7. Langholm's proximity to the Anglo-Scottish Border can be seen in Figure 1.1. The town's name, 'Lang-holm', is derived from the flat land on the banks of the River Esk and the Ewes.[2] The surrounding area's geological structure lends itself to a mixture of arable farming and sheep-rearing on land which has allegedly belonged to the Duke of Buccleuch since the sixteenth century. The conditions to purchase this land arose, as previously mentioned, in 2019 and was fully completed in 2022, when funding was secured to purchase an additional 5,300 acres on top of the initial 5,200

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[1] <https://maps.nls.uk/transport/railways/rec/8273> [accessed 1 September 2022]

[2] Sinclair, Sir John. *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Langholm, Dumfries, Vol. 13, Edinburgh: William Creech, 1794, p. 587.

acres that was finalised in 2021.[3] The Langholm Initiative, the community's development trust, led community efforts to raise £3.8 million for the first purchase and was crucial for securing the £2.2 million required for the second.[4] Despite this major success, interviews with the community showed that ownership of the land was not something that they had considered, 'it hadn't occurred to anyone that Buccleuch would ever sell that land. It was a huge shock.'[5] This chapter will thus connect the community's heritage to the land's historical patterns of use to reveal insightful observations about the identity of 'The Muckle Toon'.

Langholm's relationship to the land can firstly be characterised by its functionality. One narrator said, 'sheep farming has always been really important in this part of the world,'[6] given that the flat lands make good pastures for sheep-grazing. This land would become fully exploited by the end of the nineteenth Century, developing after the onset of the industrial revolution. As Rev. Thomas Martin noted in his statistical account of 1794, 'there seems to be a spirit of industry and enterprise arising, which, if properly cherished, may ultimately lead to the introduction of different manufactures, particularly to that of the woollen'.[7] The wool trade made Langholm an early centre of economic activity, with a wool-market and traders from Huddersfield, Halifax, and Leeds travelling to buy the town's produce in the early 1800s.[8] This is reflected in the population of the time which leapt from 2,039 in 1801 to 2,990 by 1851, and again to 3,500 in 1901.[9] At one point there were ten mills in the town, and employment was good enough that 'you could walk out of a job at one mill and get another one the next day or that afternoon.'[10] Clearly, in this regard, industrial productivity is directly related to the land uses permitted by leases agreed with the land owner. Indeed, for two reasons, generous land lease agreements were important for Langholm: firstly, 'the

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[3] BBC News, 'Langholm Moor Community Buyout deal completed', BBC, 2021 [accessed 8 March 2022]

[4] Bunting, Richard, 'Community makes history as South Scotland's biggest land buyout gets over the line to double size of nature reserve', The Langholm Initiative, 2022 [accessed 19 August 2022]

[5] Mrs A, Interview, 20th July 2022, Langholm [Zoom]

[6] Mrs B, Interview, 21st July 2022, Langholm [Zoom]

[7] Sir John Sinclair, The Statistical Account of Scotland, Langholm

[8] J. Gordon, ed. The New Statistical Account of Scotland / by the ministers of the respective parishes, under the superintendence of a committee of the Society for the Benefit of the Sons and Daughters of the Clergy. Langholm, Dumfries, Vol. 4, Edinburgh: Blackwoods and Sons, 1845, p. 416.

[9] George F. B. Houston, The County of Dumfries. Glasgow, 1962. Print. Third Statistical Account of Scotland 12.

[10] Mrs C, Interview, 1st August 2022, Langholm [Zoom]

nature of the ground does not lend itself to the use of combines,'[11] therefore only a limited range of agricultural pursuits in the surrounding fields can produce sufficient income for local farmers; secondly, as a result of this first reason, the town depended on abundant farming stock, as without the supply of raw materials for conversion into textile products, the town would be deprived of its workforce, who would form the soul of the community. Yet this also presents a counter economic effect: competitiveness. Given the limited land available, and the few options for use, the Duke of Buccleuch was able to exploit the demand by charging rent as high as £2, 10 shillings and £1, 5s. per acre in 1845.[12]

By the time of the Third Statistical Account (TSA) in 1951, there were only five tweed mills which were 'the chief employers of labour in Langholm,'[13] employing 240 men and 360 women. As this account shows, Langholm has therefore 'always tended to be a 'woman's town','[14] and this is reflected by the fact all the narrators interviewed were women. For one narrator, this 'woman's society' played a key role in building the community,

> They would include me in their conversations, their reminiscences about their time working in the mills, and they would refer to people that they had worked with, and they'd say, "of course you didnae work in the mill", but they still included me in their stories, and that made me feel very very much part of the community.[15]

This example demonstrates the strength of communal working in contributing to community identity. The shared work created a space within which bonds could be built, and a comradeship formed over shared tasks. Furthermore, the tweed mills in Langholm supported a number of career paths, adding to the vibrancy of the community: from the sheep farmers who supplied the wool, to the weavers, dyers, bleachers, and tailors by whom the raw material would become an item of clothing, and then also the accountants and business managers, not to mention the engineers

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[11] Houston, The County of Dumfries.
[12] Gordon, ed. The New Statistical Account of Scotland.
[13] Houston.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Mrs A, Interview

required to run the waterworks and the looms.[16] In this sense the agricultural basis on which the textile industry was formed in Langholm was not merely subsistence farming, as it effectively constructed the base for which community identity would be built on. In other words, the cultural capital of agriculture should not be underestimated in assessing its contribution to local communities, as in particularly rural areas such as the Scottish Borders, its lasting cultural contribution outstrips that of its economic value. Considering this in the contemporary context this paper is approaching community land ownership from, this has important implications for the role of the 'community' in community land buyouts. Indeed, prospective CRTB purchases are often 'given meaning locally in terms of the economic (they are expected to lead to sustainable employment) and the ecological, but they also make visible a collective, historically resilient, local, ethic.'[17] As interviewees observed, the town was generally supportive of the buyout, although with mild scepticism while they assessed 'whether it actually succeeds in bringing economic benefit to the town.'[18] Therefore, while the land has a functional application in Langholm's cultural heritage, its primary contribution lies in its symbolic value, i.e. the role it plays in bringing the community together.

The Duke of Buccleuch's ownership of the land during this period of economic productivity has much to answer for, therefore, in terms of the licences granted to farmers to cultivate the land and rear animals for something more than subsistence farming. One narrator observed, 'Langholm has been surrounded, or dominated by Buccleuch Estates forever really […] A lot of things in Langholm were determined by what Buccleuch allowed them to do'.[19] Indeed, much can be gleaned about the Duke of Buccleuch's ideology of land ownership from observations about 'New Langholm', a small village of 100 houses built in 1778, half a mile up and over the river from the main town. Its structure, in Figure 1.2, shows it to be built by way of a plan with several smaller streets feeding into one main road, which leads to 'Buccleuch Square'.

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[16] Gordon, NSA.
[17] A. Fiona D. Mackenzie, 'A working land: crofting communities, place and the politics of the possible in post-Land Reform Scotland', Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 31 (2006), p. 390.
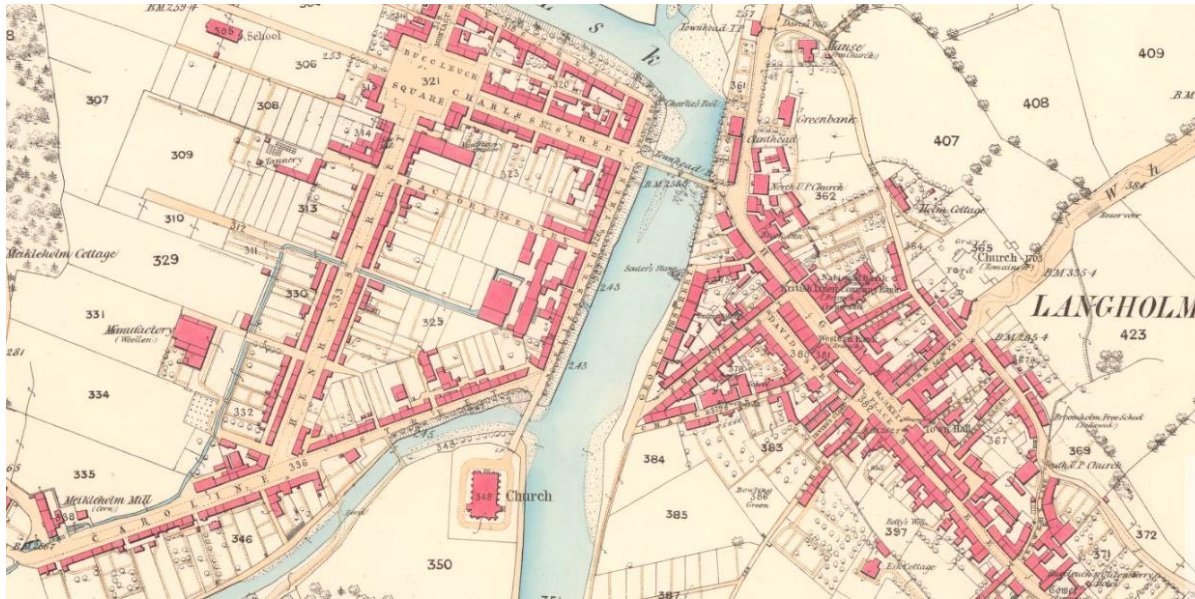[18] Mrs C, Interview
[19] Mrs B, Interview

Figure 1.2: Langholm, Ordnance Survey (OS), 1859.[20]

This design reflects the 'improving' philosophy instilled by the Scottish Enlightenment also evident in Edinburgh's New Town. The construction of the village relates directly to maximising productivity, and extraction, as Gwen Kennedy Neville writes,

> The people who emigrated into the towns to work in the woollen mills were housed in special tenement housing in areas along the rivers near the mills or down lower expanses of hillside adjoining the town's 'high street.' These newer areas of town are given special names to signify that they were started as 'new towns' for workers coming in from the countryside.[21]

As such, a cotton manufactory was established in the village around the same time as its founding, supporting employment for 80 to 100 people.[22] Rent followed a unique formula, whereby tenants paid a small amount for their house, which would give them between two and four acres of land, depending on whether it was one or two storeys.[23] The village became connected to the town via a bridge in 1775, and in the present day is a fully integrated part of the town, housing its secondary school and fire station. Owing to improvements such as this, the relationship between the Duke and his

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[20] <https://maps.nls.uk/view/74944330> [accessed 1 September 2022]
[21] Gwen Kennedy Neville, 'Community form and ceremonial life in three regions of Scotland', American Ethnologist, 6 (1979), p. 101.
[22] Sinclair, OSA.
[23] Ibid.

tenants is frequently described in positive terms: 'the Duke affords every facility for improvements and for the comfort of his tenantry'.[24] This theme persists across the centuries, as one letter to the Eskdale and Liddesdale Advertiser in 1884 reads upon the then-Duke's death,

> The late Duke's relations with Langholm were of the most cordial character, […] Anything that was asked by the inhabitants generally was readily granted, and it was rarely that any reasonable request was refused to individuals. His Grace was one of the most considerate employers who ever lived.[25]

One narrator also described the relationship between the Duke and the community as 'amicable; they wanted rid of something… we wanted the land on behalf of the people.'[26] Indeed, the 'presence' of the Duke persists in tangible terms which might be described as something akin to fealty. Drawing on Michael Billig's concept of 'banal nationalism,'[27] in this case, the daily reproduction of local, rather than national, symbols serves to underpin the community's relationship to the Duke in terms of pride and gratitude. These symbols are subtle but persistent across the physical geography, with the present-day Buccleuch Centre, an arts theatre, built on the site of the former Buccleuch Square in New Langholm, surrounded by streets named 'Henry', 'Montagu', 'George', 'Charles', 'Walter', and 'John', all in reference to the Duke or members of his family. The idea of an 'absentee landlord' often found in the case of CRTB purchases in the Highlands and Islands (Eigg, for example) suggests something of a resentment between the community and the landlord. This, however, is not the case in Langholm, where the offices of the Buccleuch Estates are, where employment as grouse keepers and shepherds supported the local economy during the dying days of the textiles industry, and where a kind of 'banal localism' reinforces a more positive conceptualisation of the tenant-landlord relationship. What makes Langholm unique, therefore, in the context of CRTB purchases outside the South of Scotland, is that the community's relationship with the land is largely characterised by positive relations

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[24] Ibid.
[25] Anon, 'Death of the Duke of Buccleuch', Eskdale and Liddesdale Advertiser, 23rd April 1884 [accessed 12 July 2022]
[26] Mrs A
[27] Michael Billig, Banal Nationalism (United Kingdom: SAGE Publications, 1995).

with the landlord. Langholm's New Town is symbolic of the dual role land plays in the community's heritage. On the one hand, it represents its functional value, housing workers which supported its agricultural and textile industries. On the other hand, it provides a space in which a tangible collective memory can be constructed and reproduced, i.e. a gratitude towards the landlord Buccleuch. 'There's a phrase hear which is "a'y bin", and people were content with that, and people had very happy experiences beating during grouse beats, […] and it was land that was not very much considered until common riding time.'[28] This reinforces ideas about subservience to a higher power, imbuing a social conservatism that indicates a contentedness with the way things are.

The reproduction of symbols is a common theme in the Scottish Borders and extends the role of the land beyond its mere functionality in the construction of community identity. This identity is celebrated on the last Friday of July each year, as the town comes together for the Common Riding. Described by interviewees as 'bigger than Christmas,'[29] the tradition is found in almost all Border towns in Scotland. One narrator joked, '[the Common Riding] is the sole purpose of a Langholm[ite's] life. […] Its very central to the life of the town.'[30] The Common Riding dates back a long time in the history of the town, but the strength of its importance has not died. The Third Statistical Account described the anticipation in the village as a 'fever', and regular correspondence in the Eskdale and Liddesdale Advertiser supports this assertion, 'The Common Riding is a great event and has a significance, the importance of which but few dare dispute. It is prepared for and talked about during six months alit of every twelve.'[31] While the celebration transcends a fortnight in July, the main event is the marking of the boundaries of common land, where the Cornet – a local man elected to represent the town by carrying the flag on excursions to other Border festivals – is accompanied by a cavalcade of horse riders to ride up the moor and perform a ceremony on the common moss granted by charter to the people of Langholm by Lord Nithsdale in 1628. In this, however, is a great irony, for indeed the title 'common moss' itself is a symbol, 'the Common never belonged to the town in the sense of the

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[28] Mrs C
[29] Mrs B
[30] Mrs C
[31] Anon, 'Langholm Common Riding, Races and Sports', Eskdale and Liddesdale Advertiser, 4th August 1880 [accessed 12 July 2022]

townspeople being the propriet[ors] of the land included within its bounds or having power to ten or sell it as a piece of heritable property.'[32] One interviewee shared the view of the common riding as 'contradictory' despite her otherwise affection for it and for the land itself.[33]

It is useful here to draw on another scholar of nationalism studies, Eric Hobsbawm's concept of 'invented tradition.'[34] According to Hobsbawm, this is a set of practices, 'which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.'[35] He observes that, in the case of nationalism, invented tradition is usually established by a ruling elite, and usually to imply continuity with a suitable version of history. Indeed, this continuity is important when set against issues of economic decline, as seen in the textiles industry in Langholm after the war, and into the 1980s. This decline is demonstrated by the population figures from the post-war years where the parish was as low as 2,750 in 1951, and 2,311 by 2001.[3637] All three narrators described the closure of local businesses as an important change, two of whom explicitly referred to 'the expansion of neoliberal capitalism'[38] as playing a key role in the decline of the traditional industries which supported business in the town.

With the changing fortunes of the town's industrial life and the eventual decline of the textiles industry, the Common Riding represents stability. Applying Hobsbawm's theory, the notion of 'invented traditions' such as the Common Riding connects the people of Langholm to the land and supports continuity in the identity of the community. As one interviewee noted,

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[32] Anon, 'Langholm Common Riding', Eskdale and Liddesdale Advertiser, 22nd July 1891 [accessed 12 July 2022]
[33] Mrs B
[34] E. J. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds), The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
[35] Ibid, p.1.
[36] Houston, TSA.
[37] https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/search-the-census/#/explore/snapshot
[38] Mrs B

it brings everybody together, […] doing what your father, your grandfather, your great grandfather and your great great grandfather did before you in the same streets, up the same hill, dare I say it, riding the same horses.[39]

In terms of preserving social relations, the ceremony is seen 'a way of the town defining itself against the large estate.'[40] While this may appear to the outside observer an apologetic stance that supports the position of the community as subordinate to the interests of Buccleuch, for many people it is 'no empty, useless custom, but putting a seal to certain rights and possessions'[41] in an act of defiance. The strengthening of the community identity through traditions such as this, supersedes notions of class and constructs a familial identity in the community, owing to the shared landscape, traditions, and challenges presented by its rural location. This can be linked to the relative conservatism of the Border people, 'relations between the workers and management are good; in some cases a close personal contact has existed since childhood.'[42] In many ways, these close personal relations mirror the structures of clanship found in the Highlands. As Devine notes, 'the blood ties between the ruling families and the ordinary clansmen were largely mythical but the assumption of consanguinity […] gave an emotional bond which helped to cement social cohesion within clanship.'[43] Indeed, there are not blood ties between the communities of the Borders, but the symbolic consanguinity played out through a common connection to the land forms a similar structure. The lack of industrial agitation during periods of time when others were agitating against their oppressors, indicates this symbolic consanguinity seeped into the industrial relations of the town, preventing conflict between managing and working classes.

The shared traditions performed through the Common Riding reinforce the bonds of symbolic consanguinity, implying both continuity with the past (community spirit lives on), and solidarity in the present (sharing in common success, and pulling together in times of hardship). Therefore, the loss of shared tasks which built industrial solidarity between millworkers and contributed to the vibrancy of the town is cushioned by the

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[39] Mrs C.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Anon, 'Langholm Common Riding'.
[42] Houston.
[43] Devine, p. 8.

continual performance of shared traditions that link its present to its past. The land, thus, acts as a focal point, around which community can come together. Against this context, a cultural repetition is deeply ingrained in the community's mindset, and while the buyout focused on the future through the creation of a nature reserve for the Tarras Valley, the conservation of the environment as a function of the land, was secondary to its cultural importance.[44]

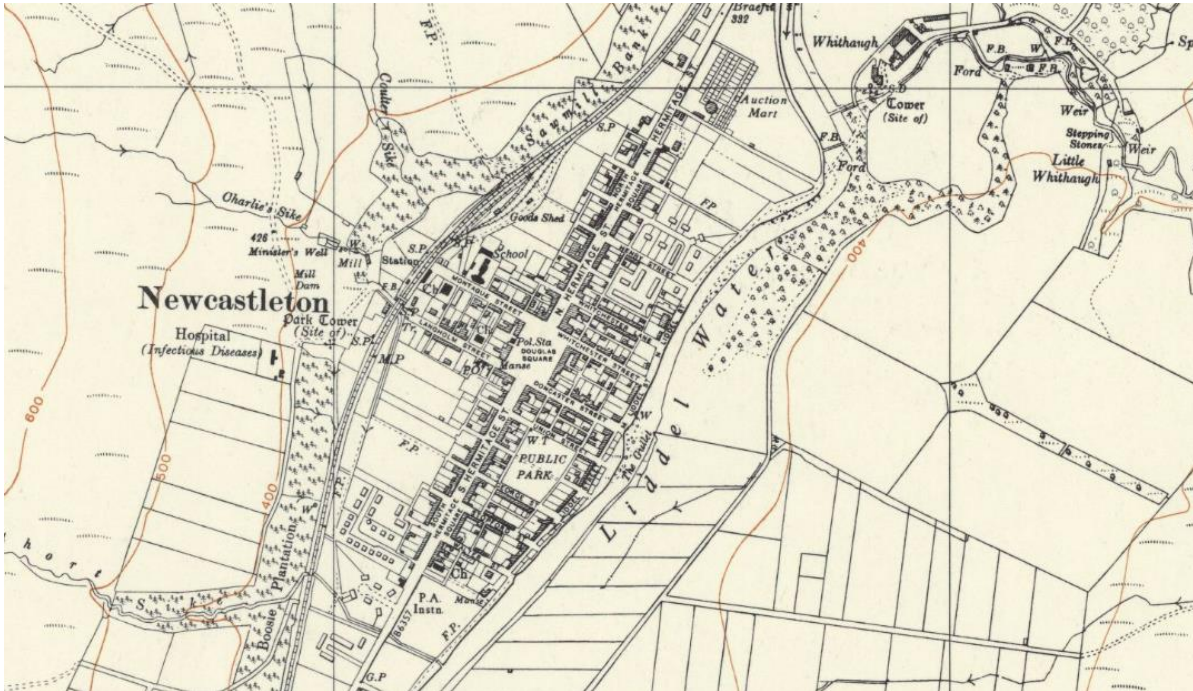[44] Mrs A.

Chapter Two – Newcastleton

Figure 2.1: Newcastleton, OS, 1957.[1]

Built in 1793, Newcastleton is a small village of 768 people which stands on the banks of the River Liddal, which gives its name to the district of Liddesdale.[2] The popular local name for the village is Copshawholm, indicating the flat land on which it was built, whilst paying tribute to the former holdings of Copshaw Ha', Copshaw and Copshaw Park, around which the building of houses was planned.[3] During the planning, '775 acres around the village were divided into 311 small fields and 700 acres of hill ground were used for grazing.'[4] The community development trust's purchase of 750 acres of this land at Holm Hill was finalised in September 2020 with £850,000 of support from the Scottish Land Fund (SLF).[5] Unlike in Langholm, where the purchase of land came as a surprise to community members, interviewees in Newcastleton saw it much more as part of a natural progression: 'I think that protection, where they fought for

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[1] <https://maps.nls.uk/view/188151297> [accessed 1st September 2022]
[2] Sinclair, Sir John. The Statistical Account of Scotland, Castletown, Roxburgh, Vol. 16, Edinburgh: William Creech, 1795, p. 60.
[3] Scottish Borders Archive and Local History Centre (SBALC), LIB/0644, Through the Eye of a Needle: 1793 – Newcastleton – 1993.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Visit Newcastleton, 'Holm Hill Community Buyout – we've only gone and done it!', Visit Newcastleton [accessed 8 March 2022]

everything to protect their own, is still prevalent in the community.'[6] Across the three interviews with Barbara, Greg, and Isabel, the narrators established a collective memory of the origins of the village. The way its history was recited was as if they had all read from a script, which also reflected the narratives in the additional sources. This collective narrative formed around two primary characteristics of the village's birth: the planning of the village and the system of 'Copshaw crofting'. By scrutinising this collective narrative, this chapter will be able to establish what silences are hidden by the collective memory.

All the narrators established early on in their narratives that 'it's a planned village,' which was designed in a 'grid system' to house the residents of 'Castletown' or 'Castleton' (which gives its name to the parish), after it was cleared to make way for a grouse moor; the village's planning is generally attributed to the Duke of Buccleuch, 'he had it designed'.[7] This reflects the 'improving' ideology demonstrated in New Langholm fifteen years previous, and indeed the village plan is a clear cultural symbol, demonstrating the pride the community feels in its original innovation. The prevalence of the village plan (Figure 2.1) in primary sources is similar to the iconography associated with images of the main street on St Kilda, as a marker of identity. However, while not entirely absent from accounts of the founding of the village, the agency of the villagers themselves in its planning is often shrouded by a narrative implying the benevolence of the 'good Duke Henry'. This narrative obscures a petition by parishioners to 'grant land to create a village in Liddesdale,'[8] which was dismissed in favour of plans drawn up by local man William Keir while the land remained in the Duke's ownership.[9] This compromise reflects wider trends in the Highlands around the same time, 'most clearances before 1815 were not designed to expel the people,' rather landowners felt, 'the evicted represented an important resource who should not simply be discarded. A dual economy was envisaged, each part of which would in time be a source of increasing revenue.'[10]

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[6] Mrs B. Elborn, Interview, 7th July 2022, Newcastleton [Zoom]
[7] Ms C.I. Elliot, Interview, 17th August 2022, Newcastleton
[8] LIB/0644, Through the Eye of a Needle: 1793 – Newcastleton – 1993.
[9] SBALC, Val Robson papers, SBA/574/15, 1793-1993 Newcastleton Bi-Centenary Souvenir Programme of Events.
[10] Devine, p. 37.

The Duke of Buccleuch, therefore, saw exploitative potential in the planning of a new village, not only from the rents raised from tenants, but also from unproductive use of land for upper-class sports like grouse shooting. Collective memory and 'banal' symbols scattered through the village street names, as in New Langholm, obscure this to an extent. Therefore, while the clearance and planning is not 'hidden' from the heritage of the village, the emphasis placed on certain aspects of the collective memory creates a silence which indicates the 'suitable' version of history which the community has been taught to reproduce, as alluded to by Hobsbawm's theory of invented tradition.

The second aspect of the collective narrative continues this silence by suggesting the Duke 'bribed'[11] or 'induced the crofters on the hills and plains to come and dwell in Newcastleton by giving them ninety-nine years' leases of building stances, and giving them fields'.[12] While long leases offered security of tenure, judging the community to be so easily won by this offer alone negates their active part in the founding of the village, and reinforces Enlightened notions of social advancement, 'implemented for the most part "from above," rather than by a combination of forces from above and below.'[13] The association of land with these leases is a fundamental aspect of the community's cultural heritage. All three narrators explained, 'when the village was founded, if you built a single storey house you got an acre of land, if it was two storeys you got two acres of land.'[14] This unique form of land tenure differed from the run-rig system of agriculture commonly found in the Scottish Borders owing to its individualisation and the length of leases. This has given rise to the characterisation of the original inhabitants as 'Copshaw Crofters,'[15] and its impact on the land can be seen in the mosaic-like pattern seen in Figure 2.2. This functional relationship between the community and the land has evidently had a symbolic impact on the community's heritage. 'Carry[ing] on that tradition'[16] contributed to the community business plan,

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[11] Elborn, Interview
[12] SBALC, Val Robson papers, SBA/574/11, W. Hall, Book, 'A Border Village' [photocopy of study of Newcastleton, Roxburghshire] 1905.
[13] Davidson, 'The Scottish Path to Capitalist Agriculture 2', p. 416.
[14] Mr G. Cuthbert, Interview, 5th August 2022, Newcastleton [Zoom]
[15] Elborn
[16] Ibid.

it's easy for us to now go back to that concept and offer young people who want to get into farming the opportunity to have a plot of land […] and let them have a go.[17]

The update of this concept indicates how the community views 'ownership': inasmuch as the concept was exploitative in the hands of a non-benevolent landowner, in the hands of a proactive owner, such as the community, it can be used for the common good.

Figure 2.2: Newcasleton and surrounding land, OS, 1957.[18]

Copshaw crofting's symbolic significance is reinforced by the struggle of the villagers against the Duke of Buccleuch's exploitative behaviour in 1892. Over the 99 years of

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[17] Ibid.
[18] <https://maps.nls.uk/view/188151297> [accessed 1st September 2022]

the original leases, the tenants had made improvements to the land from its previously desolated state, whilst at the same time, 'everything [had] been done to break the connection between the house and the land. A house in the village without land is of comparatively little value.'[19] When the villagers came to renew the leases and ask for more land to support their income, the Duke refused requests for more land and attempted to double feus from £5 to £10 per acre on account that the tenants 'must be making lots of food, lots of money.'[20][21] This relationship demonstrates Newcastleton's inclusion in the broader feudal structures which pervaded patterns of land ownership in Scotland, 'the main source of income for the landowners was appropriated, in the form of rent, from the surplus produced by the peasants.'[22] Their resistance against this exploitation therefore created a cultural link between Newcastleton and the social movements elsewhere, 'the state of things now existing is very similar to that of the Highland crofter previous to the passing of the Crofters' Act.'[23] It also became a symbol of the village's natural resilience owing to their relationship with the land. Newcastleton's 'famous'[24] lack of industry outside of agriculture, made the attachment to the land more significant, therefore assaults on the population's connection to it – their livelihood – would be fiercely resisted. This resilience has perpetuated collective memory, contributing to the 2020 buyout, 'it became symbolic when it was taken from us. But it was functional before then. We need to maintain the working ground.'[25] Crofting or working the land thus forms an important part of the cultural heritage of the community, indicating the role of the land in supporting the village's existence, and implying the community was part of something bigger.

The collective act of resistance resulted in the extension of leases for another 35 years under the under same conditions as before, with the option of perpetual feus, and a bonus equal to three years' rent.[26] As a cultural symbol for the village, this struggle

[19] Val Robson papers, SBA/574/11, W. Hall, Book, 'A Border Village' [photocopy of study of Newcastleton, Roxburghshire] 1905.
[20] Cuthbert, Interview.
[21] Hall, 'A Border Village'.
[22] Davidson, Scottish Path to Capitalist Agriculture 1, pp. 230-1.
[23] Hall, 'A Border Village'.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Cuthbert.
[26] Hall, 'A Border Village'.

represented the resilience and self-sufficiency demanded by its remoteness and isolation as 'a landlocked island.'[27] This supports earlier the earlier argument that 'ownership' in the context of the community represents a natural progression of the community's resilience. As Barbara expressed, '[t]hat resilience is what brings us together in a crisis.'[28] Land, therefore, plays a role in constructing a resilient identity through its functional relationship with the people, and through the production of symbolic events characterised by assaults on that functional relationship.

Another key aspect of Newcastleton's cultural heritage is the Border Union Railway line that ran through the village between 1862 and 1969. During the construction of the railway, the village population reached a peak of 3,688 in 1861, owing to the navvies who were building the line.[29] Sources show the introduction of the railway had much less to do with the support of economic development in regional economies, than it does extraction. A memorandum book explains its specific design to accommodate the maximisation of profits, 'the importance of cheap and abundant Coal, [and Lime] to the manufactures and agriculture of Scotland, has greatly weighed with the promoters in their choice of the route to Carlisle.'[30] This reflects wider trends in Britain's development of railway connections where 'rail routes linked the productive centres of the periphery to England.'[31] Indeed, Figure 2.3 demonstrates that lines in Scotland were constructed north-to-south, rather than east-to-west, much like in Wales where 'north-south rail links were late to be constructed, and relatively sparse when compared with routes in the coal-mining areas.'[32] In the Borders, as elsewhere, 'Railway extension was much less responsive to population density,'[33] and much effort was exerted in extending the line through Newcastleton (Figure 2.4), rather than through the more populous Langholm, owing to its greater access to natural resources.

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[27] Cuthbert.
[28] Elborn.
[29] John Herdman, Third Statistical Account of Scotland, The County of Roxburgh, Vol 28 (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic, 1992).
[30] Dumfries and Galloway Archives, GGD513/3, Richard Hodgson, Chairman, Printed memorandum book of the Border Union (North British) Railways for construction of a railway line from Hawick to Carlisle via Longtown, with branches to Langholm, Canonbie Colliery and Gretna, 1858
[31] Michael Hechter, Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 1999), p. 149.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.

In this regard, land dictated Newcastleton's connection to the outside world, as much as it dictated its means of living.
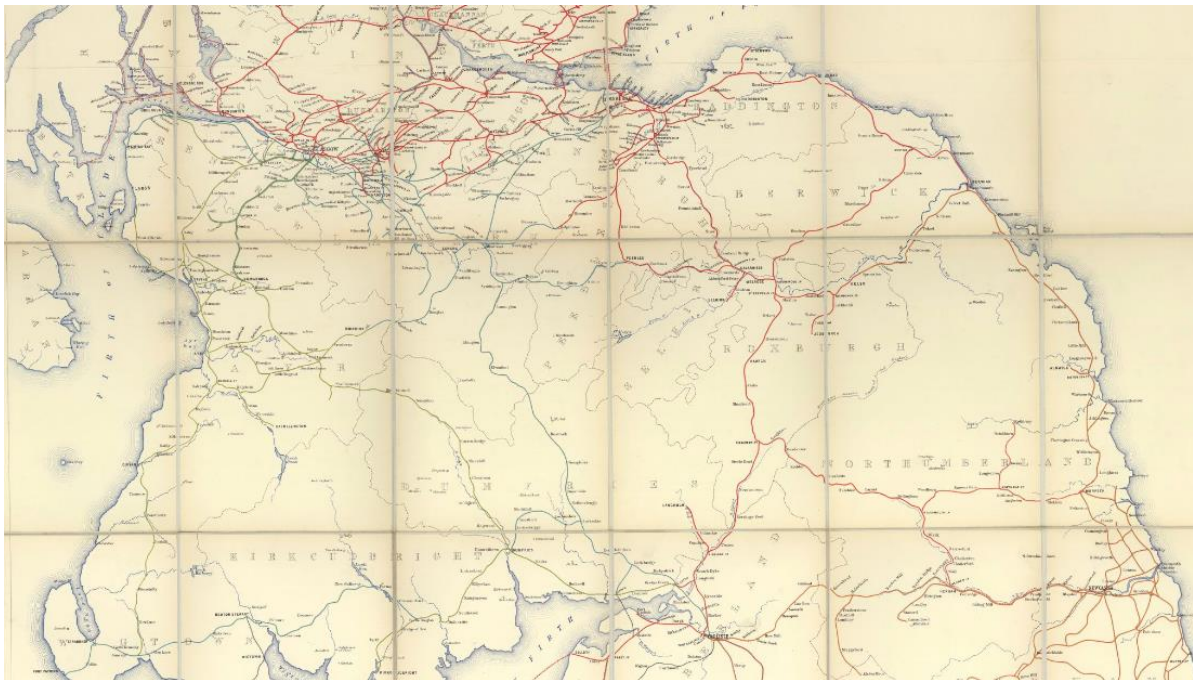

Figure 2.3: Map of the North British railway system, NBR, 1882.[34]

Despite this extractive premise, the railway also supported economic growth in the region. For example, it connected Newcastleton to larger centres of industry in Langholm, Hawick, and Carlisle, which enabled the textiles industry to utilise the village's local wool supplies.[35] Despite the local economy which this supported, it came as a double-edged sword as these larger towns offered better wages and could produce on a larger scale.[36] These antagonisms are reflected in the post-war hosiery factory established in 1946 as an extension of a firm in Hawick. The factory provided employment for 'more than 40 girls and women' before its closure in 1959, and then 17 on its reopening again in 1965.[37] Thus whilst the railway offered competition, it also brought expansion. Indeed, 48 women were able to commute to Hawick as a result of

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[34] <https://maps.nls.uk/transport/railways/rec/8273> [accessed 1st September 2022]

[35] Val Robson papers, SBA/574/15, 1793-1993 Newcastleton Bi-Centenary Souvenir Programme of Events.

[36] SBALC, Val Robson papers, SBA/574/12, Edinburgh College of Art School of Town and Country Planning, Castleton (Newcastleton) Parish, planning study 1966.

[37] Herdman, John, Third Statistical Account of Scotland, The County of Roxburgh, Vol 28 (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic, 1992)

the railway.[38] Wherever villagers found work, their collective employment had a positive impact on the village community, much like the 'women's society' described in Langholm. Isabel recalled,

> When I worked in the bank, the shop across the road used to be a knitwear factory, it was an offshoot of one of the Hawick ones, and I mean there was some right characters that worked in there, I mean full of fun […] when you get a bunch of people in a factory together they have a laugh.[39]

Skilled worked, such as that found in textile factories offers the space within which members of a community can share stories, build bonds, and construct collective memories which shape the identity of a community. As such, a community's heritage is strongly dependent on the pillars which support this space: in Newcastleton, the land supports industry, while the railway connected it. This idea of dependency is silenced in the collective narrative of Newcastleton's heritage owing to the self-constructed image of resilience and self-sufficiency. In many ways the railway both challenges and reinforces notions of resilience and self-sufficiency owing to the cultural as well as economic benefits it enabled.

Thus the railway has always played a key role in the identity of the village, inconspicuous by its presence, but conspicuous by its absence. Copshies have consistently defined themselves by their ability to access opportunities outside the village. The agency afforded to them by effective transport links gave them independence and a sense of ownership about their lives. The loss of the line in 1969 resulted in the community's loss of 'privilege' in determining its own fate.[40] Indeed, the notable change in the character of the village in the period after its loss indicates that its removal was effective to the removal of part of the village's identity, 'in the 70s, 80s, the village wasn't a nice place to live, it was very despondent, I would say it was very like a mining town after the pit closures in the 80s'.[41]

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[38] Val Robson papers, SBA/574/12, Edinburgh College of Art School of Town and Country Planning, Castleton (Newcastleton) Parish, planning study 1966.
[39] Elliot, Interview.
[40] Hechter, Internal Colonialism, p. 119.
[41] Cuthbert.

Figure 2.4: Map of the North British railway system, NBR, 1882.[42]

Coupled with the decline of the village's founding agricultural industry the loss of the railway further increased the sense of remoteness and isolation of the village. Greg continued,

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[42] <https://maps.nls.uk/transport/railways/rec/8273> [accessed 1st September 2022]

You had the mill closures that affected Hawick and Langholm, you know it affected us as well because a lot of the women worked in a lot of the mills in Hawick. […] You could see that some houses went from having two incomes, you know, they had a wife working in the mill and […] we had a lot of forestry workers; then they went to mechanisation.[43]

The contrast between these recollections of life in the village with the enthusiasm with which Greg described the struggles of the villagers in the first hundred years indicates the interconnected nature of concepts of resilience, self-sufficiency and dependence for remote communities like in Copshawholm. A certain dependency enables the village to develop a resilient identity, to the extent where the dependent features of the village become a crucial aspect of its identity; therefore when faced with their loss, the identity seeps away. Parallels can be drawn between this loss and the threat of loss of land made in the 1890s, however, in the case of the former the strength of the community's 'crofting' identity and its sense of ownership over the land (despite not possessing proprietary rights) enabled a cohesive identity to resist the threat to their identity. In the case of the railway, however, the development of a dependency without a sense of ownership limited the community's ability to maintain cohesion after its loss.

Greg felt Margaret Thatcher's right-to-buy scheme was important in beginning the process of re-establishing a sense of ownership in the community. By being able to buy a house, 'people began seeing the fields around Newcastleton, they became more valuable, they became assets.'[44] The effect was to increase awareness of what ownership enabled the community to do. With this increased sense of ownership, the remnants of the community's identity could be reconnected with its heritage of struggle and resilience. This rediscovery was given the added economic boost of 60 well-paid jobs with the opening of a Barbour factory in the late 1980s, thereby restoring a sense of control over the local economy for a time.

The case of Newcastleton presents many similarities with that of Langholm, however the conservatism reinforced through cultural rituals and symbols in the latter contrasts

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[43] Cuthbert.
[44] Ibid.

directly with the enforced progressivism in Newcastleton. Ownership and self-enhancement make up a natural progression of the community's life and identity, rejecting the common Borders' "a'y been" attitude. Furthermore, while in Langholm the land played a primarily symbolic role, in Newcastleton its functionality laid the grounds for its symbolism. The symbolic struggle of villagers against oppressive landlordism reproduces itself daily in the challenges presented by the remoteness of the village. Its rurality therefore renders the framework of class relations within which these struggles are embedded almost totally irrelevant. The community described itself in such terms in its application to the 1993 Friends of the UN 'We the Peoples' Community Award:

> Newcastleton is a prime example of a small rural community, able to harness its own internal drive, initiative, determination, creativity and neighbourhood […] the underlying principle has been a determination by the village to better itself, principally through self-help and basing future development on its historical foundation and community strength.[45]

Thus the community is characterised by its location and its subsequent ability to respond to challenging circumstances. The village's remoteness acts as a binding characteristic among its population: 'Everybody in the village is born with a chip on your shoulder. It's the way we make things happen, it's the way we get things done.'[46] As such the CRTB purchase is about very much about continuing the heritage of resisting change "from above."

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[45] SBALC, Val Robson papers, SBA/574/15, the application to the Friends of the United Nations Community Awards 1993 (UN 50th Anniversary) including: correspondence, draft nomination form; We the Peoples: 50 Communities Awards, 1993.
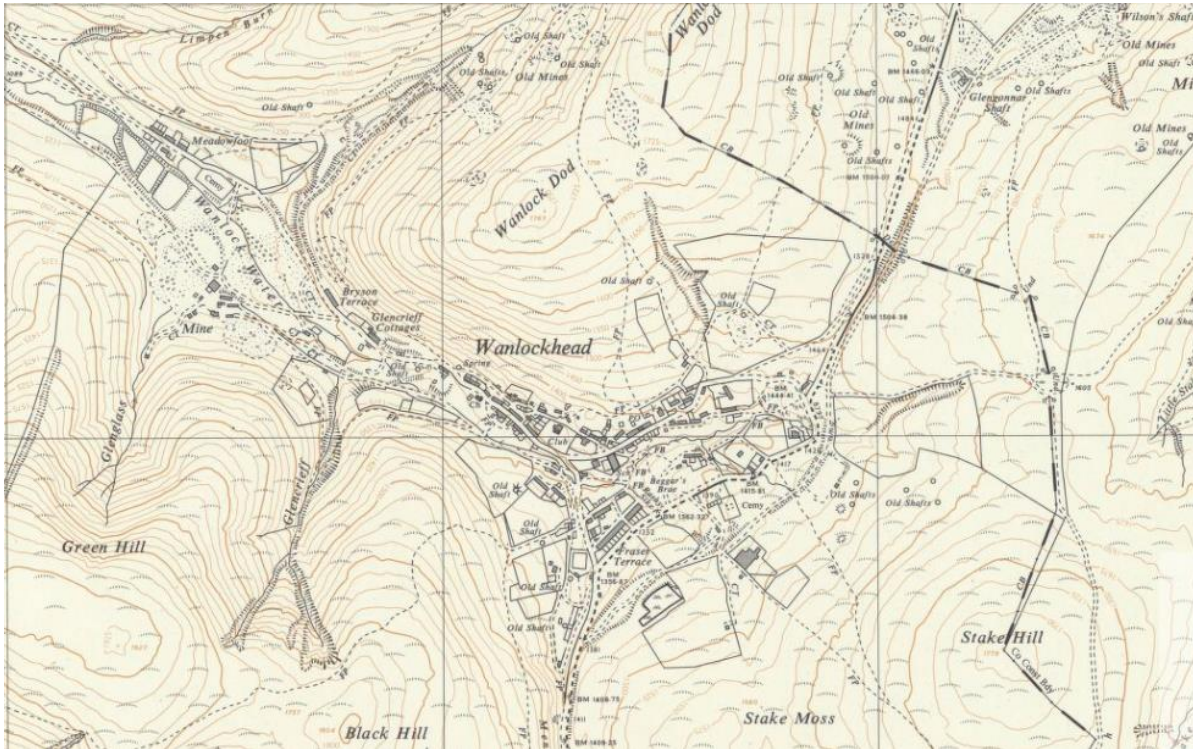[46] Cuthbert.

Chapter Three – Wanlockhead

Figure 3.1: Wanlockhead, OS, 1962.[1]

Wanlockhead is a former lead-mining town situated in the Lowther Hills in Upper Nithsdale, Dumfriesshire, named after the Wanlock stream which runs through it; at around 1,500 feet above sea level the village is Scotland's highest village.[2] In August 2020, the community agreed a £1.5 million deal with Buccleuch Estates to purchase the surrounding 3,863 acres of land.[3] The WCT applied for funding from the SLF to support the purchase, however, the CRTB purchase stalled when the SLF expressed concerns over levels of support given only 69 out of 134 villagers supported the buyout in a public ballot.[4] Residents of 20 years or more are scarce in the village, and straddled both sides in the vote. Interviewees expressed confusion, frustration, and dismay at the impact this has had on the community, 'there's an anger in this village

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[1] <https://maps.nls.uk/view/188144931> [accessed 1st September 2022]
[2] John C. Crawford, and Stuart James, The Society for Purchasing Books in Wanlockhead 1756 – 1979 (Scottish Library Essays – 1, 1980)
[3] BBC News, 'Wanlockhead: Price agreed for highest village buyout bid', BBC, 2020 [accessed 8 March 2022]
[4] Webster, Laura, 'Wanlockhead: Setback for community buyout as funding bid is rejected', The National, 21st November 2020 [accessed 8 March 2022]

that was never here before;'[5] 'I don't know if it's their love for the village or their dislike for the buyout. I find it very difficult when they've been here as children and seen that the Duke did nothing;'[6] 'they haven't articulated to me why they are so threatened by [the buyout];'[7] The remit of this paper is not to debate local politics, however, this community divide contrasts with the cases in Langholm and Newcastleton, both of whom were relatively supportive communities. This chapter therefore seeks to draw connections between the village's cultural heritage, its connection to the land and its construction of identity.

Wanlockhead's industrial heritage has always been a key characteristic of village identity, as Peter said, 'the lead miners made Wanlockhead.'[8] Note here that he says, 'the miners,' and not 'the mines,' an important distinction made in characterising the relationship of the community to the land. The functionality of the land played a role in creating an element of prosperity and economy for a village that existed for the sole purpose of supporting the extraction of profit from the natural resource. As a result of this, the village was built to house the workers. The land therefore provided the space within which community could be formed; a common theme observed against the millworkers of Langholm and Newcastleton. The broadcaster Tom Weir spoke to Peter's grandfather on his programme Weir's Way, and he described the working conditions of the miners in the early twentieth century. Asked how was he paid, Sandy replied, '[m]iserably I would put it. Well looking back, 27 [shillings] and 10 [pence] a week. During the First World War, yes you'd maybe around £3 a week, but that was the biggest wage I ever made.'[9] Yet, despite low pay, dangerous working conditions, and very often not seeing daylight, the recollection was clearly a fond memory for Sandy. He described a 'lovely spirit' amongst the miners, 'once you were doon that mine, well you get comradeship doon the mine that you just don't get on the surface. […] it's disappeared now, even among miners its disappeared. There's no the same comradeship among miners now.'[10] The land therefore laid the basis for the

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[5] Mr P. Scott, Interview, 30th June 2022, Wanlockhead
[6] Mrs A. Arrigoni, Interview, 14th July 2022, Wanlockhead
[7] Mr J. M. Blewer, Interview, 29th June 2022, Wanlockhead
[8] Scott, Interview.
[9] Weir, Tom, Weir's Way: Wanlockhead [YouTube video], Gasmeter's Way, 29th January 2020 [accessed 2nd July 2022]
[10] Weir, Tom, Weir's Way: Wanlockhead.

community's identity, providing the means for comradeship to form around a common experience. Sandy liked living in Wanlockhead because he felt that the spirit of comradeship persisted in the village community, even with the closure of the mines.

The common experience of hard labour brought the men of the village together, and by extension their families. Such an experience was important in overcoming cultural barriers within the mining community. Anne's husband descended from Italian immigrants who came to work in the mines, 'his grandpa came in the '20s or '30s, […] and he was a lead miner, and aye he would be here, because he fought for Britain in the First World War.'[11] Owing to this international make-up, the miners who made the village brought a variety of experiences to the community. This left an imprint on the community's cultural heritage, as observed by Mac, himself an American,

> Wanlockhead is a very international community. We have had English, Galicia, Scandinavians, Americans, […] in the old mining days, there were people from all over the place. So Wanlockhead has always been an international community.[12]

The diverse cultural make-up of the community has left a legacy of constant change, represented by a constant in-flow and out-flow of villagers. This is reflected in Peter's account who felt that the values of the community differed from the values of the village in its mining, and initial post-mining years. As in both these periods, Peter felt people living there now bring different values – there was no one unifying feature.[13] Nevertheless, the economic relationship with the land had a human impact in that it brought miners from around the world to the village, as the landscape does now.

This economic relationship is directly connected to community life: 'in 1743, [former lead miner Alexander Telfer] was employing 240 men and by 1750 this number had risen to about 350, by which time Wanlockhead was a prosperous industrial unit.'[14] As such the land itself serves as the historical bedrock of the community: without the

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[11] Arrigoni, Interview.
[12] Blewer, Interview.
[13] Scott.
[14] Crawford and James, The Society for Purchasing Books in Wanlockhead, p. 2.

functionality of the land, there is no work for the miners, therefore a loss of sense of purpose for the community, leading to low community activity, low community morale. A letter in the Dumfries and Galloway Standard from 15th February 1939 reflects this relationship as much,

> My thoughts take me back many years to the days when Wanlockhead, nestling in the bosom of the Lowther Hills, was a thriving centre of the lead-mining industry. Though it was alone and far removed from the large industrial centres of population, yet its own small communal centre contained an atmosphere full of exhilaration and peaceful, prosperous contentment. [...] the social life of the village was so kindly and hospitable.[15]

Indeed, the village had a vibrant community life with a Silver Band, a youth hostel, a Ski Club, a branch of the Scottish Women's Rural Institute, a curling club, football and badminton clubs, a dramatic society and a choir, as well as a horticultural society and flower show, an Old Age Pensioners' Association, and Ex-Servicemen's Club and a local branch of the Labour Party – all of this now gone.[16] Functionality in this regard represents much more than the exploitation of the land. Functionality of the land is its ability to support arms of social activity by providing a labour base and maintaining this connection on the basis of wealth extraction. In this sense, Wanlockhead replicates many characteristics found in the cases of Langholm and Newcastleton.

One key aspect of this thriving community was the Society for Purchasing Books in Wanlockhead (SPBW – the Miners' Library), established in 1756, '[t]he society functioned in the life of the community like veins in a body.'[17] After replicating a number of labour reforms in neighbouring Leadhills, introduced by James Stirling, 'Wanlockhead emphasised that their object was "mutual improvement" or "improvement of the mind".'[18] However, for a number of reasons the presence of the library itself is somewhat of a red herring for academics and observers, who might otherwise be inclined to draw connections between an overall sense of progressivism

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[15] Anon, 'Wanlockhead and Leadhills', Dumfries and Galloway Standard, 15th February 1939 [accessed 12 July 2022]
[16] Houston, TSA.
[17] Crawford and James, The Society for Purchasing Books in Wanlockhead, p. 17.
[18] Ibid.

in the community identity. Firstly, records by the Wanlockhead Museums Trust indicate the stocks of the library were not inclined this way, 'Mill, Engels, Marx, Rowntree, Paine and others are conspicuous at Wanlockhead only by their absence.'[19] While a number of political texts by Locke, Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hume and others feature, Table 1.1 (Appendix B) indicates the emphasis of the library was heavily tended towards theology and religious texts. Secondly, Crawford and James have used SPBW records to show the relationship of the population to the membership of the library to be unconnected. As indicated in Table 1.2 (Appendix B), despite growth in population during the 1800s, suggesting an increased period of prosperity, the Library saw continually falling numbers; 'Between 1822 and 1842 the workforce fell from 250 to 150, but the library's membership rose from 91 to 114, and during the library's early years when about 350 men worked in the village the society had only about 30 members.'[20] Finally, a third reason to question the cultural impact of the Miners' Library is the circumstances of its establishment. While the library was indeed established by the miners themselves, it was founded as part of the replication of reforms in neighbouring Leadhills to increase the productivity of workers, and therefore a 'top-down' innovation to a certain extent. In Leadhills, James Stirling

> set out to reform the violent habits of the miners and turn them into a more docile and responsible workforce. To this end he cut down the number of ale sellers in the village, reduced the working day to six hours, brought in a surgeon and a schoolmaster, introduced sickness benefits, old age pensions and a charity fund and encouraged the miners to build their own houses and establish smallholdings.[21]

Reading this as solely top-down however, negates the agency of the Wanlockhead miners themselves in implementing changes which they perceived to be to their advantage. The suggestion that the miners themselves were engaged with ideas of social advancement through the establishment of the library is not inconsistent with other observations, including the local Labour Party, and membership of the

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[19] Ibid, p. 37.
[20] Ibid, p. 17.
[21] Ibid, p. 4.

Communist Party of Great Britain, as Sandy was.[22] However, such is the cultural legacy of change in the village, the closure of the mines also resulted in a dwindling of the library's significance, and while the building stands as part of the Wanlockhead Museum, its role as part of the community's identity remains 'frozen' into that of a cultural artefact. The silence on the part of Mac, Peter, and Anne, on this subject in interviews supports this assertion.

In all three interviews, a deliberate distancing from the past through a collective silence characterised their accounts of the CRTB purchase. Another issue this silence obscured was religion, which featured heavily as an influence on community identity in additional sources, notably the community practice of outdoor services. In October 1845, 'The Free Church congregation at this place is now, we believe, the only one in the South of Scotland which regularly meets for worship in the open air.'[23] Gwen Neville draws connections between this practice and the history of Covenanters in the Dumfries and Galloway area,

> Outdoor communions began in the Covenanting period, when the dissident preachers took their messages outside the organised kirk onto the hillsides. The communion outdoors in this period became a ceremony of solidarity, cementing ties and confirming loyalty to the cause of church reform.[24]

This is consistent with the record of Wanlockhead, as observed in the TSA, 'The solitude and loneliness of the valleys and moors round Wanlockhead afforded refuge and shelter in Covenanting times to many who were seeking freedom of worship.'[25] Land, in this sense, played more than one symbolic role, not only linking the community to a period in Scottish history of great renown, but also a symbolic connection between the land and God. Symbolism, in this regard draws the community together and highlights a unified identity in the form of the religious congregation. Just as common experience of hard labour in the mines built a sense of comradeship for the miners, so too did a common system of values imparted by the Free Church onto

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[22] Scott.
[23] Anon, 'Political Influence of the Duke of Buccleuch', Dumfries and Galloway Standard, 8th October 1845, [accessed 12 July 2022]
[24] Neville, 'Community form and ceremonial life', p. 99.
[25] Houston, TSA.

its members build a certain community solidarity. However, by utilising a constructivist approach it becomes clear that religious solidarity was also built in opposition to landlordism. The congregation had requested land and stones to build a church, however they were denied by the Duke. In July 1845,

> we were soon experimentally reminded, that although engaged singing one of the songs of that very psalm […] the Free Church congregation here had no ceiled house in which [to] worship their God—no hospitable covering to shelter them from the pitiless blast, while engaged in praise—the green sod was their seat—the blue canopy of heaven the vaulted dome under which they had assembled.[26]

In many senses, this connected the villagers with their dissenting Covenanter past, as the continued outdoor practice defied the apparent wish of the Duke to remain in perpetual neglect of their needs. In many ways, 'Nature, in [this] context, becomes the site of struggle, a means through which power and resistance are exercised.'[27] Indeed, correspondence at this time indicates an acute awareness by the villagers of class struggle and their inferior position as tenants to the superior Duke, 'the great Duke of Buccleuch may think he can trample with safety on this oppressed and helpless man [the Minister]; but there is a God in Heaven, who has special regard to the poor and defenceless.'[28] It becomes apparent from this that a strong sense of morality was gained from religion, and this is supported by the large amount of religious texts in the Miners' Library. Rather than relying on Marxist ideas about equality, the morals of the Miners were guided by theology. Much in keeping with themes found in Newcastleton, it is evident that rural communities are drawn together by common challenges, whether landlordism or rurality. Like Newcastleton, therefore, as a result of its relative remoteness, Wanlockhead has established a reputation for resilience, and interviewees were proud of this association.

What this exchange highlights is the landlord-tenant relationship inherently characterised by the Duke's neglect. This appears to persist across time, and narrators

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[26] Anon, 'Wanlockhead', Dumfries and Galloway Standard, 23rd July 1845 [accessed 12 July 2022]
[27] Mackenzie, 'A working land', p. 385.
[28] Anon, 'Mirror of Parliament', Dumfries and Galloway Standard, 29th July 1846 [accessed 12 July 2022]

consistently described their relations in such terms. Anne expressed her feelings as such,

> I've seen him twice in the village since I came here […] in 36 years. That was once the old Duke and once the new Duke. […] I mean he hasnae made it worse, but he hasnae made it better […] there seems to be no sense of pride to him that he owns the highest village in Scotland, and that's quite confusing to me.[29]

While class did not play a role in the community identities of Langholm and Newcastleton, and nor did narrators in Wanlockhead describes themselves in class-based terms, it did play a role in the way the community in Wanlockhead was characterised by 'outsiders' from Buccleuch Estates. Mac described the early relationship between the WCT and the estate as 'antagonistic':

> I was dumbfounded at being told by Buccleuch's men (and they were men) about what we were doing and why we were doing it. […] That was my introduction to the class system. […] once they realised I wasn't going to be 'one of the good old boys' […] they started treating us, and all of us, like peasants, and it was condescending, we didn't, as a community, have the right to a buyout, we didn't have the right to a vision.[30]

Hence, the land in Wanlockhead continues to characterise the relations between the landlord and the tenant. This relationship is therefore symbolic of broader ideas about ownership, a view shared by both Mac and Peter. Whilst, the heritage of the village remains in tangible forms such as the cottages and houses left by the miners, the ownership associated between the miners, their houses and their work has gone. The exploitative relationship with the land they had by way of employment gave them ownership in the sense that they possessed the choice to remain or leave on the basis of employment and the productivity of the land. In contrast, today's villagers lack this sense of control as their relationship with the land is purely derived from their

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[29] Arrigoni.
[30] Blewer, Interview.

accommodation and leisure, and not their prosperity, nor their freedom, which now come from other things such as owning a car.[31] Therefore the view that Mac expressed above, that 'we didn't have the right to a vision' indicates this loss of ownership even over symbolic aspects of community life. This kind of symbolism was clear in the sentiments expressed by Peter, 'I think we've paid for it [the land] already. Through three hundred years of blood and sweat and tears.'[32]

This grievance-based view shows more similarity with ideas about 'absentee landlords' commonly found in the Highlands and Islands, than it does with the relationship between the Duke and his tenants in Langholm and Newcastleton. The feeling of neglect might reflect the distance between Wanlockhead and Buccleuch Estates offices, compared with the relative proximity of Langholm. Furthermore, Wanlockhead lacks the 'banal localism' of symbols which reinforce the presence of the Duke. Important symbols of localism in Wanlockhead are represented by the Miners' Museum, Library, and street names such as 'Goldscaur Road' which reflect the industrial heritage more so than any connection to the landowner. Hence the feeling of already owning the land, as expressed by Peter, indicates the community does not feel the need to reconnect with its cultural heritage. Anne's understanding of 'ownership' implies as much,

> I don't think the buyout is steeped in the heritage, I think the buyout is very much steeped in being in control of the village and being in control of its future, rather than being in control of its past.[33]

This kind of ownership indicates the break in connection between past and present, through the 'freezing' of cultural heritage into one preserving institution, rather than using it to advance community identity, as in Newcastleton, or to maintain continuity, as in Langholm.

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[31] Scott.
[32] Blewer.
[33] Arrigoni.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the contrasting forms of cultural heritage represented in the CRTB purchases in Langholm, Newcastleton, and Wanlockhead demonstrate that land plays a symbolic and functional role in the formation of rural community identity. In Langholm, whilst, land played an initially functional role in the development of industry in the area, its overall cultural impact was that of conservatism. This conservatism serves to connect Langholm with its past, and forms a stable pillar of continuity against the changing landscape of industrial decline. Key markers of this symbolism are threefold: firstly, the daily reproduction of "banal" symbols of localism, such as street names; secondly, the annual Common Riding which acts as a bonding mechanism, similar to the kinship ties of Highland clans; these symbolic markers create a third "attitudinal" marker, that of "a'y bin." This contrasts with the natural progressivism of the community in Newcastleton which has been forced into this identity owing to the nature of its isolation and remoteness, which imbues a sense of resilience that prevails in the collective memory of the community. While there are similarities with Langholm, like the banal localism of street names, a cultural heritage of struggle leads Copshies to identify more strongly with their fellow villagers owing to a sense of 'we're all in it together.' That said, Newcastleton's self-constructed identity of self-sufficiency creates a silence which hides the community's dependence on the outside world through things like the railway, which provides Newcastleton with the autonomy it cherishes.

Finally, Wanlockhead differed the most with the other two cases, as expected. While several key indicators of difference anticipated this – the unsuccessful buyout, the different industrial background, and the distance from the other two – the primary difference shown in Wanlockhead was actually the relative absence of cultural heritage. Indeed, while patterns of continuity with heritage are demonstrated in the other two examples, Wanlockhead seeks to avoid being 'trapped in the past and trapped in their heritage, without looking to the future.'[1] This conscious distancing from the past via a bridging to the future shows parallels with the 2014 independence referendum and the ways in which the independence movement focus very much on civic nationalism and progressive ideas about the kind of nation Scotland wants to be,

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[1] Blewer.

rather than dwelling on ideas about the historic nation that Scotland was. This connection between ideas about independence and cultural heritage in the Scottish Borders offers an important space which political and historical scholars should explore in order to better understand why a Conservative "blue belt" persists in the region, beyond its close geographical relationship with England. Additionally, the geographical relationship between Langholm and Newcastleton and Buccleuch Estates shows how concepts of "nearness" can influence the culture of a community. In a sense this shows similarities between Hebridean community land buyouts, owing to the "absentee landlord" narrative.

Cultural heritage plays a key role in the construction of contemporary community land buyouts, and the construction of this heritage through a community-led oral history has enabled this paper to make clear observations about the nature of social, cultural, and political relations in the South of Scotland. Land plays an important role in this cultural heritage, but ultimately, 'It's not the land, it's the people.'[2]

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[2] Elborn.

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Appendix A – Sample Interview Guide

Questions are not strict and are merely meant to be jumping off points for further discussion. Answers will dictate further questions, and not all question will necessarily be covered.

Questions about the individual:

- What does 'community' mean to you?
- Would you say you / your community were working class, middle class or neither? Why?
- Do you consider yourself a [local demonym] first, Scottish, British, or other? Why? Do you consider yourself an 'outsider'?
- How long have you lived in the community? (Before you moved, where did you live or grow up? What made you move to this community?)
- What do you like / dislike about living where you do? Why?

Questions about the community:

- In the time that you have lived here, how has the community changed? What has been the most important change? Why?
- When you moved, was the environment an important issue to you? If so, why?
- Would you consider the community remote? Would you consider it connected?
- Is the community more forward looking or backward looking? (Does it revel in its heritage, or does it look forward to bridging a new history? Or both?)
- What legacy still exists of this history?

Questions about the buyout?

- How and why did the community buy the land, and how were you (or not) involved?
- Has the sense of community identity strengthened or weakened with the buyout? Why?
- Did the environment matter to you and the community before the buyout?

- Do you think that the community's heritage had an important part to play in the buyout? Why?
- Does the land have any symbolic value for you or your community? Or is the land more 'functional'?
- Do you think that connectivity has an important role to play in the community buyout?

Appendix B – Tables relating to the Society for Purchasing Books in Wanlockhead

Table 1.1: SPBW Library Stock in volumes, 1783-1925

	1783	1790	1829	1848	1868	1888	1901	1925
Religion	35	73	395	680	774	858	831	832
History	25	57	103	166	169	210	224	238
Fiction	21	44	161	217	275	435	795	1258
Periodicals	13	13	35	159	265	310	261	358
Miscellaneous	12	51	97	175	206	238	260	262
Literature	8	29	81	114	116	134	147	155
Biography	2	16	71	110	130	162	202	207
Voyages and Geography	-	12	35	142	179	179	179	183
Science and Technology	-	12	41	98	129	133	157	160
Politics and Law	-	2	31	48	73	49	62	64
Totals	116	309	1050	1909	2316	2708	3116	3717

Source**:** John C. Crawford, and Stuart James, The Society for Purchasing Books in Wanlockhead 1756 – 1979 (Scottish Library Essays – 1, 1980), p. 27.

Table 1.2: Wanlockhead Village Population in relation to SPBW Library Membership, 1825-1891

Year	Village Population	Library Members
1831	675	103 (1825)
1861	743	91
1871	772	84
1881	788	57
1891	745	55

Source**:** John C. Crawford, and Stuart James, The Society for Purchasing Books in Wanlockhead 1756 – 1979 (Scottish Library Essays – 1, 1980), p. 17.