

**Mid-Nineteenth Century**

**Population Movement in the Anglo-Scottish Border Region**

For the social scientist, current debates about Scottish independence inevitably raise questions about the nature of the relationship between England and Scotland in the past and, for residents of the English and Scottish border counties, the proximity of the border increases the significance of such questions. There are several schools of thought on the nature of the border and its significance in the past, present and future. In considering the deeper meaning of political boundaries it is necessary to move away from the notion of frontiers and boundaries as strictly functional elements of the political landscape to a consideration of their significance in relation to issues such as identity.<sup>1</sup> A key component in developing and fostering a sense of 'nationhood' is through the process of 'othering', that is, defining oneself in terms of what one is not<sup>2</sup> and the 'other' is the neighbour on the other side of the boundary. There are, of course, counter arguments to this perspective.

In considering the movement of people across the Anglo-Scottish Border in the past, a number of hypotheses may be formed. For example, the very existence of the border may have been a barrier to mobility, not for physical reasons but for cultural and psychological ones. Alternatively, the negative impact of the border may have been diminished by the early to mid-nineteenth century due to the emergence of a highly compatible agricultural economic system and related social practices on both sides, resulting in unimpeded mobility across it. The aim of this paper is to test the empirical validity of these two hypotheses in the context of mid-nineteenth century population movement and demographic structure in the eastern Anglo-Scottish border area.

### **The Border as Barrier?**

Although limited to mid-nineteenth century population movement, this research has wider implications. Rather than potential 'similarities' on either side of the border, an alternative

hypothesis concerning border regions is that the very existence of the border itself exacerbates differences.<sup>3</sup> In this interpretation, we may expect to find considerable friction in social and cultural interchanges of all sorts and especially in relation to physical movement across the border. Pooley has noted the potential for 'difference' to persist even after relatively short distance movements.<sup>4</sup> In these circumstances, social interaction with 'host' residents of the destination could be limited.

Given the history of the Borders as a lawless region, characterised by raiding, invasions and outright warfare, the negative role of the border itself as a barrier to contacts across it may have increased.<sup>5</sup> The capture of Newcastle in 1640 and 1644, exacerbated the 'long antipathy to the Scots'.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, as well as conflict, various forms of co-operation existed in the Border area in the early modern period.<sup>7</sup> Economic linkages between the Southern Uplands of Scotland and the industrialising north east of England existed in the late seventeenth century: "...it was really the appetite of the Newcastle coalheaver that sustained the early growth of the sheep and lamb trade".<sup>8</sup> In the early eighteenth century a high proportion of Tyneside keelmen were of Scottish origin: "the whole number of Keelmen is within 1600. 400 of them are yet in Scotland whither they go always in the winter to their families".<sup>9</sup> In the cultural realm the concept of the Border was extensively used in post-Union literature but, argues Sassi, essentially as a 'thematic device' to represent 'difference', "not with a view to promoting separation, but rather to bridging cultures."<sup>10</sup>

A more nuanced assessment of the role of the border is required because different spheres of activity were impacted unevenly by the existence of the Border Line. It is entirely feasible that, whilst a border may separate two regions, the very proximity of that border may engender a degree of similarity on either side of it. In fact, it took a very long time to establish any kind of a border between 'Scotland' and 'England'<sup>11</sup> and it has been suggested that there never was a clear and undisputed distinction between the kingdoms of Scotland and England. In the late eighteenth century "The border region was...defined by the fluid character of its boundaries, the lack of distinct

barriers between regions and constituent cultures”.<sup>12</sup> This ambiguity relating to the border itself is directly relevant to our study which tests, for the mid nineteenth century, how relevant the border line was to the lives of people living right next to it, people who have spoken the same mutually intelligible English language for the best part of 1,500 years.

We use data on migration as an indicator of interchange between both sides of the Border. The volume of flows in both directions provides a measure of the role of a border as a barrier. More significantly, the characteristics of the people moving provides a more useful indicator of the nature of this potential barrier. For example, the employment characteristics of migrants can indicate much about any potential barrier, as can the gender balance in relation to employment. The existence of return or possibly circular migration may equally tell us much about the shared economic experience – or lack of it – on both sides of the border. Therefore, in an economic sense, the concept of a border *region*, rather than a border *line*, may be a more appropriate interpretation of historical reality.

Although considerable cross-border movement may take place, this may be a product of economic necessity and the significance of the border may still be manifest in limited social and cultural interaction between the groups from either side. Indicators of such interaction include the degree of inter-marriage and co-residence and religious differences. These features can be explored through an examination of the characteristics of populations engaged in such movement.

### **The Study Area**

The population and household characteristics of Scots-born residents living in several rural parishes in Northumberland and English born residents in southern Scotland in 1851 are examined in this article. The parishes chosen in Northumberland are Norham, Carham and Alwinton and Harbottle

and, in southern Scotland on the opposite side of the Border, Ladykirk, Sprouston, and Hownam. The first two from each country are located in the fertile lowlands of the Tweed basin whereas Alwinton and Harbottle (one parish) and Hownam are both upland parishes. The parish of Norham includes its substantial village and adjacent townships.

Norham and Ladykirk face each other across the Tweed, being linked by an 18 foot wide wooden trestle bridge from 1839 onward (the present bridge being completed in 1887), Carham and Sprouston parishes are directly linked by what is now the B6350 and B6396 plus three other minor roads; the two ‘upland’ parishes of Alwinton and Harbottle and Hownam are linked by nothing more than hill tracks but, overall, there was no major impediment to the movement of wheeled traffic (i.e. farm carts) over the relatively short distances between these parishes.

The Improvement Movement of the later eighteenth century produced a new economic landscape in the south east of Scotland and in the lowland parts of north Northumberland.<sup>13</sup> New crops, grasses and rotation systems resulted in more intensive use of the land and a much higher level of demand for workers, including seasonal labour.<sup>14</sup> This improvement was apparent on both sides of the Border. Although reporting on Northumberland, Bailey and Culley<sup>15</sup> made frequent glowing references to advances made north of the Tweed, and “...all the writing of the time shows close contact between English and Scottish landowners and farmers.”<sup>16</sup> This improvement created new patterns of demand for labour and a more mobile labour force, albeit within local areas. Even as late as 1891, the Rector of Ford parish complained in his *Visitation Return* to the Bishop of Durham that “...a large proportion of the parishioners migrate each year”, referring to the May ‘flitting’, consequent upon the prevailing system of agricultural employment.<sup>17</sup> Labour was formally contracted on an annual or half-yearly basis only<sup>18</sup> and, as part of the arrangement or ‘bond’ struck between ‘hind’ and farmer in return for free cottage accommodation, the former would provide an additional worker (usually a woman) either from his own family or as a paid employee.<sup>19</sup> This

system “...although not unknown elsewhere, prevails in its most characteristic form in those counties adjoining the Border of Scotland on both sides.”<sup>20</sup> For example, George Tait farmer of 407 acres in Coldsmouth and Thompson Walls township in Kirknewton parish Northumberland at the time of the 1851 census, employed five agricultural labourers, all of them born in Scotland.

Displaying an all too familiar lack of comprehension of the situation that many agricultural workers found themselves in, the Rev. Adam Landels, minister of Hutton (in Scotland) complained that “ There is no other kind of emigration but that which takes place at Whitsunday when there is a removal of many hinds, herds and cottagers in the neighbouring parishes, whose places are at the same time filled up by others of the same description, who are actuated by an unaccountable desire to change their habitations, though they seldom ameliorate their situations”.<sup>21</sup> The system also required that female workers, known as ‘bondagers, be employed at other times of the year at an agreed daily rate of pay.<sup>22</sup> In contrast, farm stewards and shepherds, invariably male, would likely remain on the farm for much longer, for ten years or more.<sup>23</sup>

Transport improvement aided this mobility. By the later eighteenth century, road improvements encouraged the growth of an extensive system of local carriers, integrated with coastal shipping to and from small ports in Northumberland and the Scottish borders.<sup>24</sup> Although walking would have been the principal means of reaching a short-distance destination, longer distance moves (including cross-border) and the use of carts would have been facilitated by more and better roads.

## **The Data**

Our analysis of data from the 1851 Censuses of England and Scotland demonstrates the detail and complexity of cross-border movement patterns in this region and throws some light on larger questions concerning identity and consciousness.

Data were extracted from the relevant census enumeration books compiled in the taking of the 1851 census. These contain information on names, place of residence, age, sex, relation to household head, marital status and place of birth of all individuals resident in a specific household on the night of the census.<sup>25</sup> Data on migration is therefore mainly limited to ‘lifetime’ migration, where movement is deduced from the fact that the present place of residence is different from the place of birth. Clearly, this does not capture the entirety of movements made over the course of a lifetime but data on the latter is indicated in households where there were resident children as their birth places can be used to indicate some details of movement. One example is Thomas Ord, a Scottish born farmer aged 62 recorded at Snitter Township in the parish of Rothbury, Northumberland in 1851. His wife Margaret aged 56 was also born in Scotland but their eldest son Thomas (aged 32) was born in Alwinton, Northumberland whilst their next child, daughter Ellen (aged 28) was born in Scotland. John, aged 25, was born in Elsdon, Northumberland. The family had presumably returned to Scotland sometime between 1819 and 1823 then moved back to Northumberland between 1823 and 1826.

In the census enumeration books the birthplace column indicates the county and place (usually parish) of birth if these were in England and Wales. Otherwise, as with the example of the Ord family above, the country of birth only is given (i.e. Scotland) although occasionally more detail is supplied (e.g. Edinburgh; Kelso etc.). The Scottish enumeration books give equivalent data. Although providing only partial information, these data enable us to examine many of the characteristics of Scottish-born residents in the three Northumberland parishes and the English-born residents in the three Scottish parishes.

### **Was the Border a Barrier to Migration?**

Movement across the border is historically well attested. In the sixteenth century, the English Wardens were frequently complaining about Scots migrating into England<sup>26</sup> and, by the early modern period, some quite specific migration streams between Scotland and the north-east existed. For example, "...in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century many Tyneside keelmen were of Scottish origin, but there was already a substantial Scottish minority in the area by the 1630s."<sup>27</sup> The Gypsies of the Yetholm area were known for their involvement in "the carrying trade, of coal ....from Ford and Etal to Kelso and Jedburgh, and were active in the smuggling trade that followed the Act of Union".<sup>28</sup> Prominent in the latter was the smuggling of whisky across the border in the early nineteenth century, mainly due to the different excise rates applied.<sup>29</sup> This activity must have been substantial because, in 1834, 56 border officers were employed in attempting to prevent the smuggling of spirits from Scotland into England.<sup>30</sup>

Relating to potentially more permanent moves, by the early 1830s movement of Scots into Northumberland drew expressions of concern from the local reporter to the inquiry into the Poor Laws, John Wilson (1834), who observed "The larger proportion ..of casual paupers and beggars are Scotch. Many of the latter are tailors, weavers and of other trades, who pick up a precarious subsistence in the villages. They also come to assist in harvest work for which the wages are about 16/- a week with food."<sup>31</sup> Wilson also noted that in Berwick on Tweed in 1832 "Great numbers of them (Scots) are passed from thence to the Scotch township of Ayton...occasionally three or four cartloads in one week. Many....when passed into their native country, return by some other route into England, and are passed perhaps three or four times a year".<sup>32</sup> In Newcastle upon Tyne in 1831 a 'mendicity society' was formed and within six months the Society had relieved "1835 strangers, viz. 779 English, 640 Irish, 401 Scotch and 15 Foreigners".<sup>33</sup>



Cross-border movement was therefore a well-established phenomenon well before the mid nineteenth century, albeit one that is difficult to quantify. Nevertheless, we can assess the volume of more permanent mid nineteenth century movement directly through examination of the birth-place data from the 1851 census enumeration books for border parishes (Figure 1).

[\(Figure 1 here\)](#)

In the mid-nineteenth century, all ‘frontier’ parishes on the English side and, in fact, virtually all parishes in Northumberland, had some Scots born residents. However, Figure 1 indicates a ‘distance decay’ pattern of fewer Scots migrants with increasing distance from the border whilst, in detail, the pattern is strongly affected by accessibility, especially in relation to the two main routes through north Northumberland into Scotland. Carham parish, opposite Coldstream, had the highest proportion (30.4%) with adjacent Cornhill 16.5%. Berwick had 17.8% and, being the largest settlement, the greatest absolute number (1,792). But large and agriculturally productive parishes such as Kirknewton and Norham also had substantial absolute numbers of Scots born residents, with 302 (17.9%) and 486 (14.7%) respectively. In some local areas stronger concentrations existed: the township of Coldsmouth and Thompson Walls had a total population of only 20 people, but 18 of these had been born in Scotland. Wark village, with a total population of 424 had 165 (38.9%) Scots born. The upland township of Linshiels had 39.2% of its population of 97 born in Scotland. The number of Scots resident in Berwick was augmented by the substantial presence of Scottish soldiers in the barracks (228 or 75% of a total of 303) although these are not shown on Figure 1. Excluding the latter, something like 5,000 Scots born migrants were living in the English border parishes in 1851.

North of the border, English-born residents were present in every ‘border’ Scottish parish with stronger concentrations in the eastern ones (Figure 1). Mordington, Foulden, Ladykirk, Coldstream, Hutton, Sprouston and Yetholm all had in excess of 10% of their population born in England.

In the mid nineteenth century, the Border Line, significant though it may have been (and remains) in many contexts, was not a significant barrier to the physical movement of populations originating in the counties on either side of it. However, a more detailed examination of the characteristics of those migrants is required if we are to understand its nature more fully.

### **Sample Parishes: Migrants in Aggregate**

The proportion of Scots born in the three English parishes and the proportion of English born residents of the three Scottish border parishes immediately opposite the English parishes is shown in Table 1. The proportion of households that had at least one resident born on the other side of the border is also indicated. [\(Table 1 here\)](#)

Each of the sample parishes had 10% or more of its total residents born in the neighbouring country, but a clearer impression of the impact of Scottish migration into Northumberland and English migration into southern Scotland is given by the second statistic. In each of the three sample parishes in England, over one third of households had a Scottish presence. On the Scottish side of the border the proportions were similar. Carham clearly stands out in having a majority of its households with at least one member born in Scotland.

The aggregate demographic structure of these migrant populations in the sample parishes is shown in Table 2.

[\(Table 2 here\)](#)

The most obvious difference between the two sides of the border is the absolute number of migrants. This is mainly a function of population size and associated economic opportunities which greatly favoured the English parish sample. The trajectory of growth also favoured the three

English parishes which grew by 21.5% between 1801 and 1851 compared to 12.2% in the Scottish parishes. The larger villages of Norham and Carham in England would also offer slightly more varied economic opportunities, especially the large village of Norham. Although the two sides of the border shared a broadly similar agricultural economic system there were a larger number of migrant agricultural workers on the Northumberland side. One possible factor responsible for this relates to the timing of the annual hiring fairs. For example, in the principal English border town of Berwick upon Tweed, the hiring of farm servants took place earlier than it did in Scotland,<sup>34</sup> facilitating the recruitment of Scottish labour anxious to secure a new contract as soon as possible, even if under terms only marginally (or no better) than previously enjoyed in Scotland. Those keenest to move might walk furthest to a hiring fair and, if the English hirings generally preceded the Scottish ones, this might explain a drift of Scottish Border farm workers moving into England. Furthermore, what may appear to be only marginal differences in the growing season might have influenced the sequence of hirings. Being further south and east, English farms would be more advanced in their growing seasons by a few critical days or a week or so.

However, the structure of the migrant groups was rather different. In the Northumberland parishes the majority of Scots migrants (56%) were female with a surplus being particularly marked in the 15-39 age range. Females outnumbered males by over a third in this age cohort (284 compared to 209). Young children and older people were clearly not absent, but it is apparent that most migrants were young adults. Along with the gender balance, this pattern relates to the specific structure and characteristics of the regional rural labour market described earlier.

Despite sharing this agricultural system, the structure of the English-born population in the three Scottish parishes was somewhat different, especially in relation to the sex ratio. Over half (51.5%) of the English-born were male and also in contrast to the Scots-born in the English parishes, males formed the majority in the younger working age-groups aged 15-39 (79 males compared to 67

females). Clearly, there was not the same incentive for English born young females to move to Scotland as there was for Scottish born young females to move to England, despite the similarity in agricultural occupational structures. It seems unlikely that this was a consequence of the lack of demand for young female labour on the Scottish side as Houston has shown for Greenlaw in 1841 that 80% of all movers were women in the 15-24 age-group.<sup>35</sup> But for our sample parishes, in contrast to the English side, younger adult males were relatively more significant in-migrants to the Scottish parishes. This rather different structure of the two groups of sample parishes suggests that there was a relatively stronger demand for young female labour on the English side. It does not demonstrate that such a demand was lacking on the Scottish side but it seems possible that this was met much more locally, by Scottish born young females.<sup>36</sup> Again, the earlier annual recruitment of labour at Berwick on the English side may have been a factor. As the provision of an 'additional' female worker, was part of the contract, potential employers in Northumberland would be more able to secure their required labour at an early stage. For older adults, aged 40-69, in the three Scottish parishes, although males are still the majority, the discrepancy is less marked (41 males compared to 35 females) and for the elderly there is equivalence.

Given the nature of agricultural employment in the Anglo-Scottish Borders, it might be expected that the majority of young adults enumerated in the 1851 census would be 'footloose', mobile individuals with few impediments to migration. In fact, exactly 50% of those aged over 15 in the Northumberland sample parishes who had moved from Scotland were married, 41% single and 9% widowed. In the Scottish sample parishes, the figures were very similar with 49.2% of the English-born aged over 15 being married, 44.6% single and 6.2% widows or widowers.

The specific characteristics of the regional rural economy and its labour requirements appeared to demand a flexible and, in many ways, non-spatially bound workforce. It is all the more remarkable then that, on the English side at least, this did not preclude the formation of strong or permanent

personal relationships. It is possible to over-stress the role of the ‘bondage’ system in encouraging a high level of mobility and obstacles to marriage for young females. Of 400 households in the Glendale parishes of Carham, Kirknewton and Ford, in 1851 only 20% had a bondager from outside the family employed.<sup>37</sup> It is likely that a substantial proportion of the requirement to provide female labour as part of the contract of employment would have been met from inside the family, a point noted by Northumberland’s chief investigator for the 1834 inquiry into the operation of the poor laws – “This bondager is generally the wife, sister or daughter of the hind.”<sup>38</sup> It is possible that the requirements of employment may have actually encouraged marriage for some. Male migrants, seeking to minimise the potential insecurities in finding employment strengthened their position through being able to offer a working wife or daughter of working age. Long has noted the various attempts made in north Northumberland to discourage mobility, including advice to farmers to allow open courting amongst their unmarried workers.<sup>39</sup>

However, the Scottish born population of the sample Northumberland parishes were far from being exclusively a young, highly mobile cohort. A substantial proportion of the total households in the sample parishes in Northumberland were headed by Scots born, a factor that may indicate a trend towards permanent residence. We may hypothesise, therefore, that two types of Scots born migrant may be identified – the relatively young, recently moved mainly agricultural worker, and the rather older migrant who had possibly settled for the foreseeable future. In total, 23% of household heads in the three English parishes were Scots born. The proportion of household heads born in England in the three Scottish parishes was somewhat less, at 16.4%.

Table 3 shows the main features of the aggregate household structure of these households.

(Table 3 here)

In the Northumberland sample parishes, of the 237 households with a Scottish born head, 83% had a surviving wife and an average of 1.3 co-residing children per household. However, many households were complex with a significant representation of other relatives, with one lodger in every sixth household and, especially, a high proportion of ‘servants’. The latter is, of course largely a product of the nature of the regional agricultural system and its labour patterns. In the Scottish parishes a smaller proportion of households with an English born head had a surviving wife (71%), there were more surviving children per household (2.8), a higher proportion of other relatives in the household (36.1% compared to 27.8%) and a higher proportion of lodgers, boarders and visitors (26.3% compared to 16.9%). Although the differences are not substantial, they do suggest rather more pressure on local housing accommodation on the Scottish side of the border than on the English side, although the latter was, of course, significant. Although somewhat marginal, these differences may go some way towards explaining the higher proportion of migrants overall in the English sample parishes than in the Scottish ones.

### **Mobility characteristics**

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the Anglo-Scottish border was a region with considerable internal mobility of population. For example, a localised pattern of frequent movement, albeit on the Scottish side only, is recorded by a day labourer, Alexander Somerville (1811-1885) in his remarkable biography.<sup>40</sup> Robson notes of this record that “This continuous movement was necessary to find work at all.”<sup>41</sup> However, contemporary opinion disputed the level of mobility. John Grey of Dilston (1841-2) attempted to defend the practice of annual hiring of ‘hinds’ and the attendant requirement for provision of a female worker by citing “a considerable farm in Northumberland” where the length of service appeared to be substantial, averaging 13 years for the 13 farm workers employed.<sup>42</sup> From our overall data on mobility and many other contemporary

descriptions, this example appears to be a significant exception. Other contemporary accounts (e.g. Gilly, 1842) stressed the negative consequences of frequent mobility within the region, including the disincentive to landlords to offer and maintain good quality cottage accommodation and the regular access of children to education.<sup>43</sup> Gilly was the vicar of Norham in 1841 and surveyed the eleven townships in the parish. In contrast to Grey's example, of 174 families occupying cottages reserved for them as part of the contract of employment, only 17 had remained stationary for more than ten years and 83 of the 174 cottages had changed their occupants within the previous two years.<sup>44</sup>

A weakness of the census is that it is simply a cross-section in time and tells us little about whether the Scots-born living in English parishes (and vice versa for the English-born residents in Scottish parishes) were permanent, cyclical or temporary migrants. However, we can infer something of the nature of the mobility, albeit indirectly, from a more detailed analysis of household structures, relating especially to the birth places and age of children.<sup>45</sup>

(Figure 2 here)

Figure 2 is based on the birthplaces of children in a small number of households (those whose 'head' is recorded in the census as being born in either England or Scotland and with resident children born in locations on the other side of the border) and does not capture sequential moves of those without offspring. But the movement shown within the region ranges from some quite long distance moves from some of the English border parishes to Tyneside (and back) for example and west Durham (and back) to some highly localised 'circuits' of movement. Once having crossed the border, subsequent moves included 'returns' but, more commonly, moves *within* the country of destination. Overall, however, the pattern suggests a 'regional system' rather than one cut into two by a national boundary.

Using the ages of children as recorded at the 1851 census it is possible to make a reasonable calculation of when households had moved south or north of the border. For example, John Patterson, a 35 year old agricultural labourer enumerated at Longridge hamlet (Norham parish) in the 1851 census and his 30 year old wife, Margaret were both born in Scotland, as was their two eldest children Margaret (age 7) and Robert (age 5), but the 2 year old John had been born in Norham parish, suggesting that the family had moved there some time between 1846 and 1849. In other words, they had been residents for at least 2 years. In this way we can make some reasonable estimates of the proportion of migrants who, in 1851 were recent migrants or longer term. Table 4 shows the results of these calculations for the sample parishes on both the Northumberland side of the border and the Scottish side.

[\(Table 4 here\)](#)

Table 4 shows that a substantial proportion of households with at least one partner born in Scotland had been living in Northumberland for a considerable period of time, that is, a decade or more. This propensity is even more marked in their equivalents (husband or wife born in England) in the Scottish parishes, although the very small numbers involved in Hownam reduce its significance. Nevertheless, this suggests that, for married households, high levels of frequent mobility across the border may have been the exception rather than the rule. Although married households clearly did move, as dictated by their contracts of employment, the available evidence from the birthplace of children and the ages of children as related to place of birth suggests a limited amount of cross-border movement for families although not necessarily for individuals. Furthermore, this is a feature of all the sample parishes, despite the existence of slightly different economic structures in each of them.

An examination of the place of birth of children provides additional evidence. For example, a household that has resident children who were born within both England and Scotland must be one



that has moved across the border. Table 5 shows the number and proportions of households with children born in both Scotland and England.

(Table 5 here)

Although the numbers involved are quite small, Table 5 adds some weight to the argument that, for some, cross-border movement was a normal occurrence, relatively unaffected by life-cycle events and this was the case on both sides of the Border. Nevertheless, combined with Table 4, a tentative hypothesis could be that, once having moved to Northumberland or Berwickshire/Roxburghshire and, particularly having married and started a family, thereafter a more local pattern of movement may have been the norm. Frequent moves may have been common but their distance and, especially, inclination to re-cross the border may have become more constrained. There are sound reasons for this. The contract of employment was for one year only – this could be renewed but, failing that, alternative employment opportunities would be sought. It is highly likely that ‘word of mouth’ would have been by far the most important source of such information<sup>46</sup> and it is equally likely that the circulation of such information would have been highly localised, producing local circuits of mobility.<sup>47</sup> For those failing to secure re-employment in their immediate locality of current residence, the main recourse would have been to the annual hiring fairs.<sup>48</sup>

Such events would potentially offer a wider geographical range of employment prospects but these would still have been limited to the well-established hinterlands of these urban-based hiring fairs, thus likely to have had a constraining impact on the future location of employment. In Greenlaw between 1834 and 1843, of the 218 agricultural workers presenting testimonials of employment, 74% travelled less than 10 miles and 95 per cent less than twenty miles.<sup>49</sup>

## **Occupations**

The search for employment was the main reason for most cross-border movement. We can establish the occupational structure of Scots-born people living in Northumberland and their counterparts, born in England but living and working in Scotland, from the 1851 census enumeration books. This is shown for the sample parishes in Table 6.

[\(Table 6 here\)](#)

As expected, agricultural employment predominates for both sets of parishes and is almost exactly equivalent at 60%. Although domestic service employment is similar with 17% for Scots moving to England and 11.5% for English-born in the Scottish parishes, the majority of the latter was located at Ladykirk Hall. There is a substantial difference in the employment gained in local service provision – mainly various ‘trades’ – with this category employing less than 1% of the English moving to Scotland but over 12% of Scots moving to England. However, the pattern is heavily skewed by the impact of the largest village of Norham. Nevertheless, the differential does suggest the wider employment possibilities for Scottish migrants with more varied and possibly higher skill levels. The impact of temporary, local factors is illustrated by the transport-related employment at Sprouston, a function of recent railway construction. Table 6 also raises an interesting point about detailed nomenclature of occupations, specifically the use of the terms ‘farm servant’, ‘farm labourer’ and ‘agricultural labourer’. The latter seems to have been used predominantly in relation to males in the English parishes but less so in the case of Sprouston in Scotland where it was applied to a significant number of females. The term ‘farm servant’ was mainly used in reference to females in the English parishes but barely at all in the Scottish parishes. The term ‘farm labourer’ was totally absent in the Scottish parishes. It appears that different names were used for what were, in effect, very similar roles.

**The Border as a Socio-Cultural Barrier?**

The search for employment may have provided a strong catalyst for migration away from one's place of birth for many border residents. But such moves may have been undertaken with some reluctance. Although the border may have been permeable in an economic sense with a similar economic (especially agrarian) structural organisation meaning that a relatively straightforward transition into a new position both north and south of the border was possible even though it appears that there were rather more varied jobs for the Scots-born going to England. However, it does not follow that such a move was accompanied by a full or even partial degree of social integration. Although 'crossed', the border could still have performed a symbolic role as a social barrier. This leads to questions about the extent to which Scottish migrants on the English side and English migrants on the Scottish side took with them or formed their own social facilities and/or organisations?

An obvious example relates to religious affiliations. However, evidence of Scots migrants, for example, taking their religion with them seems rather limited. Only seven Church of Scotland churches were enumerated in the whole of Northumberland in the 1851 Census of Religion, two in Newcastle and one in Haltwhistle, well outside our study area, leaving only four in North Northumberland, at Berwick upon Tweed, Tweedmouth, Lowick and Belford.<sup>50</sup> Although there is no doubt that the Anglo-Scottish border was an area of considerable denominational rivalry,<sup>51</sup> the extent to which this related to 'national' adherences to different denominations (e.g 'English' Anglicanism vs. 'Scottish' Presbyterianism) is highly uncertain. For example, Presbyterian church-going was not the exclusive preserve of local Scots-born residents. There is considerable evidence of different denominations actually sharing churches as witnessed by the vicar of St Cuthbert's Church, Carham: "Some of the dissenters and also the Scotch Church attend the church service".<sup>52</sup> The vicars of Branxton and Kirknewton in the 1861 *Visitation Returns* to the Bishop of Durham, both noted the presence of Presbyterians at their services.<sup>53</sup> More importantly, for Scottish

Presbyterians in particular “..rivalries were predominantly internal.”<sup>54</sup> and the schisms within the Church of Scotland and Scottish Presbyterianism raise the possibility that differences within the Scottish community may have been more significant than any differences with neighbouring English communities. Perhaps even more fundamentally, the gradual decline in the overall significance of religion seems likely to have played some part in weakening its role as a potential socio-cultural barrier. Even in 1810, the incumbent of Ilderton parish in Northumberland, commented “...it is obvious that Disregard to religion prevails every where in this neighbourhood.”<sup>55</sup> Neville (1909) confirmed that the practice of annual hiring and movement of workers had a negative impact upon church attendance.<sup>56</sup>

Even if specific institutions and factors such as denominational adherence may provide some evidence of attempts to preserve ‘distinctiveness’ and ‘otherness’, the day-to-day reality of both the Scottish and English migrants working alongside the ‘host’ population at the same tasks may be expected to have gradually eroded social barriers and led to greater levels of social integration. This process may have been assisted by deeper historic social and cultural factors such as the “close historic link between the speech of Roxburghshire, Berwickshire, and Northumberland..”<sup>57</sup> Early cross-border involvement in social events is implied in the Border Poet Robert Davidson’s (1788-1855) poem *The Cheviot Games* where he contrasts the animosity of former times with friendly sporting rivalry, writing that:

*Lads baith frae Tyne and Tivot*

*Are here this day.*<sup>58</sup>

The region could be argued to have started its own institutions early with, for example, the establishment of *The Berwick Advertiser* in 1808, “circulating in Berwick, North Northumberland and widely in the Tweed Valley”.<sup>59</sup> Social and cultural mixing was well apparent at the upper

levels of 'Border' society. For example, the *Berwickshire Naturalists Club* membership list of 1857 has 67 English members and 26 Scottish ones. The *Border Union Agricultural Society* (established 1813) had, in 1850, a considerable number of members from North Northumberland. Not surprisingly, therefore, the *Northumberland Agricultural Society's* annual show was frequently held in the Tweed Valley, for example at Cornhill on Tweed in 1857 and 1868 and Berwick in 1873 and 1876.

Our 1851 census enumeration data on household structure provides more comprehensive indication of social mixing. One measure of this is the extent of co-residence. Table 7 shows this for the sample parishes.

(Table 7 here)

It is clear from Table 7 that a considerable proportion of Scottish and English migrants were co-residing with the 'host' population. In the Northumberland parishes, over one third of all households had at least one Scottish resident living with them and the proportions of households with at least one English-born resident were similar in the Scottish parishes. Although not a direct measure of social integration this clearly suggests a lack of inhibition over choosing to live with a household of a different nationality. However, as we have seen, this co-residence could have been mainly a function of the structure of the agricultural system with its annual contracts and the persistence of the provision of bondagers. Furthermore, the existence of co-residing could have been more a function of the shortage of accommodation than a positive result of social integration.<sup>60</sup>

A more meaningful measure of social integration, or the lack of it, is provided by an indicator of a closer emotional relationship between different groups. The high degree of social integration indicated by co-residence is subject to competing explanations but the degree of inter-marriage between English and Scots is less so and may be regarded as a key indicator of social integration.

Table 8 shows the degree of inter-marriage between English and Scottish men and women in the sample parishes.

(Table 8a and 8b here)

Table 8 shows a considerable propensity to inter-marry. Although some couples chose to marry only within their own nationality, and possibly migrated as a family, these are exceeded by mixed marriages in each parish, between 12 and 20 per cent of all households consisted of such nuptial arrangements on the English side. In the latter it was slightly more common for the wife to be Scots-born than the husband, a reflection of the greater mobility of younger adult females in the mid nineteenth century.<sup>61</sup>

Table 8b shows that, on the Scottish side, mixed marriages constituted between 8 and 13 per cent, marginally lower than such marriages in the English parishes and there is slightly less evidence for any greater mobility of younger adult females. This clearly relates to our findings shown in Table 2 and the suggestion that a higher proportion of the female labour force in the Scottish parishes was sourced relatively locally. There is little difference between the number of English born wives and English born husbands.

## **Conclusion**

The primary research objective of this article was to establish to what extent the Anglo-Scottish border was a barrier to movement. The findings from the 1851 census reported here show that no such barrier existed in the eastern borders at least. Our research leads us to agree with Robson that “it is of greater use to treat the English and Scottish sides as all part of the Border country”.<sup>62</sup>

Despite some differences in detail, our findings lead us to suggest that the eastern Anglo-Scottish

Borders should be considered a distinct sub-region in itself whose two sides have as much in common with each other as they do with the countries of which they happen to be administrative parts.

The evidence for this conclusion is based mainly on economic migration in the mid-nineteenth century, but our analysis suggests that demographic and migration characteristics reflected a coherent agricultural economic system with shared characteristics facilitating a frequent and regular flow of workers across the Anglo-Scottish border, albeit in our study favouring the English side in aggregate. These movements were to some extent consequent upon a specific pattern of labour demand, a result of a period of agricultural capitalist development (termed 'improvement') on both sides of the Border from the later eighteenth century, albeit one that would soon be swept away by mechanisation from the mid nineteenth century onwards. However, it is clear that the structure of mobility was moderated by other factors. Within the overall pattern, the 'attractiveness' of crossing the border to find agricultural employment seems to have varied, especially for young females. The English parishes were a considerably bigger magnet for Scottish young females than vice versa.

Nevertheless, for many, the Border was a minor obstacle only, if at all. Any suggestion that the very existence of a Border Line between England and Scotland might to some extent inhibit movement across that Line – national prejudices actively conspiring against any inclinations to make such a move – would therefore appear to be false, for our time-period at least. Additionally, the research has shown that this migration pattern extended beyond the widely accepted view of movement being mainly limited to young adult agricultural workers, responding to a very specific form of annual employment contract. Mobility appears to have been more widespread than this. Moreover, our examination of the birthplaces and age of children at the 1851 census reveals some interesting features relating to the permanence of migration. Against a background of overall high mobility, it is possible to detect differences within the study area mainly relating to younger, unmarried

individuals, probably moving several times across the border and older households, themselves showing earlier evidence of such moves but subsequently engaging in more localised migration patterns. Finally, being born on one side of the border or the other does not appear to have constituted a significant barrier to the existence of social relationships with those born on the other side. Simple evidence from co-residence and, more persuasively, from inter-marriage of Scots and English persons suggests few barriers to social mixing.



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Table 1. Percentage of English/Scots-born residents in sample parishes and percentage of households with at least one English. Scots-born residents, 1851

English Parishes			Scottish Parishes		
Parish	% Scots born	% households with at least 1 Scots born	Parish	% English born	% households with at least 1 English born
Carham	29.3	60.5	Sprouston	12.0	26.0
Norham	14.7	33.3	Ladykirk	14.0	30.9
Alwinton and Harbottle	13.5	39.2	Hownam	9.9	40.4

Table 2 Age-Sex structure of migrant groups in sample parishes, 1851

	Scots born migrants in sample Northumberland parishes		English born migrants in sample Scottish parishes	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-4	23 (2.4%)	23 (2.4%)	5 (1.6%)	10 (3.3%)
5-14	68 (7.0%)	73 (7.5%)	25 (8.1%)	28 (9.1%)
15-39	209 (21.5%)	284 (29.2%)	79 (25.7%)	67 (21.8%)
40-69	112 (11.5%)	133 (13.6%)	41 (13.4%)	35 (11.4%)
70+	17 (1.7%)	32 (3.3%)	8 (2.6%)	9 (2.9%)
TOTAL	429 (44.0%)	545 (56.0%)	158 (51.5%)	149 (48.5%)



Table 3. Household Structure of Scots-born and English born headed households

	Northumberland sample parishes (Scots born head)	Roxburgh & Berwick sample parishes (English born head)
Head	237	72
Wife	198	51
Daughter/Son	311	205
Relatives	66	26
Servant (*)	126	30
Lodgers, Boarders, Visitors	40	19

(\*) including farm servants and other co-habiting employees

Table 4. Length of residence in England/Scotland of Households with Husband or Wife born in Scotland/England.

Living in England/Scotland for at least...	Alwinton and Harbottle		Norham		Carham	
	No	%	No.	%	No.	%
10 + years	11	47.9	66	47.1	35	40.7
3-9 years	6	26.1	43	30.7	23	26.7
1-2 years	3	13.0	21	15.0	12	14.0
Less than 1 year	3	13.0	10	7.2	16	18.6
Unknown (*)	1		13		17	
	Sprouston		Ladykirk		Hownam	
10 + years	33	68.7	17	65.4	4	66.7
3-9 years	9	18.7	8	30.8	2	33.3
1-2 years	6	12.6	1	3.8		
Less than 1 year						
Unknown (*)					2	

(\*) not included in percentage calculations

Table 5. Households with children born in both Scotland and England

English Parishes				Scottish Parishes			
Parish	Households with children born in both Scotland & England	As % of total households	As % of households with Scots-born head	Parish	Households with children born in both Scotland & England	As % of total households	As % of households with English-born head
Carham	28	11.1	30.4	Sprouston	16	5.6	34.0
Norham	36	5.6	20.0	Ladykirk	11	9.7	57.9
Alwinton and Harbottle	3	2.4	29.3	Hownam	2	4.3	33.3

Table 6. Occupations of Cross-Border Migrants

	ENGLAND						SCOTLAND					
	CARHAM		ALWINTON and HARBOTTLE		NORHAM		SPROUSTON		HOWNAM		LADYKIRK	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
AGRICULTURE												
Farmer	5		5		5	2	3				3	
Farm steward/bailiff	5				7		3					
Farm servant	16	35	3		1	10	2			1		
Farm labourer	6	2	1		8	8						
Agricultural labourer	41	1	5		57	14	32	24			8	4
Shepherd	14		15		3		7		10		2	
Other	4		1	1	13(*)		2		2		1	
(*) includes salmon fishermen												
DOMESTIC SERVICE	3	25	1	11	8	33				4	7	9
LOCAL SERVICE PROVISION	12	3	2	4	23	14					1	
TRANSPORT	1				6	1	13(\$)				2	
(\$) includes railway workers												
PROFESSIONAL	2	1	2		4	1						
INDUSTRIAL	20		5		8		5					
TOTAL	129	67	40	16	143	83	67	24	12	5	24	13

Table 7. Households with at least ONE Scottish (in England) or at least ONE English (in Scotland) resident, 1851: Sample parishes

Parish (England)	Number of Households	% of total Households	Parish (Scotland)	Number of Households	% of total Households
Carham	142	56.1	Sprouston	76	26.9
Norham	224	34.7	Ladykirk	35	29.9
Alwinton and Harbottle	49	39.2	Hownam	18	38.3

Table 8a Inter-marriage English parishes

	Alwinton and Harbottle	Norham	Carham
Number of 'mixed' (Scottish/English) marriages	15 (12.0)	102 (15.8)	52 (20.6)
Of which, husband Scots born	6	40	22
Of which, wife Scots born	9	62	30
Households with Husband & Wife BOTH Scots born	7	49	42

(x) as % of ALL households

Table 8b Inter-marriage Scottish parishes

	Sprouston	Ladykirk	Hownam
Number of 'mixed' (Scottish/English) marriages	23 (8.2)	16 (13.3)	5 (10.6)
Of which, husband English born	12	8	3
Of which, wife English born	11	8	2
Households with Husband & Wife BOTH English born	23	6	0

(x) as % of ALL households

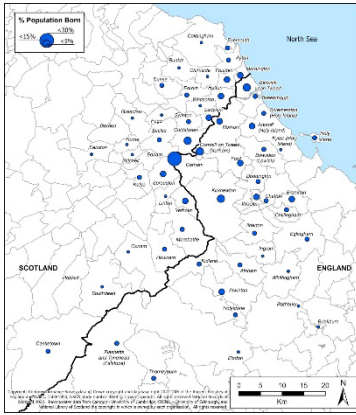


Figure 1. Sample parishes: % of population born in Scotland but resident in English parishes and % of population born in England but resident in Scotland, 1851.

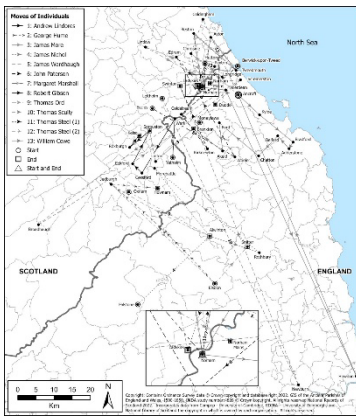


Figure 2. Migration paths of selected cross-border migrants, to 1851.



