

TRANSACTIONS  
OF THE  
EAST LOTHIAN  
ANTIQUARIAN AND FIELD  
NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

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TRANSACTIONS  
OF THE  
EAST LoTHIAN  
ANTIQUARIAN AND FIELD  
NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

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## APPENDIX—

Office-Bearers and Council.

List of Members.

## CONTRIBUTORS

JOANNA CLOSE-BROOKS is an Assistant Keeper at the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, Edinburgh.

IAN WHYTE is a Lecturer in Geography, University of Lancaster.

I. H. ADAMS is a Lecturer in Geography, University of Edinburgh.

ROSALIND MITCHISON is Reader in Economic History, University of Edinburgh.

T. M. DEVINE is a Lecturer in History, University of Strathclyde.

MARY AMBROSE, 103 St. Alban's Road, Edinburgh 9.

P. A. FURLEY is a Senior Lecturer in Geography, University of Edinburgh.

## EDITORIAL

As new editor of these *Transactions* I would like to make some points to the Society. It has been my policy in accepting articles for this volume to rely in most cases on the opinion of outside referees. This enables me to tap a wide range of expertise and for the Society to be confident of the quality of the articles outside the historical period of my own specialisation. Much of this volume is the work of academic historians, some of whom are not members of the Society. While I am grateful for such contributions I would like to urge members of the Society to consider whether they cannot contribute more themselves. The county is within relatively easy reach of the Scottish Record Office and there are local archives there, private and public, which are still barely exploited. In particular I know that there is a large stock of kirk session and presbytery registers and estate papers. Little in the way of specialised technique such as palaeography is necessary for the reading of documents after approximately 1690, and the staff of the Record Office are extraordinarily kind and helpful. I would also like to commend to the attention of members the Scottish Records Association, formed since the last volume of our *Transactions* appeared. This society, for which the annual personal subscription is only £1 (this can be sent to its honorary treasurer, Miss M. Young, West Register House, Charlotte Square, Edinburgh 2), exists to promote the preservation and use of public and private records, and has as members individual scholars and the keepers or owners of Scottish archives. It will be holding a joint conference with the British Records Association from 21 to 23 September 1979 at the Pollock Halls, Edinburgh University, and it also holds local meetings and issues a newsletter.

ROSALIND MITCHISON.

# A BEAKER CIST AT SKATERAW, EAST LoTHIAN

*By JOANNA CLOSE-BROOKS*

## EXCAVATION

On the 17th of October 1972 a pipe trench was being dug in the course of road improvements beside the A1, the main coast road from Edinburgh to Berwick on Tweed, at Skateraw, some four miles east of Dunbar. The machine driver excavating the pipe-trench hit and broke open the corner of a short cist, and bones could be seen inside. Musselburgh police were informed, and they notified the National Museum, who arranged for a rescue excavation the following day. This was conducted by the writer with the assistance of Mr David Clarke, also of the museum, and of Dr Anna Ritchie.

The site lies at about 30 m OD (99 ft.) on the grass verge immediately north of the road, and about 500 m WNW of Skateraw farmhouse at NT 72877539 (fig. 1). When found, the top of the capstone was 2 m below the modern ground surface at the bottom of a narrow trench. Excavation was possible only by courtesy of the contractors who removed the 2 m of gravel overburden for us by machine. It appeared that much of this gravel overburden was old makeup for the road, and indeed a piece of iron pipe and a glass bottle fragment came out of what looked superficially like natural gravel.

The cist was aligned approximately ENE-WNW. It was covered by a single capstone, which measured 1.70 m x 1.10 m by 0.05-0.15 m in thickness. This capstone like the other cist slabs was made of a bright yellow weathered sandstone. When the capstone was lifted, the grave was found to be intact, with no soil infilling save at the S end where the pipe trench had broken into the SW corner and some top soil had penetrated. The leg bones were partly disturbed as the workmen had removed one femur through the small hole at the corner. A crouched skeleton lay on the paved floor, its head facing east, with a beaker on its side, probably fallen, behind the head (Plate 1) The whole base of the

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cist, the fragile bones and the pot were covered with a fine red silt. No other grave goods were present.

The cist (fig. 2) was of irregular shape, the average measurement being 1.15 m by 0.80 m and 0.32 m deep to the paving. The sides were formed of four rather thin single slabs about 0.04-0.07 m thick, and 0.50 m deep, and the bottom was paved with one large slab and a few smaller ones in crazy paving fashion. The floor had been built up 0.20 m with gravel below these paving slabs after the side slabs had been inserted. No trace of the pit in which the cist must have been inserted could be traced in the time available; nor were any other features visible in the length of the pipe trench.

The burial was of a young adult of about 23-25 years, possibly female (see Appendices 1 and 2). A rough natural stone some 15 cm long was found behind the head, and had perhaps originally propped it up. The lower jaw was in its correct position, but the top of the skull lay on the lower ribs with the upper jaw and teeth among the arm bones. It appears that the skullcap may have fallen off and landed in this position naturally. The layer of fine silt in the base of the grave suggests that it was very wet if not actually full of water at times, so bones might have slid about. The position of one arm was also unusual. The left arm was in the normal position by the left side, but the right humerus was laid across the body (though under the lower jaw) with the elbow on the left shoulder and the lower arm bones parallel with the left humerus. Probably the arm had been arranged carelessly and fell into this position as the body disintegrated.

The unusual position of the arm is of some interest in view of the beaker cist burial that was found in 1958 some 290 m to the east at NT 73137537, and was excavated by Mr P. R. Ritchie (1958; beaker illustrated in Clarke 1970, fig. 648, no. 1648). He reported that the arms were severed from the trunk and placed separately on the wrong sides of the body, and suggested that decomposition before interment was possible. The cist is said to have been well made with local flags for side, top and floor, and the crouched burial was of a young male in the late twenties or early thirties.

### THE BEAKER

The beaker (fig. 3) is intact, save for one flake off the body. The fabric is pink and smooth on the outside. The height is 21.4 cm, the diameter at the mouth 14.5 cm, and at the base 7.6 cm. It is decorated with incised grooves and

## A BEAKER CIST AT SKATERAW

with the impressions of the teeth of a comb in three zones. On the neck bands of incised horizontal lines alternate with lines of vertical and herringbone incisions, while three comb-impressed lines form the lower border. On the shoulder there is a line of incised Xs between groups of comb-impressed lines; on the lower body a broad zone of horizontal comb-impressed lines including one line of incised X motifs. This beaker would be called N2 in the classification of Dr D. L. Clarke (1970) or Step 4 in the Lanting and van der Waals system (1972). It is now in the National Museum, catalogue number EG 105.

A grain impression on the shoulder of the beaker has been identified by Mr Kenneth Maclean as of six-row naked barley.

### C14 DATE

A radio-carbon determination for the skeletal material was obtained through the good offices of Dr D. D. Harkness of the Scottish Universities Research and Reactor Centre, East Kilbride. The determination, on the collagen fraction of the femur, was 2469 bc  $\pm$  130 (SRR-453). This gives a range of 2729-2109 bc at the 95% confidence level. Such a date range seems rather too early for a beaker of this particular style, which one would expect to fall within the bracket 2000-1700 bc or later, on the basis of dates published for comparable beakers. However, more dates are needed before we can be certain.

Dr Harkness has drawn my attention to a paper by Professor Tauber (1976) which offers a possible explanation in terms of diet. It has been established that marine life from the coastal waters of Scotland exhibits an apparent age of circa 350 years in comparison with the conventional radiocarbon time-scale. Thus, if the dietary protein of the individual interred at Skateraw had included a significant proportion of sea food (including sea birds) then this would be reflected in his skeletal structure having an apparent C14 age of up to 350 years at the time of death.

### DISCUSSION

The new find comes from an area with a surprisingly dense concentration of beaker cists. The county lists in Clarke (1970 515-9) show that ten beaker burials have been found along a coastal strip some 4 miles long and 1½ miles broad from North Berwick to Cockburnspath (or eleven counting an S4 beaker) with only six in the rest of Berwickshire, seven in the rest of East Lothian, and three in the whole of Midlothian. (Settlement sites and finds of single sherds



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have not been included in the count). The concentration on the coastal strip seems too marked to be a mere accident of discovery.

Of the graves nearest to Skateraw 1977, that 290 m east in the field north of the road with an N3 (Step 5) beaker was mentioned above (fig. 1, cist 1958; Clarke 1970 no. 1648; Ritchie 1958); a cist with an N/MR or Step 3 beaker was found a mile north-west at East Barns (Clarke 1970 no. 1632) and an S4 or Step 7 beaker half a mile west (fig. 1, cist 1939; Clarke 1970 no. 1647). All the beaker burials in the area have been found in isolation, and even given the circumstances of discovery this seems to contrast with the typical grouping of food vessel cists, as for instance at Aberdour Road, Dunfermline, Fife (Close-Brooks, Norgate, Ritchie, 1972), Dalgety Bay, Fife (Watkins 1973), Almondbank, Perthshire (Stewart 1973; 1975). The two Skateraw cists were on level ground, not a natural knoll as is so typical of food-vessel graves.

Finally it should be mentioned that a dagger grave was found in the vicinity some time between 1806 and 1814. The dagger, with a gold pommel mount, was in a cist with a skeleton below an "immense cairn," now destroyed. The exact location of the cairn is uncertain, but it was in a field on Skateraw Farm (Henshall 1968, 783-4).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to the excavators; to R. J. McLeod (Contractors) Ltd., Mr Francis, their agent, East Lothian County Council and Mr Lynch their resident engineer for their generous co-operation in uncovering the cist and other help; to the Lothian and Borders Police, "E" Division, for information and photographs; and to Dr D. Lunt and Dr A. Young for their reports.

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## A BEAKER CIST AT SKATERAW

### APPENDIX I

#### THE HUMAN BONES FROM SKATERAW, EAST LOTHIAN

by Archibald Young, M.A., M.B., ChB., F.R.C.S.(G)

Department of Anatomy, University of Glasgow.

Apparently only one human individual is represented. The bones are very fragile and much eroded. The surfaces are mostly covered in a fine red silt. It is impossible to estimate height or sex on account of the fragmentary state of the long bones but I think the individual was of relatively slight build.

The bones recognisable were:—*Skull*: the occipital and both temporal bones. *Ribs*: both 1st ribs and many rib fragments. *Vertebrae*: various fragments. *Pelvis*: only the two innominate bones. *Femora*: portions of both. *Tibiae*: portions of both. *Fibula*: R only represented. *Foot bones*: both calcanei, both tali, several other tarsal fragments, and the base of a 1st R metatarsal. *Scapula and Clavicle*: parts of one of each. *Humeri*: both represented by pieces. *Radii and Ulnae*: both pairs. *Hand bones*: a few carpals (some from each hand), phalanges for more than one hand, and 6 metacarpals in whole or in part. The epiphyses had all apparently united and so age is probably over twenty years (allowing for possible female sex).

### APPENDIX II

#### THE DENTITION FROM SKATERAW, EAST LOTHIAN

by Dorothy A. Lunt, M.A., PhD. H.D.D.

Department of Oral Biology, University of Glasgow Dental School.

The jaw bones had been badly affected by post-mortem decay and were extremely fragmentary. Some portions of the outer cortical plate of the mandible could be identified, and a rather larger fragment of the right maxilla had survived in a more complete state, bearing the sockets for the two premolars and three molars in this quadrant. None of the bone fragments possessed features which could give any clue as to the sex of the individual.

When received, the teeth were covered by a crusted layer of fine dark red silt. The roots of most of the teeth had obviously been affected by the same

## A BEAKER CIST AT SKATERAW

process of post-mortem decay that had caused the disintegration of the bones. Very careful washing removed the silt deposit (as a kind of "scale") from the tooth crowns, revealing hard sound enamel. The crowns and varying amounts of the root of 10 permanent molars, 7 premolars, 3 permanent canines and 1 permanent lower incisor were recovered and preserved. The remaining 2 permanent molars, 1 premolar and 1 canine were present in a fragmentary but recognisable condition. Further slivers of enamel represented incisors and the lower canines but were not accurately identifiable.

Three of the four maxillary incisors were present with both crowns and roots in a firm sound condition right to the apical foramina. Why these teeth should have escaped completely the severe destruction which affected cementum and dentine of all the rest, is a mystery.

Altogether 28 permanent teeth from a possible 32 could be identified. No tooth was duplicated, which suggested that a single burial was involved.

Three complete series of permanent molars allowed an assessment of attrition to be made. The degree of wear was exactly the same on both sides of the jaw, and throughout the series corresponded precisely to the amount of wear observed by age 24 in the Anglo-Saxons studied by Miles (1963). An age estimate of 23-25 years could therefore be made. The amount of attrition shown by incisors, canines and premolars was consistent with this estimate.

The tooth crowns were well calcified, with no evidence of hypoplasia. No dental caries was present in any tooth. The general state of periodontal health could not be assessed because of destruction of bone, but the sockets in the right maxilla appeared normal. There was, however, a fairly heavy deposit of calculus (tartar) on one of the lower molars: this may or may not have been accompanied by mild inflammation of the gingivae. So far as the evidence went, the dental health of this individual appeared to have been good.

### REFERENCE

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# LONG CISTS AT DRYBURN BRIDGE, NEAR DUNBAR, EAST LoTHIAN

*By JOANNA CLOSE-BROOKS*

A long cist was found during roadworks on the A1 at Dryburn Bridge, east of Dunbar, on 10th December 1972, and the National Museum were notified by the Police. Dr J. Close-Brooks and Mr D. V. Clarke, with kind assistance from Miss M. J. Mountain, Mrs Irene Mackay and Mr Robert Mowat, excavated from 11th-13th December, and were able to record both the first grave and two more discovered subsequently. We are grateful to R. J. McLeod (Contractors) Ltd., to Mr Francis, the contractor's agent, to Mr Lynch, the resident engineer for East Lothian County Council, and to Mr Graham, the machine operator, for their generous co-operation; and to the Lothian and Borders Police, "E" Division, for information.

The site lies on level ground immediately east of the valley of the Dry Burn, about half a mile (0.8 km) from the sea, and about 99.00 ft (30 m) O.D. on a gravel subsoil (fig. 1). The long cist graves were under the road, only a few inches below the tarmac of the old road surface, and they were discovered when the surface was lowered a metre or so in connection with road improvements at Dryburn Bridge. The three graves excavated centre on NT 72787534. Another structure, probably a long cist (cist 4) had been destroyed a fortnight earlier, under the impression it was a field drain. It was some 15 m further SE along the A1, and was aligned across the road approximately NE-SW, at about NT 72837540. The excavation was very much a rescue operation as the graves were in the way of the contractors who could not work round them.

Cist 1 was recognised as a grave by the contractors and left in position (fig. 4). It was 1.85 m long by 0.65 m wide, and aligned WNW - ESE. The southern long side was formed by a single large slab, 1.78 m long and 0.40 m, and the west end by a short slab, 0.35 m high. Any capstones, and the east and

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north walls of the cist had been destroyed by the machine, save for a short length of broken slab on the north side. All walling slabs in this cist, and in cists 2 and 3, were of a bright yellow weathered sandstone, similar to that used in the Beaker cist previously excavated, and probably a local stone. Cist 1 was partly filled with earth and crushed tarmac fragments, but on clearing these some of the original fill of soft brown earth and a little gravel was found. The body was badly preserved, but parts of the long bones were in position, and the skull at the west end. This cist had been dug into the gravel at least to the level of the top of the side slabs, at which point the gravel surface had been sheared off by the machine.

Cist 2 (fig. 4) lay some 15 m west of Cist 1, with Cist 3 roughly parallel to it. When this cist was found, the machine was removing a metre or so of gravel in one operation, so that the east end of the cist was again damaged and the capstones removed. The cist was about 1.85 m long by 0.70 m wide, aligned NW - SE. The north and south sides were constructed of at least two slabs of yellow sandstone, the west end of a single slab. The floor was paved with four slabs of a grey slaty stone, the edges of the two outer slabs overlying the two inner slabs in order to fit into the cist. These flooring slabs lay on the natural gravel, into which the cist had been sunk at least to the level of the top of the side slabs, which in this cist were 30 cm deep. The head was at the west end, and while much of the skeleton was well preserved, no trace at all was visible of the backbone or ribs. This cist was filled with soft brown earth as in Cist 1.

Cist 3 lay parallel to Cist 2 and about 1.60 m to the south of it, with the head some 0.40 m further E. It was more or less on the south verge of the road. The site plan has unfortunately been mislaid, so the following description was prepared from photographs. The cist (pl. 2) was some 1.80 m long and 0.65 m wide. The long sides were each formed of two slabs, one very long slab overlapping on short slab at the foot-end, and the ends formed of single slabs. The capstones had been removed by the machine, but the floor was paved with irregular slabs, some overlapping. The body of an adult lay extended on the paving, with the head to the west, but the upper part of the body was badly decayed. This cist was filled to the top with hard compacted earth.

The three cists excavated, and the presumed fourth cist destroyed, may form part of one of the extensive long cist cemeteries that occur frequently in South East Scotland. Although a cemetery on this spot was not previously recorded, Miss Henshall (1964) had investigated some slabs in the field about

## LONG CISTS AT DRYBURN BRIDGE

350 m ESE of the 1972 cists (fig. 1) and reported that they appeared to be the remains of a long cist. The apparently scattered nature of the cemetery at Dryburn Bridge is consistent with evidence from elsewhere (for instance Parkburn, Midlothian: Henshall 1956, 257-9).

Long cist cemeteries have been fully discussed by Henshall (1956) and little more can be said. Some recent discoveries can be added to the list, and these are mostly detailed in *Scottish Material Culture; a bibliography*, 2, 1976, 79-80; to which can also be added recent discoveries at Prestonpans, E. Lothian (see Appendix 3) and Hallowhill, St. Andrews, Fife (*Discovery and Excavation Scotland* 1976, 32, 33).

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## APPENDIX 1

### THE HUMAN BONES FROM DRYBURN BRIDGE, EAST LoTHIAN

by Archibald Young, MA, MB, ChB, FRCS(G),  
Department of Anatomy, University of Glasgow.

#### CIST 1

There were not many bones present and none were complete. However by comparison with whole modern bones an estimate has been made of the probable lengths of the left humerus (as 30.25 cm) and the left femur (as 40.6 cm). From these I estimate the height as being approximately 157-167 cm. From the slenderness of the bones I think the individual was probably female and from absence of definite epiphyseal cartilage surfaces as *over* 20 years of age.

The following bones were recognisable:—*Skull*: fragments of basiocciput. *Vertebrae*: three fragments. *Pelvis*: part of L ilium with part of acetabulum. *Femora*: L almost complete, R shaft and neck. *Tibiae*: R lower end only, L lower third of shaft and part of Talar surface. *Footbones*: Metatarsals: R 1, 3, 4 and 5 almost complete, head of R 2, head and part of shaft of L1; Calcaneus, posterior

## LONG CISTS AT DRYBURN BRIDGE

fragment, probably L. *Scapula*: L glenoid surface and adjoining parts. *Clavicle*: L outer half. *Humerus*: L almost complete. *Radius and Ulna*: three fragments of shafts of such bones.

### CIST 2

These bones were relatively well preserved, but many of them were broken. There were almost no vertebral or rib remains and few hand or footbones were present.

Those identified whole or in part are as follows:—*Scapulae*: R and L represented only by spines; these are of heavy build. *Humeri*: R lower end missing; L incomplete and broken, lower end, shaft and head present. *Radii*: R almost complete in two pieces, estimated length 25.4 cm; L in two pieces, lower end missing. *Ulnae*: R almost complete in four pieces; L lacks both extremities. *Phalanges*: three proximal and one intermediate. *Vertebrae and Sacrum*: A few fragments (including parts of C.1, C.2 and another cervical vertebrae). *Pelvis*: Both innominate bones present but broken. *Femora*: Both present but lacking fragments of heads and great trochanters; the L head neck and upper quarter of shaft are markedly externally rotated compared with the R, this may be the result of an old fracture of the upper shaft. R 47 cm, L 46.7 cm. *Tibiae*: L almost complete, 37.35 cm; R lower half missing. *Fibulae*: L upper end missing, R lower half missing. *Footbones*: Both R and L tali and calcanea, fragments of three tarsals, fragments of three metatarsals.

From those bones which are sufficiently intact to be measurable I estimate that this individual was about 176.5 cm if male, or about 172 cm if female. From the heavy build of the bones I think this was a male.

### CIST 3

The bones present are less friable than those of Cist 1. More were present, but, again, vertebral remains were scanty. The following bones were recognised:—*Vertebrae*: L 1-5, all lacking some minor portions, such as transverse processes. *Sacrum*: segments 1 and 2 more or less intact. *Ribs*: assorted fragments including a small portion of a first rib. *Pelvis*: most of both innominate bones. *Femora*: L almost complete in two pieces 42.1 cm; R almost complete in three pieces, head damaged. *Tibiae*: Both virtually intact, L 33.5 cm, R 33.7 cm; there is an irregularity of the surface of the mid shaft which may suggest an old

## LONG CISTS AT DRYBURN BRIDGE

fracture. *Fibulae*: fragments of both are present. *Patellae*: both. *Footbones*: both calcanea, tali, naviculares; fragments of ? three other tarsals; and three metatarsal fragments. *Scapulae*: fragments of both. *Humerus*: R, lower end and shaft. *Radii and Ulnae*: both pairs are almost complete but broken. R radius=22 cm. *Handbones*: four carpals (hamate, lunate, triquetral and pisiform) are present; nine metacarpals in varying degrees of completeness, and an assortment of twelve proximal and middle phalanges.

Using Dupertuis and Hadden's formulae, from the left femur, from the right tibia and from the right radius I estimate the height to be about 165.1 cm if male, and about 160 cm if female.

## APPENDIX 2

### THE SKULLS AND DENTITIONS FROM DRYBURN BRIDGE, EAST LoTHIAN

by Dorothy A. Lunt, MA, PhD, HDD,

Department of Oral Biology, University of Glasgow Dental School.

#### *Cist 1*

The glabella and supra-orbital regions of the skull are very smooth, the forehead vertical and the cranial contours angular: the skull is almost certainly that of a female. A metopic frontal suture is present; this feature occurs in about 9% of skulls.

The body of the mandible is essentially intact in spite of *post-mortem* bone erosion, and carries 12 permanent teeth, the remaining 4 having been lost *post-mortem*. Portions of right and left maxillae are present, bearing 7 permanent teeth. The anterior parts of the upper jaw have been lost. The root apices of the third molars have closed, so the individual was probably over 20. The degree of attrition of the permanent molars suggests an age between 20 and 24. The teeth are well-formed and calcified, and there is no evidence either of dental caries or of periodontal disease.

#### *Cist 2*

The glabella and supra-orbital regions of this skull are prominent, the forehead is sloping, the mastoid processes large and the areas of muscle attach-



## LONG CISTS AT DRYBURN BRIDGE

ment on the occipital bone are well developed. The skull is probably that of a male.

Fragments of the right side of the mandible and the right maxilla are present, each with three permanent molars. A further 14 loose permanent teeth are present, belonging to the same dentition. The degree of attrition of the molars is the same as that exhibited at age 30-32 by the Anglo-Saxons studied by Miles (1963), and an age estimate of c. 30-35 may be suggested. The teeth are well formed and calcified and show no evidence of dental caries. There is some alveolar resorption and signs of early periodontal disease, particularly in the upper jaw.

The right condyle of the mandible and the glenoid fossa of the right temporal bone both show unusual features. The neck of the right condyle of the mandible is broad, and a most unusual spur or flange of bone has developed on its lateral aspect. This may be due to an over-development of the temporomandibular ligament. In the case of the temporal bone, the postglenoid tubercle shows an exaggerated degree of development. The condyle itself is of the type which is compressed anteroposteriorly and elongated mediolaterally and the glenoid fossa is a correspondingly deep narrow groove, but the morphology of the joint is within the normal range of variation.

### *Cist 3*

Only parts of the cranial vault and none of the upper facial bones are present. Such cranial sutures as are present show no evidence of fusion and their appearance suggests that the individual was a young adult. The mastoid processes are small and this may indicate that the individual was female, though such an assessment of sex would be valid only if the individual had reached maturity at death.

The anterior portion of the body of the mandible is present. The chin is small, and the contours of the fragment of mandible suggest that the whole bone was also small and delicately built. Much of the alveolar process has been broken away, but the bases of the sockets of 9 teeth can be seen.

There are also present 16 loose permanent teeth, 9 from the maxilla and 7 from the mandible. All appear to be from the same dentition. The roots of the third molars are complete and the teeth have been in function: this suggests that the individual was probably 20 by the time of death. However the degree

## LONG CISTS AT DRYBURN BRIDGE

of attrition of the other teeth is slight, and the amount of wear of the third molars is so small as to suggest that they had only recently become functional. An age at death of c. 20-22 is suggested for this individual.

The teeth are small, and the third molars in particular show a considerable degree of reduction both in size and in number of cusps. There is no evidence of dental disease.

## APPENDIX 3

### LONG CISTS AT PRESTONPANS, EAST LOTHIAN

By Joanna Close-Brooks

On 29th April 1976 the discovery of bones at Nethershot Road, Prestonpans, (NT 3920 7478) was reported to the National Museum by Haddington CID. The part-time archaeology officer for East Lothian was contacted but was unable to investigate as her car was in a garage for repair. An immediate action had been asked for Dr J. Close-Brooks and Mr Ian Scott of the Museum accordingly went out to see what was involved.

It emerged that the site, a small open area between a group of houses set back on the N side of the road opposite a modern cemetery, was being prepared with hard core as a compound for contractors about to renovate the surrounding houses. Mr Brian Paxton, operating a caterpillar 931 track skivvier, explained that a portion of the ground had subsided, and that he dug a large hole to investigate as her car was in a garage for repair. As immediate action had been shaft or tunnel in the natural clay subsoil; apparently these are known elsewhere in the vicinity. In digging the hole the machine had destroyed some graves, and bones and stone slabs were scattered on the dumps.

A few slabs still in situ protruded from the side of the hole, under some 0.60 m of soil, and a little digging showed these belonged to a long cist grave aligned ENE - WSW (fig. 5). One side of the cist was completely exposed, the dimensions recorded, the position plotted, and the site then back-filled as the contractors were anxious to fill the hole up before nightfall. The cist was apparently coffin-shaped, 1 m 80 long, and the exposed side was built of 2 slabs, the longer being about 1 m 50 long, 0.30 m deep and 0.05 m thick; the usual capstones were visible. The black soil above the brown loam (fig 5) appeared to be recent makeup.

## LONG CISTS AT DRYBURN BRIDGE

The bones and slabs found on the dump clearly belong to a number of destroyed cists, and included a slab 1.45 long x 0.45 m wide. The bones and teeth have been examined by Dr Archibald Young and Dr Dorothy Lunt respectively and their full reports have been lodged in the National Monuments Record, Edinburgh, where they may be consulted. It was not possible to assign most of the mixed collection of bones to individuals, but there was evidence from humeri of at least four individuals, one of whom was of heavy build. Another had suffered from well-marked osteo-arthritis (arthritic changes show in the head of the right femur and some vertebrae). Four fragments of jawbone were recovered from two of the individuals, one aged between 20 and 24, and the other perhaps 35 to 40.

The presence of four individuals suggests at least four cists had been destroyed, and these may have been part of an extensive cemetery. There is no previous record of long cists on this site. Mr R. B. K. Stevenson has noted two isolated cists elsewhere in Prestonpans (*Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 86, 1951-2, 111).

# THE EAST LoTHIAN GRAIN TRADE 1660-1707

*By IAN WHYTE*

During the late seventeenth century East Lothian's greatest economic asset was her highly fertile soils. Grain production sustained the population of the county's burghs and landward areas and also formed a major source of revenue. Not only was cereal production vital to the prosperity of the rural economy of the area: the grain which the county supplied was important in maintaining the large urban population of nearby Edinburgh. In addition it was a significant earner of foreign exchange by being exported to many parts of Europe. This article examines the structure and operation of the East Lothian grain trade at a period when the feudal rural economy was beginning to be modified and agriculture was becoming more commercialised. It considers the linkages by which grain moved from tenant farmer to landowner and from landowner to merchant, and attempts to discover the destinations of the county's surplus grain. In particular it will try to evaluate the importance of the industrial and domestic market of Edinburgh as a consumer of East Lothian grain in comparison with overseas markets.

A variety of documentary material aids the reconstruction of the trade. The surviving leases and accounts of six estates<sup>1</sup> have been used to provide details of the involvement of tenants and landowners. These also frequently record the merchants to whom grain was sold. Contracts which were drawn up by merchants contain further information on their operations, while customs records throw light on the export trade in grain.

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE TRADE

Much of the grain which formed the basis of the diet of the urban and rural populations of the county was either consumed directly by the producers or changed hands in small quantities by means of local sales and exchanges. These took place either within rural communities themselves or via the market places of burghs such as Haddington and Dunbar. Unfortunately, such transactions

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almost invariably went unrecorded. The total volume of grain which circulated at this level must have greatly exceeded the amounts which left the county. Nevertheless, it was the large-scale trade to outside destinations which was important in terms of bringing money in from beyond the shire.

Throughout East Lothian the tenants of arable farms paid the major part of their rents in kind as 'fermes' or grain rents.<sup>2</sup> Partial commutation of these to money payments had begun to be introduced on some estates by the end of the seventeenth century but this had yet to make a major impact.<sup>3</sup> By paying their rents in grain, tenants were absolved from the responsibility of marketing it themselves, though it must have been usual for them to have sold surplus grain on their own account in smaller quantities. The most commercialised sector of the grain trade was thus securely in the hands of the landowners.

Tenants were also liable to render labour services to their landlords. Possibly one of the most unpopular and least convenient of these was to deliver their fermes to whatever destination the proprietor desired, within reasonable carriage distance. Details of the 'carriages' which were required from tenants are contained in their leases. These show how far it was practicable to transport grain overland on the first stage of its journey. They also pick out the rural spheres of influence surrounding the burghs which were involved in the grain trade.

Figure 1. shows the origins and destinations of consignments of grain carried by tenants as part of their services on several East Lothian estates. The pull of the city of Edinburgh with its satellites of the Canongate and Leith is immediately apparent. Edinburgh drew in grain overland from a zone extending almost as far east as Haddington, up to 24km. from the capital. Thus, much of the western part of the county had direct and immediate access to the Edinburgh market. Beyond this zone, however, all consignments of grain bound for destinations outside the county had to be sent by sea because of the impossibly high cost of overland transport. This explains the importance of Dunbar, whose area of supply covered the entire eastern half of the county. North Berwick, Prestonpans, Port Seton and, to a limited extent, Aberlady, performed similar functions on a smaller scale. Haddington was gravely disadvantaged in this respect on account of its inland location. It is notable that estate accounts record the sale of only small quantities of grain to the burgh presumably mainly for internal consumption. Haddington merchants were hardly involved at all in the bulk trade in grain. Haddington may have been one of the most

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important markets for grain in Scotland by the 1790's<sup>4</sup> but the town had to wait until the improvement of road conditions in the second half of the eighteenth century before it could attain this position.

The grain which was harvested in autumn was threshed out in the early part of the winter and tenants were normally required to deliver their fermes, using their own pack horses or sometimes carts, between Christmas and Candlemas (February 2nd).<sup>5</sup> This may have been a slack period in the farming year but it was probably not a good season for overland carriage using roads which had been worn rather than constructed. A tenant might have had to transport something in the region of 1-2 tons of grain in this way, the capacity of a pack horse being only about 1-2 cwt.<sup>6</sup>

Once the grain was delivered it was up to the proprietor to dispose of it. If an estate lay beyond the zone within which overland carriage to Edinburgh was feasible it was usual for a landowner to buy or hire granaries or girnels, in the nearest suitable coastal burgh. Occasionally landowners marketed the grain in bulk themselves, hiring a coastal vessel to carry it to Edinburgh in the hope of finding a ready sale, or buying a share in a sea-going vessel in order to export it abroad. Sir John Nisbet of Dirleton is recorded as once having shipped a cargo of grain to Rotterdam in partnership with an Edinburgh merchant,<sup>7</sup> while Sir Hugh Dalrymple of North Berwick is known to have bought an eighth share in a merchant vessel.<sup>8</sup> In general, though, landowners or sometimes their factors were content to negotiate a contract of sale with one or more merchants in Edinburgh or a local burgh. Several of these contracts have survived for the estates of Sir John Nisbet and Sir Hugh Dalrymple.<sup>9</sup> The proprietor undertook to provide a specific quantity of grain if it was already in store in the girnels following the harvest, or a quantity within maximum and minimum limits if the sale was arranged in advance of the harvest and the landowner was unsure how fully his tenants would be able to pay their rents. The merchant in turn undertook to furnish a vessel, either his own or one under charter, adequately manned and in a seaworthy condition. The merchant would bind himself to send the ship to the harbour which the landowner was using and the proprietor would agree to have the grain ready for loading.

A contract of hire, dated 1680, between William Cleghorn, an Edinburgh brewer, and James Falconer, a skipper in Bo'ness, required Falconer to sail from Leith to Dunbar 'wind and weather serving,' to wait there for 'six work and wetherly dayes' in order to load 18 chalders (about 14½ tons) of grain, and to return to Leith within a specified time.<sup>10</sup> He was to be paid extra for any

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additional days involved over and above those specified in the contract. At a hire charge of 3 pounds 13s. 4d. Scots per chalder, transport costs were a fairly small item for a merchant who was paying the landowner perhaps 80-130 pounds Scots per chalder. Once the vessel was loaded, the sea risk (whether or not the proprietor was entitled to compensation in the event of the loss of the grain in transit through wreck, piracy or damage by sea water) was a matter for negotiation. In many cases the landowner accepted the sea risk, always provided that the merchant 'fraught and furnished ane tight ship well manned with skilful and careful seamen'<sup>11</sup> but in other instances the merchant was persuaded to carry it.<sup>12</sup>

While the leading figures in the trade were essentially the landowner and the merchant, other people were involved, some of whom derived a lucrative income by providing ancillary services. Several people in Dunbar rented out space for storing grain to neighbouring landowners, including Thomas Bryson, a slater, and Helen Jackson, the widow of a former burgess.<sup>13</sup> The measuring of the grain, turning it periodically during storage to prevent it fermenting, and its eventual loading provided additional work.<sup>14</sup> A man who seemed to be active in every aspect of the grain trade was William Kirkwood, merchant in Dunbar. At various times during the 1690's he served as town clerk of Dunbar, clerk of the baron court of Innerwick and Thornton, and factor, or agent, to a number of Edinburgh brewers and merchants.<sup>15</sup> He also exported consignments of grain on his own behalf and in partnership with fellow merchants to England, France and the Netherlands,<sup>16</sup> as well as hiring out girnells in Dunbar.<sup>17</sup>

The profits which landowners and men like Baillie Kirkwood appear to have made encouraged other opportunists who were neither proprietors nor merchants to enter the trade in the hope of increasing their social standing as well as their purses. The grain trade could be a risky business, however, as the cautionary tale of Gilbert Murray, factor for Sir John Nisbet at Thornton, shows. In his position as an estate factor Murray, who seems originally to have been a tenant-farmer, was involved in arranging the sale and delivery of his master's grain rents. Sir John Nisbet, as Lord Advocate, had to spend much of his time in Edinburgh and left most of the running of the Innerwick and Thornton estates to his factor. The experience of the grain trade which Murray gained prompted him to undertake ventures on his own account, buying consignments from his master and other landowners and shipping them mainly to merchants in England. Between 1680 and 1682 the East Lothian port books record him as having exported over 2,000 bolls of grain, mainly to London, Sunderland and Newcastle.<sup>18</sup> The surviving correspondence between Sir John Nisbet and Gilbert

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Murray indicates that they were on friendly terms initially; Sir John signed his letters 'your friend'.<sup>19</sup> Gradually, however, a slightly querulous tone began to creep into Sir John's correspondence, suggesting that all was not well. He began to question his factor's claims for expenses and to pick out discrepancies in his accounting.<sup>20</sup> Eventually a full investigation was instituted and Murray was forced to admit that he had 'meddled with and disposed of considerable quantities of the said Sir John, his corns and victual and money rent . . . for my own use without the knowledge and far less warrant and order of the said Sir John'.<sup>21</sup> Some of his trading ventures had failed; in one instance the man to whom he had sold a cargo had gone bankrupt leaving Murray without any cash to pay the landowner from whom he had bought the grain. He had been forced to dip his hand increasingly into his landlord's pocket in order to cover his losses. He was found to be owing over 9,000 merks Scots. Sir John was generous enough not to prosecute him but he seized all his possessions, farm equipment and crops and sent him away a broken, penniless man. Within three years Murray was dead and the new factor eventually returned some of the household goods to his widow at Sir John's order.<sup>22</sup>

The vessels which were used for the coastal shipment of grain were of modest size. References suggest that they normally carried a crew of only half a dozen and had a capacity not normally exceeding 500 bolls of grain (about 25 tons).<sup>23</sup> They ran to perhaps 40 tons burden.<sup>24</sup> Although they were operating only in inshore waters the traffic was not without its dangers. The outbreak of war at the end of the century brought French privateers down upon the east coast severely disrupting the trade, though there is surprisingly little indication of this in the dry, factual accounts of proprietors and merchants.<sup>25</sup> A more localised danger threatened between 1690 and 1694 when the Bass Rock was taken over by a group of Jacobite prisoners and the coastal trade was threatened by their depredations.<sup>26</sup> The fate of one vessel, intercepted en route from Dunbar to Leith with a cargo of wheat in 1694, shows the dangers involved not only from enemy action but also from the weather. The vessel, having received her cargo from Baillie Kirkwood, set sail but was becalmed off Dunbar. She was boarded by a boatload of men from the Bass and forced to anchor off the island. The next day, before the cargo could be unloaded for the use of the Jacobite garrison, a strengthening wind forced her to put to sea, still under the control of their captors. She rode at anchor off St. Andrews for three days and nights during which conditions were so bad that they were forced to cut away the mainmast and jettison part of the cargo in order to keep the vessel afloat.



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When the weather improved the crew were made to sail into the Firth of Tay where their captors succeeded in making their escape into the interior of Angus.<sup>27</sup>

### THE PATTERN OF THE TRADE.

Having looked at some of the mechanisms of the grain trade and some of the difficulties which were involved, to what destinations was the grain delivered? It is hard to be precise regarding both the pattern and the volume of the trade as the relevant sources are all fragmentary. The port books, however, which are complete from the end of 1680 to the end of 1686, apart from one or two brief gaps, indicate how much grain was exported abroad.<sup>28</sup> During this period over 42,000 bolls of grain (about 2,100 tons) were shipped out. Some 40% of this went to Holland and 17% each to England and France. The remainder went in smaller quantities to Norway, Sweden, Germany, Spain and Portugal. A notable feature of this trade, however, is the extent to which it was controlled by merchants operating from Edinburgh or Leith, rather than ones based in East Lothian burghs. Over 40% of the grain shipped overseas during this period had been bought by merchants who can be identified as belonging to the capital.

The dominance of Edinburgh merchants is also evident when the destinations of consignments of grain recorded in estate papers are examined. Nearly 300 consignments have been traced for the estates whose records are available. They were sold to 160 merchants. 29 of these cannot be definitely linked with a particular burgh. Of the remaining 131, 91 were based in Edinburgh, Leith or the Canongate. Prestonpans, with 14 recorded merchants, and Tranent with 9, are the only other centres of any importance. Only three merchants from Dunbar and one from Haddington were recorded. 86% of the grain whose destination is recorded was bound for the capital.

That a certain amount of the grain from East Lothian which was bought by Edinburgh merchants was designed for re-export is suggested by the occurrence of the names of the same merchants in the Leith port books.<sup>29</sup> The merchants involved may well have been buying grain from other parts of Scotland of course. In the later seventeenth century grain flowed into Edinburgh from as far away as Orkney.<sup>30</sup> In some cases, however, the timing of the purchase and shipping of consignments from East Lothian landowners, and of the export of similar quantities of grain aboard from Leith by the same merchant suggests

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that the port was being used as an entrepot in which the grain was transferred from a coastal vessel to a sea-going one with a minimum of delay. The influence of Edinburgh merchants on the export of East Lothian grain is thus reinforced.

Although some of the grain which was brought from East Lothian to Edinburgh overland or by coastal vessel may have been re-exported via Leith a large proportion of it was destined for the city's own use. By the end of the seventeenth century Edinburgh, with a population possibly approaching 30,000, was a sizeable city in European terms<sup>31</sup> with a considerable demand for agricultural produce for direct consumption by her own inhabitants. This is reflected in the designations of the people in Edinburgh who bought East Lothian grain. Out of 72 who were specifically designated, 40 were brewers, 13 baxters and two maltmen against only 17 who were styled 'merchant.' Brewers and maltmen took 48% of all the grain in the consignments which were studied, and baxters a further 5%. People designated as merchants accounted for only 23% of the grain. The names of the brewers, maltmen and baxters rarely appear in the port books and their trades strongly suggest that they catered primarily for the needs of the population of the city itself and its immediate environs. The Edinburgh brewing industry is known to have expanded considerably during the later seventeenth century and to have been the largest single consumer of bere (the hardy four-row barley which was the normal crop in Scotland at this time rather than the higher-yielding but less resistant two-row variety) in the country.<sup>32</sup> The importance of brewing is emphasised by the character of the grain which was sent to Edinburgh. In the consignments studied, bere formed 68% of the grain coming from East Lothian to Edinburgh against only 20% for oats and 11% for wheat. Baxters and maltmen purchased 64% of the bere against only 13% bought by merchants.

It is perhaps surprising that wheat formed so small a proportion of the grain sent abroad from East Lothian or transported to Edinburgh. This lends weight to the suggestion, supported by estate rentals, that although wheat was widely cultivated in the county at this time it was not often raised in large quantities and that large commercial surpluses were not usually produced. The basis of East Lothian arable farming seems then to have rested on the production of oats for local consumption by the bulk of the rural population, of bere for export, and of wheat perhaps mainly to meet the local needs of the more wealthy sectors of society who could afford wheaten bread.

Many of the people who bought East Lothian grain were fairly small-scale operators who often spread the risk of failure by combining in partnership in a

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number of purchases rather than buying large consignments on their own. The principal danger attached to such a venture, apart from the loss or damage of the grain in transit, was that by the time delivery had been taken prices might have fallen below the level at which a profit could be made. Factors of this kind may have lain behind the reluctance of some merchants to actually take delivery of their grain once a bargain had been reached with a landowner.<sup>33</sup> Again, Edinburgh buyers, whether merchants, brewers or baxters, appear to have had more money at their disposal and to have operated on a larger scale and more often on their own. Only 34% of the consignments studied which were destined for the capital were bought by two or more partners against 57% of the consignments going to other burghs. The average size of consignment bought by Edinburgh traders was also larger than for other centres: 274 bolls of bere against 208, and 305 bolls of oats against 126.

The larger operators were also a better risk from the landowner's point of view than the smaller men who may often have been only occasional speculative purchasers with limited assets. Sir John Nisbet wrote of his reluctance to go to the trouble of drawing up contracts for small quantities of grain. He stated that this was due to the trouble which he sometimes experienced in collecting payment from such merchants.<sup>34</sup> This is borne out by the letters of horning which survive alongside some of the contracts of sale for small consignments, as in the case of 200 bolls of bere which he sold to William Liddel, a Leith brewer, in 1692. Sir John was still trying to recover a third of the money, which was being paid by instalments, two years later.<sup>35</sup> It was much better, Nisbet thought, that 'if the persones have confidence one of another that they are responsall (responsible) men, I think they should . . . joyne together to take some considerable parcell (of grain)'<sup>36</sup> Such attitudes may have given the richer Edinburgh merchants a competitive advantage over their smaller counterparts in other burghs. A notable feature of the surviving contracts for the sale of grain from the Dirleton estates was the way in which Sir John Nisbet suddenly changed his policy in the late 1670's. During the late 1660's and early 1670's all the contracts record sales to local merchants in Tranent, Longniddry and Prestonpans.<sup>37</sup> The average size of consignment was only 170 bolls. From the late 1670's, however, grain from Dirleton was sold almost exclusively to Edinburgh merchants and in much larger consignments — an average of 845 bolls.<sup>38</sup> While this may reflect in part a change of attitude on the part of Sir John, it may also reflect the expansion of the Edinburgh grain market which is known from other sources<sup>39</sup> with a greater involvement by Edinburgh merchants in the East Lothian grain trade.

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### CONCLUSION

This article has attempted to reconstruct some aspects of the East Lothian grain trade during the later seventeenth century and the mechanisms by which it operated. Two major themes have emerged which would repay further study. Firstly, the East Lothian burghs were not very active in the grain trade as mercantile communities. North Berwick, Dunbar and Prestonpans served mainly as trans-shipment points for grain from the landward areas which had been bought by merchants from outside the county. Haddington hardly seemed to have had any significant role at all in handling the bulk grain.

Secondly, the dominance of Edinburgh burgesses and the Edinburgh market over the grain trade was paramount. It is interesting to reflect that during the period 1680-86 the incomplete records of grain being sold to Edinburgh from only six estates covering only a small proportion of the county amounted to a third of the total amount of grain exported abroad from all the East Lothian ports. Because of the fragmentary nature of the estate accounts which have been used it is impossible to estimate the volume of grain flowing in to Edinburgh compared with the amount which was exported with any more precision, but the conclusion must be that a high proportion of the county's surplus grain was channelled into the capital. It has also been suggested that, while some of this may have been re-exported from Leith, a large part of it went to meet the city's own domestic needs. East Lothian may have formed only a part of the hinterland from which Edinburgh drew her grain supplies, but the importance of the capital's market to the rural economy of the county was overwhelming.

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4. *Old Statistical Account VI* p.538 Haddington parish.
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## THE DIVISION OF THE RUNRIGS OF TRANENT

By I. H. ADAMS

The burgh and barony of Tranent belonged to the estate of Winton in the beginning of the eighteenth century. Tranent was erected as a burgh of barony by Lord Seton on 13 March 1541/2 and *de novo* by the Earl of Winton on 22 April 1619.<sup>1</sup> The burgh had the privilege of two yearly fairs to begin 'upon the day of St. Bartholomew and St. Catherine' with the privilege of a weekly market to be held on Saturdays 'with the right to customs of the said yearly fairs and weekly markets, with all and sundry immunities, casualties and profits belonging thereto.'

It seems as if no feus had been created by the Earls of Winton prior to 1635 for in that year there was a Decreet of Locality of the Stipend of the parish of Tranent, in which none of the feuars of Tranent were called as parties though the Earl of Winton and all the other heritors were called. Later in the seventeenth century the superior, the Earl of Winton, feued out a considerable number of plots, often mere fractions of an acre, to encourage people to settle in the town. In many ways it was similar to the planned village movement which was to be undertaken on a large scale in the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup> The feuars, mainly craftsmen and tradesmen, received a house and yard with a small 'croft of ground' some distance from the settlement. The croft of ground was a strip of arable sufficient to provide subsistence for the craftsman's family. With the piecemeal feuing of parcels a pattern of intermixed strips emerged which we call runrig. Although many authors have attributed very ancient origins to runrig, in the case of Tranent it was of very recent origin. The lands nearest to the town were reserved for indwellers in the burgh, either 'merchants or mechanics' who might need ground for building.

The estate of Winton, including the barony and burgh of Tranent, was forfeited by the attainder of George, Earl of Winton for his part in the 1715 rebellion. Like so many families in the eighteenth century they paid dearly for their support of the Jacobite cause. The Winton estates were purchased by

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the York Buildings Company, an English concern with a somewhat chequered history. It was founded for the purpose of erecting a waterworks in the grounds of York House in the Strand to supply the district with water from the River Thames.<sup>3</sup> It was already in financial difficulties when it purchased in 1719 and 1720 many of the forfeited estates. By 1728 the York Buildings Company was bankrupt. Thus by the middle of the eighteenth century the landownership of Tranent was very disorganised with numerous small holders and the largest landowner a remote, bankrupt company. At this time the runrig lands of Tranent comprised several fields lying around the town, especially to the east, in multiple ownership with intermixed strips:

162.80 Sc acres belonging to 26 feuars consisting of	152 parcels
328.70 Sc acres belonging to York Buildings Co. consisting of	229 parcels
<hr/> 491.50 Sc acres	<hr/> 381 parcels

The holdings were fragmented and of various sizes, a point which can be illustrated by looking at those of one of the pursuers Robert Turnbull:

- (a) a croft of land
- (b) an acre lying runrig in East Field
- (c) an acre of arable land lying on westside of Winton Loan
- (d) three rigs lying in Muirshot
- (e) 12 rigs of arable land
- (f) a broadrig of arable
- (g) a rig of arable
- (h)  $4\frac{1}{2}$  rigs
- (i) 10 rigs
- (j) 3 rigs and a ligg
- (k) 3 acres of arable with barn and barnyard
- (l) 5 butts and headrig of arable

In the light of all the agricultural improvements taking place throughout Scotland at this time it is not surprising that the farmers of Tranent wished to resolve this inefficient system of land holding by consolidating their holdings into single blocks. This they could do either by mutual arbitration or by resorting to law and the Court of Session. In the case of Tranent they were forced to the latter.

## THE DIVISION OF THE RUNRIGS OF TRANENT

### THE DIVISION OF THE RUNRIGS

On 5 July 1695 an Act was passed in the Scottish Parliament to facilitate the consolidation of runrig lands, which were described as 'highly prejudicial to the Policy and Improvement of the Nation', by planting and inclosing.<sup>4</sup> As the Act intended most cases were heard in the Sheriff Courts, but in certain instances of great complexity the case was heard by the Court of Session.<sup>5</sup> Implicit in the Act for Division of Runrig was voluntary consolidation and that legal action was the final resort. It was stated in the case of Tranent that the 'pursuers had oft and diverse times desired and required the said defenders to divide and exchange the said runrig lands yet they wrongously refused and delayed so to do . . .'<sup>6</sup> Thus the scene was set for a difficult and very expensive proceedings before the Court of Session. A summons was raised on 10 November 1769 by David Russell, farmer in Pentland Mains, and fourteen other feuars for the division of the runrig lands lying mainly to the east of the burgh (Table 1). An Act and Commission was extracted on 28 February 1770 and William Law of Elvingston, sheriff depute of Haddingtonshire, was appointed commissioner for taking proof. It was his duty to act on behalf of the Court by conducting the practical matters of establishing rights, usages and boundaries of the runrig lands. His first action was to name Alexander Fraser, writer in Haddington, to be his clerk. From a list of respected tenant farmers, he selected James Miln, at Lochhill, Peter Bairnsfather in Harperdean and Robert Ainslie in Begbie to act as valuers. After visiting the East Fields of Tranent, the commissioner found it very difficult to take proof with any degree of accuracy until he had a plan before him. He therefore appointed a local land surveyor, David Mather, to make a plan to show every rig and ordered the valuers previously appointed to give him every assistance.<sup>7</sup>

The valuers got to work in the summer of 1770 and began the task of valuing each rig on the basis of the quality of the soil. However, they had to modify their results on three counts: first, those fields which had been enclosed had to include the value of the fences themselves, second, the old coal pits and associated bings had to be excluded even though the bings were grass-covered and suitable for grazing; the valuers felt that the danger of cattle falling down the old pits outweighed the value of the grazing. Thirdly, the filled-in coal pits were reduced in value because the mining detritus produced a poorer soil. The results of their work were reported to the commissioner on 24 August 1770. At the same time the land surveyor set about making plans for the commissioner.



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On 8 March 1771, with the valuation and plans completed, the pursuers petitioned the Court of Session for a renewed Act and Commission to enable the commissioner to make the allocations and to allow some of the parties to produce title deeds to show their rights to the rigs. During April, before the formal meeting in May, the commissioner had several informal meetings at the Exchange Coffee House with the feuars and John Russell, the agent for the York Buildings Company. Although the Company had made formal objections at the very beginning of the process, no indication was given of any serious discord in the action. However, John Russell moved to England about this time and was replaced by John Haldane, writer in Edinburgh, and immediately the tone of the proceedings changed. Henceforth the Company did everything in its power to oppose the division. Unfortunately there is no indication whether this was a change of personality or policy.

John Haldane represented the Company at the meeting of the commissioner and the feuars on the 25th May. David Mather's two plans were produced as well as a scroll scheme of division. Mather's scheme was speedily accepted by the commissioner with only one minor modification. The surveyor was told to proceed with the operation and report back on 10th June, two days before the commissioner had to report to the Court of Session.

The complexities of the case forced the pursuers to petition for a renewal of the Act and Commission, which was granted until 12 November. By this time the York Buildings Company had become somewhat agitated by the alacrity of the proceedings, for Mather had been ordered by the commissioner to mark the division 'directly upon the plan.' With some degree of justification the Company thought the scheme had been developed solely for the benefit of the feuars. Whereas out of 491 acres in runrig only 162 belonged to the feuars, the remainder belonged to the Company and let out to 41 tenants most of whom lived in Tranent. Yet Mather's scheme allotted all the land adjacent to the burgh to the feuars and that furthest away to the Company. This latter allocation according to the Company would force it to build new houses for their tenants on the new allotments. At least that is what they complained about publically, but a deeper disquiet pre-occupied them. Under the terms of reference the valuers were to make judgements only as to the agricultural values involved, but the Company claimed that 'the valuers have not given the data upon which they estimated the conveniency of situation, neither have they made any allowance for the capability of building ground which makes ground in the neighbourhood of a town many hundred folds more valuable than if it were at a distance'.<sup>8</sup>

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The York Buildings Company was right in its suspicion of the rapid fixing of the allocations: they were sceptical that 'chalk is no sheers' for many times in instances of this kind, 'after the business is reduced to a plan and marked upon paper and the allotments made, it comes to an exceeding uphill work to get any alteration, far more to have a new plan made upon different principles, as the labour lost in making the plan together with the prejudice which parties take for a thing done, have a very considerable weight against any new proposal, and it is far more easy to prevent than remedy.'<sup>9</sup> This weight of inertia can be confirmed in another process, the division of the commonity of Hassendean.<sup>10</sup> In this example surveyors' rough chain lines were ultimately incorporated into the lines of allotments and are now hedges and roads on the landscape. The Company also complained that they had not been able to inspect the plans or the scheme of division. Thus upon these and a few more points the Company petitioned the Court that the commissioner be instructed:

- (1) To strike out of the division the lands of every party which lay in one parcel.
- (2) To find that all lands lying in parcels consisting of above five or six acres were not runrig and therefore did not fall under the statute.
- (3) That only the runrig lands of those parties who were intermixed with one another could be divided among the parties whose lands were so mixed and that excambions could not be made with lands at a distance from one another.
- (4) That the feuars were not entitled to have all their lands laid out next to the burgh and that the Company's lands were not to be put at a distance from it.
- (5) That there should be another surveyor of the Company's nomination to act with David Mather.

It was this last point, the appointment of another surveyor, that was to throw the whole case into turmoil and confusion. First, however, the commissioner ordered an advertisement to be inserted in the Edinburgh newspapers advising that the plans and scheme of division could be seen at David Mather's house until the 25th July and thereafter at James Walker, WS, until the 20th August and any objections to be given in writing before the 24th of that month. Only the York Buildings Company objected in the terms given above. The Company's memorial, consisting of fifty nine pages, was full of abuse of the

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surveyor and contained a lengthy argument which was to show that the action was incompetent.<sup>11</sup> What it did lack was a signature, for the agent representing the Company refused to set his name to its pages.

The commissioner ignored the arguments in this document and at the meeting of 1st November offered his opinion that 'tho' the said scheme of division may be liable to some particular trifling objections, unavoidable in a division of this kind, and might be altered to the better in some respects, yet in general it is just and equal and for the general behoof of all concerned, and therefore he would have been inclined to have proceeded in the division upon the said plan. But in respect of the above mentioned objections . . . it is impossible for the commissioner to make a final report of the division within the time limit of the commission, he choses rather to report the said scheme and the said papers to the Court as they stand without judging . . . and to leave it to the Court to determine upon the import of these extraordinary papers on the part of the Company which among other things contain many unjust reflections against the surveyor.' It is not hard to see which side the commissioner was on.

The Company took up its own suggestion and, at their own expense, commissioned James Morison, land surveyor in Alva, to make a new plan of the disputed lands. His work confirmed Mather's accuracy of measurement, but reduced the number of rigs by 158 and consequently gave some support to the Company's claim that a large amount of ground did not lie in runrig. But what was runrig? According to the Company the definition was 'where the lands of different heritors lie intermixed in rigs with each other.' There arose then the question what is a rig? In this case the Company claimed that any parcel over six acres could not be classified as a rig. In this they were substantiated by the legal definition of runrig, 'pieces of ground belonging to different owners, intermixed with each other, and each of no greater than four acres'.<sup>12</sup>

On 11 February 1772 the feuars petitioned the Court for a speedy end to the process because the imminence of consolidation meant that nobody was 'at much pains in cultivating and improving the grounds'. Unfortunately, four of the parties had died in the course of the process and it was necessary for their heirs to indicate their concurrence with the procedures so far. The York Buildings Company was able to find grounds even in this procedural matter for objection, claiming that one of the letters of concurrence was defective and the Court sustained their objection. So in September it was necessary to raise and execute a summons of transference so that the heirs could be entered into the roll, but delay continued because it was not called until the following January.

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With this procedural step complete, the feuars again petitioned for the case to be completed and nearly ten months later, in July 1773, the action restarted. The case dragged on and in the following January the feuars were again appealing to the Court, not only revealing, as previously, that nobody was cultivating the ground properly, but also that the cost of the action was increasing with every delay and that the danger of further deaths would slow it down even more. The Court responded quickly enough and sustained the whole of the feuars' case, but remitted to the Lord Ordinary to hear the parties' case on 'how far the allotments to the different parties could be made more convenient than they are in the scheme of division made out by the Commissioner. . . .'<sup>13</sup> So it came about that on the 22nd February 1775 the Lord Ordinary found:

- (1) The field called Wester Backsides, 4.84 acres, was to be wholly allocated to Robert Turnbull;
- (2) The two rentals belonging to the heirs of John Wauch and John Seton to remain where they were;
- (3) The southern part of the East Field of Tranent as shown on William Bell's reduced plan be allocated to remaining feuars<sup>14</sup> and remitted William Law, the former commissioner;
- (4) To allocate the feuars' division;
- (5) To supervise the division as agreeable to the interlocutor;
- (6) To allocate the expense of enclosure.<sup>15</sup>

Although the Company had got a considerable modification to the original scheme, it was still dissatisfied with Robert Turnbull getting the whole of Wester Backsides, and so it made a representation on 7 March 1775 claiming that as he was also to receive about 14 acres of the Eastfield, the spirit of the Act was broken 'that the lands should be allocated to each of the parties contiguous and together.' The feuars returned to the attack immediately but the desired delaying tactics had been achieved and the hearing was held over to the next session.

On 12 December 1775 both sides presented memorials to the Lord Ordinary stating their cases. The pursuers asked that the previous interlocutor be maintained with Robert Turnbull getting the whole of Wester Backsides, but changing the feuars allocation from the southern to the northern half of the East Field. The Company, on the other hand, simply asked for a change in Turnbull's allocation. Again the claims were changed when the parties met before Lord

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Kames, one of the leading agricultural improvers of the age. The feuars changed their previous claim for the northern half of the East Field to a rig length north and parallel to Sanderson's Wynd so that they might have the land behind their barns. Surprisingly this claim was met but with the provision that a road must be built from Sanderson's Wynd sufficient for carriages, to give access to the Company's lands, the value of the ground having to be deducted from the shares of all parties.<sup>16</sup>

William Law was re-appointed commissioner and William Bell, a land surveyor previously employed by the Company, was appointed after the death of David Mather. The commissioner and new land surveyor had two meetings on 13 April and 6 July, with the feuars to set off their allocations. The large feuars were allocated parcels south of Sanderson's Wynd and the remaining small feuars in the field to the north. The meeting adjourned with the instruction to William Bell to set up marchstones. Bell was approached after this meeting by David Russell to lay out his allocation in two equal allotments and this proposal was put before the meeting in July. The alteration was approved, but the commissioner was at the limit of his patience for he declared, 'that this is his final instructions to the said William Bell and that he will give him no further instructions'.<sup>17</sup>

The Court confirmed these actions on 3 August 1776 and immediately some of the feuars moved into their new lands and began to enclose them. There were still some problems to be solved: for example ground sown with grass by Matthew Haldane earlier in May had been later allocated to David Russell and Robert Heriot. Thus a cash adjustment had to be made:

	£	s	d
Price of 60 lb red clover seed sown on the said ground at 6½d per lb	1	12	6
2¼ lb rye grass seed at 10/- per lb	1	2	6
Gathering, filling and carrying stones off the ground sown with grass seeds there being about 4½ acres sown	0	10	0
	3	5	0 <sup>18</sup>

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Yet antagonism had not been quelled for when the surveyor went to measure the road ordered by the interlocutor he found that one of the feuars had ploughed the ground of his new allotment leaving only ten feet for the road. The York Buildings Company then claimed that the road should be twenty-five feet wide, and if the road had been laid out prior to division they would have been agreeable for this amount of land to have been deducted from all parties. But as the division had been made they suggested that the road be widened by taking an extra fifteen feet 'off the north end of the allotments to the feuars.' In recompense they offered a strip of ground equal in area from the Muir of Tranent that lay beside the feuars' ground. This exchange of arable for moor, however unequal, was not opposed by the now exhausted feuars and in December the Court confirmed the proposal.

All that had to be settled now was the cost of the whole protracted operation. In all the expense came to £984 14s 0d of which the York Buildings Company had to pay £651 16s 4d. The largest feuar, David Russell had to pay £75 4s 7½d. In all it cost about £2 per acre for the division.

Controversy ensued over the surveyors' bills, for they were very substantial:

	£	s	d
David Mather	45	14	6
James Morison	80	0	0
William Bell	163	10	7
	<hr/>		
	289	5	1
	<hr/>		

From this sum, however, James Morison's fee and £21 7s 10d of William Bell's total had to be born completely by the Company as Morison's survey had not been authorised by the Court and Bell's account included payment for a duplicate set of plans, books and scheme of division made for the Company and a survey of Carlaverock and other farms not included in the division. Thus £187 17s 3d in surveyors' fees fell to mutual payment. The level of these fees is significant for the decades of 1760s and 70s saw land surveyors in Scotland on a seller's market because their talents were in great demand during the fever of improve-

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ments during this period.<sup>19</sup> William Bell became notorious for his exorbitant bills for runrig cases and in two instances had to go to the Court of Session to force payment from his employers.<sup>20</sup> In the case of Tranent where his bill was unsuccessfully challenged, he caused even greater trouble:

Due to John Haldane, writer in Edinburgh and agent for the York Buildings Company, for his disbursement and writings, etc., as per account, commencing in 1770 including his agent fee and trouble and for extraordinary trouble in attending William Bell, the surveyor during the course of his operations ..... £358 15s 3d <sup>21</sup>

### CONCLUSION

Runrig disappeared to a great extent during the eighteenth century with the agrarian improvements of that age. For most of Scotland it was accomplished by the great landowners consolidating the lands on their estates with the help of a land surveyor. Only in the instances where there was proprietary runrig, that is land intermixed belonging to different people, did the law need to be invoked. As it turned out cases of division of runrig heard before the Court of Session are very rare and even those heard before the Sheriff Courts are infrequent. Tranent represents an unusual case in that the York Buildings Company was involved. Clearly there was little love lost between the Company and the people of Tranent, partly because the Company was on its last legs.

The decret of division of the runrig lands of Tranent was pronounced and extracted in the Court of Session on 3 March 1778. Virtually immediately a summons for the sale of the York Buildings' estate of Winton was raised in the Court of Session. On 11 August John Taylor, W.S., was appointed commissioner to prove the proportions of the cumulo rents of the baronies of Seton, Longniddry, and Tranent and Cockenzie that comprised the Winton estate. Evidence was heard as to the values of farm rents, feus, coal and salt works, teinds of finishings, rents of oyster beds, shore dues and rents of houses and yards in Tranent. A plan of the estate was produced by John Home but unfortunately this has been lost. He was assisted in making valuations by the valuers, James Miln and Peter Bairnsfather who had acted in the earlier division of runrig. The estate was divided into lots and sold by decret on 27 July 1779.<sup>22</sup>

Table 1:

List of Parties Named in the Summons of the Division of the Runrigs of Tranent

PURSUERS			DEFENDERS		
David Russell	farmer	Pentland Mains	York Buildings Company	—	London
Robert Turnbull	farmer	Whittingehame	William Edward	merchant	Belford
Patrick Turnbull	farmer	Carlaverock	James Foreman	salt grieve	Bo'ness
John Williamson	farmer	Tranent	Elizabeth Henderson	spouse of J. Foreman, only child of Alex Henderson	
James Cowan	tanner	Tranent	George Simpson	mason	Tranent
John Clark	flesher	Tranent	Ann Waugh	spouse of G. Simpson	
George Foreman	farmer	Tranent	David Allan	brewer	Tranent
Matthew Simpson	wright	Tranent	George Wilson	gardener	Tranent
Alex Deans	farmer	Tranent	Alex Walker	farmer	Riggonhead
William Symington	vintner	Tranent	Andrew Hunter	residenter	Tranent
Archibald Kinly	glazier	Tranent	Adam Pearson	shoemaker	Cockenzie
Alexander Allan	flesher	Tranent	David Allan	candlemaker	Tranent
Robert Henry	mason	Tranent	William Begbie	farmer	Pilmuir
William Livingston	clerk	Carron Co.	John McDowall of Logan		
Pat Vallange	—	Tranent	Mrs Helen Grant, relict of Andrew McDowall of Bankton, one of the senators of the College of Justice		
			Charles Peddie	late cook to the King	



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### REFERENCES

1. G. S. Pryde, *The Burghs of Scotland*, Oxford University Press, London, 1965, p. 225.
2. T. C. Smout, 'The landowner and the planned village', in N. T. Phillipson and R. Mitchison (eds) *Scotland in the Age of Improvement*, Edinburgh University Press, 1970, pp. 73-106.
3. David Murray, *The York Buildings Company*, Glasgow, 1883.
4. *Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, IX, 421 (1695, c. 36).
5. Examples include the division of the runrigs of Lanton 'in regard of the absence of . . . Anna dutchess of Buccleugh furth of Scotland whereby she cannot regularly be sisted before any . . . inferior judges'; and the runrigs of Eyemouth in 1764 where over 600 parcels of property were involved.
6. Scottish Record Office (SRO), Court of Session processes, Russell v.
7. David Mather worked mainly in the eastern Lowlands between 1753 and 1772. Earlier he had experience of dividing the runrig lands of West Reston (1760) and Eyemouth (1763) in Berwickshire as well as being the surveyor in the division of the commonry of Tranent Muir (1757).
8. Process, replies for York Building Company, No 26, pp. 5-6.
9. Process, answers for York Building Company, No 19.
10. I. H. Adams, 'The division of Hassendean Common', *Stair Society Miscellany One*, Edinburgh, 1970, pp. 171-92.
11. Process, memorial for York Building Company, 1 November 1771, No 23. The statement is in a petition for David Russell and others 28 November 1771, No 18, p. 6.
12. John Rankine, *The Law of Landownership in Scotland*, Edinburgh, 2nd edition, 1884, p. 506.
13. Process, interlocutor 28 January 1774, No 34.
14. S.R.O. RHP 29/6.
15. Process, minutes and interlocutor, No 38.
16. Process, minutes 3 February 1776, No 50.
17. Process, minutes 13 April and 6 July 1776, No 54.
18. Process, account for grass-seed, No 53.
19. See I. H. Adams, 'The land surveyor and his influence on the Scottish rural landscape', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 84.3, 1968, 248-55; and *Descriptive list of plans in the Scottish Record Office*, HMSO, Edinburgh, Vol 2, 1970, introduction.
20. In 1778 William Bell and two partners took 400 days to survey 300 acres of runrig lands at Heck and Greenhill in Dumfriesshire. The surveyors had to get an act and warrant from the Court of Session to force payment by the litigants (SRO CS105/13); and in 1791 the same thing happened at the division of the runrigs of Aberbothrie and Bardmony, Perthshire (SRO CS229/B/5/85).
21. Process, state and division of the expense 19 February 1778.
22. S.R.O. Court of Session process (CS 25/623/1).

## DEATH IN TRANENT 1754-81

*By ROSALIND MITCHISON*

In 1565 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland ordered all parishes to keep a register of burials. The Church and the Scottish Privy Council made a repeat order in 1616. The result of these rulings was that on 16 October 1752 (old style) the Heritors of Tranent decided to have a register of deaths kept by the session clerk, 'an exact Register of all the Deaths, specifying therein the precise time of death and interment, the Designations of the Defunct, their habitation, age and disease so far as it can be discovered, what mortcloth and whether the bell or Hearse or both were used and what was the place of interment'. This is what the American courts called 'acting with all deliberate speed'. The document that was then produced was kept from October 1754 to December 1781 and called a Bill of Mortality'.<sup>1</sup> Its abandonment in 1782 seems to have been because of an Act of Parliament which became operative in October 1783 levying a tax of threepence on all parish register entries. It was felt by the clerk that this would make the record incomplete by discouraging the poorer people and dissenters from making use of the register.

For this is a complete burial register. In fact it is rather more than complete. It notes the total number of births of both sexes, for most years, and it includes under deaths both residents of Tranent parish buried elsewhere and non-residents buried there. It also gives details of the funeral equipment and the place of the grave.

It was started by a remarkable man, James Bate, schoolmaster of the parish, aged approximately 34 when the register opened. It was carried on after his death in January 1757 by later schoolmasters. The Bill of Mortality says of Bate, 'a man as much noted for his public spirit and love of his country as perhaps could be in the Stat and Circumstance'. James Bate as session clerk to the heritors meeting had been bringing up to date the minute book of the heritors and the kirk session register, as well as corresponding with the deacons of the incorporated trades about the use of mortcloths.<sup>2</sup>

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Funerals are important ceremonies in all societies and though the Scottish Kirk did not encourage religious emphasis on them it acquiesced in traditional ritual. Gifts of clothing to wear on the occasion were often made by near relatives to other mourners. Alcohol and hospitality played a big part both before and after. Coffins were taken to the grave by a procession either on foot or with a hearse (it depended on the distance) and for this last journey were covered with a splendid ceremonial cloth, the mortcloth. After the interment a good deal of drinking would take place. Even in the case of paupers this was to be expected, and the local poor law allowed for it in the accounts. Mortcloths were hired for the occasion. Only in the case of children under 18 months did the funeral take place without a mortcloth and then not invariably. One day a child was buried under 'a black apron'. Mortcloths were usually of velvet and ornamented with fringes; expensive stuffs that most people would never wear in their lives. Parishes collected money by their hire to help out the parish funds for poor relief. However in a town there was a demand by the incorporated trades that their own special mortcloths be used by their members. This was all very well if the trades were ready to support their people in poverty: if not it was regarded as cheating the Poor Box of money it needed. In 1751 the heritors — who were rated for poor relief and therefore particularly anxious to see all other contributions to the poor fund in a healthy state — had been bargaining with the Incorporations about this, trying to fix a general fee that the Incorporations should pay to set up their own mortcloths. The weavers stated that they had used mortcloths 25 times in 20 years, once the big one, 24 times the small. The coal hewers had used a mortcloth 11 times in three years, the Baxters 14 times in 13 years. The Wrights said that they had only used a mortcloth once in the recent past. This was obviously not believed. Other Incorporations had already paid 50 pounds Scots, (£4.3.4 sterling) for the privilege of using their own mortcloths, and the weavers were persuaded to do the same. The Masons were told that they would have to pay for the parish cloth, even if they used their own, unless they also made a general payment. Silence in the minute book suggests that all the trades agreed.

The kirk session and heritors settled the fees for hiring on a scale taken from Gladsmuir parish for the various elements of ceremony. The use of the hearse was to cost 7/6 for three miles or less, a shilling a mile after that. It cost 1/- to have the great bell rung and at least 16 pence to have a grave dug (for children the joint cost was 1/-). But the fees were graded by rank. A tenant farmer had to pay 3/4 for bell and grave, and his child 2/-.

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While the parish would not demand more, it was left open to 'tenants and persons of higher rank to pay out of their generosity for burial or registration what farder they shall please.' Part of the fee for burials was passed on by the bellman to the clerk for the register entry, and this was regulated by class—gentlemen and people of substance paid a shilling, tradesmen 6d, the 'poorer sort' 2d and pensioners on the poor roll nothing. Besides these fees the use of the parish's mortcloth would cost, according to the one hired, up to 5/-.

The bellman had a lot to do. He had to keep the hearse in good condition and clean, oiling the harness every time it was used, and getting 8d for this. He had also to look after the parish mortcloths, the best one, the second and the third, the one for the poor and the two for children, taking them back after use in their 'pokes' to the chest kept in the treasurer's house. He also dug the grave. Though he got fees and also a salary of ten pounds Scots, as a part time job it could be onerous. Not surprisingly it was not always done to the satisfaction of the heritors and kirk session. In April 1755 the bellman, John Simpson, was in trouble for not cleaning the harness and not passing on the mortcloth fees. He had failed to lock up the church on Sunday and boys had got in and done some damage.

He was in trouble again about the money in May 1756 but after that seems to have got through his jobs for several years satisfactorily.<sup>3</sup> However, in December 1763 he was 'sharply rebuked.' The mortcloths were not in their proper pokes; some of the bags were in need of mending and two were too far gone for this. The hearse was dirty and the harness unoiled. The church had not been locked up (pigeons had got in), he had failed to pay over to the treasurer over £10 sterling of mortcloth money, and failed to extract as fees for burials a further £11.15/5½. Eventually he managed to account for nearly £7 of the money, and was asked how he was going to pay it. He was told that it was 'a great iniquity to take the poor's money'. The burial dues were to go straight to the treasurer in future.

The trouble was that the parish was expecting a professional standard of conduct from men who were doing this as a part time or extra job. People would die and their relations would expect a funeral at once, often on the next day. They would expect the bell rung through the town immediately, day or night. It could mean a lot of unexpected work, whatever the state of the bellman's normal work. The local wright would have to make a coffin, the bellman dig a grave, perhaps get the hearse ready. It is very understandable that

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he was failing to tidy up after the event, pay over the money, put the mortcloth away. Then he sometimes got confused as to who had and who had not paid fees. He denied that he had received the fee paid for a Prestonpans woman buried in March 1764 with the best mortcloth, but in June 1764 he admitted it and handed over the money. He was also in trouble for not locking the church and steeple.

He went on in trouble for two years, with disputes about what had been paid over and what had not, and finally the heritors sacked him in November 1764, demanded the church keys and stuck an advertisement for a replacement on the gate. There were four candidates and they chose John Harper, a weaver, gave him the equipment and a mop for washing the hearse with, and had the mortcloths repaired at a cost of 6/1½d. The large mortcloth was almost bare and had lost a lot of its fringe so its fee was lowered to 4/-. A new child's one was ordered. The kirk session was also having a quarrel with another Simpson, Mathew, over the price of coffins for the poor. Mathew said he could not do it at the old price because of the rising cost of wood.

John Simpson did not give up the job readily. He carried on holding his own funerals. He still had the church's handbell and he dug graves and charged fees and I do not suppose that they were passed on to the treasurer. He had to be prosecuted in the sheriff court, and when the sheriff summoned him to hand over the bell he went on with another one. Only at the end of 1766 by having him put in gaol could he be got to give security that he would give up. And before this happened the new bellman, John Harper, had thrown in the sponge. He 'declared against giving graves on account of the disturbances that had arisen in the parish thereanent' in April 1765. There had been two petitions going round the parish in favour of Simpson, and Harper shirked the demarcation dispute. He was replaced by one George Hastie, a candidate the year before, who eventually in 1773 was in similar trouble over fees and performance. In 1773 a new bellman, William Steel, a resident of Tranent and 'servant to Mr Hill Christy' got the job. The kirk session decided to prosecute all who did not pay grave digging dues, provided a new best mortcloth at 8/6 in fee, repaired the old, and eventually provided a new coat and hat for the hearse driver, a new cover to the hearse and new harness.

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Now for other aspects of death: who died and what of? On 'who', allowance has to be made for inaccuracy over ages. The parish clerks at Tranent liked

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big figures and popped in eighty four, eighty seven or ninety eight (on one occasion ninety nine years eleven and a half months) because these were impressive. The figures of accepted age could not be checked by the baptism registers of the past, since these did not exist. They are so much higher than in a parish where such a check was possible (Kilmarnock) that it is wisest to assume that high figures merely mean 'very old.' For instance in September 1772 John Rennie 'a poor shearer' from Morayshire died of fever and was put down as aged seventy seven. It is unlikely he knew his age, and still more unlikely that at seventy seven he had walked down from Morayshire to work in the harvest. The Bill records 19% as dying at over seventy: we should translate this as 'very old'. Another 14% were between sixty and seventy — the translation here is 'old', making 33% altogether 'old'. (For contrast, in 1976, 72% of deaths were of those over 65).

To balance this, 36% of deaths are of those under 5. (By contrast, the figure was 1.8% in 1976). Here the information probably was correct, and the figure, by what we know of eighteenth century mortality, is not surprising. The total of deaths averaged out at 62 per year in a population which in 1755 and the 1790s was approximately 2500. This would mean a death rate of 25 if the population had been a natural one, but there is evidence in the *Statistical Account* that there was a good deal of emigration: <sup>4</sup> emigrants are usually those with the lowest likelihood of death, young adults, so this 'death rate' exaggerates the real rate. Also some people from outside the parish are included — in 1773 a fishing boat from Banff overturned in the Forth and 3 men and 2 boys were drowned. The deaths of infants are also probably enhanced: Tranent was near enough to Edinburgh to be used as a place for the putting out of upper class infants to nurse — 'baby farming'. Edinburgh children can be found in the register of other places near to the city, Dalkeith and Duddingston for instance. In July 1767 Margaret Tait, foster child from Edinburgh died of what is called 'consumption and vomitting', aged one year: in November 1759 James Allan, a 'stranger' aged 6 months died of 'asthma'. Altogether we should think that the death rate in Tranent was below 25. The parish was benefitting from a reduction in infectious disease first noticeable in eastern Scotland in the 1750s and spreading to the west in the 1760s. We think that for Scotland as a whole infant mortality was about 280 in the 1750s, that is 280 deaths for every 1000 born, going down to about 200 at the end of the century. The 'birth rate', again distorted, this time downwards, by emigration, seems to have been about 33 so that in spite of a high death rate the parish was more than sustaining its own population.

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The Bill is not clear, in modern terms, about 'cause of death'. Sometimes it very sensibly says 'old age' — not allowed in a death certificate today — or 'bedrid' which is socially a useful description, but not medically. Sometimes it describes a death as 'suddenly' or 'hastily'. On accidents it gives a lot of detail. It also mentions dropsy, cancer, 'the gravel' (stone), apoplectic fit (stroke), rupture and jaundice. There is the description 'decay' which I take to mean any lingering disease. The bellman and the parish clerk were not medical experts — they went on what 'everyone knew' or what the family said. We know from the notebook of a Dalkeith doctor in the 1730s that there were accepted causes of death recognised other than those used in this Bill — such as rickets and pleurisy — but we should not expect the Bill to be up to date with medicine.<sup>5</sup>

By far and away the biggest group of deaths was infectious disease, and within this group, smallpox. In the whole of the Bill there are 1678 deaths recorded, of which smallpox explains 226 — that is 13½%. In this percentage, which may well appall us, Tranent was lucky — the expected figure is 15% in the eighteenth century. But this 15% probably reflects English experience. The English system of concentrating population in large villages made it easier for smallpox to spread through an entire community in a visitation. The separate nature of Scottish farm town settlement reduced its impact. In 1766 smallpox was raging through Tranent, Cockenzie and Prestonpans and producing deaths also in Elphinstone, Blindwells and Greendykes, but none in Seton. Altogether 31 died. In 1768 it struck Seton, and at the end of the epidemic produced deaths in Cockenzie, but none in Tranent. Since the main victims of smallpox were small children, whose chance of survival improved considerably over the age of two, this selectivity meant that some lives were spared. But it also meant that it was rare for there to be no cases of the disease around in the parish — in 1769 and 1770 there were no smallpox deaths; there were none in 1764, 1774, 1776 and 1778. Every other year had some. Other parishes which had settlements less separate can be found to give bigger and more regular gaps between smallpox years — for instance Alva and Kilmarnock both do. For age distribution, here are the figures. Five of those killed by smallpox were under six months, 51 between six months and a year, 63 between one and two, 31 were two year olds, 34 three year olds, 18 five year olds. After that 17 were killed between five and ten, and there were three older children and four adults. You can see from these figures that small babies probably had some immunity which they lost at six months: from six months to a year was the time of biggest risk, and after that from one to two. These figures bear out the picture from other places. (I am assuming that ages in this Bill are reasonably correct: with

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small babies they almost certainly are, since the baptism would be remembered). Three of the four adults were strangers to the parish, two being soldiers and one the wife of a soldier.

More than just figures can be found in the Bill. In March 1755 James Hog lost a seven year old daughter, Agnes, from smallpox: in April he lost another, Janet, of nine months and in 1758 he lost James, aged three, either a twin to Janet or born soon after her death. James Leitch lost Helen, of nine months, also in March 1755, and James, her elder brother, aged seven and a half in September 1759. Alexander Livingston lost Alec, aged three, in July 1758, and a later child, Elizabeth, two and a half, in April 1763. In March and April 1766, Grizel Hackett, aged three, in Cockenzie, died, and James aged two. I do not know whether these were brother and sister, or the Euphan and Hugh Jackson in Seton, aged five and seven, who died in May 1768, but some families had very bad luck. Alexander Montgomery lost his 18 month baby, Elizabeth, in November 1775, and her replacement, William, a few months younger, in March 1779. When you read these details you see why the Church of Scotland in 1803 circulated all parish ministers with details of how to organise, or if necessary, actually to do themselves, the new process of vaccination, discovered five years earlier.<sup>6</sup>

Smallpox was a disease easily recognised in the eighteenth century. If you confused it in the early stages with chicken-pox, this confusion disappeared when its seriousness showed. Other easily recognisable diseases were measles, whooping cough, ague (malaria) — and 'flux' which could mean dysentery. Tranent was lucky with measles — there are only five deaths attributed to it, all of children, one with 'flux' added. I say lucky. In Edinburgh in 1735 an epidemic described as 'mild' killed 11, and in 1752 in Kilmarnock 52 children died of it. But whooping cough, called 'chincough' then, was occasionally a serious killer, causing six deaths in 1755, nine in 1767, seven in 1776 and occasional ones at other times. There were occasional deaths of small children from bowelhive (infant diarrhoea), very few from ague but a nasty outbreak of dysentery through 1763 and '64 which killed a lot of middle aged people — 22 people in all. But the big scale killers all the time were the two headings of 'consumption' and 'fever'.

There is also the label 'asthma' given to a surprising number of deaths, sometimes coupled with sore throat. I think asthma means difficulty of breathing, and I suspect it covers diphtheria — not classified as a separate disease till the 1850s but sometimes elsewhere called 'membranous croup', 'putrid sore



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throat' or simply 'stopping', because the sufferer stopped breathing. We have some appalling figures for 'croup' and 'stopping' for Glasgow at the turn of the century.<sup>7</sup> Seven children died of 'asthma' in Tranent and Cockenzie in the autumn of 1757 — in December 1761 another three in Tranent including a three year old girl and her five year old brother, which makes their 'asthma' look infectious. On the other hand when a 60 year old man died of asthma in January 1765, it probably meant pneumonia or bronchitis.

Consumption may have meant tuberculosis: but it also may have meant other slow wasting declines, for instance diabetes. In any case a lot of the manifestations of tuberculosis would not have been recognised as such. Regularly year after year 'consumption' took a drain, five deaths, seven deaths, nine deaths. Fever meant anything not described elsewhere in which the sufferer had a temperature. So it covered flu, pneumonia, scarlet fever, typhoid and typhus and other things too. Much depended on the classification concepts of the recording clerk. 'Fever' seems less of a killer in 1775 and afterwards, tending to account for only eight, nine or ten a year. This drop may be real, and equally it may not. It had been the label given to 22 deaths in 1773 and 16 in 1774 — both years of hard times.

Sometimes 'fever' seems perhaps more specific. We can guess that when it arrives in winter and kills mostly old people it may be 'flu' with complications, or typhus. But in the summer of 1759 a fever was killing young adults, people in their 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s. Occasionally a child or an elderly person died of 'fever', but the great bulk of the year, 29 fever deaths altogether, and very few others, came in the age group where you would least expect it. A medical expert has suggested to me that this might be polio. The killing power of polio is enhanced if you think you have merely a mild illness and decide to work in spite of it, and this young adults are apt to do.

We cannot be sure that all the asthma, fever and consumption deaths are truly deaths from infectious disease, but most of them probably were. So were some other deaths not so classified, for instance deaths after childbirth. But still, if we add all these categories together with the smallpox, they come to 967 in 27 years, 70% of the total deaths. It is worth remembering that today death from infectious disease is very rare: by modern standards almost all these are avoidable and this brings home the big difference between then and now. Over 900 people would have lived longer if they had been born two centuries later. And because most infections establish a degree of immunity, most of these

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deaths were of young or youngish people. In age terms, then, one should not be surprised that the proportion dying old was not very big.

Another category of death, very carefully recorded, is what modern demographers would call death by violence — this means accident, murder and suicide. In this 'Bill' there is only one murder — that of 'George Wood, poacher', aged 45, 'shot by a party of soldiers sent to impress him' for the 7 years' war. There were two suspected suicides. In July 1774 Anne Bisset, a widow, aged 61, 'fell accidentally or designedly into George Gold's well': she was buried in a meadow, for suicides did not end up in the church yard. Wells had in earlier days been often left unfenced and potentially dangerous but standards of protection had been improving. Throwing yourself into your own well was the equivalent for a housewife of putting your head in the gas oven; it was using your ordinary domestic equipment for suicide.<sup>8</sup> On August 8th 1772 David Jack, a shoemaker in Seton, aged 45, was found dead in a field: 'it was supposed' says the Bill 'that he had an active hand in his own death' so he also ended in the meadow. Other people found dead, a Haddington weaver in 1772: or the son of a gardener at Preston who 'perished in the street in the night' were not presumed suicides: perhaps it was known that they had been drinking.

The accidental death level is startling. Not much of it is travel accident, because people did not travel so much as they do now, though there was James Brown, a 37 year-old ship carpenter, living in Leith found dead on the shore in 1770, George Carfrae who fell off his horse, aged 50, and an elderly widow who died on the way from Edinburgh. The total share of violence in death was smaller than it would be today: today it ranks at about 43 per 1000 deaths. In this Bill it is 17 per 1000 deaths. But the absolute level is much higher, because our death rate is lower, and a lot of it suggests a lack of safety consciousness. Some of it at work: an accident in the flint mill, bad air in the coal pit, falling off a cart in front of the wheel, killed by the fall of a big piece of coal in the mine. I expected to find deaths in the mine the commonest form of work accident, but they were not. Tranent had, by the 1790s 150 people working in coal, but it seems to have been a lot safer than being a fisherman. A 26 year old man died in the Forth in February 1775 'by excessive and cold in a hurricane dreging oysters'; a fishing boat overturned in August 1778 and three of the occupants were rescued but one, James Ritchie, aged 47, with a wife and seven children was not. In August 1758 a fisherman thought to be aged 76, from Cockenzie, had his boat sink under him and with him. And in October 1773 the Banff fishing boat already mentioned, with three men and two young lads,

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sons of one of the men, overturned and all were drowned. They had come down here with their families, three wives and 15 children, perhaps to settle, but after the tragedy the relatives all went back north. Pure accidents include accidents to people who should not, by our standards, have been at all at risk. The seven year old son of a collier killed in the mine in 1762 — was he acting as a bearer? And Peter Darling, aged five who was killed on the coal hill in 1757. Children also got knocked down by wagons and one two-year-old fell into a tub of bleaching water.

One source of accidents is to be expected, from other Bills, but not found here, and I attribute its absence to the lack of any big river in the parish. It was frequent in some places for men to ride or walk home from market so drunk that they failed to negotiate an important ford. In fact the building of bridges in the eighteenth century may have helped population growth. Drowning on journeys was a more serious source of death in Scotland than in other countries because of the need for ferries over big estuaries: but not here.

One final cause of death is worth noting: childbirth. Today it is a very black mark in a hospital to lose a mother in this way. But even 40 years ago such deaths were running at nearly seven for every 1000 births. In this Bill the 14 deaths in, and soon after childbirth, probably come out at a bit less than that. In some matters our ancestors are to be congratulated.

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One final aspect of this Bill. One wants to know how much more we can know about the people and families in it. The kirk session register, and even the presbytery records, will give details of some, and for before 1753 we have the heritors records. We know that the troublesome John Simpson lost a two year old grandson to 'asthma' in 1775. We could probably find others of his family, and of his replacement. If we took trouble we could probably see how long some people lived as 'pensioners' on the poor fund before dying, or what happened to the dependents of a father and grown up son who died within a few days of each other in September 1772, James and Robert Manuel in Crosshouse. We have one tombstone from this period in the churchyard, still legible, of Baillie George Seton, farmer at Seton, died in 1760 aged 82, or so it was thought.

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It says:

You Reader, if you should expect

Big swelling words, Imodesty, respect

How short men's life last — while we live we die

To know man's life, keep death within your eye.

His widow died in 1776, aged 75, says the stone. Our Bill adds of 'fever'. We can pick up Margaret Johnstone, wife of Antony Adamson, who died of decay in January 1756 aged 56: he had been in trouble with the presbytery of Haddington in 1740 for selling her for 6d at a drunken party on a Sunday evening — such things did happen, not just in Hardy.<sup>9</sup> His excuse, that it was only in jest, did not help with the presbytery: in jest, and on a Sunday! We know the living conditions of one woman, Barbara Scougal, because she was a pauper and her possessions belonged to the kirk session. She owned two bedsteads, a press, four chests, two chairs and two stools, three pairs of blankets, one and a half of sheets, one other bed covering, a mattress, pillows and bolster, a pot and a crock to hang it from, a pair of tongs, a pint vessel, two smoothing irons and two spinning wheels. One is puzzled what she ate off, for there are no pewter plates in the list: not puzzled what she ate with, for forks had not yet come into general use. She had been getting poor relief for some time, and in 1756 had been moved to a bigger allowance at her son's suggestion, agreeing to the surrender of her possessions to the parish after her death. She lived for three years on this allowance and died of old age, estimated at 82. Though she was a pauper her funeral used the second best mortcloth.

Two people in this Bill were involved, separately, in bigamy cases, both the result of long separation. In one case the woman's husband disappeared to England and after 11 years with no news she remarried, and back he came. The poor, who could not afford to use the post, could create considerable unhappiness by their poverty. Another case in the Bill displays the Scottish Poor Law at its cheeseparing worst. Elspeth Brotherston, who died of fever in 1756 aged 36, left two orphan children, one of them illegitimate, the father an Inveresk man. The two parishes shuttled the child between them, eventually asking for a legal opinion as to which was liable. Elspeth's household effects with those of another widow sold at the same time paid for their funerals and left 18 shillings sterling, so they were truly poor. One last feature of interest in the Bill is that in the early 1760s a quarter of the adult males who died were given the occupation 'labourer'. Most of these must have been

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agricultural labourers, since workers attached to urban trades would be labelled by the trade. It shows a countryside moving towards the structure of the nineteenth century with a large farm labour force.

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## THE DEMAND FOR AGRICULTURAL LABOUR IN EAST LoTHIAN AFTER THE NAPOLEONIC WARS

*By T. M. DEVINE*

The social problems which accompanied the agrarian depression after the Napoleonic Wars have long been a subject of great interest and concern to English historians. The economic parameters and complexities of distress have been discussed; the relationship between agrarian change and social dislocation analysed and the causes of rural unrest and their connection with economic difficulty clarified.<sup>1</sup> In consequence much is now known about the general condition of the labouring classes of rural England in the generation after Waterloo. In Scotland, however, the history of the agricultural labourer until recently has been neglected, no doubt partly because he failed to leave his mark on the pages of conventional history. Scottish agricultural workers remained quiet after 1815 when many of their counterparts south of the Border engaged in violence, riot and arson in protest against the deterioration in their standard of life.<sup>2</sup> Yet in the past few years this neglect has been replaced by a new and vigorous interest in nineteenth century Scottish rural society the main characteristic of which has been a marked emphasis on the study of the locality, a tendency which has gradually helped to qualify some of the bolder generalisations which sustained historians of the past.<sup>3</sup> Undoubtedly, it is now clear that the social and labour structure of the lowland countryside was remarkably complex. Differing agrarian specialisations, market influences, hiring systems and landlord strategies, to a greater or lesser degree, fashioned the daily lives and conditions of the work force. It is therefore no longer possible to talk in glib terms of the 'Scottish agricultural labourer.' Each analysis must be carefully related to the peculiarities of the different farming zones and their hiring systems. This present essay is a brief attempt to further our understanding of the condition of nineteenth century Scottish agricultural workers in the local situation by examining the rural labour market in East Lothian in the twenty years after 1815.

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By the early nineteenth century East Lothian had acquired a European reputation as a centre of advanced farming. Its fertile plains had a climate favourable to growing wheat and a generally strong soil. Farms were significantly larger than the Scottish average and, in the main, extended to between 150 and 200 acres. The farmers of the area had precociously adopted the new improved rotations and, from the 1790's sustained by the inflated prices of war-time, East Lothian agriculture prospered on a sophisticated regime of grain-growing, animal-fattening and turnip cultivation.<sup>4</sup> From about 1812, however, the boom which had encouraged this development began to falter. By 1816-17, East Lothian, like most other farming regions in Scotland, was experiencing a major crisis as grain prices plummeted from wartime levels.<sup>5</sup> The immediate result was a curtailment of investment plans which in turn caused a significant increase in unemployment among farm servants and labourers.

The agricultural labour force in this region consisted of different groups of workers.<sup>6</sup> Most significant in numerical terms among permanent employees were the married ploughmen or 'hinds.' They were hired on an annual basis and at this time received all allowances in kind. These invariably included stipulated measures of oats, barley, pease, the keep of a cow and ground for planting potatoes. The rental of the hind's cottage was paid for by the labour of his wife and daughter during harvest. Fuel was carted from town at the farmer's expense (an important saving) and, by law, employers were obliged to provide for the servant hired on an annual basis for six successive weeks when unable for work through illness. Unmarried ploughmen were also employed, though not in the same numbers as the hinds. In 1836, for instance, Hope of Fenton Barns, near Haddington, hired thirteen ploughmen, ten of whom were married and three single.<sup>7</sup> Unmarried ploughmen were paid partly in money and partly in kind, were fed in the farm kitchen and boarded in the steading.

A third group consisted of male day-labourers who were required to carry out the draining and ditching work associated with the new husbandry and other general tasks around the farm. Since, by the early nineteenth century, the ploughman had become a specialist, others had to be recruited to undertake those duties which did not usually involve horse work. So Alexander Somerville, when hired as a day-labourer in 1825, was employed in hoeing turnips, building, shearing at harvest, draining work and road-building.<sup>8</sup> Finally, most East Lothian farmers hired a very considerable number of female workers and children for seasonal tasks. The grain harvest had always been a traditional time of heavy recruitment of women. But the new turnip-based rotations of the later

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eighteenth century significantly expanded work opportunities in weeding, hoeing and lifting. Inevitably, of course, employment prospects for females fluctuated markedly over the farming year. Hope of Fenton Barns needed only six women and boys for three months in the winter but as many as eighteen during the spring and summer seasons.<sup>9</sup> Many of these additional workers were the daughters of married ploughmen but others were temporary migrants from the Highlands or from the towns who were attracted to East Lothian at harvest time.

The complex structure of the agricultural labour force makes it difficult to arrive at safe generalisations concerning its condition between 1815-1840. This problem is compounded by the limitations of the evidence which can be utilised in this enquiry. Precise measurement of employment patterns at any time before the twentieth century is obviously virtually impossible. Inevitably such materials which are available can only provide a very rough guide to the issues under consideration. The main source for this present study is the *Farmer's Magazine* which was first published in Edinburgh in 1800 and last appeared in 1825. From about 1808 until it ceased publication the journal produced fairly detailed quarterly reports on most agricultural zones in Scotland. Clearly such data are invaluable even when the obvious deficiencies in the material are taken into consideration. Detail on wages and accompanying general comments permit the historian to carry out a general analysis of the impact of agrarian difficulty on the regional labour market and to compare the experience of East Lothian with that of other areas of Scotland. The fluctuation of cash-wages for single male ploughmen, the group for which material is most abundant, does provide a relatively sensitive indicator of employment trends. Furthermore, while the tone of the regional reports is inevitably impressionistic, the contributions, as internal evidence suggests, were made by experienced observers whose conclusions do tally with other sources. Any bias would probably tend to exaggerate the extent of crisis rather than minimise it perhaps with the intention of attracting government help for hard-pressed farmers and their workers.

Most importantly of all, however, is the fact that the *Farmer's Magazine* provides data which are superior to those made available in the well-known index of agricultural wages compiled by A. L. Bowley.<sup>10</sup> Bowley's material is particularly deficient as a guide to the labour market in Scottish agriculture in the first forty years of the nineteenth century. He had to omit long periods of time because of his exclusive dependence on the Statistical Accounts of the 1790s and 1840s, together with the Agricultural Reports of the early nineteenth century. *The New Statistical Account*, which began publication in the late 1830s, contains little retrospective detail and Bowley's attempt to convert wages in



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kind into money rates probably produced both rather imprecise results and an index which was somewhat too crude to reflect short-term movements in the labour market.

Of course, the data derived from the *Farmer's Magazine* are not immune from criticism. This source could only yield information for the first ten years of the period of enquiry although it should be added that this was the most vital phase both in terms of post-war agrarian adjustment and the vicissitudes of the labour market. By the early 1830s the trend of employment becomes more easily ascertainable from alternative sources such as the 1833 and 1836 Select Committees on Agriculture.<sup>11</sup> A more serious deficiency, however, is the absence of sufficiently detailed and consistent information on all grades of farm labour. Unmarried ploughmen and male day-labourers undoubtedly attracted most attention. Comments relating to the hind class are few and far between, though as we shall see later, this silence may itself be of some significance. Information concerning female and seasonal workers is even more fragmentary and is certainly insufficient even to act as the basis of a tentative profile of the employment patterns of these particulars groups. The evidence, therefore, hardly allows a comprehensive exposition of all aspects of the labour market in East Lothian after 1815. Yet, equally it is sufficiently rich to indicate the broad trend of demand for farm workers over the period to 1828.

The decline in agricultural fortunes in 1816-17 immediately signalled both a fall in money wages for those grades of farm employees paid wholly or partly in cash and a substantial increase in rural unemployment. In 1808, at the peak of wartime prosperity, single ploughmen were offered from £6 to £7.10 per half-year at the hiring fairs in East Lothian. By Martinmas, 1817, the going rate for this group had fallen steeply to between £3 and £5 per half-year.<sup>12</sup> This virtual collapse in hiring rates provided an unambiguous illustration of the general condition of the labour market in the immediate aftermath of war. By February 1816, the *Farmer's Magazine* concluded that 'great numbers of stout men were going about seeking employment without being able to procure a job of any sort'.<sup>13</sup> Again, at the Martinmas hiring fairs in 1817 'great numbers of young ploughmen who, when employed, are always boarded in the farmer's house, found it utterly impossible to procure a service'.<sup>14</sup> Unemployment also tended to be particularly severe at this time among day-labourers. Draining and ditching work, in which many had been involved, was interrupted. It had always been difficult for day-labourers to find winter work at the best of times and the ranks of those seeking a master were likely to be swollen at times of general difficulty by ploughmen who had failed to gain a fee at one or other of the

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hiring fairs. It is scarcely surprising therefore that workers engaged by the day were among the first to be affected by the post-war change in demand for agricultural labour. As early as February 1816, the *Magazine* reported that 'day labourers are plentiful and cannot find constant employment at reduced wages as little work is carried on except what is absolutely necessary. This class, therefore, finds it more difficult to provide for their families.'<sup>15</sup>

There is no doubt, then, of the speedy impact of agrarian crisis on the demand for labour in East Lothian. Nevertheless, developments after 1816-17 were not unduly gloomy. On the contrary, as Table I demonstrates, money-wages for unmarried male servants did in fact reach their nadir in the winter of 1817-18 and, from 1818 to 1828, only fell to such low levels again in the winter of 1823. The general impression gained from an examination of the data on Table 1 is of a slow but steady improvement in wage levels (and presumably employment opportunities) between the latter months of 1818 and 1824-25 when there was a more rapid and substantial increase in hiring rates. Indeed Whitsun wage rates in 1825 were broadly equivalent to those offered in the wartime conditions of 1812. Literary comment supports the finding of the statistical analysis. By November 1818 there had been an obvious recovery from the malaise of the previous two years: 'a labourer in want of employment is rarely to be met with now in this district'.<sup>16</sup> In May of the following year the East Lothian correspondent of the *Farmer's Magazine* noted the contrasting experience of his district and that of the grain-growing regions of southern England: 'while the distressed conditions of many of the labouring classes in England press so forcibly on the feelings, and even prosperity of their wealthier brethren, it is a pleasing circumstance to say that labourers and country tradesmen here are in full employment and their wages about as high as at any former period'.<sup>17</sup> The evidence implies that, while in 1821 this recovery was interrupted, improved conditions returned in 1822 and 1824-5. The suggestion in May 1824 was that 'every person able to work is in full employment and wages on the advance'.<sup>18</sup> What tends to confirm this more optimistic impression of the employment situation is the fact that the hind class apparently only experienced redundancy in exceptional years between 1815 and 1828. Only in the spring of 1818 was there any suggestion that this important group of workers found difficulty in obtaining an engagement.<sup>19</sup> Significantly too, Thomas Oliver, land valuer of Midlothian, noted in 1833 that unemployment had previously been common among certain grades of farm labour but he specifically stressed that this had not been the case among ploughmen hired by the year.<sup>20</sup>

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**Table 1: Median half-yearly money wage rates for single male agricultural servants in East Lothian/Berwick, 1812-28 (£ sterling)**

Year	Whitsun/Martinmas	Wage Rates
1812	W	6
1812	M	6
1813	—	—
1814	W	6. 15/-
1814	M	6. 15/-
1815	W	6. 10/-
1815	M	5
1816	W	—
1816	M	4
1817	W	4
1817	M	3. 10/-
1818	M	3. 10/-
1819	W	4
1819	M	4. 10/-
1820	W	4. 10/-
1820	M	—
1821	W	4. 10/-
1821	M	4. 10/-
1822	W	4. 10/-
1822	M	4
1823	W	4. 10/-
1823	M	3. 10/-
1824	W	5
1824	M	5
1825	W	6
1825	M	5. 5/-
1826	—	—
1827	W	—
1827	M	4
1828	W	5. 10/-

Source: *Farmer's Magazine*, 1812-25; *Farmer's Register and Monthly Magazine*, 1827-8.

As Oliver implied the experience of unemployment varied not only over time but between different groups of workers. Day-labourers, by the very nature of their occupation, were particularly vulnerable. Professor David Low con-

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tended, in the early 1830s, that despite the general recovery in farming fortunes, there was still a good deal of unemployment among non-regular or day-labourers and most commentators concurred that members of this class were often exposed to very severe destitution especially during the winter months.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, the employment pattern of female agricultural servants tended to fluctuate violently from summer to winter with Whitsun and Martinmas hiring rates differing commonly by as much as 300 per cent. Such seasonal oscillation in demand was inevitable, however, as far as this group was concerned. Of more significance to this particular period is the fact that evidence from adjacent hiring fairs in Berwick indicates a long-term recovery in demand for female labour during the summer months. As Table 2 confirms, the progress of female wage-rates at Whitsun is remarkably similar to that of their male counterparts in the same period except for the sharp fluctuations between winter and summer seasons.

**Table 2: Median half-yearly money wages-rates for single female servants in Berwickshire, 1814-1825 (£ sterling)**

Year	Whitsun/Martinmas	Wage Rates
1814	W	5. 15/-
1814	M	—
1815	W	2
1815	M	2
1816	W	—
1816	M	2
1817	W	3. 10/-
1817	M	1. 10/-
1818	W	—
1818	M	1. 10/-
1819	W	4
1819	M	1. 15/-
1820	W	5. 15/-
1820	M	—
1821	W	5. 10/-
1821	M	1. 15/-
1822	W	4. 10/-
1822	M	1. 10/-
1823	W	4
1823	M	1. 10/-
1824	W	4. 10/-
1824	M	—
1825	W	5. 5/-

Source: *Farmer's Magazine*, 1814-25.

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Despite these important variations in the experience of different groups it is nonetheless still possible to draw some broad conclusions about the demand for farm labour in East Lothian after the Napoleonic Wars. There was undoubtedly a sharp increase in unemployment, beginning in the latter months of 1816 and becoming particularly severe in 1817. This phase of difficulty was then followed by one of prolonged recovery from the middle of 1818 and this improvement persisted into the later 1820s with a brief recurrence of heavy unemployment for some grades in 1821-2 and 1827. There is then no evidence of the emergence of structural unemployment in East Lothian at this time. Rather the data discussed here tend to support Professor George Houston's conclusion (based on Perthshire sources alone) that the labour market in Scottish agriculture was not permanently congested after 1815 and that in this respect there was a marked contrast between the experience of those parts of England south of the Severn-Trent line and that of the Scottish lowlands.<sup>22</sup> In the final section of this article the influences which shaped this contrasting development in the East Lothian context will be explored.

Of prime importance was the trend of migration. The work of Malcolm Gray demonstrates clearly that a substantial proportion of the natural increase of population in East Lothian was lost through migration between 1801-51 and that this must have alleviated pressure on the labour market.<sup>23</sup> Thus from 1801-51 the national rate of population increase was of the order of 80 per cent. Plainly any area having a substantially smaller increase than this was experiencing net out-migration. In East Lothian the average parish increase was about 30 per cent over the period but this aggregate figure concealed very considerable local variation. Thus 16 per cent of parishes showed an actual decrease of up to 29 per cent; 68 per cent an increase of 1 per cent to 29 per cent and only 16 per cent an increase of 30 per cent or more.

It is not possible to be wholly certain about the factors which produced this level of migration but certain probable influences can be stated. In the later eighteenth century it had become a major principle of Scottish 'improving' policy that only that population essential for proper cultivation ought to be retained on the land. Scottish farmers, and the East Lothian masters were among the most vigorous of them, endeavoured to make most use of their labour by hiring a relatively small number of permanent male workers but employing them and their families in a highly disciplined and productive fashion.<sup>24</sup> Thus, cottagers and sub-tenants who had worked part-time in return for a piece of land were dispossessed and, thereafter, accommodation for permanent servants hired by the year or six month period remained under the control

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of the farming class. It was then possible to maintain a rough balance between the number of such employees and the supply of accommodation outside rural towns and villages.<sup>25</sup> Two factors helped to consolidate this mechanism as an important influence on the promotion of migration in the particular context of East Lothian. First, the regional economy was dominated almost entirely by agriculture and so it was not easy for unemployed labour to linger in alternative occupations temporarily until demand for farm hands recovered. Second, the key figure in general labour mobility in the area was the hind. His decisions not only affected his own position but also that of a substantial proportion of the single male and female servants and day-labourers in East Lothian because the majority of these groups were recruited from the household of married servants.

It is unlikely that the hind class could or would endure unemployment for any extended period. Their proverbially high standard of literacy and general education doubtless rendered them aware of alternative opportunities both at home and abroad.<sup>26</sup> Significantly, for instance, the bad years of 1817-18 were characterised by an interest in emigration among farm servants in the south-east region. Because of the difficulty in finding employment 'numbers are resolved to cross the Atlantic in quest of subsistence for themselves and their families'.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the Scottish system of hiring farm servants also helped to promote mobility. The long hire did offer security of employment for a time but when it lapsed the majority of workers, and single adult males in particular, customarily discharged themselves and travelled to the hiring fair to seek a new master, better conditions and more experience.<sup>28</sup> Many male farm servants were therefore habitually mobile, albeit within the locality, and clearly the incidence of local difficulty or misfortune could easily lead to a more distant and permanent move.<sup>29</sup>

Similarly, the mechanism of the hiring fair was a uniquely effective medium for relating the number of places to the number of potential servants required by farmers for periods of between six months and one year. Those who were not engaged at Whitsun or Martinmas were faced with the prospect of seeking work elsewhere, accepting the inevitability of extended unemployment for six months or a year or trusting to the chance of being hired as day-labourers at a time when their ranks were swollen by others who were out of work. They could not, unlike the rural unemployed of England, always depend on the Poor Law because north of the border the rights of the able-bodied to relief were not officially recognised. Movement from their parish of origin, therefore,

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did not imply a loss of 'settlement' rights as it did in southern England and where it acted as a most effective deterrent to migration from that region.

The condition of relative equilibrium in the East Lothian labour market was also influenced by the particular response of the district's farmers to the depression in grain prices. There is no evidence, for example, of a reduction in cultivated acreage after 1815. Rather, in certain parishes, the post-war period saw an actual extension in land under the plough. So in Tranent part of the links near the sea and the whole of Tranent moor were absorbed into cultivation. The acreage under crop in Dirleton parish rose from 4,000 acres in 1790 to 5,325 in 1836.<sup>30</sup> Another indication of a continuing vigour in the rural economy of the area is provided by the evidence of farm leases. Demand for tenancies was sustained at a high level in the 1820s and 1830s.<sup>31</sup> Nor had sitting tenants done too badly. Oliver, the Midlothian land valuer, while noting in 1833 that most farmers had kept up their cultivation, also argued that, despite the absence of large profits, they had not lost their capital.<sup>32</sup>

The paradox of a decline in grain prices coupled with continued expansion in production and its consequent effects on the demand for labour requires explanation. As a centre of intensive wheat production East Lothian was bound to be vulnerable to the collapse in wheat prices after 1815. Between 1805-12, the average annual price for wheat, according to the Haddington fiars, was 85/- per quarter. From 1813-20 the annual average fell by 47 per cent to 45/- per quarter.<sup>33</sup> This was the background to the crisis years of 1816-17. Nevertheless, it was not a permanent disaster simply because the area had a resilience which allowed adjustment to the new economic situation. Wheat growing was but one component within an integrated system of grain production and animal fattening which was flexible enough to permit expansion in those activities least affected by price falls. The Haddington fiars, for example, reveal that barley prices declined by only 9 per cent between 1813-20 in relation to the annual average of 1805-12. Doubtless this was a reflection of the continued expansion in demand from the Edinburgh brewing industry after the war. In response some East Lothian farmers did begin to increase their cultivation of barley.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, turnip husbandry in East Lothian since the later eighteenth century had been linked to stock fattening as well as intensive cropping. After c. 1820 even more attention was paid to this particular aspect of the area's agrarian régime. Both cattle and sheep were brought for fattening, the former mainly from the Highlands and the north-east, the latter from stock reared on the neighbouring Lammermuir hills.<sup>35</sup>

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Partial diversification was one route to solvency. Another was through reduction of costs. From about 1819 inflated wartime rentals were reduced in two ways. First, 'corn-rents' were established by which fixed annual payments were abandoned by most landlords and replaced by rentals which fluctuated in accordance with the movement of wheat prices. By the early 1830s it was reckoned that between two-thirds to three-quarters of all farms in East Lothian were leased in this way.<sup>36</sup> Second, most tenants were awarded rent abatements by their landlord and as a result, in the view of one observer, there was a fall in the real value of the district's rental payments of between 15 and 25 per cent from 1815 to 1833.<sup>37</sup> Undoubtedly, these two measures effectively eased the financial pressures on most farmers. Indeed, contemporaries were convinced that they were the crucial causes of the economic recovery of East Lothian after 1817.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps, however, this is to neglect more subtle but possibly equally powerful influences.

A major, but much neglected, feature of the district's agricultural prominence in the later eighteenth century has been its high level of labour productivity. As we have already seen, the Scottish system of labour recruitment in general and the East Lothian variant in particular depended upon the hiring of a relatively small number of permanent employees and a larger number of temporary, low paid workers recruited either from the households of the permanent servants or at a distance. Thus the Lothians masters had no need to share work in slack periods in order to be sure of a labour supply in busier seasons. Their seasonal workers were either dependents of their own male servants or strangers for whom they had no immediate responsibility.<sup>39</sup> They could therefore safely concern themselves with the main function of maximising the productivity of the permanent labour force. The numbers in this group were carefully tailored to the needs of a particular farm and to the number of horses required to work a given acreage of land. In addition, great stress was placed on the development of a high level of expertise among the horse-men.<sup>40</sup> During the era of improvement in East Lothian ploughmen ceased to be used in shearing and gathering at harvest. Instead, ploughs were kept going either at the concluding part of the summer fallow operations or were made to commence the winter fallow by ploughing directly behind the shearers.<sup>41</sup> As George Robertson, the contemporary agricultural expert, observed: 'This was employing professional men to professional objects'.<sup>42</sup> Here was one illuminating example of the constant pressure to make the best use of horse power, a pressure which gave rise to an iron discipline and *esprit de corps* among horsemen and encouraged the development of fierce competition between them.<sup>43</sup>



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Good horse work became recognised as the route to the top positions in farm service.

East Lothian farmers were therefore able to meet the challenge of the post-war crisis on the basis of a relatively small, highly skilled and efficient permanent labour force. They then added to this advantage by investment plans which further boosted productivity. There was a very considerable investment in draining schemes and the application of rape and bone dust to raise turnip yields.<sup>44</sup> Drainage had certainly been common before the 1820s but the object of most of this activity had simply been to free the land of spring-water. Drains of three to four feet in depth were laid and filled with stones. After the Napoleonic Wars the major new innovation was the construction of tile drains which were capable both of relieving the land of rain and surface water as well as that from springs.<sup>45</sup> It was the formation of these new schemes which helps to explain the revival in the job prospects of day labourers in East Lothian from about 1819.

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## WILLIAM BROOKS

### EAST END OF MUSSELBURGH

Continues still to sell out, by retail  
The following Goods for moderate Gain the hail.  
He to the Public grateful thanks returns  
An' to his Friends that flame with ardour burns,  
For favours past; an' hopes, for time to come,  
They will continue as they ha'e begun.  
He has at present plenty stripes on hand  
Of various kinds, to answer the demand;  
Guid hame-made Linen, if you've rowth o' pelf,  
an' Straikings manufactured by himself.  
Here Check for aprons you may daily see,  
Made on a fabric stou, yet please the e'e.  
Here Flannels white, made out o' special woo',  
Or, if you please, we ha'e some bonny Blue,  
Of newest patterns, Shawls and Napkins baith,  
Bauld scancing colours, an' a sturdy Claith;  
Lang-lawns an' Cambrics, head and breast to grace,  
As cheap's you'll get them ony ither place;  
White Yarn and Cotton blue an' Turkey red,  
For making claise to either back or bed;  
At different prices, gallant Lints an' Brairds,  
For makin Yarn without the help o' Cairds.  
He also deals a wee in Corduroys  
For makin' Breeks to either men or boys,  
Broad Cloth and Narrow, coarse or superfine,  
Strong Carsimeres, an' a' thing in the line;  
Buys Linen Yarn, takes in, frae rich or mean,  
A' kinds o' claith to bleach at Inglis Green,  
Baith plain an' ribbed white an' coloured hose;  
If Salts are wanted, you can ha'e a dose.

WILLIAM BROOKS, EAST END OF MUSSELBURGH

Gude trenchered Blankets, an' North Country Tickin',  
Black Bombazets an' Skirtings to your likin'.  
Here Fustians, Janes, Swansdoons and Toilinetts,  
Strong curtain Chek, an' Rings o' different sets.  
Hard Grease, Saltpetre, Brimstone an' Molasses,  
Black Soap, Lamp Wick an' bonny Pearl Ashes,  
The Fat o' Whales, to burn frae e'en till morn,  
White Iron Pans an' heuks to fell the corn.  
Be' kent to those wha Sarkes or Sheets are spinnin',  
He warks a kinds o' customary Linen.  
A Friendly Box is kept ilka year  
In time o' need the drooping heart to cheer.  
He's now licens'd to deal in Aquavitaë,  
Strong Ale and Porter brought frae Lon'on city.  
He trades in Snuff, Tobacco, Pipes an' a',  
A' kinds o' Thread, in size baith grit an' sma',  
Black Silk an' coloured, Pins and Needles too,  
A' kinds o' Tape, white, yellow, green an' blue,  
Gude Rotton-Stone, Lash, bawbee hanks o' Twine,  
Braw Penny-Cord, an' Wires baith coarse an' fine.  
Here Brook's famous Mustard, braw an' fell,  
Which mony a nose, mouth, e'en an' throat can tell.  
Black balls an' Bruskes, Combs an' Besoms nice,  
Ropes grit an' sma', Soap, Starch, Nightcaps an' Spice,  
Salt Herrings, Teas an' Sugars, Prussian Blue,  
Bread, Butter, Cheese, Eggs, Meal an' Barley too,  
Gude Button-wires, an' Stocking-Worsted white,  
And Dimitties, the Lasses' great delight;  
Sweet oil an' Im'ry, Whitening and Heel-ball,  
Sandpaper, Crosus, Yellow Wand an' all;  
Spunks, Camstane, Caudle, Ballads an' Wheel-bands,  
Nails, Mools, Sark-buttons, for the neek an' hands,  
Lang-laces, Thimbles, Paper white an' grey,  
An' Catechisms teaching Wisdom's way.  
The Flour o' Brimstane, Senna leaves an' a',  
An' Cream o' Tartar, gude for grit an' sma'.  
Clear Barley-Sugar, Carvie, Carvie-Seeds,  
Good Spanish Liquorice, Cinnamon wha needs.  
Gibraltar Rock an' Ladies' Paradise,  
Nuts, Pens, an' Gingerbread, an' Hemp, an' Rice

WILLIAM BROOKS, EAST END OF MUSSELBURGH

An' several other articles, which to recite  
Wad endless be, an' wadna serve a doit.  
The Lowest Price is always asked at once  
An' young an' auld ha'e here an equal chance.  
The Goods are fresh, to prig ye needna fash,  
Then come awa' — but mind the ready cash.

J. WALKER, Printer, Musselburgh.

Miss Mary Ambrose, who is a descendant of William Brooks, points out that *The Scottish Directory* for 1825 lists 'William Brooks Linen Draper' and 'John Walker Printer' as both in business in Musselburgh.

## INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF THE ABERLADY, GULLANE AND NORTH BERWICK RAILWAY

*By P. A. FURLEY*

Aberlady and Gullane made but a brief contribution to the Railway Age. The standard history of the North British Railway Company gives only passing reference to the availability of a stage coach from Ballancrieff to Gullane and Aberlady<sup>1</sup>. Indeed the same author forgot about the Railway in his book on the forgotten railways of Scotland.<sup>2</sup> Maybe nobody really believed it existed even from its opening on April Fools Day, 1898. The last decade of the nineteenth century marked the final penetration of the railway into the nooks and corners missed in early manias. Legislation encouraging the building of light railways was passed in 1896 to bring lines to the remotest settlements. The idea of linking the seaside settlements of Aberlady, Gullane and North Berwick was not without merit, except that the main settlement at North Berwick was already joined to the main line. That branch had been authorised on 26th June 1846 and opened on 17th June 1850. It turned out to be such a white elephant that it was temporarily converted into a horse drawn railway in 1856-7.

The project for a line via Aberlady and Gullane was revived and prospectuses issued in 1892. Notwithstanding the possibility of imminent legislation to control light railways, on 24th August 1893 an Act was passed to build a single-line standard gauge branch.<sup>3</sup> Although there was to be nominally an independent company, it would be wholly inspired by the North British. This company was active in South East Scotland, building lines in Leith,<sup>4</sup> across the Forth as the Forth Bridge Railway Company (the bridge opened in 1890), in East Lothian with the opening of the Gifford and Garvald Light Railway on 14th October 1901<sup>5</sup>, and in Berwickshire with the Lauder Light Railway which opened on 2nd July 1901.<sup>6</sup> Within thirty five years, however, passenger traffic to Aberlady and Gullane had ceased (12th September, 1932) and goods traffic came to a halt with the Draconian measures of Dr Beeching on the 15th June 1964.

## ABERLADY, GULLANE AND NORTH BERWICK RAILWAY

The petitions against the original bill give an intriguing insight into the motives for building the railway in the first place.<sup>7</sup> Originally there were two principal objectors to the scheme. The opposition of the first could be anticipated — the North British Railway Company already owned the North Berwick line and claimed that there would be additional competition for what was already a small amount of traffic. This seems to have been a tactical opposition since in many ways the new line was the brain-child of the Company. The Company also felt that the estimates of costs were unrealistically low, and had engineering objections to some parts of the track. Indeed it argued that the preamble to the bill, which stated that the construction of the line would be 'of public and local advantage,' was 'untrue and incapable of proof'. Since it was proposed to join up the new line with the existent North Berwick line (as at the present day) and to use its facilities, the objections seem reasonable. The dispute was presumably resolved behind the scenes, as may be judged from a meeting of the Promoters in July 1893,<sup>8</sup> where it was made clear that there were to be two lines, that Railway No. 2 (Gullane to North Berwick) would not be constructed without the consent of the North British Company, and that Gullane would act as the terminus for Railway No. 1 (Figure 1). The North British Railway Company may have had its eyes on future expansion, for very soon afterwards (1900) the two companies were amalgamated, and in any event Railway No. 2 was never constructed. As suggested earlier it seems likely that the North British Company was involved very early on, even if it did not originally initiate the idea, since two of the Directors named in the Act were Henry Grierson from Edinburgh and George B. Wieland, the Secretary of the North British since 1873. Grierson was one of the three named Promoters of the bill along with David R. Kemp an Edinburgh Banker and Peter Brodie from North Berwick. Incidentally, both Grierson and Wieland were also involved in the intrigues of the Gifford and Garvald Light Railway which had started a little earlier.<sup>5</sup> The proposed extension of this latter line from Gifford to Garvald provides a parallel example of the speculative developments involved.

The second principal objector was H. W. Hope of Luffness. His main complaint concerned the spoliation of the grounds of Luffness House, and that this would happen cannot be denied if the layout of the grounds is compared with the proposed line of the railway. The plan of the pre-1893 grounds are clearly visible to either side of the rail-less track today. There were also anxieties concerning the farm lands at Aberlady Mains, and on the effect of these developments on the Peffer Burn. The reaction to the intrusion on privacy is eloquently expressed—'no money compensation can recompense your Petitioner

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for such injury to an old and cherished home'. There were some tart comments on the motives of the initiators of the scheme — 'the Petitioner believes that the bill is primarily if not solely promoted in the interests of Edinburgh members of a private club of golfers who have recently rented on a lease for 19 years a golfing green of 100 acres at Muirfield opposite to the termination of Railway No. 1, in order to provide these Edinburgh members of this private club with better facilities for reaching their private golfing links'.

It is certainly clear that neither of the petitioners felt that there was a 'great public demand' for the railway. H. W. Hope makes the point — 'whether the golf club confers any real benefit to the locality is in the opinion of the Petitioner very doubtful'. The present world wide reputation of Muirfield could hardly be foreseen in these early hesitant manoeuvres.

In order to hear the arguments of the objectors and to gauge the extent of the demand for a railway, a House of Commons Select Committee met on March 14th, 1893. The Minutes provide interesting reading and possibly contentious argument.<sup>7</sup> For example, a Mr Littler, defending the cause of golf in this part of the country remarked 'I daresay some of the Hon. Members know North Berwick, which has a great reputation as being the place which has, I think, caused the introduction of one of the national games of Scotland to England'. Several other places would no doubt claim this distinction. It was also argued that the development of what in modern parlance is termed 'the tourist industry', would be enhanced by a coastal rail route and there were two powerful landlords in favour — the Wemyss and the Hamilton Ogilvie families.

The Minutes of Evidence also offer a little effective propaganda for the two villages. For instance (item 23) the question was posed 'is Aberlady a district which might well be expected to develop?' Answer: 'the whole district is one of the most charming in Scotland!' Further (item 53) 'What is Gullane?' Answer: 'apart from the question of golf, thousands of people come in summer in brakes to amuse themselves and go over the land'. (The rise of Gullane appears to have been swift! Prior to the 1890's there were virtually no shops, and dwellings discharged sewage onto the common).

Local opinion had clearly been canvassed. At one stage in the Minutes there was an argument over the results of a village meeting on the subject, and the Chairman remarked 'I suppose . . . they are not learned in the proceedings of meetings at Aberlady?' The ambiguous reply was that 'there are some long-headed people there!' On the whole local opinion seemed to be in favour, with



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predictable support from the local hotel keepers. There was already an omnibus service (1886) from Gullane to Aberlady (two by 1893), and 'special hires' took passengers on to Longniddry station. In fact there were early commuters to Edinburgh before the railway, since a John Lees, rope and twine maker reportedly travelled daily by brake to Longniddry, and thence on the North British Line into the city.

The Act setting out the proposed railway was published on the 24th August 1893,<sup>9</sup> having gained general consent and having met at least in part the points raised by the petitioners. Some of the preliminaries make interesting reading today. For example (item 28) the company was prevented from purchasing, under the Public Health (Scotland) Act 1867, "ten or more houses which on the 15th day of August 1892 were occupied either wholly or partially by persons belonging to the labouring class". In case this might be misinterpreted, the expression 'labouring class' was spelt out to include 'mechanics, artisans, labourers and others working for wages, hawkers, costermongers, persons not working for wages but working at some trade or handicraft without employing others except members of their own family and persons other than domestic servants whose income does not exceed an average of thirty shillings a week and the families of any such persons who may be residing with them'. (The Civil Servants of the day tended to be mean with the punctuation and the commas here have been added).

The Act set out the details of the modified lines. Railway No. 1 was to be built from Spittal (where it would leave the main Edinburgh to Berwick-on-Tweed line) and terminate approximately 150 yards south of the entrance gate at Muirfield House giving a total length of 4 miles 7 Furlongs and 3.80 chains. Railway No. 2 was to run from the station at Gullane, the terminus of line No. 1, and extend eastwards for 2 miles 7 furlongs and 9 chains to join with the North Berwick line at a point some 100 yards southwest of the farm at Williamston. The Company attempted to raise £55,000 for the enterprise in ordinary and preference shares, but like so many small scale companies found itself in fairly continuous financial difficulty. At the outset the fares were fixed at a maximum charge of 3 pence per mile for 1st Class passengers, 2p for 2nd and 1 penny for 3rd, whilst parcels up to 7 lbs. weight were carried at a flat rate of 3 pence. There is no evidence to show how these fares compared with any other methods of reaching Edinburgh; they would presumably not have attracted much local traffic from Aberlady on account of the location of the station outside the village.

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Providing that the right connections were made, the time taken to travel between the villages and Edinburgh compares favourably with the bus journey at the present day. By 1911 for example, there was a useful service throughout the day:

**Timetable for Edinburgh, Longniddry, Aberlady and Gullane.<sup>11</sup>**

			Sat.		Sat.		Sat.		
	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Edinburgh	6.45	—	9.07	9.15	12.30	1.45	3.05	4.40	6.30
Longniddry	7.33	8.32	—	10.00	1.00	2.27	—	5.08	7.20
Aberlady	7.40	8.39	9.39	10.07	1.07	2.34	3.37	5.15	7.27
Gullane	7.46	8.45	9.46	10.14	1.14	2.40	3.43	5.21	7.33
Mondays only									
	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	Sat. p.m.	Sat. p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Gullane	7.00	8.13	8.53	10.45	1.47	1.50	4.13	6.32	6.32
Aberlady	7.06	8.19	8.59	10.51	1.53	1.56	4.20	6.39	6.39
Longniddry	7.12	8.25	9.05	10.57	1.59	2.02	4.26	6.45	6.45
Edinburgh	8.27	8.58	9.52	11.39	2.59	2.38	5.17	7.30	7.50
					except Sats.			except Sats.	

Regrettably the railway never managed to live up to the optimistic expectations of the promoters, although, if H. W. Hope was correct, the development of golf at Gullane may have received a valuable and intentional boost by its construction. As indicated, the second track from Gullane to North Berwick was never completed, either because of a lack of funds, a change in the objectives or because of rationalisation after the amalgamation with the North British Railway. Since so much speculation was involved, the line might in any case never have been a serious proposition. Its absence left the Aberlady and Gullane track out on a limb, and the development of the coastal resorts, though continuous, never generated sufficient traffic to make much profit for it, particularly with the increasing growth and efficiency of road services. The construction of the coastal route to North Berwick would, of course, have made much more sense today.

Despite its short life, the railway has left many nostalgic memories in the area (Plates 1 and 2). The line did after all pass through delightful countryside and can be walked for most of its length today. The stations were small, but

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well built <sup>10</sup> Figure 2. They were obviously well cared for, because in 1907 Mr Yorkston at Aberlady gained a First Class Premium of £4 in the Best Kept Station scheme, whilst Mr Seth gained a Second Class Premium of £3 at Gullane. Looking at the abandoned sidings at Aberlady today, or the overgrown station still standing at Gullane (Plate 3), it is difficult to imagine the bustle and steam illustrated in old picture postcards of the turn of the century. The road commuter, nose to tail through the easterly approaches to Edinburgh might well reflect on the merits of the original coastal line envisaged by the Aberlady, Gullane and North Berwick Railway.

*Acknowledgement:* It is a pleasure to be able to record appreciation for the help and comments of Dr I. H. Adams of the Department of Geography, University of Edinburgh and of the Scottish Record Office.

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 Figure 2 Construction Plans of Aberlady Station (a) and Gullane Station (b).  
 Plates 1 and 2 Photographs of Aberlady Station at the turn of the century (from postcards).  
 Plate 3 Present state of the station at Gullane (1976).

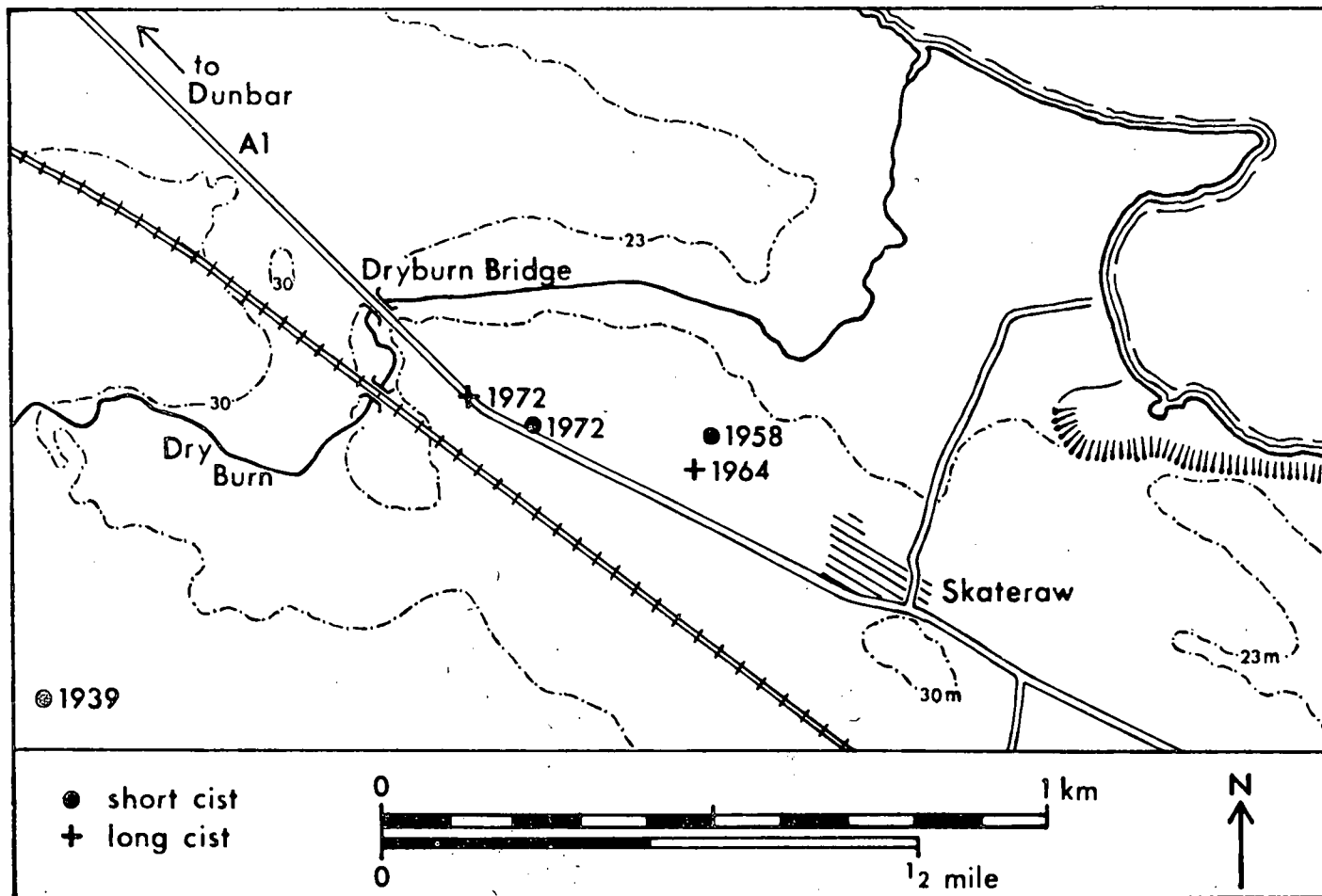


Fig. 1 Paper 1 Location map for short cists at Skateraw and long cists at Dryburn Bridge, East Lothian.

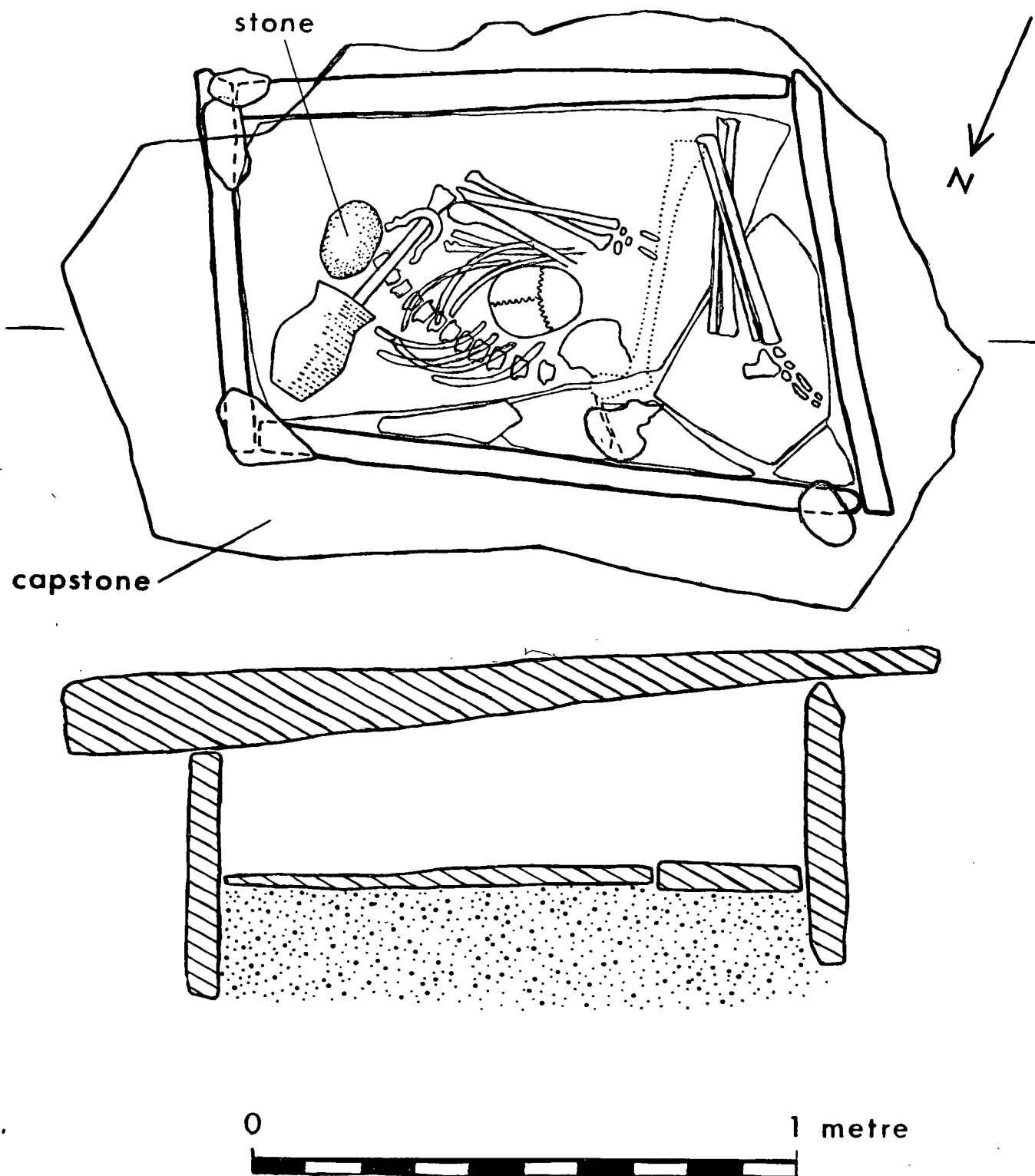


Fig. 2 Paper 1 Plan and section of short cist, Skateraw, 1972.

Fig. 3 Paper 1. Beaker from short cist at Skateraw 1972.

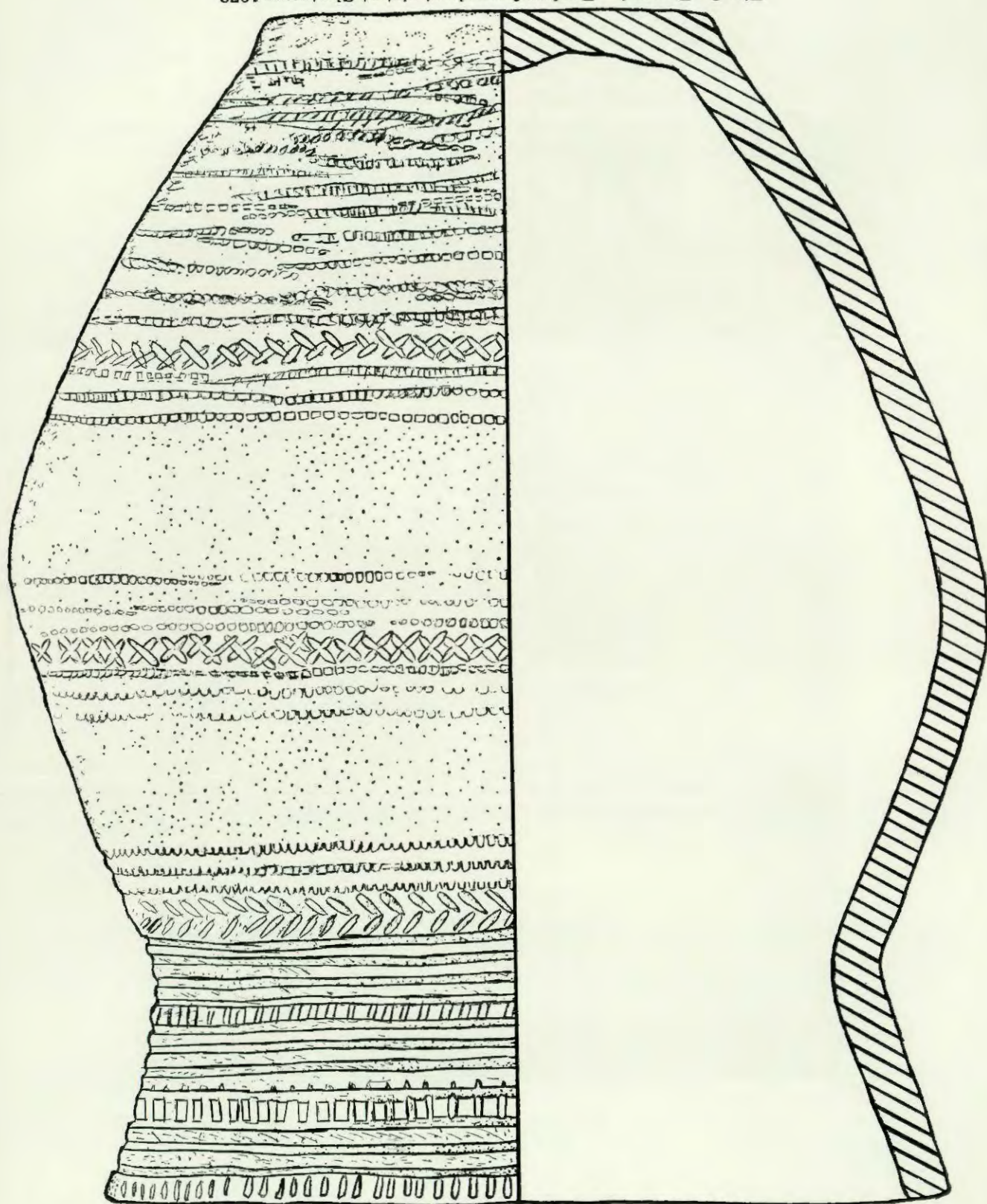






Plate 1 Paper 1 Beaker cist at Skateraw.





Plate 2 Paper 1 Beaker from short cist at Skateraw, 1972.



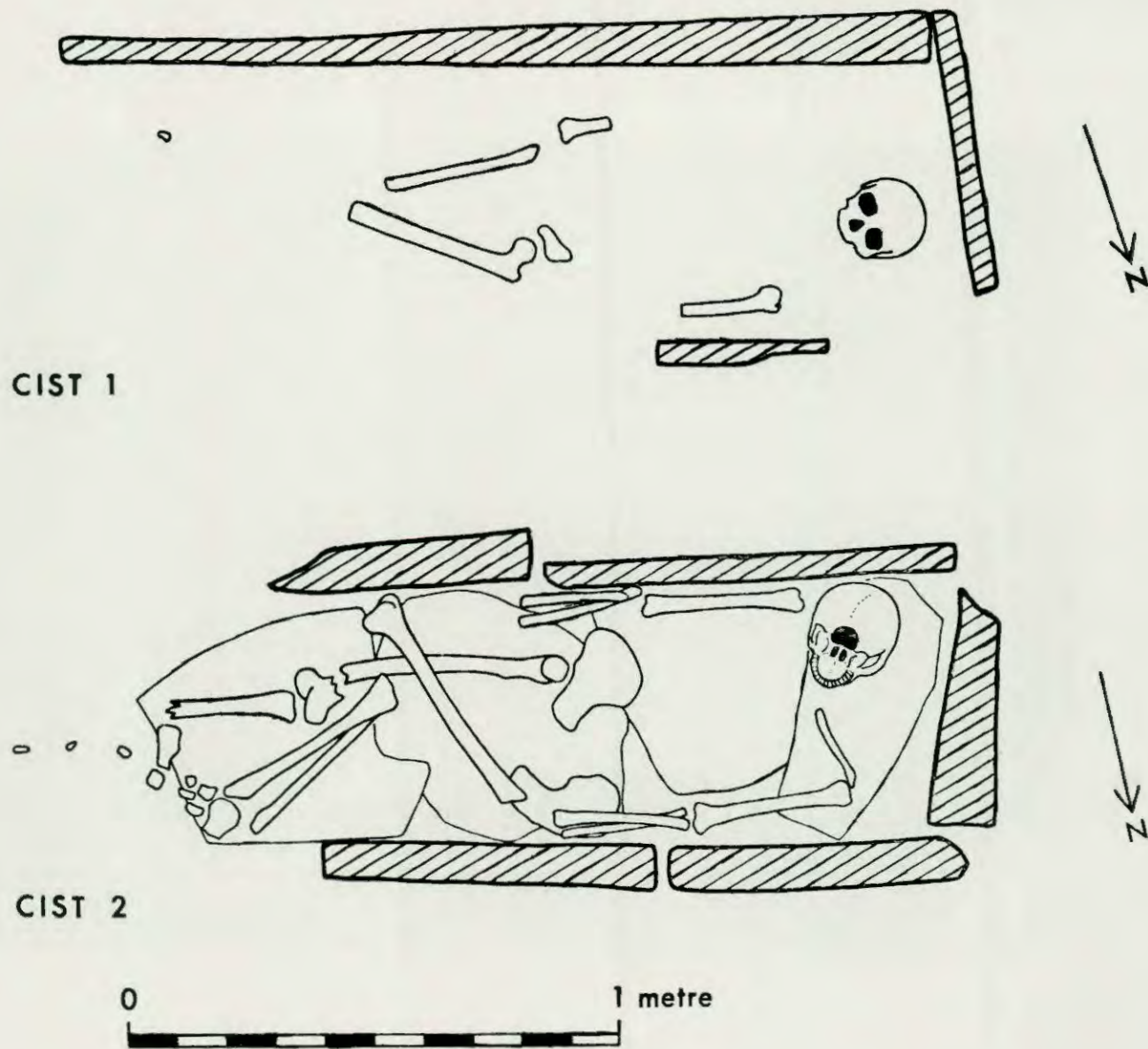


Fig. 4 Paper 2 Long cists, Dryburn Bridge.

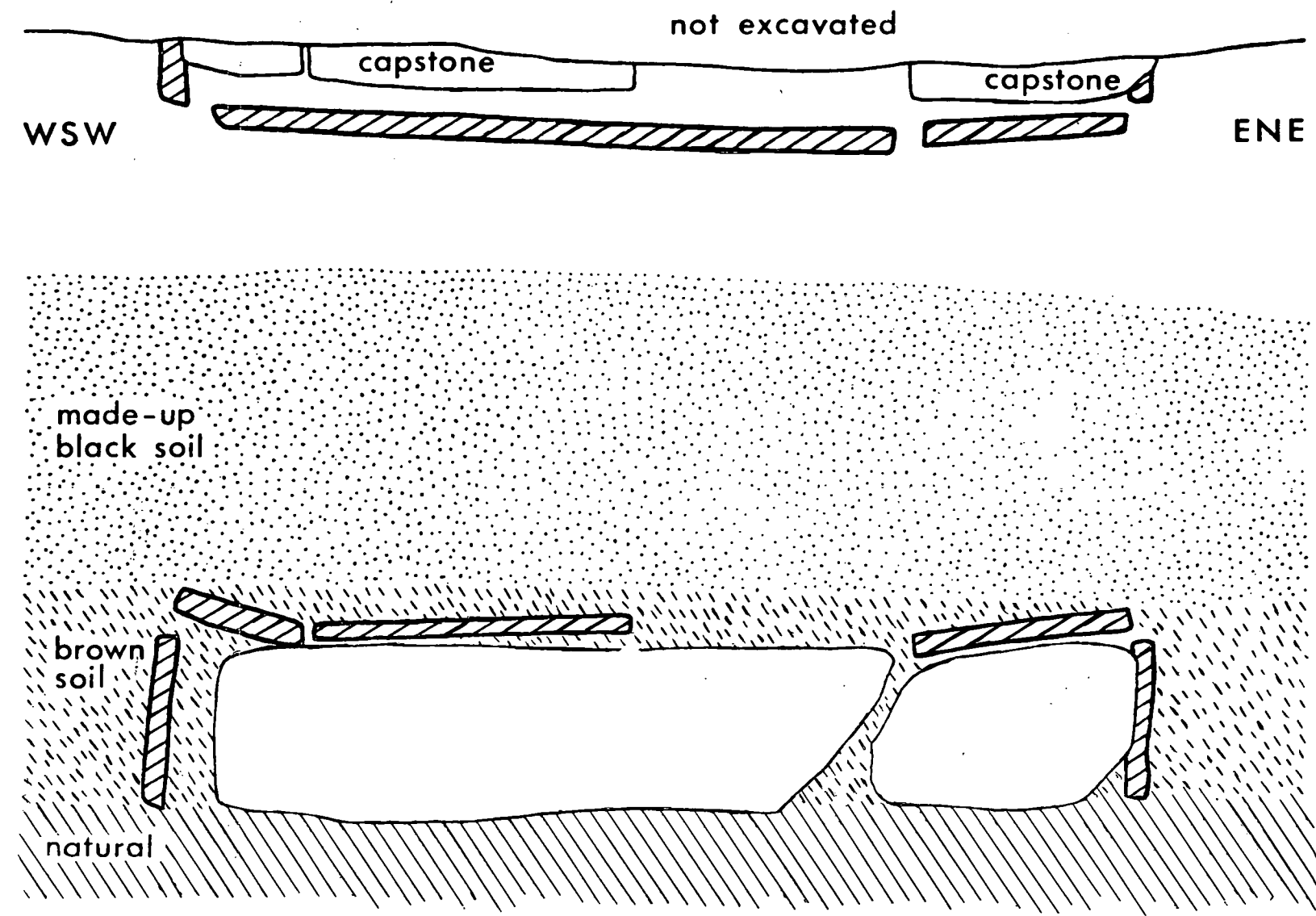
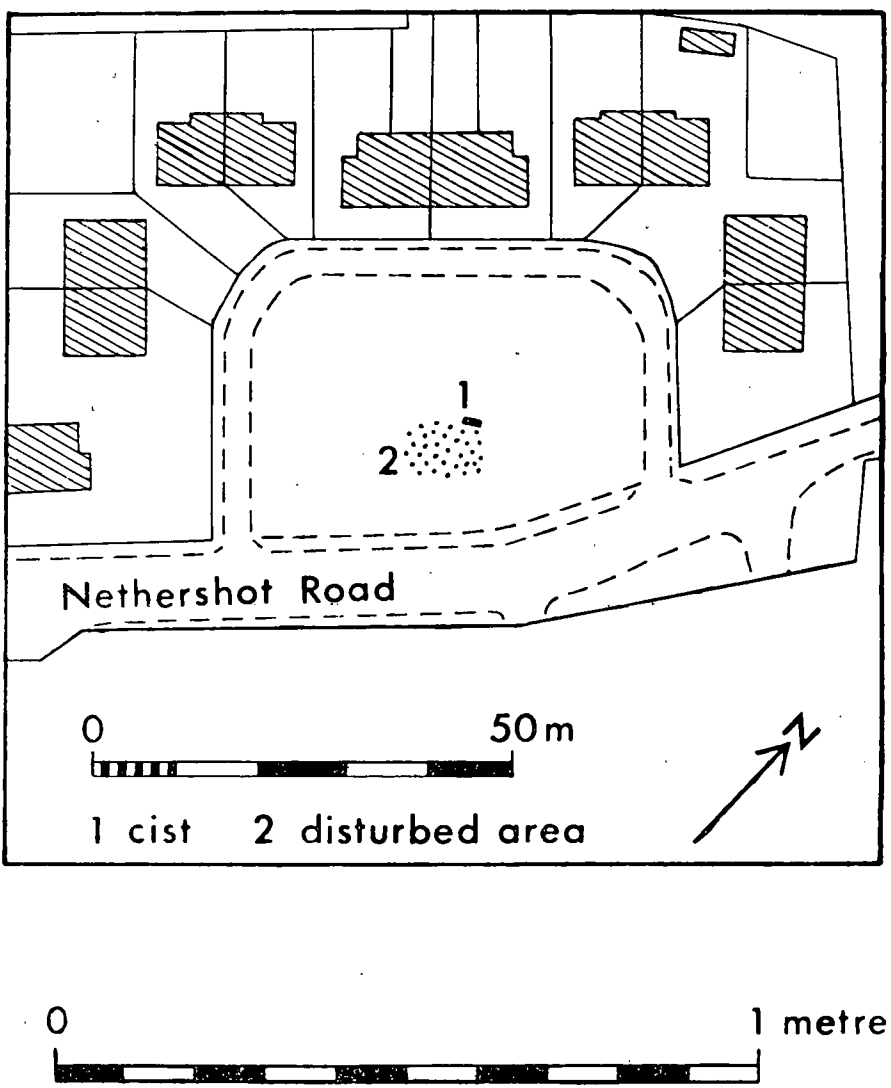


Fig. 5. Paper 2 Location map, plan and side view of long cist at Nethershot Road, Prestonpans, East Lothian.

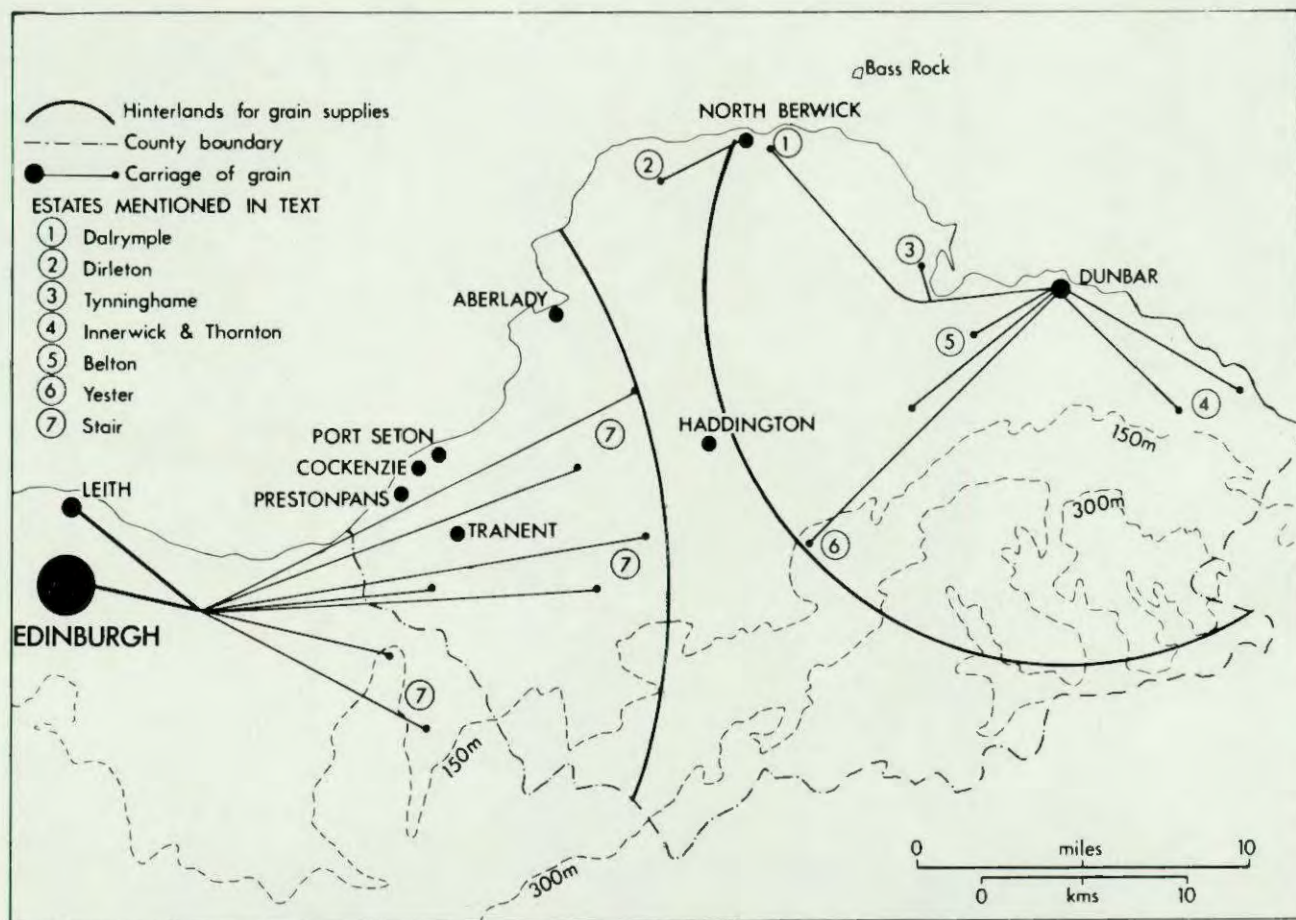


Fig. 1 Paper 3 Map for East Lothian Grain Trade.



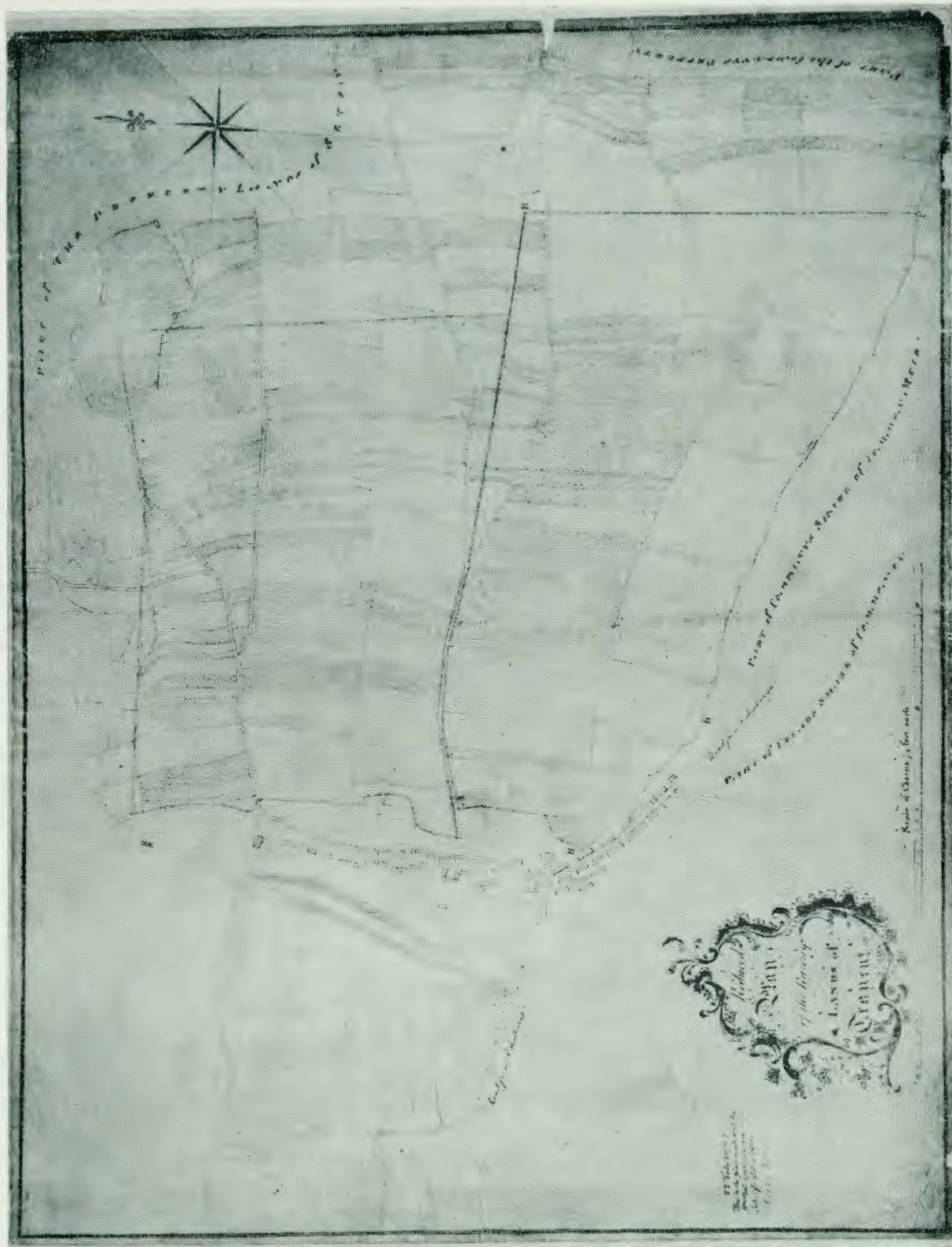


Fig. 1 Paper 4 Reduced plan of the runrig levels of Tranent by William Bell. Endorsed by Henry Home, Lord Kames, on 22 February 1775 (Scottish Record Office).







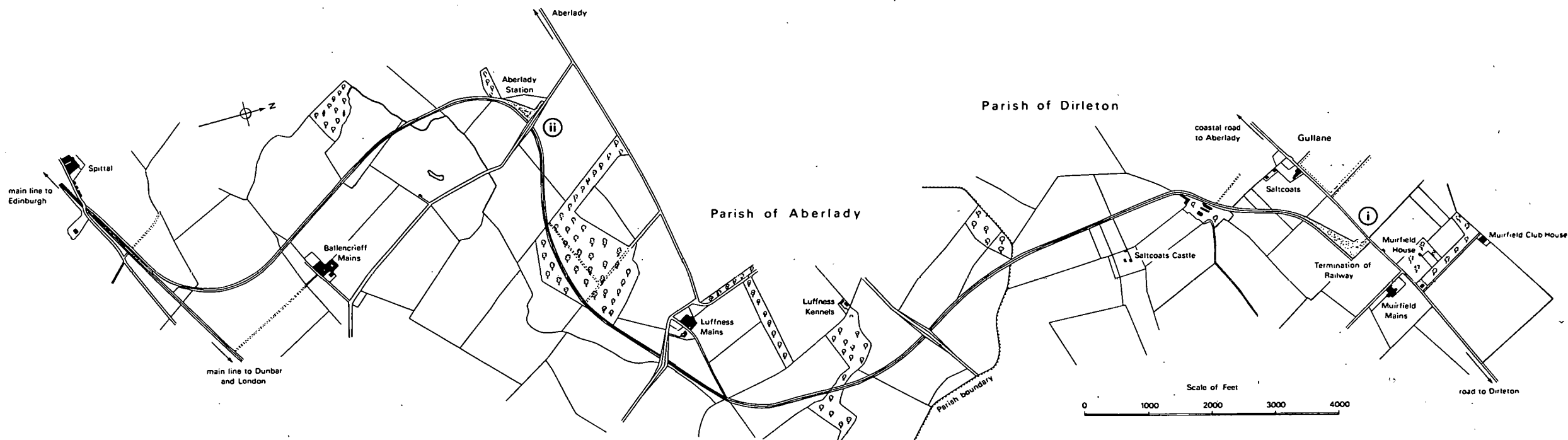
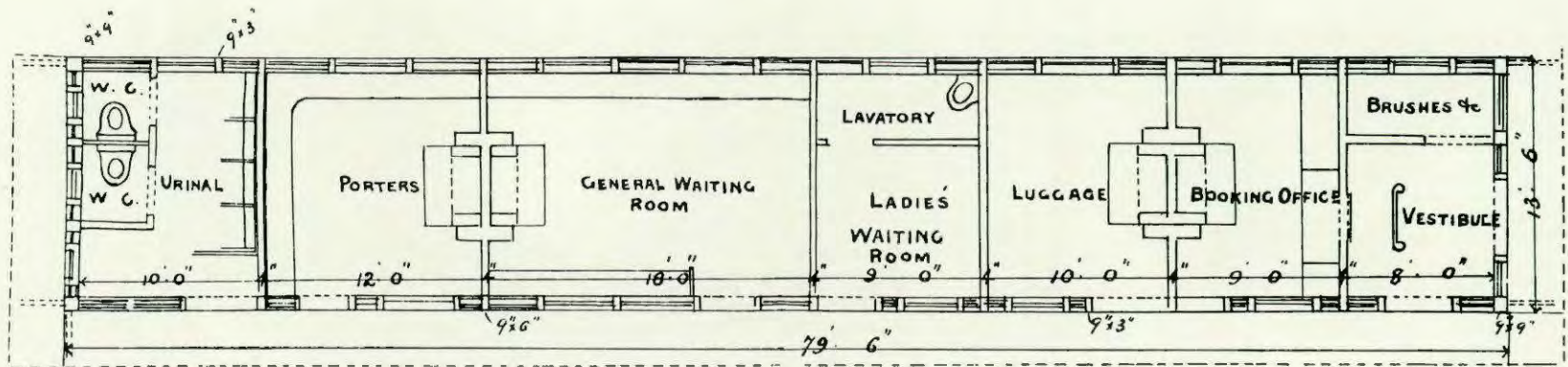


Fig. 1 Paper 8 Course of the original railway between Spittal and Gullane.

NOTE: in 1976 the original railway station was still standing in Gullane (i) and the platform and engine sheds were still clearly visible in Aberlady (ii). Most of the railway line is still traversable on foot, although there is no right of way.



*Ground Plan for Aberlady & Gullane Station Buildings*

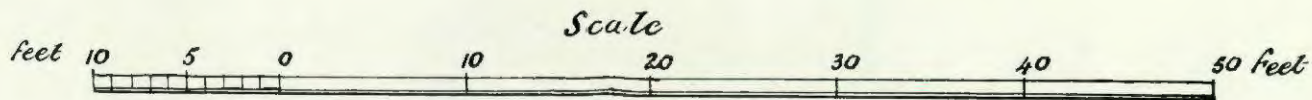






Plate 1 Paper 8 Aberlady Station from a postcard circa 1900.



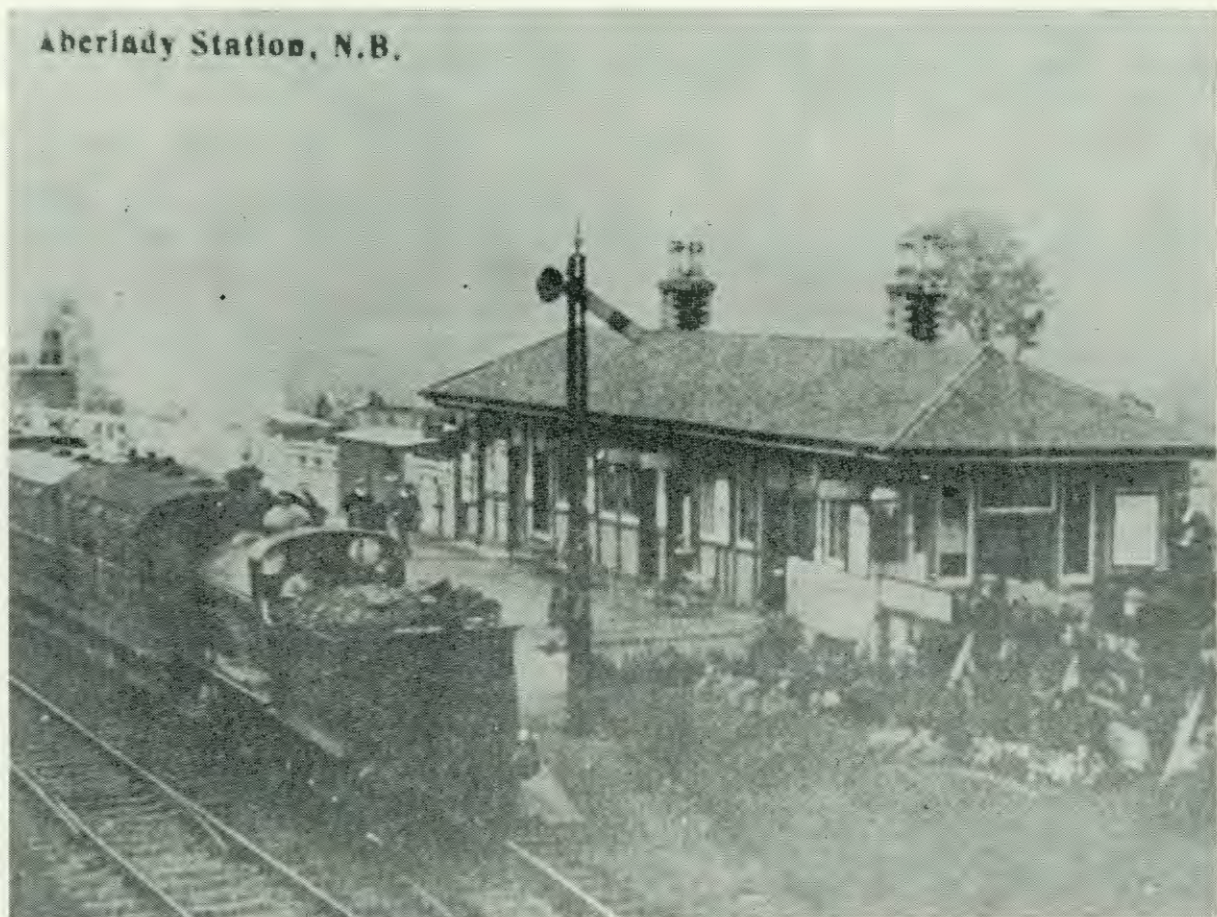


Plate 2 Paper 8 Aberlady Station from a postcard circa 1900.





Plate 3 Paper 8 Gullane Station in the 1970's.