EXTRACTS

THE BORDERS:
THE LANDS WE SHARE

Landscape and life in Scottish and English border country

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CHAPTER 1

EDINBURGH CASTLE

Making a start

Walks have to start somewhere. My walk began at Edinburgh Castle.

I mingled with the hordes of visitors by the ticket barrier at the top of the Royal Mile but didn't go inside the castle. I had a hefty pack on my back and there was no obvious place I could see to store it. Anyway I wasn't feeling particularly touristy. I had many miles ahead of me and I wanted to be on my way. So I took a souvenir selfie on my mobile phone with the castle as backdrop and left it at that.

The plan I'd made was to walk south, down through the Scottish border lands. The route was going to take me cross-country, passing on the way through the historic burghs of Peebles, Selkirk, Melrose and Jedburgh, until eventually I reached the Cheviots and found the border into England. It would, according to one of the route-plotting websites I looked at online, work out at around a hundred miles of walking. I had put aside six and a bit days to get there.

And then, after that, I would carry on. The idea I suppose was based on some sort of sense of symmetry: a hundred miles in Scotland and then a similar distance making my way slowly southwards through the English countryside. A chance to see the landscapes on both sides of the border line.

So: thirteen days' backpacking with a little one-person tent and with a total distance of a couple of hundred miles or so to cover (it ended up slightly more). My itinerary said that for some of those days I would necessarily be tackling at least twenty miles of walking. A few days would also see a fair amount of up and down (the Pentland Hills, the Cheviots, the North Pennines). But as this was to be a journey to be enjoyed I also had some shorter days' walking scheduled in: an

afternoon off now and again for sightseeing or just relaxing seemed like a good plan.

Walking has its own rhythm, and it's a slow rhythm. Walking allows you the time you need, it allows you to absorb what you see. The rest of the world may be charging about frantically around you but after a day or two of steady walking life settles down to a simpler, quieter pace.

I walked alone. Nothing very terrible happened. I may have got lost once or twice, but only very slightly. The tent didn't collapse. My walking shoes were comfortable. The weather was kind. (In fact, the weather was worryingly good: we're warned to expect more extreme weather and I had chosen a fortnight which turned out to be very hot indeed, with an almost complete absence of rain.)

So, you may be thinking, not much of a story here. No big adventures.

But that's not really what I'm offering. To get to know a landscape is best done on foot, and my intention in tackling this walk was exactly that – to try to understand better how and why the Scottish and English borderlands look the way they do.

'Landscape' has been defined as the result of the interaction of humans with the underlying land forms. Humans have been changing our landscapes all the time that we have been here on earth, in our efforts to survive, find food and prosper. Today's landscapes are not the same as those in times past, and the way we shape the lands will undoubtedly change again in the future. They are moulded by us to meet our current needs and to reflect our current concerns.

In 2006 Britain signed up to something called the European Landscape Convention, an initiative not of the European Union but of the much larger Council of Europe. It was a commitment by our government (and by the other 39 states that also signed up) to look after our landscapes, on the basis that they are important to us – on the basis, in fact, that they form a part of the identity that we draw on as individual human beings and as societies. To quote from the Council of Europe, "the Convention is based on the assumption that landscape is a key element of individual and social well-being everywhere, an essential component of human beings' surroundings and an important part of their quality of life".

What this is saying is that landscape doesn't mean a pretty view – or maybe it can, but it means rather a lot more than that. Understanding the landscape involves, I'd suggest, looking at how we use the land economically, how we arrange the ownership of the land, how we travel

about the land, how we interact with nature, how and why we decide to make changes to the land, and – of course – how we use the land for recreation and to bring us pleasure.

My intention in this book is to try to tackle issues like these. This has meant that my thirteen days out on the moors and meadows of the borderlands were only the first part of what I've needed to do. After my walk was over, when I'd safely got home, had done all the washing and had tidied away the tent ready for another day, I started a second, longer, journey of discovery, one that involved being indoors much more than outside. It meant time spent with books and reports and documents, with visits to libraries and with trawls of websites. It meant interviews with a wide variety of people who I felt had insights to offer me (and who all, very kindly, agreed to help me). It was only after this second journey of mine was over that I felt I had something to share, a book which I hope begins to provide a way to read the landscapes of this particular part of our island.

I have chosen for part of the title of the book *The Lands We Share*, but the question has to be asked: in what sense are lands that lie on both sides of a border line 'shared'? My walk took me through two political jurisdictions – indeed, this made my work rather more challenging than it might have been, because I needed to get to grips with two different legislative systems, two different political cultures and to an extent two different ways that local communities are trying to actively intervene to work for change. So my title isn't a rejection of the obvious border division. Don't think that this is an attempt to assert some sort of post-colonial English hegemony over lands that have long been Scotland's.

No, the sharing I have in mind is of a different kind. Certainly I felt I was sharing the land while I was walking through it with those for whom it plays a significant role in their lives – those who live and work here, for example. I had the privilege to explore landscapes that others perhaps more legitimately can claim to know and enjoy.

I was also sharing the lands I walked through with other life – with all the mammals and birds and insects and plants which have their habitats here. I probably should have been more observant of them than I was. Much of the nature that was there I think I took too much for granted – as we often do.

However there is perhaps another sense I had in mind when choosing my title. I don't think it's possible to write a book about landscape today

without also being aware of the potentially existential challenges that face humanity at the moment, challenges which do not respect human-made boundaries or divisions. We have a shared climate crisis to contend with. As I discovered, global warming is already having direct consequences in the way that aspects of the border land are currently being shaped. And we face a second potential catastrophe too, that of biodiversity loss. These are issues which we have to tackle together. Shared work.

I'd chosen Edinburgh, and more precisely Edinburgh Castle, to start my walk. I needed to choose my destination, somewhere that was a hundred miles or so south of the border. I got down to the planning and the route took shape: I would cross Northumberland and County Durham and get to Yorkshire before ending my walk. More precisely, I would end my walk on a river bridge. Rivers were going to be important landmarks on my walk and I would be meeting and crossing in turn the Tweed, Yarrow, Teviot, Tyne, Wear, and the Tees. My final river would be the Swale, I decided. I would end my walk on an historic bridge over the Swale: Catterick Bridge, on the old Great North Road.

Maybe I had another reason for choosing to walk from Edinburgh to Catterick. Call it a whim. It relates to a very old poem from this island of ours which is called *Y Gododdin* and which dates back to that period in our history that we often dismiss too readily as the 'Dark Ages'. Somehow I feel that it's altogether too complicated to try to explain all this now, before you've read more than a handful of pages, so the details can come later. I'll save my explanation until my journey is well under way – let's say, until I'm getting close to the Scottish and English border.

But first I have to start walking. I turn my back on Edinburgh Castle and leave the visitors behind. I turn south off the Royal Mile. I pass the imposing National Museum of Scotland. I make my way down across The Meadows. I pass the Royal Observatory.

I'm heading out, towards the edge of the city and into open country.

CHAPTER 2

PENTLAND HILLS

The right to wander

The first full day's walking.

I had camped overnight at Edinburgh's main city campsite near the ring road and was looking forward to getting properly out into the hills. I got the tent folded and into my backpack and started out early, at a time when only dog-walkers were abroad. My route for the day ahead was already carefully planned: I was making a bee-line for the Pentland Hills.

The Pentland Hills may be said to lie at the very gates of the City of Edinburgh. Or so reads part of the first sentence of a very early guidebook for walkers, one which first came out in 1885 with the determined aim of persuading Edinburgh citizens to get out and explore the beautiful countryside on their doorstep. Its author was Walter Smith and his guidebook, small enough to be slipped into the pocket of your hiking jacket, offered a selection of walking routes criss-crossing the range of the Pentlands. "There is no city in Europe that possesses in greater degree than Edinburgh so ready privileges of delightful rural recreation such as this," Smith wrote, perhaps a little provocatively. And yet, he went on, "how comparatively few of even the most active of the sons and daughters of our ancient town have penetrated to their sweet pastoral glens, or crossed their uplying moors and heard the curlew's cry across the heather!"

Smith's book came complete with advice on exactly which rural railway branch line to take out of Edinburgh and which station or halt to alight at, how to make your way into the hillsides to find the best views back over the city and the Forth, and how to ensure you found the finest swards of "delicious turf bejewelled with dainty daisies". In

the years after 1885 the guidebook went into numerous reprints and re-editions and more than thirty years later it could still be bought by would-be walkers from its Edinburgh publishers' bookshop in Princes Street.

Walter Smith had an ulterior motive, however, in bringing out his guidebook. At the time of its first publication he was the Acting Secretary of an organisation called the Scottish Rights of Way and Recreation Society, set up to defend the right to walk historic footpaths through the Scottish countryside. The Society under a previous name had had an early success as far back as the 1840s in a tussle over access between the Duke of Atholl and a group of student naturalists led by their Botany Professor from Edinburgh University in the mountain country bordering the Cairngorms. The so-called Battle of Glen Tilt (Glen Tilt is to the north of Blair Atholl) ended in lengthy legal proceedings and has since been seen as a landmark episode in the history of access in Scotland.

By 1885 the Scottish Rights of Way and Recreation Society had decided that walkers needed more help and encouragement to walk in potentially contested areas of countryside. In May that year its committee agreed to spend funds on cast-iron footpath signs to mark footpath routes and some thirty of these new signs were earmarked for paths across the Pentland Hills. There seems to have been an element of direct action involved, as it would appear that landowner consent was not always sought before the signs were erected. It would also seem that not every landowner welcomed the initiative: the Society's minutes for December 1885 reported that two of the cast-iron signs had already been destroyed.

Smith himself implies that there was resistance to the presence of walkers from some landowners at this time. Giving directions for a walk on the western flank of the Pentland Hills near East Cairn Hill, he praises one property-owner for their enlightened attitude but then adds in brackets: *Would that all lairds were as considerate as he!* A short time later in fact Smith was to find himself at the centre of a major dispute over access rights when he led an expedition to signpost rights of way between Braemar and Glen Doll in The Mounth area of the Grampians and was confronted by the keepers of the landowner, Duncan Macpherson. Once again the issue of access was subject to lengthy court proceedings and was only ultimately resolved by the-then highest court in the land, the House of Lords. The Lords found in

favour of the Society and the route (named Jock's Road after a local shepherd Jock Winter who had been supporting the Society) is now a popular high-level route for hillwalkers. Nevertheless the court case left the Society (and reportedly the landowner too) virtually bankrupt. It is perhaps not surprising that Smith ended his guidebook with a forthright plug for the Society and its work: "it is hoped all readers of these pages will become Members," he wrote. Membership was £1, but you could pay in instalments.

One of Smith's active colleagues in the Scottish Rights of Way and Recreation Society was a man called James Bryce who from his position as an MP in Parliament was to lead a long campaign for access rights to Scottish mountains and moorlands. Bryce first presented his Access to Mountains (Scotland) Bill in 1884, at a time when he was MP for the perhaps unlikely constituency of Tower Hamlets in east London. His Bill was considerably broader than the aim simply of defending traditional rights of way: he wanted what we would now call the right to roam freely over Scotland's mountains and moorlands.

His 1884 Bill got nowhere at Westminster so Bryce tried again in 1888 (by which time he had moved to be the MP for the rather more appropriate seat of South Aberdeen). This Bill did get a Second Reading, it would appear more by luck than anything else, but again got no further. So, nothing daunted, Bryce presented almost the same Bill four years later, in 1892.

His argument each time was that his proposed legislation was simply restoring a right which Scottish people had long previously enjoyed. "There is no such thing in the old custom of this country as the right to exclusion for purposes of the mere pleasure of the individual; and there is no ground in law or reason for excluding persons from a mountain," he told his fellow MPs when presenting his 1892 Bill. "Eighty years ago everybody could go freely wherever he desired over the mountains and moors of Scotland."

Bryce was many things during his career: an author, a barrister, a Professor of Civil Law at Oxford, a Cabinet minister under Gladstone and, later, from 1907-1913 the British Ambassador to the United States. But he was also a very keen climber and mountaineer. He was part of that generation of middle-class Alpinists from Britain who made the most of the new travel opportunities to the Alps, and indeed he was President of the Alpine Club from 1899 to 1901. Bryce's climbing also took him much further afield: to Iceland in 1872, Mount Ararat in 1879,

Hawaii and the Rockies a little later, and even later in life to Japan. Mount Bryce in British Columbia is named after him.

Scottish access law at the time when Bryce was presenting his Bills was certainly somewhat ambiguous and the law of trespass in Scotland was subtly less hostile to walkers than the position south of the Border. By tradition landowners tended to allow what one Scottish law academic has recently described as "a precarious freedom of access" to hills and mountains. However Bryce was right that the nineteenth century had seen a much more hard-line approach being taken by many Scottish landowners, the result of the development of deer-stalking as a significant sporting industry during this time. What was happening at the time when Bryce was presenting his access Bills in Westminster was something of a clash between two different visions of the way that the Scottish highland landscapes could be enjoyed for middle-class and upper-class recreation, with those wanting to pop away at stags and hinds being challenged by those who were climbers, hillwalkers and naturalists.

However Bryce's Bills faced opposition in Westminster not only from landowners and their representatives but also perhaps more surprisingly from some in the Scottish mountaineering fraternity, particularly from some members of the Edinburgh-based (and respectable) Scottish Mountaineering Club. One SMC member, J. Parker Smith, was an MP for a Glasgow constituency at the time and he criticised Bryce in 1891 for making "an attack upon one class of her Majesty's subjects who use the mountains of Scotland for the recreation of sport, on behalf of another class of her Majesty's subjects who would use the same mountains for the recreation of climbing". The SMC approach seems to have been to have a quiet gentlemanly word beforehand with landowners when planning an excursion. It worked for them, so why was Bryce trying to stir things up?

As in 1884 and 1888, Bryce's 1892 Bill duly failed to reach the statute book. So did his next attempt in 1898. Thereafter, in 1900, a very similar Bill was introduced by his younger brother Annan who was also an MP… and it failed. Annan Bryce tried again with Bills in 1905, 1908 and 1909. They all failed as well.

Indeed, as committed walkers and ramblers know all too well, the issue of access to open countryside, in England and Wales as well as in Scotland, remained unfinished business throughout the whole of the twentieth century. There were regular rallies, there were protests,

there was deliberate trespass, there was political lobbying, but England and Wales had to wait until the Countryside and Rights of Way Act of 2000 made it on to the statute book for anything like a 'right to roam'. The CRoW Act, steered through Parliament by the then Labour Environment Minister Michael Meacher, meant that the 'Private' signs which had previously been a feature of much upland moorland had to come down. However the CRoW Act also involved expensive (and controversial) mapping of access land and it remains for many walkers unfinished business: there is no automatic legal right south of the Border to enjoy woodland, lowland countryside or inland waterways, for example.

Scotland had to wait three years after CRoW for the Scottish Parliament to pass its 2003 Land Reform Act but when it came it finally put on a legal basis that traditional de facto right of access that James Bryce had tried to lay claim to. A landmark piece of legislation from the newly (re)established Scottish Parliament which was perhaps enjoying flexing its muscles (and looking for inspiration across the North Sea to the very enlightened land access rights in Scandinavian countries), the 2003 Act offers the legal right to enjoy all of Scotland's land, lowland countryside as well as Highland mountain and moor.

So what were my rights as I walked from Edinburgh south to the Cheviots? Under the 2003 Act I could roam as I chose at will, albeit with sensible exceptions for areas such as private gardens, sports fields, cultivated farmland, airfields, military bases and the like. I had the right to wild camp. I could have brought a bike and cycled or come on a horse and ridden. I could have brought a hang-glider or even carried a kayak and paddled my way down the Borders rivers (not enough room for it in the rucksack, though).

My rights under the Act came with certain responsibilities. Fair enough: I had a duty to care for the environment, to take responsibility for my own actions and to respect the interests of other people using the land. But the owners of the land I crossed had responsibilities too, including the duty to respect my right to walk their land and to have a safe and enjoyable visit.

Backing up the powers of the Act is the comprehensive Scottish Outdoor Access Code, a model of good sense which was brought out in 2005 under the auspices of Scottish Natural Heritage (or NatureScot, as it prefers to be called now). It has taken time, a very long time, since a Times editorial in March 1884 argued that "surely the lords of the soil

cannot claim so absolute a monopoly of earth's surface and of the most beautiful parts of it, as wholly to shut out the poor holiday folk, the artist, the naturalist… Surely the many have rights as well as the few." In the end, though, Scotland has got there.

However in just one respect walkers are disadvantaged in Scotland compared with the situation further south. For over fifty years Ordnance Survey has shown on its 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 maps the footpaths, bridleways and byways in England and Wales that are rights of way under the post-War National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. But this part of the Act doesn't apply north of the Border. Long-distance and certain other popular walking trails in Scotland are shown by OS, but by no means all waymarked routes and paths are marked. As for more local footpaths, these may or may not show up. The Ramblers Scotland charity have tried their best to make up for this deficiency with a very comprehensive Scottish Paths Map which can be consulted online but I'm not sure that's adequate compensation for those of us brought up on traditional map-reading with paper maps in our pockets. If I were Ramblers Scotland I'd be doing some serious lobbying of OS to remedy the situation.

Still, there's not a problem when it comes to the Pentland Hills. After crossing the Edinburgh by-pass I turned off the main road into Hillend Country Park and skirted my way south, through the attractive Erraid Wood and then past the Iron Age hill fort of Castlelaw. At the Flotterstone visitor centre I stopped for a welcome cup of coffee and a fried egg sandwich, and from then on the hills really began.

Walter Smith's cast-iron signs have long gone but you barely need a waymark these days to point you along the footpath that heads up from Flotterstone along the southern range of hills in the Pentlands. A steady stream of people were with me as I made my way up a thousand feet or so of climb to the first of the summits, Turnhouse Hill. After that there was a rapid descent before another climb to the second of the two hills, Carnethy Hill. Walter Scott praised this stretch of hillside in his Journal in November 1827: "I think I never saw anything more beautiful than the ridge of Cairnethy (sic) against a clear, frosty sky… The hills glowed like purple amethysts," he wrote.

Scott's use of the older spelling of Carnethy Hill, incidentally, is one that Walter Smith also copied. It's a reminder that the people who lived in these lands before they were speaking Scots or English spoke an early version of Welsh. Until Edinburgh and the Lothian lands were

taken over by Germanic-speaking Angles from Bernicia in the early seventh century the local kingdom was a Celtic one. Their linguistic heritage remains in many place names in the Borders: Carnethy is usually taken as coming from the Welsh for cairns *carneddau* (although the 'car' prefix is also suggestive of *caer*, a castle or fort). Later my walk would take me to another reminder of those speakers of Welsh: Peebles' name comes from *pebyll*, still the modern Welsh word for tents.

Carnethy Hill has given its name to one of Scotland's premier hill-running clubs, the Pentland Hills being the local playground for the club's runners. It somehow *feels* like this hill should be the highest summit of the range. But no, that honour belongs to the next summit on the ridge, Scald Law, which at 579m is just a few metres higher than Carnethy. Once again it's a matter of following the footpath downhill, losing much of the height painfully gained, before starting another brisk climb. By this stage the crowds of fellow-walkers who had accompanied me from Flotterstone were definitely thinning out.

After Scald Law I carried on to two further summits, East Kip and West Kip, before beginning the final slow descent off the hills towards the small settlement of Nine Mile Burn. Walter Smith came this way too: "We pause and admire the pretty view to the south across the valley of the Esk," he told his readers. As he pointed out, this route off the hills is an ancient route known as the Monk's Road with a "curiously hollowed stone called the Font Stone" to be found about half way down. More than a century on from when Smith was writing his guidebook this stone (usually now given its Scots' name of Font Stane) remains in its place among the cropped grass, looking indeed very like a font in a church. In fact it is probably the base of what was once an ancient cross.

Smith was able to invite his readers to stop in Nine Mile Burn for a pint of beer in the "quaint old hostelry" to be found there. No such luck for me – the pub has long gone. No chance either of a drink at the next pub Smith recommends, in the nearby village of Carlops, for this has gone too (although much more recently). So it was on instead to the "pleasant little inn at the north end of West Linton". I'm pleased to say that the Gordon Arms was open, and welcoming.

Walter Smith, an actuary by profession, was to remain actively involved in the outdoor movement. He became in due course the Chairman of the Scottish Rights of Way Society (which remains active today using the shortened name of ScotWays) and went into print again

in the 1920s with his book *Hill Paths, Drove Roads and 'Cross Country' Routes in Scotland*. He would, I feel, have been pleased at his legacy.

He would, for example, surely feel that the Pentland Hills today are properly appreciated by very many people from Edinburgh and beyond. The area is officially designated as a Regional Park, a step or two down perhaps from a proper National Park but still requiring its own detailed management plan to ensure that visitor, conservation and landowner interests can be adequately addressed. The formal responsibility for looking after the Regional Park rests with staff of Edinburgh City Council but, as in Walter Smith's day, there is plenty of opportunity for voluntary endeavour to make a difference. The Friends of the Pentlands are a local environmental charity that among other things run work parties several times a month, undertaking tasks such as checking on waymarking posts and repairing stiles and gates. (The Friends have also been responsible for designating a twenty-mile route the length of the hills as the Pentland Way.) Another group has taken on responsibility for making life easier for walkers in the countryside just beyond the Pentlands, including the land around Carlops and West Linton. North Tweeddale Paths was set up in 2001 to be in their own words "the caretaker of paths and rights of way in our area" and they too have a hands-on approach to their work: "if you see any waymarkers guiding you on your way, any drainage dug, trees, bushes or nettles cut back to unblock paths, chances are that NTP members will have done it," they say. Well done to all.

CHAPTER 3

NETHER STEWARTON

Drovers

In the absence of a nearby campsite I'd decided to treat myself to an overnight stay in the Gordon Arms. Once again I was up early. After all the up and down of the Pentlands the day before I was hoping for something a little gentler. My goal that evening was the valley of the Tweed near Peebles.

Not long into my walk, somewhere south-west of West Linton a few miles beyond Romannobridge and near a farm called Nether Stewarton, I came across an almost indecipherable information board positioned at the side of a lane. This 'interpretation board', to give it the name by which it would be known in official parlance, had certainly copped some weather. Year after year it had clearly had to face all the rain, wind and snow sweeping across from the nearby Cloich Hills. It hadn't coped with its fate particularly well.

A few years back, one day when I was feeling mischievous, I wrote a blog for an outdoors website musing on whether the time had come to do away with the whole interpretation board phenomenon. There they all are, I said, dotted up and down the countryside, eager to inform us about exactly what we need to know before we can properly enjoy the countryside for ourselves. Isn't there something just a little patronising about the whole idea of interpreting the landscape for us in this way?

Perhaps it was time to get rid of the whole bloody lot of them. Or maybe, I compromised, at least to impose a moratorium on plans for any new boards.

Don't necessarily hold me to what I was arguing back then. Nevertheless there is certainly a problem with interpretation boards as they grow elderly. By and large there isn't any agency or individual

charged with the responsibility to look after them as the years go by, when as at Nether Stewarton the elements begin to take their toll. Fading, peeling, hard to read interpretation boards speak to me of long-forgotten funding applications where the boards were produced in the first place because grant-funders rather liked the sound of them, but where the grants have been long spent and the organisations behind them have moved on.

In one sense, though, the state of the board at Nether Stewarton was appropriate to its subject matter. It was recounting the story of droving, an occupation which was once a very significant part of Scotland's economy but which has now almost completely disappeared from popular memory. Droving, what's that? A typo perhaps for driving?

Certainly the words droving and drovers (those who did the droving) have disappeared from everyday speech although of course we do still talk about things arriving in droves. Almost certainly when we do we have little idea of what the word originally referred to.

The droves were the long lines of cattle, usually many hundreds strong and sometimes comprising more than a thousand beasts, which made their way south, plodding down through the Borders and then through the North of England and the Midlands until they finally reached their journey's end, typically at Smithfield market in London, ready to be turned into fresh meat. There were droving routes too for cattle coming from Wales into England. As Adam Smith put it in his *Wealth of Nations*, the thing about cattle is that almost uniquely they could "carry themselves to market".

The cattle had an exceptionally long journey to make. Those which came south on the drove roads through the Scottish Borders may have originally come from Caithness or Sutherland, from Ross-shire or Inverness-shire, or from the pasturelands of Aberdeenshire and Scotland's North-East. They may have come from the islands of the Hebrides by boat to the mainland, or they may perhaps have lived the early years of their life on Skye and been made to make the hazardous start to their journey by swimming across the narrow strait of Kyle Rhea to reach the mainland. By the time these streams of cattle had reached the Borders they would have been joined by cattle from other parts of Scotland, including the Argyle peninsula and from Galloway. Slowly but steadily they would at this stage by heading south to cross the Border either into Northumberland or Cumberland.

Shortly after I had come down from the Pentland Hills, just before

I reached my overnight stop at West Linton, I had met up with the long-distance path now given the name of the Cross Borders Drove Road. The path (promoted as one of 'Scotland's Great Trails') starts south of Livingston, goes through Peebles and Yarrowford and ends its journey at Hawick. It was going in the direction I wanted to go and as I would choose to stay on it for much of the next two days I clearly needed to find out more about the story behind its name.

We know what we know about droving in Scotland primarily thanks to one man, the lawyer and landowner A.R.B. Haldane, whose 1952 book *The Drove Roads of Scotland* is now rightly regarded as one of the great classics of Scottish history. Haldane himself begins his book by explaining how he first became interested in his subject: "During the autumn of 1942 I had occasion, in the course of certain work on which I was then engaged, to call to mind an old road which crosses the Ochils immediately behind my home near Auchterarder in Perthshire," he wrote. "Little used as it now is, the grassy road retains the clear marks of extensive use by the traffic of former days, and it occurred to me that it would be of interest to try to trace something of its history."

Haldane's first enquiries identified his track as one which had been particularly used by drovers, and so, as he put it, he "determined, as opportunity offered, to get to know more of this droving traffic". From his initial curiosity in one short stretch of trackway emerged an extremely scholarly and comprehensive historical account of the Scottish droving trade and its effect on the landscape.

Although the practice of droving cattle to markets has a long history, the most important period in Scotland was the century and a half between the union of the English and Scottish parliaments in 1707 (after which cross-border trade became rather more straightforward and somewhat safer) and the middle of the nineteenth century. As Haldane puts it, "Were the progress of the Scots droving trade after the Union of 1707 to be illustrated by means of a graph, it would be seen that the index line, after a relatively slow ascent in the first half of the eighteenth century, rose from the middle of the century with increasing steepness to reach its peak about 1835, and that its descent was short, sudden and complete". Long-distance droving did in fact continue into the very start of the twentieth century but by this stage it was very much a dying way of life. Effectively droving disappeared early in Queen Victoria's reign.

One of the achievements of Haldane's painstaking research was his

CHAPTER 5

MINCH MOOR

Commercial forestry

You can't believe everything you read on the Internet. The next morning I set off early, taking the Railway Path onwards to Innerleithen and then following the B-road down to Traquair House. Google told me that the Old Walled Garden café there opened at ten. I was twenty minutes early but decided to wait. I fancied a good strong cup of coffee and maybe something to eat, as a second breakfast to fortify me for the day ahead.

Traquair House is deservedly popular with visitors. Its claim to fame is that it is the oldest inhabited house in Scotland, having been lived in for more than nine hundred years. It has necessarily accumulated over the years its fair share of history. Mary Queen of Scots came visiting in 1566 along with her baby son James, the infant who was to grow up to become James VI (of Scotland) and James I (of England and Wales). Bonnie Prince Charlie probably paid a visit too at the time of the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion. In the years since 1491 there have been 21 Lairds of Traquair, the 21st and latest being a woman, Catherine Maxwell Stuart, who lives in the house with her family today (or at least those bits of the house which she hasn't opened to the public).

The walled garden at Traquair is also worth seeing. I plonked myself and the rucksack down on a garden bench watching the gardener who was hard at work mowing the immaculate lawn, as I waited for ten o'clock to come round.

At about seven minutes past ten I made some enquiries. Oh we open at eleven came the reply, didn't you know? No coffee, no flapjack or rocky road for me this time. I picked up the rucksack and made my way reluctantly down the main drive.

I had briefly left behind the Cross Borders Drove Road route in Peebles but I joined it again in the village of Traquair for the long ascent up on to Minch Moor. At 567 metres the highest point here is only a handful of metres below the height of Scald Law in the Pentland Hills. It felt like a climb. The day was really hot, and I began to ask myself whether I had brought enough water to last out the day.

The track over Minch Moor is famous as an old droving road. Walter Scott wrote a story called *The Two Drovers* in which he has one of his characters a Highlander called Robin Oig trying unsuccessfully to teach his English friend Harry Wakefield the Scots Gaelic for calf. "From Traquair to Murder-cairn, the hill rung with the discordant attempts of the Saxon upon the unmanageable monosyllable," Scott wrote. The story ends tragically (if in a suitably romantic fashion) later on in England with Robin killing his friend Harry as a result of a misunderstanding, pleading guilty to the murder, and accepting his death sentence by hanging. All very Walter Scott. You can read the story for yourself.

I'm not sure where Murder Cairn was to be found on Minch Moor but my guess is that it has long been swallowed up by the commercial forestry which has been planted on the hillsides. The landscape which would have been familiar to Robin Oig and Harry Wakefield, or at least to their non-fictional equivalents who came droving cattle and sheep this way, would have been completely different from the landscape we see today.

The most obvious recent landscape change up on Minch Moor has been the creation of the Elibank and Traquair Forest, which is in the hands of Forestry and Land Scotland and is one of those very extensive stretches of dense commercial forestry made up of non-native conifer species which tend not to be at the top of the list of walkers' favourite walking areas. Blame the First World War, perhaps, and the government's very belated realisation then that the country's timber stocks were almost completely exhausted. After the war in 1919 the government quickly passed the Forestry Act, establishing the Forestry Commission to try to remedy things by buying up agricultural land and planting forests. Farmland at the time was cheap and the Forestry Commission, a government department, rapidly became one of the largest landowners in the country. The state remains a major owner of our commercial forests, public pressure having successfully defeated attempts to privatise the Commission in both 1993 and 2010.

As you might expect, Scotland has proportionately more of Britain's forests as a percentage of overall land cover. Currently about 18.5% of Scotland is forested compared with 13% in Britain as a whole.

But go back far enough and the Scottish landscape was quite unrecognisable from what we can see today. The last Ice Age left Britain only about 10,000-11,000 years ago, a blink of an eye in terms of geological time. Woodland gradually began to spread across the Scottish landmass following the retreat of the glaciers and ice sheets and by around 3000 BCE, five thousand years ago, woods are thought to have covered as much as 60% of the land. Down in the south of Scotland oak was probably the primary species while Scots pines would have been the dominant tree on poorer soils and in the central Highlands. There's nothing 'natural' therefore about Scotland's bare mountain and moorland landscapes which pull the tourists to the Scottish Highlands.

After that the woodland cover gradually diminished. Humans got to work cutting down trees to create fields for crops and for grazing, and then started taking timber in a much more organised way. Wood was needed. Ships needed oak, for example. Country houses were constructed with timber frames. Charcoal was required as a fuel. Wood was a commodity with all sorts of uses.

In more recent times the woods have suffered from overgrazing by sheep, from destruction caused by excessive numbers of deer, and from the demand for grouse moors. By the time that the Forestry Commission was being created in 1919, the percentage of Scotland which was covered by woodland was down to a meagre 4%.

However the Border landscapes today are the result of another dramatic change, once again caused by human agency. This was the devastating period of Land Clearances which took place in the Borders counties at the behest of landowners in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when smaller farmers and labourers lost their homes and livelihoods in order to make way for large-scale sheep farming.

The shocking story of the Highland Clearances has entered deep into Scottish consciousness. By contrast the Clearances in the Borders are much less well known. The historian Tom Devine, whose 2018 book *The Scottish Clearances: A History of the Dispossessed* has rapidly gained the status of a classic, devotes a hundred pages of his book to this earlier history. "Contrary to popular belief, the removal and abandonment of traditional rural communities in eighteenth-century

Scotland did not start in the Highlands," he writes. He talks of a "seemingly inexorable white tide" of sheep which led to the uprooting of many peasant communities in the Borders. It was, he maintains, "a scale of dispossession in the early-eighteenth-century eastern Borders which evokes comparison with the more familiar Highland experience of later decades".

So there is a reason why today a walker will find themselves making their way along the footpaths and tracks through a Borders countryside which, outside the burghs, is almost empty. Tom Devine says that the process of removing the smaller farms and cottages from the land was virtually complete by the time of the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. The landowners may have been stubbornly conservative when it came to politics but in terms of maximising the economic benefits of their land they were revolutionaries, Devine suggests.

And now the Borders landscapes have changed again, with the commercial forestry plantations and (particularly in the west, in Dumfries and Galloway) the arrival of massive wind farms. Commercial forestry is important economically to Scotland. A 2015 report for the Scottish government calculated that the industry was responsible for providing around 20,000 jobs, with a further 6,000 or so created by the exploitation of the forests for tourism and recreation purposes. All told, forestry added not far short of a billion pounds to the Scottish economy.

There are, of course, criticisms of the way that commercial conifer forestry has covered the hills, particularly when it comes to very densely planted conifers with little or no undergrowth. The predominant conifer that is planted, sometimes described as an 'exotic' variety, is the Sitka spruce which originally comes from North America. The Sitka, it turns out, rather enjoys Britain's maritime climate and reaches maturity in a comparatively short time – between 35 and 50 years. After fifty years you'll end up if things go to plan with about 600 or 700 cubic metres of timber for each hectare of your forest. Typically Sitka plantations will be clear-felled in one go at this point (it's much more straightforward and much cheaper than just felling some of the trees), with the land then left bare for a few years before the cycle begins all over again. Sitka makes up around 60% of conifer plantations in Britain, slightly more in the case of the publicly owned forests.

The Forestry Commission became a little more sensitive in its approach to planting following the wave of complaints in the Sixties and Seventies about the dismal appearance of some of its landholdings.

Legislation in 1985 obliged it to try to take account of conservation issues as well as timber production, and an earlier Act, in 1968, started the move towards recreational use of the forests. Forestry and Land Scotland (which along with the regulatory and funding agency Scottish Forestry has taken over the Forestry Commission's roles following devolution) certainly tries to encourage the public use of both the Glentress and the Elibank and Traquair Forests, and there are among other things some challenging mountain biking trails which can be undertaken if you're so minded. I think it's satisfactory too that, while the plantations on Minch Moor cloak the flanks of the hillside, the highest ground has been left unplanted. After the deep shade of the trees as I walked up from Traquair I emerged eventually into the open. A little of the old Minch Moor remains.

Though public ownership is important more than half of Scotland's (and the UK's) commercial forests are privately owned. It's a business which can prove very attractive if you have the wherewithal. This is "a proven asset class which has delivered compelling real returns" as one asset management company puts it in their introductory guide to the sector. Income from forestry is exempt from income tax and corporation tax, and with the right advice you can arrange for any capital gains tax liabilities to be reduced. Commercial forestry (both the trees and the land underneath) normally also qualifies for full relief from Inheritance Tax (IHT). "Forestry offers considerable investment flexibility… This can be accomplished within an environment which provides 100% IHT relief, allowing for flexibility in financial planning," the guide concluded.

Tempted? After all, commercial forestry as we've seen provides jobs and boosts the economy. It also helps to meet our country's requirement for timber and paper, and as a country we of course need timber and wood products. At present only a very small amount of what we use is home-grown. More than 80% of our wood requirements in Britain has to be imported and the UK indeed is the third largest importer of wood products globally, behind only China and the USA. Maybe we need to do rather better. Maybe we do need more forests.

The Scottish government certainly thinks so. Its current national forestry strategy calls for a considerable increase in forest and woodland cover in Scotland over the next fifty years. As it points out, Scotland's 18.5% cover is extraordinarily low compared with many other European countries: Germany has 33% woodland, Norway 40%, Sweden 69% and

Finland 74%. Even southern European countries do better: Spain has 37% of its land forested, Portugal 36% and Italy 33%. Really, in terms of land usage Scotland, and the UK as a whole, is right at the bottom of the table.

Increasing tree cover is seen by the Scottish government as producing several benefits. The minister for rural affairs in the Scottish government at the time when the forestry strategy was launched said that she wanted forestry in Scotland to play a significant role in the rural economy but also help to meet "our ambitions to make Scotland a low carbon economy and a world leader in dealing with the threat of climate change". It's certainly true that up to now the Scottish government has been making somewhat more enthusiastic noises about confronting global warming than the government in Westminster: while the latter has the target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 (the agreed international deadline under the Paris Agreement) in Scotland the target date has been brought forward to 2045.

It turns out that there has been an active debate going on within at least some parts of civil society in Scotland about exactly how this move towards greater afforestation should be undertaken. Leading the debate has been an organisation called the Forest Policy Group which for twenty years has been pressing for a broader approach to forestry within Scotland, one which takes account of the need to strengthen rural communities and to take proper account of biodiversity and conservation concerns. *Woodland Nation*, a recent report from the group authored by two of its Board members Anna Lawrence and Willie McGhee, can perhaps be read as a sort of manifesto.

"Woodland Nation is a vision of a Scotland where forests cover more than twice their current extent, much of which is natural woodland," they write, "where the land and the forests are part of our society and economy, supporting prosperous rural communities and the wider economy through fairer ownership and attention to the environmental, economic and social benefits…The reforesting of Scotland must be part of a process that leads to more equitable ownership of land, and fairer distribution of the environmental, economic and social benefits of reforestation."

Any far-thinking development of forestry surely needs to address the twin issues of global warming and biodiversity loss together. Perhaps we can learn from elsewhere: Norway was mentioned to me a number of times as an example of a northern European country more conscious

of the need to manage commercial forestry in a sustainable, environmentally-friendly way.

So, as the authors of *Woodland Nation* put it, "the issue is not whether trees are good, but what kind of trees, and where; and who experiences them as benefits or disbenefits". Are new forests going to be for the benefit of society as a whole or are they simply to be a new income stream for landowners and the forestry industry?

It is perhaps time to explore the economics behind forestry a little more. Economics may be a dismal science but in any attempt to really comprehend why our landscapes look the way they do we have to, I think, explore the underlying economic base behind the way the land is used. The first thing to say is that, in all nations and regions of the UK, there are currently government grants designed to encourage the planting of new woodlands and forests.

The Scottish government has in recent years been helpful in this respect. If your application is successful, you will currently be eligible for an initial planting grant, a contribution towards capital costs such as fencing and tree protectors and then an annual maintenance payment for the first five years. The grants are higher if you are planning new broadleaf woodland so that – depending on where in Scotland you want to plant your trees – you could find yourself at the moment eligible in total for over £6,000 funding for each hectare of land. Conifer planting is less generously funded (conifers are more likely to bring in a greater commercial return) but even here you could be eligible for £3,000-£4,000 per hectare. In fact, arguably, the Scottish government's keenness to see new forests planted is in danger of backfiring: shortly after I had completed my walk through the Borders the government announced that pressures on its finances meant that the budget it was providing for the Forestry Grant Scheme was under pressure, particularly for larger projects. The government has had to admit that for the time being at least its annual target for new woodland creation will not be met.

However the grants from the Scottish government (and the grant schemes run in England, Wales and Northern Ireland as well) are just the icing on the cake if you are seriously thinking of an afforestation project. Something else has been happening in recent years, something which has major implications for the way that our upland landscapes look now and will look in the years to come. This development is international in its reach and is bringing in major players in the financial sector. It is carbon offsetting.

I mentioned earlier the targets which the UK and Scottish governments have set to become net zero. This is a term which is much bandied about but which isn't necessarily always understood. The principle is simple: human activity creates carbon and other greenhouse gases which escape into the atmosphere and demonstrably create climatic warming. But there are various ways that these gases can also be *removed* from the atmosphere. Net zero would mean that we had reached that point where the sum of new emissions entering the atmosphere was exactly balanced by the amount of gases being taken out. At that point (assuming we manage to get there, and assuming we get there globally and not just locally) we should have turned the corner on any further global warming.

Of course, far and away the best way of moving towards net zero is to reduce the emissions we are creating in the first place. Removing greenhouse gases in compensation for on-going new emissions is seen by environmentalists and climate scientists as very much a second best. But on the other hand, up to now, the human race (or perhaps it is our way of running our economic system?) seems to be struggling to achieve meaningful reductions.

So at the moment we perhaps need to look also for effective techniques on the other side of the equation. As is well known, trees are one way that carbon can be removed from the atmosphere and stored or 'sequestrated'. During daylight hours the leaves of trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and through the process of photosynthesis store some of this as carbon. About half the total carbon is held by a tree in its trunk, with about 25%-35% in the roots and the rest in the branches and leaves.

The amount of greenhouse gases which trees secrete in this way can be calculated. The usual calculations for sequestration are done in terms of tonnes (t) of carbon dioxide (CO2), with other greenhouse gases (such as methane) converted into 'carbon equivalent' figures. This is very often written in mathematical form as tCO2e.

This formula can be extended to read tCO2e ha-1 yr-1, which simply means the tonnes of carbon or equivalent stored per hectare per year. So how much do trees store? It's complicated of course, but not surprisingly it's an area of study which many scientists have been undertaking recently. Indeed if you take a trip to the right woodland you will be able to see curious metal structures ('flux towers') which have been assembled over the canopy of the trees, designed to measure

CHAPTER 13

REDESDALE

Upland farming

The river Rede flows for over thirty miles through some of the more remote corners of Northumberland before eventually disgorging into the North Tyne at – logically enough – the village of Redesmouth a few miles south of the small market town of Bellingham. It rises as near as dammit to the Scottish/English border by Carter Bar and for much of its journey it chooses to be the close companion of the A68, the trunk road which I'd encountered at both Newtown St Boswells and Jedburgh and which would ultimately get motorists all the way from Edinburgh to the A1.

The Rede is a fine river, home to salmon and otter but also to another species of considerable interest to conservationists. This is the pearl mussel, a freshwater mussel which can indeed grow pearls and which can live for a hundred years – or longer still – if all goes well. For all to go well, however, the river that is providing the mussel with its accommodation must be clean and fast-flowing, there must be suitable fish such as salmon or trout swimming nearby (because very early in their life-cycle mussel larvae attach themselves to the gills of these fish) and human beings must be obeying the law and not trying to illicitly harvest the mussels. Pearl mussels have been protected in Britain since the 1990s but illegal harvesting nevertheless has taken place. River dredging has been a problem too, destroying the mussels' habitat. Regrettably freshwater pearl mussels are a declining species, not just in Britain but in other northern countries where they are found.

Recent years have seen efforts to reverse this trend in Britain. It's surprising what can be done sometimes. The Environment Agency runs a Salmon Centre at nearby Kielder where thousands of young salmon

are raised in a hatchery to be released in due course into the Tyne and where in the past few years freshwater mussels have also been artificially reared. Given that tiny pearl mussel larvae are barely a third of a millimetre in size when they are ejected into river water by an adult mussel (and given also that the larvae only survive to grow if they are quickly inhaled by a host fish) the successful rearing of pearl mussels seems to me quite an achievement. Ultimately the mussels being bred at Kielder will help restock the Tyne and Rede.

I met the Rede for the first time as I came down to Byrness from the Cheviots and followed it the next morning for a couple of miles or so, past the settlement called Cottonshopeburnfoot to Blakehopeburnhaugh (place names are generously proportioned hereabouts). But all too soon the river and I parted company. The Pennine Way which I was continuing to follow took a firm turn southwards into the woods and the next few miles would see me tramping miserably on a dusty forestry road through endless conifer plantations. It was I would say the least attractive stretch by quite a long way of my entire journey. Things could have been better: in the very early years of planning the Pennine Way there was a proposal from local ramblers' groups to bypass much of this forest walking by routing the path along the Rede's riverbank for several more miles. Sadly their suggestion was not taken up. Perhaps suffering is a necessary part of the Pennine Way experience.

When eventually the forest plantations do end the Pennine Way continues its broadly southward trajectory over mile after mile of rough moorland. Bellingham (the pronunciation, as all Northumbrians know, is Bellingjum not Bellinghm) is the destination, but Bellingham is a long time coming. This is empty countryside. I don't think I met another human from breakfast to lunch.

More accurately, this countryside is empty of walkers. It is certainly not empty of sheep. Human activity, in the shape of upland farming, is all around. These moors and rough grazing lands are the workplaces for local farmers. And, of all the human interactions with the land that help to shape our landscapes, agriculture must surely be the agency that has the greatest effect.

It has always appeared curious to me that many people who enjoy getting out into the countryside from our cities and towns seem to have little interest in finding out how the land they are walking on is farmed. The sheep and cattle and the crops will no doubt be noticed, but *why* they are there, and why perhaps they weren't there last time you came

this way, or may not be there next time you come, are questions that generally don't get asked.

That's partly because farmers traditionally haven't gone out of their way to explain their trade. Making a living successfully from the land can sometimes be so challenging and stressful that perhaps there is simply not the extra time or space in farmers' lives to try to communicate to the rest of us what is going on. It means that farming can seem something of a closed book, an esoteric activity that only the initiates understand and can undertake.

But surely there's an obligation on all of us to try to educate ourselves on the way that the countryside is farmed. So here's a suggestion. Just as you need to have passed a driving test to handle a car, in future you'll have to take a countryside test if you want to go out walking. It needn't be too onerous. Perhaps a practical element should be included, checking for example that you know to leave farm gates the way you found them and not to let dogs harry livestock. And then there would need to be a written test. I imagine the questions could be something like this: What began in 2018 with a report entitled *Health and Harmony*? What do the letters ELM stand for in a farming context? And the letters SFI? Can you explain the difference between Mid-Tier and Higher-Tier?

These are questions for what would be the English test. Questions for the Scottish and Welsh tests would have to be slightly different. But all three tests could include the really big question: How do you successfully earn your living as an upland farmer?

Well of course I'm not being serious with my suggestion. But on the other hand I do think we should all try to comprehend as much as possible what farmers do and where our food comes from. Sorting out our current environmental problems requires understanding and dialogue. So I would certainly agree with the environmental economist (and former MP) Alan Simpson whose blog I came across while working on this chapter. Our whole approach to the food we eat and the way it is produced has to be rethought, he argued: "We desperately need a new coalition between farmers, families and climate activists". Such a coalition would have to begin by guaranteeing farmers a secure living wage, he added.

Farming is in one sense a curious relic from a previous way of running our economy. For the last forty years or so our economy has operated on the basis that market mechanisms are the only tools we need in

order to progress. Businesses and industries which can't be commercially viable shouldn't be propped up, or so it's claimed. This was the philosophy which saw British manufacturing hollowed out in the latter years of the last century and it very often seems to be the guiding principle today when it comes to much of our economy.

But not when it comes to agriculture. There is absolutely no way that upland farming in particular could conceivably carry on without financial support. It is, in terms of its ability to turn a profit, an absolute no-hope business proposition. So it has needed considerable public subsidy.

When we were in the European Union, this was something which didn't really need much discussion. As an EU member Britain was required to sign up to the Common Agricultural Policy, a keystone of the European project which at one stage took as much as 70 per cent of the EU's budget (it's now down to below 25 per cent, although in money terms that is still a substantial figure). There were very understandable reasons why CAP was created with such generous support for farming: all governments have to ensure that their people are fed, and memories were still fresh in Europe of wartime and post-war food shortages and rationing. The priority was to incentivise farmers to ensure that their land was as productive as possible. In a sense it worked: CAP historically not only delivered the food we needed, it delivered affordable food.

But with Britain's exit from the EU our participation in the EU's common policy came to an end, and there was an opportunity to step back and discuss why as a society we wanted to support farming and what the criteria should be for that support. Farming is a devolved issue, which means that the discussions and consultations which have taken place – and the measures to replace CAP which are gradually being put in place – have been different in England, Scotland and Wales, and in Northern Ireland, too. But certainly in the English context the key starting point was a report issued early in February 2018 at the time when Michael Gove was the relevant Secretary of State. This document (it is the *Health and Harmony* report I referenced earlier) talks of the opportunity to build a 'green Brexit' and to restructure government financial support towards a "more rational and sensitive agriculture policy which promotes environmental enhancement, supports profitable food production and contributes to a healthier society". In many respects it was a surprisingly radical approach to emerge from

the then-Conservative government. The slogan was to be 'public money for the provision of public goods', with considerable emphasis on the importance of strong environmental protection including such things as improved air, water, and soil quality, increased biodiversity and measures to mitigate for climate change.

This approach was worked up into a new grant framework which was given the name Environmental Land Management – ELM for short – and since then the details have been slowly fleshed out. It hasn't necessarily been a straightforward process: as one farmer suggested to me, given the length of time the UK had been in the CAP, initially there simply weren't enough civil servants in place with the necessary skills for what their boss in Defra has described as the biggest reform in agriculture for seventy years.

The way things are shaping up currently in England is structured around an entry-level grant scheme called the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) which the government hopes the vast majority of farmers will sign up for, combined with a so-called Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier programme for those wanting to participate in more focused environmental outcomes for their farm. For a smaller number of farmers who want to embrace a more rigorous environmental land management approach to their farming there is the Higher-Tier Countryside Stewardship scheme, which requires more detailed longer-term planning for the whole of a farm and which also involves advice being taken from Natural England. The Mid-Tier and Higher-Tier stewardship schemes in many ways carry on from what were earlier Countryside Stewardship schemes under the previous grant regime.

Finally (because I sense that you want me to be as comprehensive as I can here) there's a third grant programme called Landscape Recovery, designed primarily for much larger land restoration initiatives typically involving either large landowners or groups of landowners working together.

Things are in flux and in five years' time everything could change all over again. But in the meantime maybe it's best to try to imagine a pizza restaurant which offers over two hundred separate options for you to choose from to put on your pizza (I appreciate that this would be somewhat unusual). Some of the options are available only if you opt for a specific pizza base and some of the options can't be combined (would you really want pepperoni with pineapple?). But within these

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