

**Farming community and identity in Lower Wharfedale,
Yorkshire, 1914-1951**

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Abstract

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The terms ‘community’ and ‘local’ carry with them a host of preconceived ideas and positive connotations which are often taken as self-evident. This study re-examines the two ideas in the context of a farming community in Yorkshire in the early part of the twentieth century, using original oral testimony obtained through the author’s pre-existing connections with the locality. A key component of this investigation is the use of classic works on community, ethnography, sociology, ontology, philosophy and critical theory to provide a foundation on which to build an understanding of the oral evidence. By exploring themes of space and place, gender and embodiment, and social and cultural boundaries, it is possible to trace the threads upon which community is based as they continued through the large-scale changes which characterised the period 1914 to 1951, and even into the twenty-first century. The evidence for this continuity among Lower Wharfedale’s farming community suggests that the idea of the decline of rural communities during the twentieth century is flawed. While quantitative decline is evident, what emerges from this study is a picture of a community which ensures its own survival by adapting and changing to suit the context in which it finds itself, relying on trust, shared knowledge and experience, and a sense of shared identity and ‘togetherness’ in order to survive. The study concludes that ‘community’ is a performance given through the activities of everyday life, a possession to be protected or given as a gift by its members, and a passport granting entry to other communities which overlap in terms of membership or values.

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List of Abbreviations

CWAEC	County War Agricultural Executive Committee
ISDS	International Sheep Dog Society
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Farming and Fisheries
MRSI	Male Sex-Role Identity
NFWI	National Federation of Women's Institutes
OS	Ordnance Survey
PEP	Political and Economic Planning
PTO	Power Take-Off
TVO	Tractor Vaporising Oil

1. Introduction

In the twenty first century, the terms ‘local’ and ‘community’ are becoming ever more important, evocative, and politicised concepts, and yet they are used so often, and so freely, that it sometimes seems they have become almost meaningless. This study draws on the classic community studies of historians such as M. W. Williams and Ronald Blythe in order to explore the meaning of these terms in early twentieth-century rural Yorkshire.¹ This is the era of ‘England’s green and pleasant land,’ the image of which is often conjured up alongside ideas about ‘local’ and ‘community’, for example in the recent furore over supermarkets using fictional farm names on the packaging for meat and fresh produce, some of which has been imported, in a way which may mislead consumers as to the provenance of the food.² The meanings of these terms during the early twentieth-century are therefore of continued relevance today.

The technological advances and social and landscape changes of the previous century have altered the concepts of ‘local’ and ‘community’ beyond recognition. The internal combustion engine has vastly increased the distances which can be easily travelled, while urbanisation and the exodus of jobs and labourers from the countryside has prompted the idea that rural communities have been decimated, and that the term ‘community’ can no longer be applied here. However, by examining the nature and interpretation of ‘community’, and the meaning of ‘local’ in a single, defined area during the earlier half of the twentieth century, it is possible to create a definition for these now rather nebulous ideas, and to discern how the terms can be applied and understood today. This is reinforced by an exploration of how the themes identified in the main body of this study can be traced through into the twenty-first century.

The study uses original oral history interviews with elderly farmers as its key primary source, alongside photographs, film, and archive sources such as the National Farm Survey. The investigation questions the meaning of local and community identities, both in terms of individual identity as a member of a community or locality,

¹ M. W. Williams, *The Sociology of an English Village: Gosforth* (London, 1956); R. Blythe, *Akenfield: Portrait of an English village* (London, 1969).

² ‘Tesco’s fictional farm range blasted by industry chiefs,’ *FG Insight* (23 March 2016), <https://www.fginsight.com/news/tescos-fictional-farm-range-blasted-by-industry-chiefs-10996>.

and as a collective community identity such as that identified by Benedict Anderson in his *Imagined Communities*.³ The study aims to add another detailed English rural community study to the existing body of work, in order to increase the representation of northern regions therein. In doing this, it will address a series of lacunae within the current literature, such as the importance of the auction mart both as a space within the locality and as a microcosm of the community which makes use of it; the role and concept of the male body in agricultural communities, and the qualitative continuities which link the community of early twentieth-century Lower Wharfedale with their early twenty-first-century counterparts. This is linked to questions of gender: not only establishing the role of women, but also examining masculinity, a subject which is currently attracting a great deal of academic attention but still has many facets left to explore. These important features are placed in context by an analysis of the outside events which influenced the people living in the area during the study period: war, mechanisation, scientific innovation, and the activities of people involved in non-agricultural occupations within the same geographical area. As a result of this detailed community study, the work will further identify the key recurring themes across all aspects of the subject which have been examined, and use them to examine more closely the meanings of the terms 'local' and 'community'. It will be argued that 'community' is the possession of those who are considered part of it, and the creation of those who believe in its existence. It self-perpetuates, in that individuals become insiders by accepting the conventions of that community, and in turn they continue the belief in the community as an entity in and of itself. However, it is not a static object. It reacts and changes shape according to the wider context in which it finds itself, creating a repeating pattern of qualitative change which surpasses the oft-cited quantitative decline. There is a great deal of emphasis, both in the literature, and in the minds of interviewees, on 'community spirit',⁴ which will be shown to be the sum of shared knowledge and shared experiences, both past and present, and the anticipation of continuity of this sharing into the future, engendering a 'feeling of togetherness', closely allied with Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft*, or Benjamin's *Gedächtnis*, expressed in English in the concept of 'community'.

³ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London, 2006).

⁴ See K. D. M. Snell, *Spirits of Community: English Senses of Belonging and Loss, 1750-2000* (London, 2016).

Stephen Caunce has written that the study of social bonds in communities is probably the oldest strand in oral history, calling it the ‘cultural equivalent of archaeology.’⁵ This makes oral history an ideal way to study the meaning of ‘community’, in addition to the fact that the process of collecting oral evidence creates new, unique, and valuable sources for future research. My own position as a member of the Lower Wharfedale farming community, the subject of this study, has meant that a great deal of detail has been uncovered, which would have been inaccessible to other researchers. This investigation, therefore, aims to use new and hitherto unexplored source material to shed new light on the meanings inherent in the terms ‘local’ and ‘community’ in the period 1914-1951. This period covers the wartime which had such a huge impact upon British farming, the interwar period, described by Caunce as ‘the last period in which it was possible to experience a truly rural style of life in England,’⁶ and the immediate post-war period which shared many traits with the preceding years. 1951 was chosen as the end point of the study period because, according to John Martin, ‘the return of the Conservative Party to power in 1951 marked the completion of the first phase of the postwar expansion drive.’⁷ The period 1914-1951, therefore, takes us from farming communities which were essentially still Victorian in method and outlook to the first appearance of farming people and farming methods which were recognisably modern.

In order to explore the ways in which a sense of ‘community’ was understood by people who counted themselves as part of Lower Wharfedale’s farming community, this study will focus on five key topics: location and population, the auction mart, masculinity and technology, women and family, and agriculturally related occupations. These five themes cover the spaces and places, gender roles and employment and economic factors which gave Lower Wharfedale’s farming people their sense of identity, and can be seen manifesting in different, but nevertheless recognisable, ways in the twenty-first century. These factors are used to form ideas about differences between insiders and outsiders, and to create the boundaries which defined a community. The study will begin with an explanation of the key theoretical material and discourses which have informed the work, followed by a discussion of the

⁵ S. Caunce, *Oral History and the Local Historian* (Harlow, 1994), p. 43.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁷ J. Martin, *The Development of Modern Agriculture: British Farming since 1931* (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 76.

methodology and ethics associated with the oral history aspect of the project. Each topic will be introduced by a subject-specific historiographical discussion, to place it in its academic context, and to explain how each chapter contributes to the discourse on the meaning of ‘community’. The work will end by bringing the key topics up to date and showing how they are still important in defining and understanding the meaning of a ‘farming community’ today.

General Historiography

‘Community’ is a topic which has been debated by sociologists throughout the twentieth century, and it remains a problematic term to define. Many historians and social anthropologists, for example M. W. Williams in *Gosforth*,⁸ R. Frankenberg in *Village on the Border*,⁹ Ronald Blythe in *Akenfield*,¹⁰ or Marilyn Strathern in *Kinship at the Core*,¹¹ have undertaken different types of community studies aiming to detail the intricacies of community life. Community studies tend to focus on rural or small town communities, trying to elicit the intricate networks which form them.¹² The question remains, however: what is ‘community’?

This discussion analyses oral and documentary evidence of kinship and ‘community’ within Lower Wharfedale, in Yorkshire in the period 1914-1951 in the context of the debates surrounding the meaning of the disputed term ‘community’. It explores the meaning of ‘community’ in a particular agricultural context, establishing which definitions fit a particular localised agricultural group of people at a specific point in time. It argues that different levels of ‘community’ existed in this setting, and that the different levels conform to different models, even though the same individuals might be part of multiple levels. It further argues that ‘community’ is a concept to which groups assign their own meanings and boundaries, but it is also affected on a fundamental level by wider experiences and events which shape the context in which it exists.

⁸ M. W. Williams, *The Sociology of an English Village: Gosforth* (London, 1956).

⁹ R. Frankenberg, *Village on the Border: A Social Study of Religion, Politics, and Football in a North Wales Community* (London, 1957).

¹⁰ R. Blythe, *Akenfield: Portrait of an English Village* (London, 1965).

¹¹ M. Strathern, *Kinship at the Core: An anthropology of Elmdon, a village in north-west Essex in the nineteen-sixties* (Cambridge, 1981).

¹² Day, *Community and Every Day Life*, p. 27.

The investigation of community also incorporates other key themes which impact upon the meaning a community had to its members. The second key theme which is integral to this study is that of identity. Identity, in its various forms, has been the subject of numerous studies in the twentieth century, often by sociologists and anthropologists. Belonging to a community is obviously an important part of an individual's identity, but roles within the community also form a large part of this.

Belonging has been the subject of study for as long as community. In the nineteenth century, Ferdinand Tönnies modelled human interactions and network links through ideas of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, using them to denote the dichotomy between selfless action for community good and commercial action for personal gain.¹³ Tönnies' wrote that, 'the ordinary human being... feels best and most cheerful if he is surrounded by his family and relatives. He is among his own (*chez soi*).'¹⁴ Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft* is most commonly translated as *community*, while *Gesellschaft* is equated with *society*. Tönnies differentiated between three categories of *Gemeinschaft*: *Gemeinschaft* by blood, *Gemeinschaft* of place, and *Gemeinschaft* of mind.¹⁵ Each of these categories represents a sense of belonging; belonging to a family, belonging to a place, and belonging among people with similar experiences to one's own.

As the twentieth century progressed, work on belonging began to expose more clearly the means by which people came to belong. This meant the development of ideas around insider and outsider status, the liminal stage between the two, and the markers which signified the transition between these states. The seminal work on this theme was done by Arnold van Gennep and published in 1909 as *Les Rites de Passage* (*The Rites of Passage*). The key argument put forward by van Gennep was that change in state took place through three stages: separation, liminality, and reincorporation. This tripartite sequence was accompanied by ritual, symbolism and meaning which differed only in surface detail from culture to culture.¹⁶

Van Gennep's theories influenced the work of later social scientists, such as that of Victor Turner. Turner is most recognisable for his use of the Latin term 'communitas' to describe the sense of togetherness between people who share an

¹³ G. Day, *Community and Every Day Life* (Oxon, 2006), p. 5.

¹⁴ F. Tönnies (C. P. Loomis trans.), *Community and Society* (1887, New York, 2002), p. 43.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 42.

¹⁶ A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (1908, London, 1977).

experience of liminality, and to distinguish this bonding, which is so closely linked to rites of passage, from 'community' as an 'area of common living.'¹⁷ Turner was interested in the relationships between structure and anti-structure, characterised by *communitas*, between present happenings and the long term, incorporating the past and the future, and between individuals.¹⁸ Turner himself explained: 'There is a dialectic here, for the immediacy of *communitas* gives way to the mediacy of structure, while, in *rites de passage*, men are released from structure into *communitas* only to return to structure revitalized by their experience of *communitas*.'¹⁹ Interestingly, just as Tönnies differentiated between three types of *Gemeinschaft*, Turner distinguished between three types of *communitas*. He described existential or spontaneous *communitas*, which might also be called 'a happening'; normative *communitas*, which added the element of time to the previous type, influenced by the need for social control to create a social system; and ideological *communitas*, by which was meant a model utopian society based upon existential *communitas*.²⁰

More recent studies on identity include Eli Hirsch's *The Concept of Identity* (1982), A. P. Cohen's edited volume *Belonging: Identity and social organisation in British rural cultures* (1982), Manuel Castells' *The Power of Identity* (1997) and John Kirk and Christine Wall's *Work Identity: Historical and cultural contexts* (2011). This is of course a very small sample list, but it covers those texts which have been particularly informative in this study.

Cohen's edited volume presented a number of different views of rural communities, and argues that a fully representative model of British rural communities is impossible due to Britain's 'rich cultural heterogeneity' and the importance of cultural distinctiveness. Cohen states that two basic requirements should be asked of any ethnography of locality:

That the communities or milieu studied should be displayed to us in their own terms; and that the ways in which these

¹⁷ V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and anti-structure* (1969, New York, 1997), p. 96.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-132

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

localities articulate with, and inform us about their “host” societies should be clearly revealed.²¹

Cohen and his co-authors sought to show that localised communities across Britain differ from one another substantially, and that the sense of difference between insiders and outsiders of a particular community is reflected in the behaviour of people within that community.²² Furthermore, Cohen posits that the experience of community and culture can best be explored through the mundane details of everyday life, using as his examples the evaluation of neighbour’s work in making a wheelbarrow, when and where to fish for a particular species, or when to cut hay, as ‘each such commonplace event is a metaphorical statement of the culture in which it occurs;... it is implicit in the very familiarity of the idioms of its performance and in the small everyday crises which follow from their transgression.’²³ Being part of a community, therefore, is placed in Cohen’s work as an active experience, in which identity is shaped and then reinforced by the performance of everyday tasks and interactions as a member of that community.

Hirsch, whose *The Concept of Identity* appeared in the same year as Cohen’s edited volume, approached the concept of identity from a philosophical standpoint, but his work chimes very closely with the sociological and historical work which has been published in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries, in that it included an exploration of the meaning of bodily identity. This became a key theme in the discussion of masculinities, following the trend for women’s history which expanded in the second half of the twentieth century. This specific historiography will be discussed below, in the chapters on gender.

At the same time as Hirsch was publishing on bodily identity, Doreen Massey was exploring the relevance of identity to geographies of labour in *Spatial Divisions of Labour* (1984). Massey was interested in the relationship between social structure and geographical distribution. This was a move away from the industrial geography which had emerged in the 1960s, setting an analysis of production within its broader social context, both on a large scale and in microcosm.²⁴ Massey suggests a microcosm within

²¹ A.P. Cohen (ed.), *Belonging: Identity and social organisation in British rural cultures* (Manchester, 1982), p. 2.

²² Ibid., pp. 2-3.

²³ Ibid., p. 5

²⁴ D. Massey, *Spatial Divisions of Labour Social structures and the geography of production* (London and Basingstoke, 1984), pp. 7-15.

the firm, but R. E. Pahl took the idea in a different direction by exploring geographical divisions of labour in the home, merging studies of gender with those on labour.²⁵

By 2004, this branch of human geography had become more explicitly linked to the study of identity, with Massey's investigation into 'the relationships between identity and responsibility and the potential geographies of both.'²⁶ Massey identified a trending argument that identity is relational, that it is a fluid concept which is constantly changing through interaction (including absences and hiatuses) with others. This concept of identity was linked closely to place as the site of interpersonal negotiations, and Massey noted the widespread use of words such as 'real,' 'grounded,' 'everyday,' and 'lived' to describe place, in contrast to 'space' which was conceptualised in a much more abstract fashion. This had a major impact on the meaning of 'community' as it added further levels at which the idea could be understood, and emphasised how the particular context in which the term is used can affect the way in which this happens.²⁷

The concept of what a community is, and how its borders are defined, have of course been explored in terms of national and international politics, geopolitics, from different class viewpoints and by writers from across the political spectrum. Many of these theories deal with ideas of community and boundaries on a much larger scale than the local area of Lower Wharfedale. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware of a wider literature, as some viewpoints can be extrapolated down onto a smaller scale. Just as Benedict Anderson's theory of 'imagined communities' will be shown to contain aspects which are relevant to a smaller local community, other wider-ranging studies can offer insights into the workings of a community. There is a rich literature in politics and critical theory which can inform interpretations of local politics, as well as the national and international contexts in which the community operated. For example, Roberto Esposito in *Communitas: The Origin and Destiny of Community* posits 'community' as a direct contrast to nihilism, saying that, 'nihilism and community mutually exclude each other: where there is one (or when there is one), the another isn't, and vice versa.'²⁸ Another example, Étienne Balibar's *Politics and the Other Scene* (2002) explored the meanings and philosophies of borders, largely on an

²⁵ R. E. Pahl, *Divisions of Labour* (1984, Oxford, 1992), pp. 63-77.

²⁶ D. Massey, 'Geographies of responsibility,' *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, vol. 86, no. 1 (2004), p. 1.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-7.

²⁸ R. Esposito, *Communitas: The Origin and Destiny of Community* (1998, Stanford, 2010), p. 135.

international scale, but explained that, ‘every discussion of borders relates, precisely, to the establishment of definite identities, national or otherwise.’²⁹ This work, and other examples of critical theory and philosophy from across the political spectrum are influenced by the classic works of Heidegger and Habermas, among others, which, while straying somewhat beyond the scope of this investigation, are important to bear in mind and to acknowledge as having contributed to our understanding of identities, belonging, liminality, and so many other aspects which make up the way in which ‘community’ can be constructed.

‘Community’ has remained a difficult and complex term, along with a number of other, linked terms, such as ‘group’, ‘team’, ‘network’, ‘trust’, and ‘social capital’, all of which N. J. Reid and J. S. Smelser describe as somewhat overused ‘buzzwords’ in social science.³⁰ In the past half century, numerous scholars have explored its meaning, and approached the subject in various different ways. In 1959, R. Durant defined community as ‘a territorial group of people with a common mode of living striving for common objectives.’³¹ By 1983, D. Lee and H. Newby were defining the term as ‘a sense of common identity, enduring ties of affiliation and harmony based upon personal knowledge and face-to-face contact.’³² In contrast, Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* (published in the same year and revised in 2006) discussed the possibility of a community identity based upon the shared cultural experiences of a nation, but not reliant upon personal knowledge of every other member of the community. Anderson traced the evolution of the nation-state, along with its associated ideas of national identity and nationalism, ‘linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together’ in the development of a unified group in a fixed geographical area creating its own history and culture. This ‘imagined community’ creates a sense of personal connection between people who share geographical and cultural reference points, allowing the growth of a sense of ‘national community.’³³ In this, Anderson’s thought process has been influenced by the work of Victor Turner, Walter Benjamin, and Erich Auerbach.³⁴ Graham Day, in *Community and Every Day Life*, further noted that the notion of

²⁹ É. Balibar (C. Jones, J. Swenson and C. Turner trans.), *Politics and the Other Scene* (1998, London, 2002), p.76.

³⁰ N. J. Reid and J. S. Smelser, *Usable Social Science* (Berkeley, 2012), pp. 121-2.

³¹ Day, *Community and Every Day Life*, p. 9.

³² Ibid., p. 9.

³³ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition (1983, London, 2006).

³⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. ix.

‘community’ is almost entirely free from negative connotations in popular understanding.³⁵ It is therefore a much less loaded term than ‘nationalism’ to use in Anderson’s context, but its frequent use as an almost meaningless descriptor also makes it problematic to use in local history. In addition to this, Day notes that a community studies have always been susceptible to accusations that they are too close to ordinary life, and to take this to an extreme, that this kind of study deals only in common sense, merely telling the reader what they already know, rather than giving any kind of theoretical insight.³⁶

Local rural history studies are particularly vulnerable to romanticism, and to tacit judgments about the relative value of perceived rural *Gemeinschaft* versus apparent urban *Gesellschaft*. Tönnies himself wrote that there was no such thing as bad *Gemeinschaft*.³⁷ To this, Day added that rural interaction is often simplified to be the epitome of *Gemeinschaft*, creating a cosy image of idealised rural communities.³⁸ R. Hoggart noted that phrases like ‘the rural community’ imply certain levels of caring and friendly networks among groups which may simply be unconnected individuals with common geography, occupation or lifestyle type.³⁹ In 1992, Brian Short also warned of the potential dangers in the use of the phrase ‘English rural community’, which can be skewed by individual perceptions and romantic ideals.⁴⁰ More recently, there has been an increased academic cynicism regarding the acceptance of community as a positive at face value. In 2002, Miranda Joseph identified the term and its associated values as problematic, and began her *Against the Romance of Community* with:

The self-evidence, the commonplace, that I hope to assist in wearing away here is community. I hope that this book will give pause, will insert a hesitation into the next sentence you utter that seems inevitably to require community. I hope that hesitation will open a space for creative thinking about the constitution of collective action, where the term community would operate so effectively to shut down such thought.

³⁵ Day, *Community and Every Day Life*, p. 14.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 30.

³⁷ F. Tönnies, *Community and Association* (London, 1955), p.38.

³⁸ Day, *Community and Every Day Life*, p. 11.

³⁹ R. Hoggart, *A Local Habitation* (London, 1988), p. 3.

⁴⁰ B. Short (ed.), *The English Rural Community: Image and Analysis* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 4.

Community is almost always invoked as an unequivocal good, an indicator of a high quality of life, a life of human understanding, caring, selflessness, belonging. One does one's volunteer work in and for "the community." Communities are frequently said to emerge in times of crisis or tragedy, when people imagine themselves bound together by a common grief or joined through some extraordinary effort. Among leftists and feminists, community has connoted cherished ideals of cooperation, equality, and communion. Because it carries such positive connotations, community is deployed by any and everyone pressing any sort of cause.⁴¹

Joseph argued that 'community' was not constituted by shared identity, or by cosy notions of cooperation and communion, but 'through practices of production and consumption.'⁴² This is set out as a dichotomy (community is not one quality, but another which is in direct opposition), which has strong parallels with Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, although with Tönnies' conclusion turned upon its head.

Additionally, Day picked up on themes of nostalgia and myth, which play a part in the portrayal of past rural communities, citing the work of Ray Pahl (1996) and M. Mayo (2000), which identified the same tendencies.⁴³ This links to the contrasts between urban and rural, 'traditional' and 'non-traditional', which fascinate many of the investigators of community. The influential sociologist Margaret Stacey used this dichotomy when investigating Banbury, contrasting her early work on a small community with the town she returned to in the 1970s. She utilised the image of the new Birds factory dwarfing the 'pepper-pot' spire of the parish church, which establishes for the reader the image of the old, 'traditional' community being overwhelmed by the new *Gesellschaftliche* group of geographically-linked, urban individuals working for personal gain.⁴⁴

⁴¹ M. Joseph, *Against the Romance of Community* (Minneapolis, 2002), p. vii.

⁴² Ibid., p. viii.

⁴³ Day, *Community and Every Day Life*, p. 14.

⁴⁴ M. Stacey, *Power, Persistence and Change: A Second Study of Banbury* (London, 1975), p. 9.

However, community studies which focus on particularly isolated communities also possess inherent dangers when generalised to wider areas.⁴⁵ Farming in its historical context is particularly open to romantic ideas about community, ‘pitching in together’, and performing activities for the good of the community. In consequence of the increasingly solitary nature of agriculture and the decrease in practitioners of traditional rural crafts,⁴⁶ it is a truism to say that the modern, commercially-orientated farming lifestyle is often contrasted with the perceived ‘golden era’ of early twentieth-century countryside communities, ‘pulling together’ during wartime to maintain Britain’s ‘green and pleasant land’.⁴⁷ This is exemplified in contemporary rural literature, which, while acknowledging the hardships of farming during the Depression of the 1930s, tends to emphasise the power of friendship and kinship networks to support rural people through difficult periods. Examples include the cross-generational and cross-class support and advice offered by old Jacob Garthen, the farm-labourer character in J. S. Fletcher’s *The Threshing Floor* (1905) to Brigit Challenger, the landowner’s daughter when the man she loves discovers her shameful secret past.⁴⁸ Winifred Holtby’s *Anderby Wold* thrusts the reader into the upheaval in the world of the Robson family, who form a clear, if not always amicable, network throughout the book. The family provides a sense of belonging, even when they do not personally get along.⁴⁹ Naomi Jacobs’ *They Left the Land* (1940) similarly appears to take for granted that kinship networks are both a source of support in hard times, and a determinant of one’s future. One is obligated to help one’s kin, regardless of friendship-status or love. The whole story is instigated by the two Langdon brothers searching for wives in order to carry on their farming family.⁵⁰ Bess, the heroine, whom the story follows as daughter-in-law, wife, mother, and grandmother, is presented as the ideal, self-sacrificing, motherly, hard-working Yorkshire-woman, and the reader is encouraged to sympathise with her throughout the novel. Loyalty to family is a key element of her character, and she proves this by sacrificing her beloved home, farm, and market stall in rural Yorkshire to travel to London to care for her estranged, manipulative, and

⁴⁵ A. Howkins cited in Short (ed.), *English Rural Community*, p. 7.

⁴⁶ R. Perren, *Agriculture in Depression, 1870-1940* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 62-64.

⁴⁷ M. Mayo, *Cultures, Communities, Identities* (London, 2000), p. 39.

⁴⁸ J. S. Fletcher, *The Threshing Floor* (London, 1905), pp. 129-134.

⁴⁹ W. Holtby, *Anderby Wold* (1923, London, 1981).

⁵⁰ N. Jacobs, *They Left the Land* (1940, London, 1954), pp. 1-13.

emotionally abusive husband in his last illness.⁵¹ Through this, the image of countryside life, with its inherent kinship and honest hard work is contrasted with the representation of isolation in the city crowds. In the earlier part of the book, Bess is surrounded by familiar neighbours, friends, and kin, forming a community despite disagreements and enmities. In contrast, the part of the book set in London shows no sense of community or belonging. Those few friends Bess does make are single figures, who do not bring their kinship networks and obligations with them. The close kin connections of rurality, and the way they were perceived by those urbanites without them, were satirised in Stella Gibbons' *Cold Comfort Farm* (1932), in which the characters initially struggle to cope when urban cousin Flora begins to chip away at the family's closed, unhealthy, loveless, but absolute bond. In this novel, the family network is portrayed as prison-like, with multiple generations as slaves to the power of reclusive and terrifying matriarch Aunt Ada Doom. As satire, this work naturally takes these themes to extremes, but in order to be successful they must still be recognisable in their distorted forms, suggesting that the idea of kinship as the underpinning to the rest of farm life would have been a familiar one to the book's readership.⁵²

This is important because of the close relationship between the community study and the novel. Day identifies a number of semi-autobiographical and consequently very popular community studies, which set up the investigation of a real place to appeal to the popular taste for stories about 'ordinary' and 'recognisable' people.⁵³ In 1966, Ruth Glass noted that the community study has been identified as a sociological substitute for the novel,⁵⁴ and Philip Cohen later drew comparisons between the community study and the television soap opera.⁵⁵ *Emmerdale* is a particularly relevant example of a fictional rural community which is intended to provide recognisable situations and characters, which might conceivably constitute life in a rural village, and with which the audience can sympathise.⁵⁶ Without attributing extraordinary and anachronistic foresight to Walter Benjamin, this fits in very neatly with his theories about storytelling. Benjamin viewed the changing modes of storytelling, from oral communication through the birth of the novel, as a factor in the

⁵¹ Jacobs, *They Left the Land*, pp. 123-124.

⁵² S. Gibbons, *Cold Comfort Farm* (1932, London, 1994).

⁵³ Day, *Community and Every Day Life*, p. 29.

⁵⁴ R. Glass, 'Conflict in Cities' in CIBA Foundation Symposium, *Conflict in Society* (London, 1966), p.148.

⁵⁵ P. Cohen, 'Beyond the Community Romance,' *Soundings*, 5 (Spring 1997).

⁵⁶ Much of *Emmerdale* is, coincidentally, filmed in Lower Wharfedale.

collapse of traditional communities, as it broke the direct connection between the narrator and his or her audience.⁵⁷ He pinpointed the First World War as the moment when storytelling tradition, and the traditional community which went hand in hand with it, really collapsed, as ‘men returned from the battlefield grown silent – not richer, but poorer in communicable experience’.⁵⁸ One could argue that the expansion of the audience and the removal of the voice of the narrator in television soap operas further adds to the feeling that there is no longer a *community of ‘listeners’*. However, the soap opera also places the audience inside the home of the subject of the story, so that the breakdown of the audience-based community is balanced by drawing the individual audience member into the fictional community which has been created. These ideas relate back to Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*, since the audience feel themselves to be part of the fictional community, and familiar with it, despite, obviously, not having any reciprocal connections with it.

It is clear, therefore, that ‘community’ is a fluid term, which is constantly changing, and which depends heavily upon the context in which it is placed. In the light of this historiography, it has been particularly important to approach the community from a theoretical standpoint in order to expose its hidden complexities and underlying structure, rather than simply producing a ‘common sense’ narrative. One of the key theories which has influenced this investigation has been Kia Lindroos’ model of the ‘Benjaminian’ community, based on the work of Walter Benjamin, detailed above. Benjamin’s theses reject the possibility of a united community in the modern age as the individual narrative replaced premodern collective storytelling which bound communities together by the construction of shared cultural myths, and the protection of a tradition of experiences, which Benjamin termed *Gedächtnis*. However, Lindroos posits that Benjamin’s construction leaves open the possibility of a scattered community bonded together through a shared tradition, a feeling of togetherness, and the exchange of knowledge and information within community boundaries. Lindroos explains, Benjaminian “communities” are not based on normative or value coherence but appear as human networks that are temporally redefinable according to the actual

⁵⁷ K. Lindroos, ‘Scattering community: Benjamin on experience, narrative and history,’ *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 27: 6 (2001), pp. 22-23.

⁵⁸ W. Benjamin, ‘The Storyteller: Reflections on the works of Nikolai Leskov,’ *Illuminations* (London, 1999), p. 84.

conditions of their existence.’⁵⁹ Of course, there are differences between the kinds of communities Benjamin would have been familiar with, as a German Jew born in 1892, and the community of agricultural Lower Wharfedale in Yorkshire. Yet Benjamin’s theories, alongside other classic studies, help to create a framework through which to understand the mechanisms by which a community functioned and adapted to its environment. By drawing upon some of this classic work, alongside more recent analyses, we can begin to piece together the ways in which the Lower Wharfedale farming community worked, how this related to the findings of other community studies, and the reasons behind these behaviours.

Oral History – Historiography, Methodology and Ethics

Why Oral History?

The social historian Trevor Lummis describes oral interview material as, ‘such an important source that it is difficult to visualize a rounded social history without it.’⁶⁰ The chief value of oral history lies in the ability of the historian to create new historical sources through which to understand underrepresented groups which do not generally leave behind physical document sources. Lummis pointed out that the creation of oral evidence can be tailored by the historian to answer specific questions or points of interest, which a document cannot do.⁶¹

This is advantageous in revealing aspects of a rural community which has left minimal and scattered archival records, and which encompassed a significant group of people who left school aged fifteen or even earlier, and who did not find writing and qualitative record-keeping easy or even particularly necessary. It also allows the historian to capture details of contemporary community life which was not considered worth writing down, for example details of relationships between individuals, or between genders, or the feelings inspired by the use of different technologies.

Oral history is also ideally suited to local studies, as testimonies from a small geographical area begin to link together as a study progresses. Stephen Caunce noted,

⁵⁹ Lindroos, ‘Scattering community,’ p. 35.

⁶⁰ T. Lummis, *Listening to History: The authenticity of oral evidence* (London, 1987), pp. 17-18.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

‘implicit in the massive recent growth of local history is a recognition that every family and every place has a history of its own, and one that can contribute detailed knowledge to the study of wider themes.’⁶² He further observed that every individual leads a life as part of a small local community, which in turn forms a part of wider society: ‘we cannot understand the way society really worked in the past if we ignore our equivalents from days gone by.’⁶³ Of course, it is important to remember that these small communities operated within a broader society, in which they were neither significant nor alone, but the exploration of local reactions to change and development on a national scale reveals a greater depth to the national narrative of the war, interwar, and immediate post-war periods.

Oral History as a Source for Rural Studies

Oral history is now firmly established as its own sub-discipline of historical studies, utilised by numerous researchers, discussed both practically and theoretically, and the subject of its own internationally-read academic journal, *Oral History*. The student of oral history can now not only read examples of the technique in the studies of other academics, but they can peruse a vast array of guides, handbooks, and manuals on how to plan, carry out, transcribe, edit, store and manage oral interviews, while other researchers have used the platform of oral history to address questions around age, memory, and communication, to name just a few subjects.

Oral testimony was initially a controversial source for historical investigation, both in Britain and internationally. Jan Vansina’s *Oral History: A study in historical methodology*, published in 1961, is one example of an early oral investigation, which had to justify its research method. Vansina began the work by addressing the questions likely to be raised by contemporaries critical of the practice of reliance on the memory of an interviewee, and, in some cases, on the memories and communication skills of previous generations, for the accurate preservation of historical fact. He wrote:

These special features pose a problem for the historian. Do they
a priori deprive oral tradition of all validity as a historical

⁶² S. Counce, *Oral History and the Local Historian* (Harlow, 1994), p. 8.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

source? If not, are there means for testing its reliability? These are precisely the questions to which the present study seeks to find an answer, and I hope to show that oral tradition is not necessarily untrustworthy as a historical source, but, on the contrary, merits a certain amount of credence within certain limits.⁶⁴

At the time this was a pioneering work, which argued persuasively for the validity of oral evidence as a source. In 1961, Vansina was able to write, ‘Few historians have gone into the methodological problems raised by oral tradition.’ He went on to criticise the methods of those few who had attempted to do so as completely ignorant of the importance of the act of transmission in the gathering of oral information.⁶⁵ It is clear from the introduction that oral testimony and oral tradition were generally considered to be inferior to written sources in terms of reliability and veracity.

Vansina’s return to the topic of oral tradition as methodology, in 1985, addressed an academic community which no longer discussed in great depth whether oral evidence was reliable, but instead how to adapt methodologies to get the best from the source.⁶⁶ Oral tradition is of course not entirely equivalent to oral history in that the former is an account of an event or ritual from before living memory passed down from generation to generation, which may or may not still be completely understood. Oral history on the other hand tends to be events recalled from personal memory. However, the two overlap in the recalling of memories as passed down from parents and grandparents which must be used when investigating the period 1914 to 1951, as the present study aims to do.

Furthermore, the lessons and behaviours learned from oral tradition can remain very relevant to the lives of those for whom the stories are a significant part of their culture. One of the most well-known practitioners of oral history in twentieth-century rural Britain, George Ewart Evans, demonstrated this throughout his work in East Anglia. It is particularly clear in his records of the practice of ‘jading a horse,’ in which he explains the beliefs around ‘horse magic,’ which had been passed down through

⁶⁴ J. Vansina (H. M. Wright trans.), *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology* (1961, London, 1965), p. 1.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁶⁶ J. Vansina, *Oral History as Tradition* (1985, Oxford, 1997).

generations and remained current for the interviewees he was able to speak to directly.⁶⁷ Ewart Evans is the name which first springs to mind when thinking about British rural oral history in the 1960s and 1970s, during which decades he published both oral history literature, and fiction based upon his recordings: *The Horse in the Furrow*, *The Pattern under the Plough*, *The Farm and the Village*, *Where Beards Wag All*, *The Leaping Hare*, *Acky*, *The Days that We have Seen*, *Let Dogs Delight and Other Stories*, *From Mouths of Men* and *Horse Power and Magic*.⁶⁸

In 1982, David Henige began his *Oral Historiography* with the words, ‘growing interest in oral historical research has been one of the most striking features of historical study in our time, as advances in sound technology make such an enterprise economically and technically feasible.’⁶⁹ This growth was particularly striking when one considers that Manfred J. Waserman’s *Bibliography on Oral History*, published in 1971 by the Oral History Association listed only 201 volumes published over the previous twenty one years, as well as an annotated section entitled ‘Twenty Selected Books incorporating Oral History Material.’⁷⁰ Around this time, there was an explosion in the amount of literature which analysed the methods of creation, storage and use of oral history, and a growing awareness of the differing international approaches to the technique. In the introduction to his 1978 publication, *An Archive Approach to Oral History*, David Lance, the keeper of the Department of Sound Records at the Imperial War Museum, questioned whether there was a need to add another volume to the ‘already substantial and rapidly growing body of literature on oral history.’⁷¹ He justified his work by calling attention to the American provenance of many of the pre-existing texts, as well as the academic orientation of much British oral history at the time. Lance aimed to expand the body of work on the analysis of oral history away from simply the methodology and evaluation which was relevant to university historians, and to begin to discuss the use of oral material by archives, libraries,

⁶⁷ G. Ewart Evans, *The Pattern under the Plough* (London, 1960).

⁶⁸ G. Ewart Evans, *The Horse in the Furrow* (London, 1960); *The Pattern under the Plough* (London, 1966); *The Farm and the Village* (London, 1969); *Where Beards Wag All: The Relevance of Oral Tradition* (London, 1970); *The Leaping Hare* (London, 1973); *Acky* (London, 1973); *The Days that We have Seen* (London, 1975); *Let Dogs Delight and Other Stories* (London, 1975); *From Mouths of Men* (London, 1976); and *Horse Power and Magic* (London, 1979).

⁶⁹ D. Henige, *Oral Historiography* (London & New York, 1982), p. 7.

⁷⁰ M. J. Waserman, *Bibliography on Oral History* (New York, 1971).

⁷¹ D. Lance, *An Archive Approach to Oral History* (London, 1978), p. 1.

museums, and similar institutions.⁷² This demonstrates the increasing wider acceptance and utilisation of oral history beyond academia in the later decades of the twentieth century. Oral history is now a popular and useful resource for museums, as well as being held in numerous archives and institutions, for example the North West Sound Archive.

In 1984, Larry Danielson noted a certain difference between understanding of ‘oral history’ and ‘folk history’, which could also be termed ‘oral tradition.’ He quoted Cullom Davis’ distinction between ‘genuine oral history (first-hand recollections) and oral hearsay (second-hand [recollections]),’ but changes can be seen from the early 1960s in that Davis continued to remark that the value of ‘oral hearsay’ was not less than that of ‘oral history,’ but that it must be handled carefully.⁷³ Danielson realised that such differentiation could be regarded as ‘pointless hair-splitting,’ and, in conversation with Edward D. Ives, the editor of the American academic journal *Northeast Folklore* and director of the Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral History at the University of Maine, discussed the formulation of ‘oral history’ defined as the technique and methodology by which ‘folk history’, among other subject areas, could be researched.⁷⁴ He also made the point that ‘it is as important to analyse the “inaccurate” account as it is to reconstruct the “objective reality”; an argument which was still debated at the time.⁷⁵

David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum’s edited volume, *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology* combined the central academic questions and principles of oral history with a wide interdisciplinary approach to become a key text in the historiography of oral history. First published in 1984, and reissued in 1996, it retained its relevance due to the contributions of eminent oral historians from an international community, with widely differing backgrounds and bodies of work. The collection of essays includes work by Allan Nevins, who is credited with the introduction of oral history to the United States through his innovative 1938 suggestion of ‘some organization which made a systematic attempt to obtain, from the lips and papers of

⁷² Lance, *Archive Approach*, p. 1.

⁷³ Cullom Davis, *History with a Tape Recorder: An Oral History Handbook* (Springfield, Illinois, USA, n.d.), inside cover, quoted in L. Danielson, ‘The Folklorist, the Oral Historian, and Local History,’ in D. K. Dunaway and W. K. Baum (eds), *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, 2nd edition (1984, London and Walnut Creek, CA, USA, 1996), p. 189.

⁷⁴ Danielson, ‘The Folklorist, the Oral Historian, and Local History,’ p. 189.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

living Americans who have led significant lives, a fuller record of their participation in the political, economic, and cultural life of the last sixty years.’⁷⁶ This image of the application of oral history in America differs greatly from the picture painted by the prominent British historian Paul Thompson, in his essay on the development of the discipline in Britain, which identifies it as a tool for investigating not only the lives of significant individuals, but the experiences of the working classes, of localised communities, of migrant communities, and of family and work environments.⁷⁷

These kinds of subjects have formed the bulk of British oral history, and the practice has rapidly gained a reputation as the foremost technique in exploring the histories of people who, by and large, do not leave written records of their lives. Of course, George Ewart Evans was one of the first to practise oral history this way, but the tradition has continued in Britain to such an extent that an exhaustive list of researchers and studies would be impossible. The creation of the Oral History Society in 1973, and the place of its journal today as an internationally read publication, indicates the growth of the discipline’s importance and use as a research technique.

Methodological Influences

The key methodological influences for the interviewee selection in this study came from the methods used Anna Bryson in 2007 and Rhoda Wilkie in 2010. Bryson used a ‘snowball sampling’ method, based on a pre-existing network of contacts and recommendations from interviewees in order to obtain her interviews with both Protestants and Catholics in her investigation into the communities in Maghera, in Mid-Ulster.⁷⁸ The same method was used by Wilkie, with the acknowledgement that the distinct advantages in terms of access were balanced by the risk of missing out those who were not part of the dominant social networks.⁷⁹ This approach to sampling is similar to the methods described by George Ewart Evans, who made a practice of getting to know his interviewees prior to interviewing them. He wrote: ‘Invariably,

⁷⁶ D. K. Dunaway and W. K. Baum, *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, Second Edition (1984, London and Walnut Creek, CA, USA, 1996), p. 29.

⁷⁷ P. Thompson, ‘The Development of Oral History in Britain,’ in Dunaway and Baum (eds), *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, Second Edition (1984, London and Walnut Creek, CA, USA, 1996), pp. 351-362

⁷⁸ Bryson, 2007, p 54.

⁷⁹ Wilkie, 2010, p 15.

before doing this I got permission from a man's friend, one who has usually recommended him, to use his name.'⁸⁰ This approach proved effective during this project, not only in recruiting interviewees, but also in following networks of connections through the community. One location in which this method was particularly fruitful was at the auction mart, where the auction staff were able to use their connections to persuade potential interviewees to agree to speak with a researcher. The efficacy of this was demonstrated in one interviewee's response to being asked if he would do 'a favour' for one of the auction's cattle men: 'For you, Craig, anything!'

The interviews took the form of an informal conversation, usually in the interviewee's own home, in which a list of topics was used to make sure that everything was covered, but the lead was ideally taken by the interviewee. The advantage of this method was that information might be given which was not anticipated, and therefore written questions would not be prepared about it. Once again, this technique was favoured by Ewart Evans, who noted:

I find it does not pay to be too urgent or tidy-minded in an interview. If your man digresses it is better to let him have his head. If you pull him up it may probably be the last time you will hear about the subject to which he has digressed. During the years I have found that some digressions, if followed up, reveal valuable social history which may otherwise have been lost.⁸¹

Stephen Caunce, in his *Oral History and the Local Historian*, also discusses the difficulties of collecting oral testimonies without making use of pre-existing acquaintances and network connections. Following a network to cover the history of a small locality allows an intensity of coverage which would not be possible over a larger area.

Ethical Considerations

⁸⁰ G. Ewart Evans, *Spoken History* (London, 1987), p. 27.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

The advantages of oral history as a technique, its ability to reveal information which would otherwise be lost from people who would not leave any written record of their lives, also generate ethical problems which differ from document-based history. These difficulties were described by Maureen Sutton, who interviewed women in Lincolnshire about topics including sex, puberty and sexuality. She noted that some interviewees found that the transformation of their spoken word into written history problematic and embarrassing, while others were upset when particular stories they had told were not included in the final draft of the book.⁸² Maggie Morgan, whose work centre on the feminism of the Women's Institute, found that developing friendships with interviewees, and being a member of their community, caused ethical dilemmas in that, 'I did... have some hesitations, caused by an unwillingness to exploit other women for my own research.' She found the oral history approach of allowing interviewees to speak in their own words appealing, but resisted the dominant trend which placed the words of the interviewee in an academic context which was not accessible to the original contributor.⁸³

Amelia Fry's essay in *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology* tackles the subject of ethics as something which is an essential part of project design but was often something of an afterthought. Fry drew attention to a number of ethical issues which may not be immediately obvious. Of course questions of informed consent, and of the interviewee's right to retract a statement and insist it not be made public are easily dealt with by the use of permission and copyright consent forms, which detail the ways the recorded material may be used, and allow the interviewee to specify what material may not be included, and whether or not they wish to remain anonymous. Briefing and debriefing sessions immediately before and after the interview were also used in this project to ensure that interviewees understood how their recollections would be used, and the rights they had regarding the recorded material and written transcripts. However, Fry also discusses the obligation of the researcher to be well-informed prior to the interview, and to bear in mind the broader objectives of oral history; that the material should be useful for other oral history projects in the future, and not simply for

⁸² M. Sutton, 'The Problems, Difficulties and Advantages of Women's Oral History in Rural Society,' *Rural History*, 5, no. 2 (October, 1994), pp. 212-213.

⁸³ M. Morgan, 'Jam, Jerusalem and Feminism,' *Oral History*, 23, no.1, Health and Welfare (Spring, 1995), pp. 85-86.

personal research.⁸⁴ In the case of this project, the ‘snowball’ sampling technique allowed information about a prospective interviewee to be gleaned from a previous participant who recommended them. Further information could be gathered through chatting informally to community insiders who were part of my own personal network, for example family members and family friends. Fry recommends reading the papers and work of the person who is to be interviewed, and this reflects the broadly American slant of the anthology, in which oral history was primarily conceived as a way to document the lives of influential public figures.⁸⁵ This is, of course, virtually impossible when one is carrying out oral interviews among people who generally leave little or no written record. In the case of this particular project, to be armed with a knowledge of farming in general, and to be familiar with the interviewee’s own agricultural specialisms and interests appeared to be a reasonable compromise.

Stephen Caunce further noted the social obligations of the interviewer, beyond the ethical obligations relating to the treatment of the results of the interviews. He wrote: ‘Many elderly people are lonely and get back something from oral history without being paid – indeed, a visit may have a significance you do not suspect, so do not miss one lightly.’⁸⁶ For this reason, every effort was made not to schedule more than one interview on the same day, so that conversation would not be rushed.

Caunce highlighted further ethical considerations in the transcription of oral material. Particularly relevant to this project was the issue of the rendering of accent and dialect into text. Caunce recommended subtle alterations to spelling, but warned against taking this too far and making the speaker appear ridiculous.⁸⁷ Some interviewees for this project had strong Yorkshire accents, and some used dialect words. The approach taken for these transcriptions was generally to use standardised spellings unless the pronunciation of a word was significantly different from the standard or altered the rhythm of the sentence. For example, the Yorkshire words ‘owt,’ ‘nowt,’ and ‘summat’ lend a very different rhythm to a sentence than ‘anything,’ ‘nothing,’ or ‘something,’ owing to different numbers of syllables, and differences in the stressed syllables. However, the contraction ‘t’, which is often used for ‘the’ was used so often

⁸⁴ A. Fry, ‘Reflections on Ethics,’ in Dunaway and Baum, *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology* (1984, London and Walnut Creek, CA, USA, 1996), pp. 165-167.

⁸⁵ Fry, ‘Reflections on Ethics,’ pp. 166-167.

⁸⁶ Caunce, *Oral History and the Local Historian*, p. 141.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

that to transcribe them all would render the document difficult to read. This is also often used when making fun of the Yorkshire accent, and so was deemed inappropriate for extended use within the transcriptions. The one exception to this rule was when the interviewee quoted the speech of a person with a stronger accent, and therefore exaggerated the broadness of their speech in order to differentiate the quotation. This was generally the case when repeating a particularly memorable phrase from an older, now deceased, person, usually an employer, parent, or older neighbour. The change in the speech pattern was felt to justify a change in the way the words were transcribed. Furthermore, where possible, extended quotations from the oral evidence are used in the text. This gives a greater sense of the context from which the quotations were drawn, and the voices of the people who were interviewed. This decision was made as a result of considering the abovementioned work of Maggie Morgan, which highlighted the ethical importance of the work resulting from oral history being as accessible as possible to the people who have contributed to it.⁸⁸

The Interview Process: A Review

As much as it is desirable for an oral history interview to run flawlessly and in accordance with all the advice on best practice from the numerous guides, manuals, and handbooks which are available to the postgraduate researcher, oral history involves living people, and is therefore possibly one of the most unpredictable methods of research open to the historian. The way the interviewee is approached, the phrasing of the questions asked, and the identity of the interviewer can all have a considerable effect on the outcome of the research. As Trevor Lummis noted, an interviewer cannot avoid being seen as an individual by the interviewee, and therefore the interview must always be affected by gender- and age-biases.⁸⁹ Ewart Evans even asserted that the season and time of day affected the success or otherwise of the interview, recalling his own successes in evening and night-time interviews, and quoted a writer who was researching in Ireland: ‘Somehow, I found that the clear evenings were not conducive to the kind of material I am in search of. But obviously the days are shortening and I hope

⁸⁸ Morgan, ‘Jam, Jerusalem and Feminism,’ pp. 85-86.

⁸⁹ T. Lummis, *Listening to History: The Authenticity of Oral Evidence* (London, 1987), pp. 52-53.

that conversations will start in October.’⁹⁰ I cannot say that evening interviews proved any more enlightening than daytime ones, in fact the optimum time to catch a farmer at home appeared to be around 2 o’clock in the afternoon, however the season was an important factor, as the vast majority of interviewees, even into the eighties, were still working on their families’ farms, and so interviews had to come second to farm work. Auction days were a fantastic opportunity to use network connections to gain introductions to, and exchange contact information with, potential interviewees, but were bad days to attempt to conduct an interview. Even when the sale itself only lasted half the day, the rest of the day’s work was still to do, therefore no active sheep farmer, for example, was interviewed on a Monday. Stephen Caunce stressed the importance of selecting an approach ‘appropriate for both the task and the temperament of the collector,’ and these factors have indeed shaped this study.⁹¹ Based on the nature of my experience and skillset, and the nature of those people with whom I was trying to speak, the planned ‘vox-pop’ method of interviewing numerous individuals for a short period of time, was unsuccessful. The approach of visiting fewer individuals for longer periods, and collecting much more detailed, ‘life-story’ style recollections was much more successful, as interviewees seemed to feel far more comfortable and therefore able to recall more details when in their own homes, or the home of a friend, usually with a cup of tea, and the time to think over their answers in a quiet, unrushed environment.

Potential interviewees were contacted either in person at the auction mart or by letter, making sure to mention the mutual acquaintance who had recommended the person, and my local address. Following this, a date and time for interview was arranged by telephone, putting the interviewee in control of when and where the interview was to take place. A list of topics and potential questions would be taken to the interview, but no formal questionnaire was given. A casual and friendly atmosphere was far more conducive to relaxed and informative recollection than a formal session would have been. Indeed, many interviewees were made nervous by the suggestion that the research was academic in nature. After an initial connection had been established, I was able to explain that the information I was given would be used for my PhD research, however responses to this level of academia being mentioned early on in the conversation were unfavourable, and a small number of potential interviewees were lost

⁹⁰ Ewart Evans, *Spoken History*, p. 29.

⁹¹ Caunce, *Oral History and the Local Historian*, p. 27.

through people feeling that they would not be able to contribute to any sort of academic work. In response to this, I began to introduce my work as ‘a history project’ when first broaching the subject of asking for participation. This encouraged interviewees to think about the small details of life during the study period, which they often believed would not be of any interest to a serious researcher. Once my interest in these apparently minor details had been established, I was then able to explain fully the level at which I intended to write about the community.

My own place as part of the Lower Wharfedale farming community, as the daughter of a local farmer, and former pupil at local schools alongside many interviewees’ grandchildren was certainly advantageous in that I, or at least my family, were already known to many of the interviewees when I first contacted them. This meant that many were inclined to see speaking to me as a personal favour, and as non-threatening; I also believe that being a young woman helped here, as I was being invited into interviewees’ homes. This in itself requires trust on both sides. I was able to use the ‘snowball sampling’ method as a way of making sure that interviewees who were not personally known to me were vouched for by other people whom I trusted, before I visited them in their homes. My use of personal networks to collect contact details for potential interviewees, and my emphasis on my own local background and family connections was a hugely important aspect in gaining the interviews I did, and this was proved by the reactions I received upon contacting people. One interviewee told me that, had he not recognised my family name and address at the last moment, my letter to him requesting an interview would have ended up on his fire. Others, whom I met at the auction, with the help of the mart staff, expressed their willingness to speak to me in terms of a favour to the staff member who introduced us. Further connections were established between myself and auction-going interviewees by explaining my connection to Billy Rowling, a former director of the Wharfedale Farmers’ Auction Mart, and a relative with whom I was fortunate enough to share a surname and locality. These connections may explain why I achieved so many interviews, particularly with individuals who would almost certainly not have agreed to be interviewed by a stranger. Some interviewees, with whom I had no prior personal relationship, did not always fully grasp my background when I began to speak to them. I found that explaining my background and farming connection again, and even speaking a little about my family’s

cattle, or auction visits, tended to reinforce my insider status in the farming community, and allowed the interviewee to relax and speak more freely.

It is impossible that my own personal connections and identity have not influenced interviewees' responses in some way, and this can be negative as well as positive. I noticed a tendency, early on the interviews, for participants to speak in a 'telephone voice', more stilted than their natural manner, and in language which was not wholly natural to them. Sometimes, particularly among men, this was reinforced by a partner's warning not to swear on tape. My age and gender may have contributed to this, as the majority of interviewees were male and aged over seventy, and therefore generally held the belief that swearing, or speaking very casually or explicitly in front of a young lady would be unacceptable. This was compounded by some of the older participants assuming that I was very young, far younger than my actual age, with one man estimating my age at fourteen. This was quickly corrected where it became apparent, but may still have affected other interviews and what interviewees felt that they could share with me. Furthermore, participants who knew my family may have felt that I was perhaps too close to their community for them to share personal information. For example, upon realising that my grandmother and her siblings had been his childhood friends, one interviewee joked, 'Bloody hell, you've got to keep your gob shut, haven't you!'⁹² These potential problems were clearest when the conversation turned towards gender relations, for example what went on between farm lads and Women's Land Army members at local dances, or in the recounting of events when swearing may have been involved. In these cases, events or phrasing might be hinted at, but were not always made explicit. One way around this issue, or which at least seemed to partially counteract the reticence which may have sprung from speaking to me alone, was to speak to two participants together, where the participants already knew one another very well. This was effective with couples, where husband and wife were interviewed together, for example Betty and Ted Haxby, Betty and Derek Illingworth, or Jean and Frank Morphet, but it was even more effective when two participants of the same sex were interviewed together, as in the case of Thomas Mickle and Ernest Cawkwell. This style of interview allowed the participants to converse casually with one another about remembered events, encouraging a more natural speaking pattern, and allowing the interviewer to take a back seat in the conversation, only having to

⁹² F. Morphet, interview by J. Rowling, Hampsthwaite, 18 July 2013.

speak to introduce a new topic for conversation between the participants. In the case of women, interviewing married couples together could be more successful than interviewing women alone, as husbands often prompted wives to recall particular events or details, or asked them for confirmation that a memory was correct, adding further details from a differing point of view. This method, of course, ran the risk of women feeling that they could not say certain things in front of their husbands, but in practice, women who began the interview by insisting they did not know anything which was likely to be of interest to me, quickly started to correct husbands' misconceptions about women's work, and to add extra information to mutually recollected events.

Following the interview, participants were asked to sign the permission and copyright form, which had been explained at the start of the visit.⁹³ The implications of the form were explained once again, and an opportunity given for parts of the recording to be excluded from being used or shared. Anonymity was also offered at this point, and any requests made by the participant were written down. Within a few days of the interview taking place, a thank you card was sent to each participant, expressing appreciation for their time, and thanks for their help. Each thank you letter was handwritten, as this gave a more personal feel to the communication, and, due to the ethical issues surrounding interviewing older people, discussed above, I felt that this small effort was an important one to make.

Location

The location for this study was chosen because of the unique opportunity it afforded me, as a researcher, to get inside a closed community, which would not be open to another investigator. Because of this, and the focus on community, the defining of the study area was very much participant-led, the boundaries of the area being drawn around the networks which became evident through the 'snowball sampling' method of recruiting interviewees, the customer lists of Mainprize and Wood Ltd, a local agricultural chemists business, and the catchment area of the Wharfedale Farmers' Auction Mart at the centre of the study area. Due to this, the area which will be referred

⁹³ See Appendix 1.

to as 'Lower Wharfedale' does not precisely correspond to geographical features and boundaries which have previously been held to make up this locality.

Lower Wharfedale in Literature

The River Wharfe, on which even the broadest definition of Wharfedale must be based, begins at Oughtershaw, six miles from Hawes, in the Yorkshire Dales National Park, and joins the Ouse at Cawood, where the ground flattens out towards the Vale of York. It flows through both North and West Yorkshire, passing bleak moorland, steep fells, thick forest, and fertile agricultural land.

What actually constitutes Lower Wharfedale is far from clear. The Ordnance Survey map of the area covers Lower Wharfedale and the Washburn Valley, spanning the valleys from Darley to Yeadon, and following the length River Wharfe from Howgill to Collingham.⁹⁴ Modern tourist guides to Lower Wharfedale interpret its boundaries in very different ways. YorkshireNet's tourist guide to Lower Wharfedale focuses on Ilkley, Otley, and Harewood.⁹⁵ 'Out of Oblivion', a website devoted to landscape history information for walkers, describes the area between Bolton Abbey and Grassington as 'Lower Wharfedale'.⁹⁶ In contrast, Edmund Bogg's 1923 walking guide, *Lower Wharfedale*, took the definition in the opposite direction, beginning at York and Ainsty and reaching only as far up the valley as Pool.⁹⁷ Similarly, Bogg's predecessor as cataloguer of Wharfedale, Harry Speight, located Lower Wharfedale between Cawood, where the Wharfe joins the Ouse, and Creskeld, between Arthington and Pool.⁹⁸ He begins his *Upper Wharfedale* volume at Otley, and continues as far as the source of the river, two and a half miles above Oughtershaw.⁹⁹

A contemporary of Speight, and fellow 'advocate of pedestrianism', Fred Cobley described the regions of Wharfedale thus:

⁹⁴ Ordnance Survey map of 'Lower Wharfedale and the Washburn Valley' (Explorer Map 297).

⁹⁵ YorkshireNet, <http://www.yorkshirenet.co.uk/yorkshire-west-south/lower-wharfedale.htm> [viewed 19 November 2013].

⁹⁶ 'Out of Oblivion', <http://www.outofoblivion.org.uk/lowharfedale.asp> [viewed 19 November 2013].

⁹⁷ E. Bogg, *Lower Wharfedale: The Old City of York and the Ainsty, the Region of Historic Memories* (Leeds, 1923).

⁹⁸ H. Speight, *Lower Wharfedale: Being a complete account of the history, antiquities and scenery of the picturesque valley of the Wharfe, from Cawood to Arthington* (London, 1902).

⁹⁹ H. Speight, *Upper Wharfedale: Being a complete account of the history, antiquities and scenery of the picturesque valley of the Wharfe, from Otley to Langstrothdale* (London, 1900).

From above Outershaw to the point where it emerges into the great Yorkshire plain a little beyond Harewood, and where Wharfedale proper may be said to terminate, the river traverses no less than three distinct regions, each presenting different features.¹⁰⁰

Cobley located Upper Wharfedale between Outershaw and Burnsall, where the landscape, ‘torn and upheaved, as it seems to have been, by some tremendous convulsion of nature, presents almost an endless succession of rugged hills and mountain ranges, with beautiful dales lying nestling between.’¹⁰¹ The middle portion of the valley, extending from Burnsall Bridge to Bolton Bridge, was characterised by thick woodland, giving ‘the appearance of a great park.’¹⁰² Lower Wharfedale, to Cobley’s mind, was synonymous with agriculture. Located to the east of Bolton Bridge, where ‘the valley begins to expand, and the rich herbage of the lowlands on each bank of the stream indicate a fruitful soil and a prosperous prosecution of agricultural pursuits.’¹⁰³ The book takes Harewood as its starting point in an ascension to the source of the Wharfe. The *Ward and Lock Guide to Harrogate, Knaresborough, Ripon, Ilkley and York*, which provided local tourist information for visitors to the area, mainly focusing on Harrogate, includes a map of ‘Wharfedale’ in its ‘Walks from Harrogate’ section. This map identifies ‘Wharfedale’ as extending from Burnsall to Wetherby, with no ‘Upper’ or ‘Lower’ denoted.¹⁰⁴ However, we can assume from the book’s ‘Notes for Anglers’ that the authors share Cobley’s definition of Upper Wharfedale, as information about angling in the Wharfe covers locations as far west as Bolton Woods, while Appletreewick is relegated to a small paragraph titled ‘Upper Wharfedale’.¹⁰⁵ Arthur H. Norway, writing in 1899, took Otley as a significant point, seeming to begin his definition of Lower Wharfedale there, describing it as, ‘[lying] in the opening of Wharfedale, a wide and spacious gateway to the moors.’ Where Bogg, Cobley, and Speight waxed lyrical about Otley’s quaintness and hidden gems, Norway, focusing on

¹⁰⁰ F. Cobley, *On Foot through Wharfedale: Descriptive and Historical Notes of the Towns and Villages of Upper and Lower Wharfedale* (Otley, 1882), p. 4.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* p. 4.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁴ Ward, Lock & Co., *Illustrated Guide Books: Harrogate, Knaresborough, Ripon, Ilkley and York*, 9th edition, (London, 1912/13), p. 25

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* *Harrogate*, p. 86.

the roads themselves, condemned it as having ‘little distinction.’¹⁰⁶ Norway finishes his tour of Wharfedale at Skipton, describing the route thereon to Grassington as ‘the higher regions of the river.’¹⁰⁷

One thing which remains constant throughout these descriptions is the importance of the river. The walking guides all return to the river to lead the pedestrian holidaymaker up the dale, while divisions between upper, lower, and middle regions of Wharfedale are universally placed at points where bridges cross the Wharfe.

The area identified by this study most closely resembles that covered by Edmund Bogg in his walking guide, *The Middle Valley of the Wharfe: From Woodhall Bridge to Harewood, Otley and Ilkley*.¹⁰⁸ As with the other contemporary guides, this book closely follows the river, and sets itself between Woodhall Bridge, and the bridge at Ilkley. Once again, however, no explicit mention is given to the extent to which the area extends to the north and south of the river. Geographically speaking, the edges of Wharfedale are as clear as any other dale, being the highest point of the hills which separate the valley from its neighbours. On the south side, Arthington Banks, Otley Chevin, Rombald’s Moor (the Ilkley Moor of *On Ilkla Moor Baht ’at* fame) make up a convincing boundary. On the north side, the line of the hills is pierced by the Washburn Valley, but a rough line could be traced through Almscliffe Crag and Forest Moor to indicate the highest point of the hills separating Wharfedale from Nidderdale.

Cobley’s is the only one of the abovementioned volumes which makes any attempt to show the extent to which Wharfedale ranges away from the river. Cobley’s ‘Plan of the Route taken “On Foot through Wharfedale”’ shows the north edge of the valley clearly marked by geographical features: Cam Fell leads to Deepdale Chase, and to Little and Great Whernside, followed by Hebden Moor, Appletreewick Moor, and Bewerley Moor, around the tributaries of the Washburn. The boundary curves around the north of Pateley Bridge, and then follows the route of the modern B6165 to Ripley, and then to the east of Harrogate. The boundary moves south from Harrogate across the valley to Harewood. As expected, the boundary on the southern edge of the valley is influenced by Otley Chevin and Rombald’s Moor, but with detours to take in

¹⁰⁶ A. H. Norway, *Highways and Byways in Yorkshire* (New York, 1899), p. 318.

¹⁰⁷ Norway, *Highways and Byways in Yorkshire*, p. 338.

¹⁰⁸ E. Bogg, *The Middle Valley of the Wharfe: From Woodhall Bridge to Harewood, Otley and Ilkley* (Leeds, 1922).

Hawkesworth Hall and Silsden. From here, the boundary follows an S-shaped line through Draughton, Skipton, Thortley, Gargrave, Eshton, Winterburn and Cracoe to Linton. The valley narrows at Grassington and Kilnsey, and then the boundary continues in a straight line from Kilnsey back to Cam Fell.¹⁰⁹ It is interesting to note that, as with the communities identified in this study, Cobley's definition of 'Wharfedale' in fact extends north into Nidderdale so far as to cross to the northern side of the River Nidd between Pateley Bridge and Ripley.

This definition of the boundaries of Wharfedale isolates a unit of land which shares a cohesive landscape type, characterised by managed grassland mostly situated on rocky hills, and a smattering of arable land. This area is noticeably different to the urban landscape to the south and the rougher grazing land to the north. It also differs from the flat, open plain which opens out from the lower end of the study area at Wetherby, and the steeper, rockier, and more dramatic landscape above Skipton, which is more typical of the 'Yorkshire Dales' region.

¹⁰⁹ Cobley, *On Foot through Wharfedale*, p. 303.

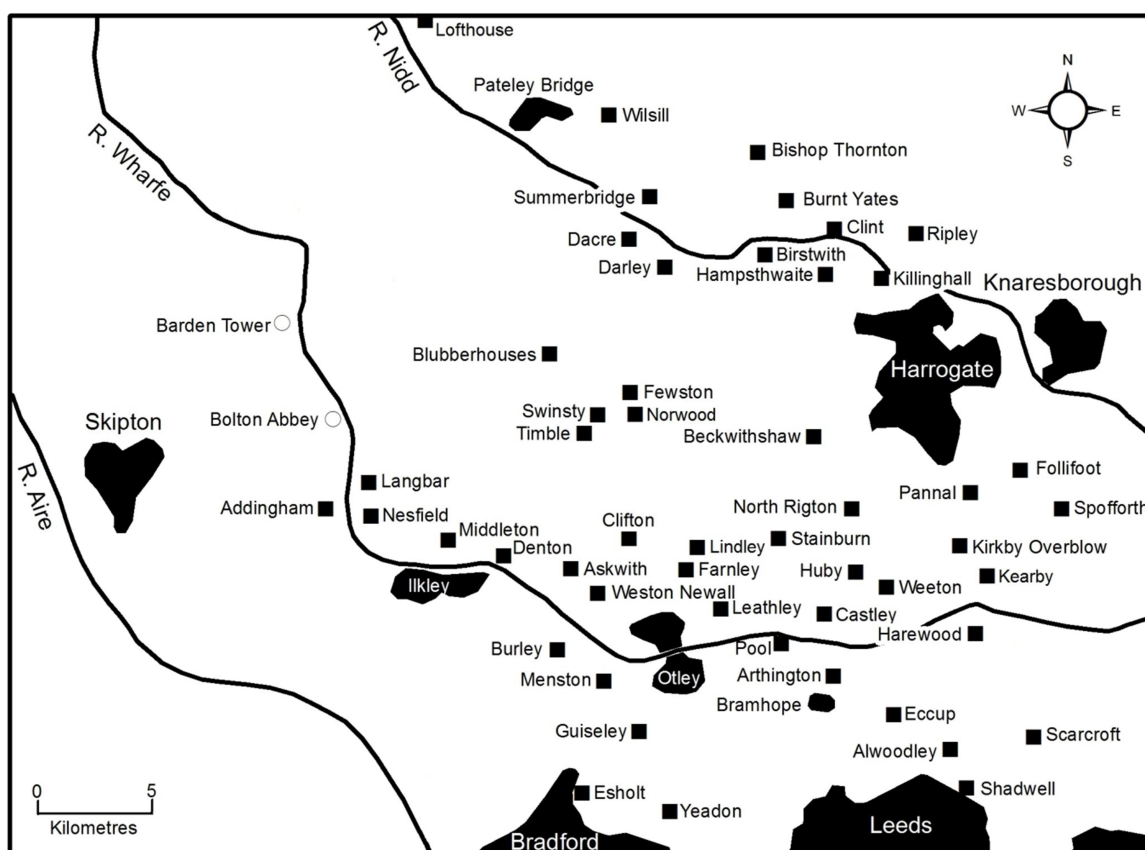


Fig. 1.1 Map of the study area to be described by the term 'Lower Wharfedale'

The Customers of Mainprize and Wood Ltd: Analysis and Surname Index

A further source which can be used to establish the meaning of 'local' in Wharfedale, and thereby shed light on the boundaries of community is the customer list of a local business. Mainprize and Wood Ltd., an agricultural chemists' business which was based on Kirkgate in Otley, has now closed, but the customer list of the agricultural side of the business, is kept at Otley Museum. This was obviously very much a working document, as names have been added by different people as and when individuals became customers, with only a basic adherence to alphabetical order. Based on the individuals named, the document appears to have been compiled during the 1920s 1930s, and perhaps 1940s, although it is undated in the archival description.¹¹⁰ In the first half of the twentieth century, the business had separate agricultural and non-agricultural sides, and was well-known for producing its own mixtures, compounds and medicines. Later the production of bespoke medicines ceased, and the agricultural side closed down altogether.

¹¹⁰ Mainprize and Wood List of Farmers and Farms, Otley Museum.

The list has the advantage of coming from an Otley business, Otley being one of the key market towns in this area, and geographically quite centrally placed in the study area. Furthermore, the firm had a close association with the farmers who flocked to Otley to attend the local auction marts, shown by the presence of Mainprize and Wood advertising at both auction mart sites and in mart literature. For example, in a 1902 sale catalogue for the Otley Old Auction Mart on Station Road, an advert is printed promoting:

J. W. Mainprize, Agricultural Chemist

19, Kirkgate, Otley

Special agent for Day, Son & Hewitt's Horse

& Cattle Medicines

Boxes at either side of the main advertisement also promote 'Mainprize's Poultry Powder', and 'Mainprize's Condition Powders.'¹¹¹ A photograph of the Wharfedale Farmers' Auction Mart Christmas Show and Sale 1935 shows a board beside the mart office door likewise promoting 'J. W. Mainprize, Veterinary Chemist.'¹¹² The agricultural associations of the firm, and the separation of the agricultural side of the business from the side which functioned as a high street chemist, means that the customer list of Mainprize and Wood Ltd is actually titled 'List of Farmers and Farms', and as such it is representative of the farming community of the area.

The list is also useful because it comes from within the context of the community it is describing. It therefore has the potential to tell us a great deal more about the meaning of 'local', the distances people were willing to travel to buy for their farm business, and the impact of geographical boundaries on the extent of a community than a more exhaustive source such as the 1911 census or the National Farm Survey (1941-1943), in which boundaries to locality were imposed from outside. In addition to this, the list can be used to show how the community represented here was linked together through kinship, and how subdivisions into smaller and even more localised groups based on kin could be established within the farming community.

¹¹¹ Otley Old Auction Mart Catalogue, Otley Museum, O/SR/cg/1.

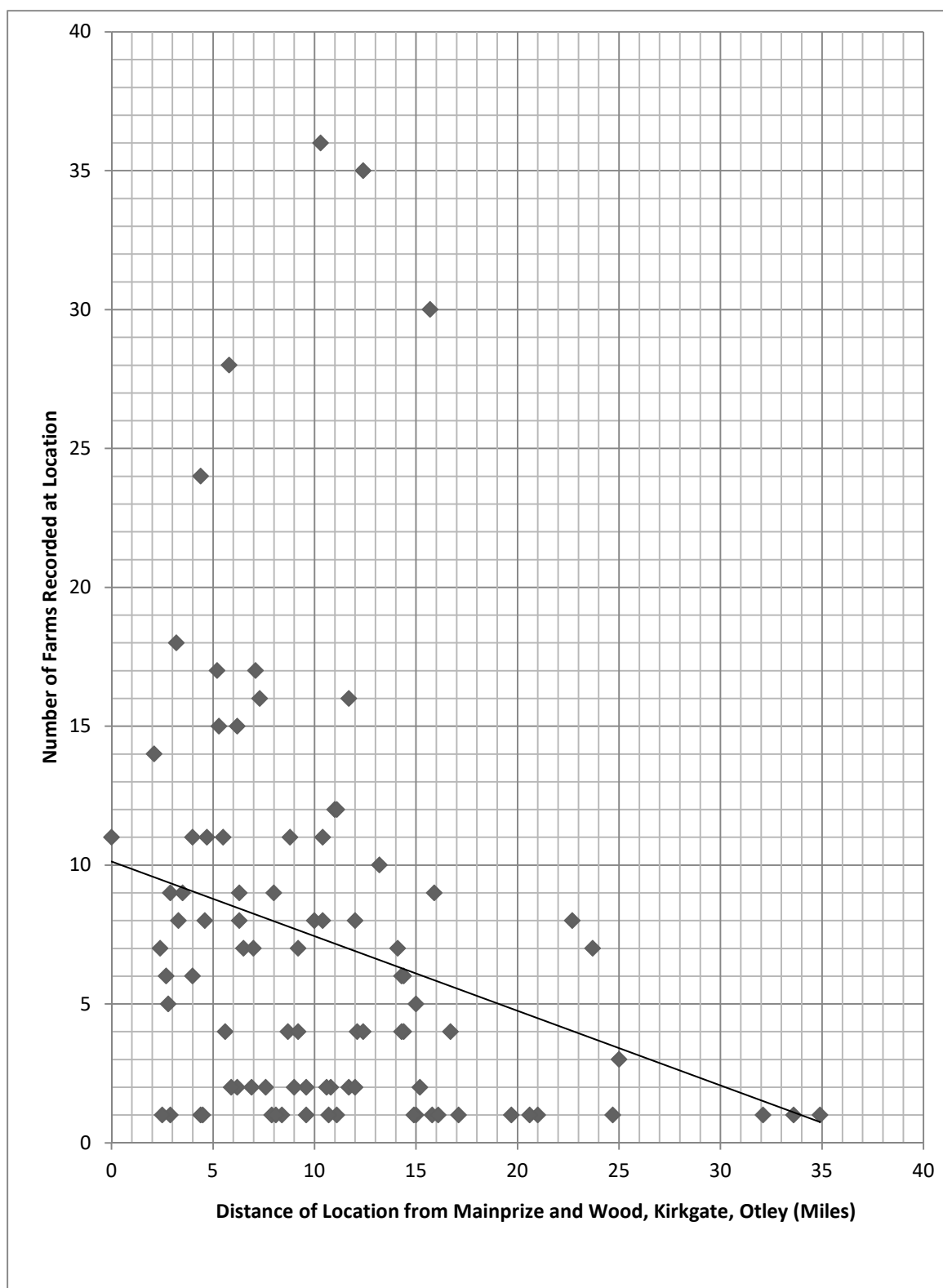
¹¹² Photograph of Wharfedale Farmers' Auction Mart Christmas Show December 9, 1935, Otley Museum, O/CH/PH 86.

The notion of context is key in examining community in the light of previous work on the subject. In particular, Walter Benjamin, from whose essays Kia Lindroos extrapolated the ‘Benjaminian’ community model, placed great emphasis on the importance of context in achieving full understanding of an entity.¹¹³ This theme can be seen in Benjamin’s work on translating, storytelling, theatre, art and history, among others. In ‘The Storyteller,’ Benjamin wrote: ‘traces of the storyteller cling to the story the same way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel.’¹¹⁴ In other words, the tradition and history of the community around a storyteller is moulded by the telling of the tale, and the experiences of the storyteller which led to him having the tale to tell. In this way concepts of ‘local’ and ‘our community’ may be shaped by the intra-community experiences of those who defined themselves as insiders, and likewise the sources coming out of these communities will be shaped by the community’s own image and understanding of itself. From the Mainprize and Wood list of farmers and farms, therefore, it is possible to see who considered themselves part of the community which frequented Otley and Otley’s agricultural businesses, and what distance they were prepared to travel to do so. From this it is then possible to gauge the geographical area this community saw itself as occupying, and, conversely, what areas were not included in this imagining.

Unsurprisingly, the majority of customers are from the central part of Lower Wharfedale, around Otley, though high numbers can still be found in outlying areas such as Pateley Bridge, Nesfield with Langbar, and the Ripley area.

¹¹³ K. Lindroos, ‘Scattering community: Benjamin on experience, narrative and history,’ *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 27: 6 (2001), pp. 22-23.

¹¹⁴ W. Benjamin, ‘The Storyteller,’ in H. Arendt (ed.), *Illuminations* (London, 1999), p. 91.



*Fig. 1.2 Graph to show the number of farms on Mainprize and Wood's customer list and their distances from the shop in the first half of the twentieth century*¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ The settlements under ten miles from Otley and represented by single farms should not be taken as evidence that the customer-community was patchy or unrepresentative of the farming community of

As this graph demonstrates, the majority of the villages and small towns in the Mainprize and Wood customer lists featured in the addresses of between one and ten farms and were less than fifteen miles from the business. Interestingly, those localities which are a longer distance away from Otley are not necessarily represented by fewer farms; even settlements between fifteen and twenty miles away were significant sources of agricultural customers. Bearing in mind the shape of the map of 'Wharfedale' given by Copley, and the shape of the networks revealed by interviewing, it is unsurprising that these more distant settlements mostly lie in the area of Nidderdale between Ripley and Pateley Bridge. Furthermore, while the three single farms from over thirty miles away from Otley may be disregarded as anomalies, the high numbers of farmers travelling from other distant addresses, beyond ten and even fifteen miles, confirms that we are seeing a widespread customer-base and a widespread community attached to an agricultural business.

Creating a surname index from this data further clarifies our understanding and visualisation of the way networks spanned this area, and how the community subdivided into localised social and kin groups. The surname index provides a number to describe the strength of core families in selected localities. By calculating the surname index we can find the area over which kin networks operated within the Lower Wharfedale area shown by the customer list.

In order to create this surname index, the villages represented by less than three farms were removed from the sample, as an index number could not be formulated from them, however, those addresses which gave both a small village name and the name of a larger settlement nearby, for example 'Haverah Park, Beckwithshaw', or 'Smelthouses, Pateley Bridge' were conflated with the addresses from the larger settlement, as this could be considered to be how the occupant of the address thought about his location.

The surname index is calculated using the formula $(S / N) \times 100 = X$, where S equals the number of discrete surnames in a data set, N equals the number of individuals in the same set, and X represents the index number. Therefore, the lower the index number, the more direct kin appear to exist in the selected locality. To give an

the area as a whole. Many of the villages closer to Otley, especially those around the Washburn Valley, are so small as to be significant in the addresses of only one or two farms.

example, the surnames of the customers of Mainprize and Wood with addresses in Timble are:

- Adkin
- Binns
- Bradley
- Bradley
- Dickinson
- Fowshaw
- Greenwood
- Greenwood
- Margerison
- Margerison
- Margerison
- Peel
- Pounder
- Roberts

In this case, N equals fourteen, but S equals ten. Therefore, X equals 71.4, indicating that there is a reasonably strong level of direct kinship among such farmers in this village. However, the majority of individual settlements had a very high index number, and many even had an index of one hundred, indicating by this measure of surname sharing, no direct kinship whatsoever. This is, of course, only one way of measuring kin ties, but it is a way that aids comparability and is readily interpretable.

However, when we apply this surname index formula to the opposite geographical extreme, the study area as a whole, the index number was significantly low, at 59.7, indicating that probable kin connections in the interwar period were spread across the entirety of the study area. A more interesting pattern emerges when we split the surname index between the two sides of the river. The south side of the Wharfe had a surname index of 85.5, while the north side, which includes sections of Nidderdale, had a significantly lower index value of 60.7. Sue Ford, who had been on the periphery of the farming community through family connections, but was not directly involved herself, said, ‘at one time in Pool you just didn’t know who was related to who, you

know, it was, “oh that’s my aunt,” you know, so they were all related in some way.’¹¹⁶ A running local joke is that one shouldn’t speak ill of anyone on the ‘other side of the river’ because everyone there is related. The same stereotype is applied on both sides of the river, with Frank Morphet in Hampsthwaite joking: ‘So you’re related to Towerses, bloody hell, you’ve got to keep your gob shut, haven’t you!’¹¹⁷ This is clearly local humour, and not meant to be taken entirely seriously, but stereotypes must contain a grain of truth in order to be recognisable. Further, the joke works as a symbol of the ‘otherness’ of the other side of the river. Victor Turner identifies symbols as, ‘instrumentalities of various forces... operating in isolable, changing fields of social relationships.’¹¹⁸

This result reinforces the assertion that the area to be defined in this study as ‘Lower Wharfedale’ does in fact extend beyond the apparent geographical boundaries and into Nidderdale, as shown on Cobley’s map, while remaining a cohesive unit with close kin connections. It is likely that the community during the period from 1914 to 1951 would have thought of itself in these kinds of terms, based around family names and genealogy, and it is largely how the community continues to conceptualise itself today. Anthony P. Cohen, in his *Belonging: Identity and social organisation in British rural cultures*, argued that a sense of belonging to a community must be continuously reinforced in order to sustain commitment to the community. This, he continued, is done by the constant evocation of what it means to belong, using, among other things, the shared knowledge of genealogy, and joking.¹¹⁹

Landlord-Tenant Relationships: Evidence from the National Farm Survey 1941-1943

While the evidence from Mainprize and Wood’s customer list is compelling, it is not totally conclusive alone. There remains the possibility that the customers were not a representative group, and therefore the conclusions drawn from this examination must be supported by another source in order to inform analyses of the meaning of ‘local’.

¹¹⁶ S. Ford, Interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, 01.08.12.

¹¹⁷ F. Morphet, Interview by J. Rowling, Hampsthwaite, 18.07.13.

¹¹⁸ V. Turner, ‘Symbolic Studies’, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 4 (1975), p. 145.

¹¹⁹ A. P. Cohen (ed.), *Belonging: Identity and social organisation in British rural cultures* (Manchester, 1982), p. 5.

For a representative sample, we turn to the National Farm Survey of the early 1940s, which aimed to record information about every farm in every parish. Parishes for use in this study were chosen on the basis of the definition of Lower Wharfedale drawn from Cobley's description (1882), from the oral history, and informed by Mainprize and Wood's customer list.

The geographical relationship between landlord and tenant is indicative of the way that people thought about their landscape, giving it connotations of ownership, identity, and community through an association of place with a particular landlord. This was confirmed in the oral history, in which tenants who had remained under a particular landlord for a long time took on this fact as an aspect of their identity and personal heritage. For example, J. B. Liddle recalled of his landlord, 'Major Fawkes encouraged me, he appreciated what was done on his estate, I was a tenant on his estate.'¹²⁰ Another interviewee, recalling the importance of a good landlord to farming tenants, said of the early part of the twentieth century that, 'Harewood Estates used to be the place to be.'¹²¹ Likewise, Michael Curran remembered that Princess Mary, the Princess Royal and wife of the Earl of Harewood during the study period, was an active figure in the community, attending local events and giving prizes at the local schools. It is therefore clear that being part of the large estates gave a sense of local belonging and identity. The largest estate in the study was Lascelles Estates Ltd., at Harewood, with 51 tenants in the area defined as 'Lower Wharfedale'. The table below shows the largest single landlords in the study area during the National Farm Survey (1941-1943), here defined as those landlords with over five tenanted properties.

Landlord Name	Location	Number of Tenanted Properties in Lower Wharfedale
Lascelles Estates Ltd.	Harewood	51
Leeds Corporation	Leeds	51
Major F. H. Horton-Fawkes	Farnley	45

¹²⁰ J. B. Liddle, Interview by Anne Roberts, 13 August 1980, Otley Museum, O/S/dc/3.

¹²¹ Anonymous, Interview by J. Rowling, Otley, 11 January 2011.

Vetenpont Estates	Skipton	21
West Riding County Council	Wakefield	18
Chatsworth Estates Co.	Bolton Abbey	10
Captain Dawson	Weston, Otley	10
Lieutenant Colonel Sheepshanks	Arthington	9
Commander Vavasour	Weston, Otley	9
Mrs Athron	Doncaster	7
Sir F. A. Aykroyd	Birstwith	7
Mrs Hill	Denton	7
Colonel V. J. Greenwood	Birstwith	6

Fig. 1.3: Table to show major landlords in Lower Wharfedale

The majority of tenants were those whose landlords held only one or two tenanted properties in the area. Of these, twenty properties were rented by individuals with the same surname as the landlord, making probable kin-tenants as a group the fifth largest group of tenants in the locality.

In order to see how kin and estate-community structures worked in Lower Wharfedale according to the National Farm Survey data, landlord and tenant addresses were analysed to ascertain in how many cases both individuals lived on the same side, or on different sides, of the River Wharfe. City corporation and council landlords were omitted as they were not individuals forming part of the community and community identity, while those individual landlords who were not from Wharfedale were placed into a separate group.

Landlord and Tenant Location	Percentage of Full Sample
Both North of River	45.2
Both South of River	24.3
Different Sides of River	4.3
Corporation/Council Landlords	18.0
Landlord Not in Wharfedale	8.2

Fig. 1.4: Table to show landlord-tenant geographies (%)

The number of landlord-tenant geographies crossing the river is extremely low, being lower even than the percentage of tenants who rented from individuals living outside the immediate Lower Wharfedale area. This confirms the idea presented by the Mainprize and Wood customer list, that the river was not only a physical boundary, but a social one as well. Furthermore, we can repeat this simple analysis within the group of landlords and tenants who appear to be kin.

Landlord and Tenant Location	Percentage of Kin Sample
Both North of River	80
Both South of River	10
Different Sides of River	5
Landlord Not in Wharfedale	5

Fig. 1.5 Table to show probable kin landlord-tenant geographies

Once again, the strength of kin networks north of the river in Wharfedale is displayed by the high percentage of tenant-landlord kin relationships which exist in this part of the study area. It is striking that the percentage of landlord-tenant kin relationships which cross the river is the same as the percentage of these relationships which cross into territory outside Wharfedale. This indicates that the river was as much of a cultural boundary as the edges of the study area.

Agriculture in Lower Wharfedale: A Brief Statistical Analysis of the National Farm Survey (1941-1943)

Data from the National Farm Survey of 1941-43 can also provide a snapshot of the type of farming which was being carried out in Lower Wharfedale at this time, and how it compared to wider national trends. Details of 600 survey returns from Lower Wharfedale were catalogued, yielding usable information on the holdings of 535 unique individuals in the study area. The total sizes of the holdings farmed by these individuals ranged enormously, from one acre to 3452 acres, which skewed the mean farm size upwards to 300 acres. However, in view of the fact that there were only four returns which held information on holdings over 400 acres, and that these forms amalgamated land outside Wharfedale with the holdings within Wharfedale parishes, a new mean was calculated for holdings of under 400 acres. The result of this, a mean value of 102.8

acres, correlated much more closely with the picture which emerged from the oral history, which had suggested that smaller farms, of around 100 acres were the norm at this time. This was also confirmed by the median value, which, at 70 acres, indicated that the majority of holdings were clustered around the smaller end of the scale. Similarly, the modal acreage for the area was only 5 acres, revealing the presence of a large number of smallholders farming on very small patches of land.

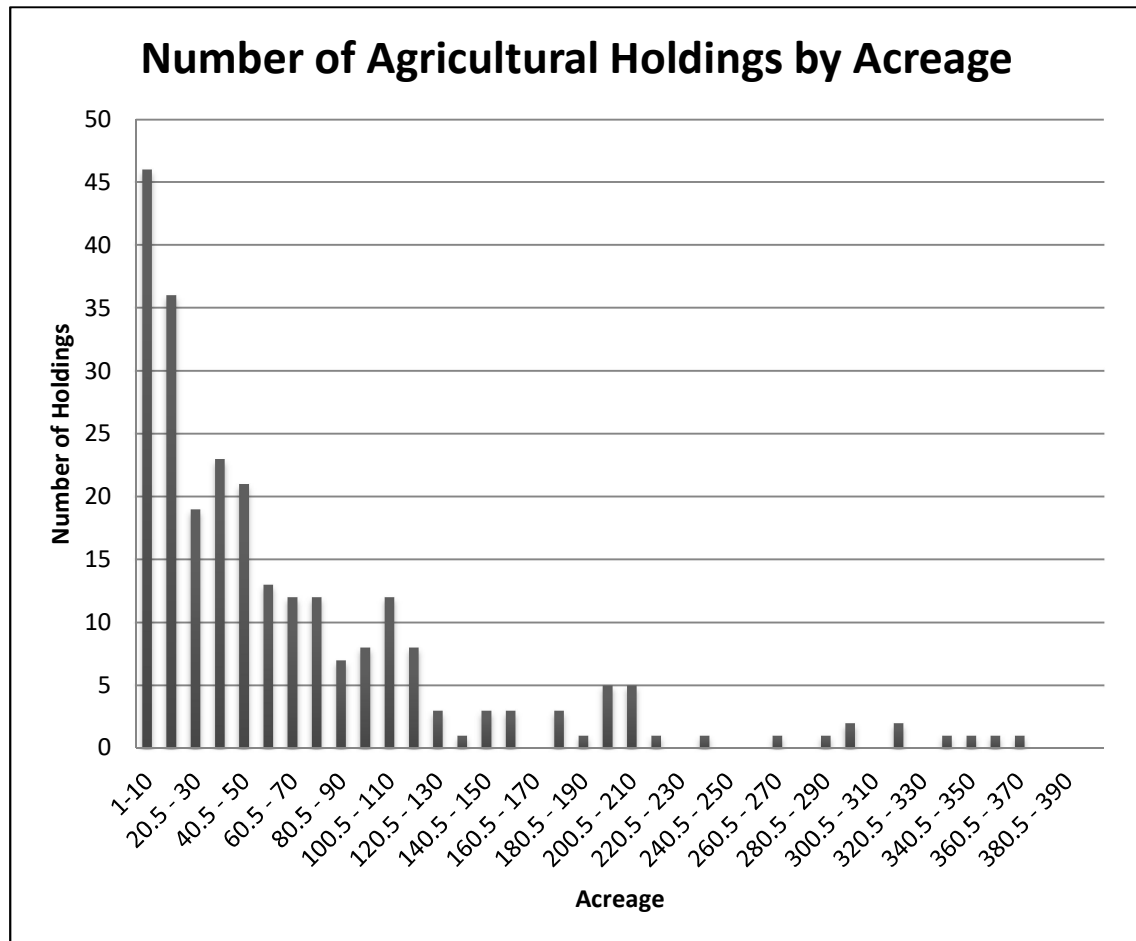


Fig. 1.6 Chart to show number of agricultural holdings by acreage in Lower Wharfedale in the National Farm Survey (1941-1943).

Unsurprisingly, the majority of those identified as the farmer, to whom the survey forms were addressed, were male (93.6 per cent), with 5.4 per cent being female, and the remainder being companies or organisations to whom a gender could not be ascribed. 71.8 per cent of respondents described themselves as full-time farmers, while 19.8 per cent had another occupation besides farming. Many of these occupations were agriculturally or rurally related, for example agricultural labourers, estate workers, blacksmiths, butchers, or cattle dealers, to list just a few, but other occupations included

manufacturers, a bank manager, a church organist, a postman, a caterer, a bus proprietor and driver, a medical practitioner, and a solicitor, among others. Many of these were the owners or tenants of the smallholdings of under ten acres which made up such a large proportion of the holdings for which acreages were given. Female labour on farms was unsurprisingly rarer than male labour, with one female worker for every 3.7 male workers, and regular labour drawn from the farmer's family was the most common employment pattern on the farms, particularly for women. 91 per cent of female labour came from the family, while 55 per cent of male labour was provided by family members. The list of farmers' second occupations, and the oral evidence, suggests that a significant proportion of the 45 per cent of the male agricultural labour force who were not drawn from the family on the farm at which they worked may have been neighbouring smallholders or farmers' sons.

Lengths of occupancy on agricultural holdings ranged from less than a year at the time of the National Farm Survey, to 71 years, with a mean length of occupancy across the study area of 15.4 years, and a mode of 10 years. This indicates a mixture of old and new tenants and owners, with a steady turnover rate, either through movement on and off farms, or succession from previous generations, the majority of farmers surveyed having taken possession of their farm in the later 1920s and early 1930s. This is interesting, as it was a time of depression. The graph below shows the changing price indices of all agricultural products combined for the period 1909 to 1951, as collected and calculated by the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF).¹²² This clearly demonstrates the agriculture was at a low ebb between 1925 and 1935, when the uptake of new tenancies and purchases of farms in Lower Wharfedale was at its peak. It is possible that this peak at such a financially difficult time indicates that a large number of farmers in this area, the previous tenants and owners of the farms in question, were forced out of business at this time, allowing new men with fresh ideas and capital to take over.

¹²² MAFF, *A Century of Agricultural Statistics: Great Britain 1866 – 1966* (London, 1968), p. 85.

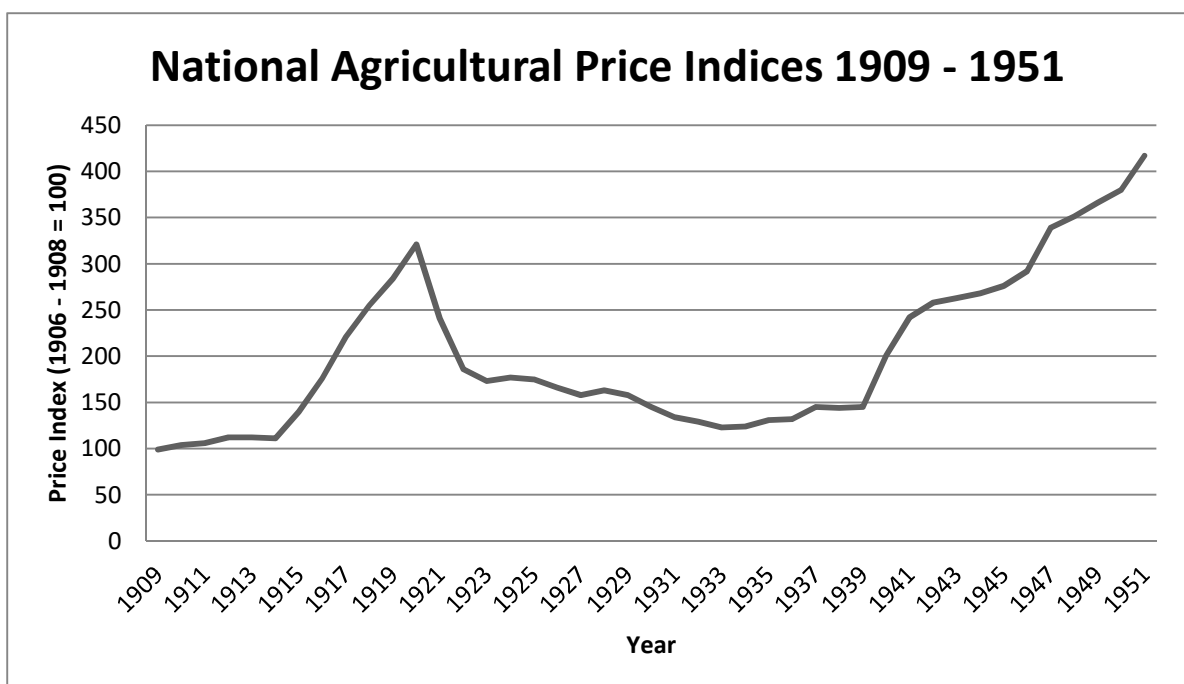


Fig. 1.7 Graph to show national agricultural price indices 1909-1951 according to MAFF

The majority of respondents, 78.9 per cent, were tenants, with only 19.3 identifying themselves as owner-occupiers, and rents paid and estimated land values varied widely across the area as a whole, often from parish to parish, landlord to landlord, and sometimes within parishes themselves. This is perhaps due to the variety of land qualities, as found by the County War Agricultural Executive Committee (CWAEC) officers who conducted the surveys. The surveyors categorised both arable and pasture land as good, fair, poor or bad, and the type of livestock kept on it can also give an impression of the kind of land this community relied upon.

Land Condition	Arable (%)	Pasture (%)
Good	43.1	30.5
Fair	43.5	48.9
Poor	4.3	11.5
Bad	0.5	1.4
Mixed	5.2	7.8
No Land of This Type	3.4	0.0

Fig. 1.8 Table to show percentage of holdings with different types and qualities of land

The table above (Fig. 1.8) shows that arable land was slightly more likely to be judged ‘good’ or ‘fair’ than pasture land, which was rather more likely to be ‘poor’ or ‘bad’. No one appeared to be farming land which was solely arable, but a small number were engaged in farming pasture land only. These figures reflect the different landscape types within the study area. While the area is physically distinct from the flat Vale of York to the east, the urban sprawl to the south, and the dramatic Yorkshire Dales landscape to the north and west, it is nevertheless not wholly internally consistent. The valley bottom is quite lush and green, compared to the hilltops and the part of the study area which spills over into Nidderdale, which have characteristics in common with the rougher, stonier moorland areas to the north. This land accounts for much of the ‘poor’ and ‘bad’ pasture, and, being difficult to manage as a pasture, is generally totally unsuitable for arable cultivation. This is reflected in the livestock numbers in these two landscape sub-types. The cow to sheep ratio in the valley bottom parishes was 1:2.15.¹²³ On the higher ground, in contrast, the National Farm Survey records one cow to every 23.6 sheep, indicating the difference in the suitability of the land for different types of livestock.¹²⁴ The presence of so many more sheep than cattle suggests a steeper, rockier, and sparser landscape.

Small farm sizes and unsuitable landscapes may account for the apparent slow uptake of tractor technology in the area. MAFF statistics show that countrywide, in 1942, horses outnumbered tractors 6:1. By 1952, tractors outnumbered agricultural horses by a ratio of 1.4:1 on a national scale. The National Farm Survey for Lower Wharfedale, in contrast, shows that farmers here in the early 1940s had one tractor for every 27.31 agricultural horses, placing them far behind the national figure in terms of tractor usage.¹²⁵ This is supported by the oral evidence, in which many farmers did not recall seeing a tractor until the outbreak of war, and even then many seemed to have come from ‘War Ag’ depots at Cartref in Pool-in-Wharfedale and from Carr Bank in Otley, rather than being owned by individual farmers.¹²⁶

¹²³ Arthington, Askwith, Bolton Abbey, Castley, Denton, Farnley, Harewood, Leathley, Lindley, Otley, Pannal, Pool, Stainburn, Weston.

¹²⁴ Birstwith, Blubberhouses, Clifton-with-Norwood, Felliscliffe, Fewston, Hampsthwaite, Nesfield-with-Langbar, Newall-with-Clifton, Skipton, Timble Great, Timble Little.

¹²⁵ This figure was derived from numbers of tractors alone, and does not include stationary engines or non-agricultural vehicles converted for agricultural use.

¹²⁶ H. Denton, interview by J. Rowling, Castley, 22 July 2012. Mr Denton recalled: ‘They had a depot just up, had the War Ag you know, just up at what they call Cartref. It was the buildings that went with

These statistics, then, provide a picture of Lower Wharfedale during our study period. To contemporaries from farther south, where land more suitable to arable cultivation was abundant, it may have appeared rather backward, and it was certainly lagging behind the national average in terms of technology, but this was an approach to agriculture which was suited to a landscape of small farms, set on land which was less than ideal, many in relatively new hands, which were emerging into a world which demanded agricultural intensification from holdings which had been dragged through the Depression by families relying mostly on labour provided by themselves and one or two neighbouring lads. 61.6 per cent of the farms had no electricity whatsoever at the time of the National Farm Survey, and a further 11.7 per cent had electricity supplied to the farmhouse only. Sheep and cattle featured heavily in the landscape, with sheep dominating the higher ground. This mixed system of agriculture facilitated the coming together of the local farming community of the area. The abundance of sheep and cattle, and a not insignificant number of pigs and poultry, made weekly livestock markets a central feature of life, while the arable aspect, which was a consideration on all but a handful of farms, opened the community to people in related occupations such as agricultural contracting, and created opportunities for networking and bonding through group events like threshing days.

The Meaning of Local: Participatory Mapping

While establishing the boundaries and meaning of the study area as a whole, it is important to retain a sense of its constituent parts, and the areas which had meaning for its inhabitants. To this end, and in the context of this particular community, participatory mapping has been employed to determine the answer to the question of ‘what is local?’

where Tom’s farm is. You went to it up by the church and up a lane at the top, and there were some old buildings there. It’d been the gentleman’s residence, I think Bob Feather built it, there were coach houses, then this other set of buildings and it was for all his hunting horses. There were three or four big stables, you know, cobbled yard, two, three, I think, big pig places. They used to keep pigs. And when it became empty I don’t know, Jane, because I never remember going up there with my dad before the War Ag came. Now, the War Ag took it as a depot, and my brother and myself spent hours up there, laiking on the tractors and tackle they used to store, you know [laughs]. And as I say I never remember going up there with my dad before they came, and I think I must have done because my dad used to be up there all the time, you know, but my brother and I, we spent some happy hours up there, Jane, laiking about with their tackle, you know [laughs]. We got to know quite a lot of men that worked there, and my dad knew them all, men that worked there, so, aye they were good days.’

Participatory mapping is a technique which has been used extensively among communities in developing countries, over the past two decades in particular, in order to further understanding of the way these communities interpret and visualise the landscapes which they occupy. It allows the communities themselves to express the importance of physical and socio-cultural features in their own way, and with a creativity which might not be possible using words. This can be combined with oral and written accounts to create a multidisciplinary and holistic picture of community beliefs, identities, and cultures.¹²⁷ It has also been used with children and young people to investigate cognitive-ability change by age regarding spatial awareness, and to gain information on childhood perspectives about urban geography.¹²⁸ Ioana Literat posits that this technique works well with young people as its ability to ‘elicit nuanced interpretations of social and geographic perceptions qualifies it as a promising strategy within the toolbox of both the teacher and the educational researcher.’¹²⁹ In the case of this project, not only did it encourage greater participant involvement in the research, but it also added multidisciplinary and non-verbal elements to evidence about how people viewed their own geographies, physical environments, and cultures as represented or remembered through landscape features.

Participants were asked to sketch a map of ‘your local area’ at a point during the study period.¹³⁰ These three words were important, and were used in the instructions to every participant in order to be sure that each map answered the same question, namely, how did people envisage the local in Lower Wharfedale? Participatory mapping was introduced to the project at a later stage, in response to the emergence of different interpretations of the meaning of the terms ‘local’ and ‘community’ during the interview process. For some, such as Jimmy Goodall, the bounds of ‘community’ stretched only as far as the farm boundary, and George Rice’s map of his local area at Carlton, near Yeadon, was similarly confined to the area immediately surrounding the

¹²⁷ International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), *Good Practices in Participatory Mapping* (2009), http://www.ifad.org/pub/map/PM_web.pdf [viewed 26.12.13], p. 4.

¹²⁸ I. Literat, ‘Participatory Mapping with Urban Youth: The visual elicitation of socio-spatial research data,’ *Learning, Media and Technology*, 38, No. 2 (2013), <http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy3.lib.le.ac.uk/doi/abs/10.1080/17439884.2013.782037#tabModule>.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ See Appendix 1 for maps.

farm where he worked.¹³¹ At the other end of the scale, Thomas Mickle and Ernest Cawkwell identified 'local' in terms of the 'local' auction marts as an area which included Otley and Skipton, conceding that the other marts they visited, at Bentham, Ripon, Masham, Thirsk and Lancaster were 'a bit further afield.'¹³² Michael Curran, asked about the geographical extent of his 'community' during the study period described:

We used to stretch up Bardsey, Harewood, Collingham sort of thing. That was the community as such, you know, in that area, but you get different people from different areas that, say you wanted help, they'd come and help you, you know... We were Harewood, Bardsey, Collingham, and probably Linton, and that'd be it like, we'd all have a different going on.¹³³

The use of the word 'we' to describe the community of which Mr Curran was a member emphasises the sense of identity which community participation, and a sense of the 'local' imparted to an individual, while the 'different going on' which different communities had (i.e. different activities, agriculture types and calendars based on soil and landscape type, and networks of individuals) served to delineate the cultural boundaries between 'us' and 'them'.

Between these definite ideas of what constituted 'local' and 'further afield' are some slightly more fluid ideas, which suggest different levels of 'local', spiralling down from the 'local' of 'local shows', down to the most immediate 'local' of 'round here'. The clearest example of this was given by Robin Cowgill, who described how he and his father would visit all the 'local' shows with their pedigree Friesian cattle: 'Halifax, Arthington, Harewood, Bingley, Gargrave, Malham, Kilnsey, Pateley.'¹³⁴ However, Mr Cowgill's map of 'round here' showed only Weston, bounded by the Wharfe on one side and the Prisoner of War Camp on the other, and stretching as far as the Bridge End Cattle Market at Otley.¹³⁵ Other activities could similarly widen a view of 'local', as shown by the map drawn by Mervyn Lister, who often travelled with family members

¹³¹ J. Goodall, interview by J. Rowling, Harrogate, 22 November 2012; G. Rice, Map of Carlton, Yeadon, 17 December 2013.

¹³² E. Cawkwell and T. Mickle, interview by J. Rowling, Askwith, 08 October 2012.

¹³³ M. Curran, interview by J. Rowling, East Keswick, 14 August 2012.

¹³⁴ R. Cowgill, interview by J. Rowling, Otley, 19 December 2013.

¹³⁵ R. Cowgill, Map of Weston, Otley, 19 December 2013.

undertaking their work for the family firm, F. M. Lister and Son, chartered surveyors, valuers, auctioneers, and land agents. This work regularly took them as far afield as Boroughbridge, Ripon, Pateley Bridge, Grassington, Skipton, Bradford, and Leeds, leading Mr Lister to depict these settlements around Otley, the base of the firm, as a central hub.¹³⁶

The Lister family and their firm also links to an interesting piece of evidence about the concept of local. The founder of the family firm, and local auctioneer, Fred Margerison Lister, was the proprietor of the Station Road Auction Mart in Otley. When the mart was bought out by the Wharfedale Farmers' Auction Mart in 1919, Mr Lister was employed by the Wharfedale Farmers' Mart as chief salesman for a minimum of three years, at a salary of £250 per annum, and signed an agreement to that effect. One of the terms of this agreement stated that, 'Mr Lister will not open or be interested in any auction mart within a radius of eight miles from Otley Station.'¹³⁷ The wording of this particular condition was later to cause problems, Mr Lister's grandson remembered, as it did not specify whether the eight miles was by road or as the crow flies, or whether it would be measured from station to station, to the town centre, to the other mart itself, or to any other point. This meant that when Mr Lister took another post at Bingley Auction Mart, arguments ensued about whether or not he was in breach of his contract. By road, Bingley Mart was over eight miles from Otley Station, but in a straight line it was not. As a result of this disagreement, Mr Lister resigned from the Wharfedale Farmers' Auction Mart, but remained a popular auctioneer at local sales, and on good terms with the farming community he served.¹³⁸ This raises an interesting point about the way people viewed the landscape and the meaning of local. The Wharfedale Farmers' Auction Mart clearly felt that a radius of eight miles was sufficient to prevent a conflict of interests for its chief salesman, and it identified the town's railway station as being of key importance to the survival of their mart. At this time, so many cattle were brought into Otley by train that permanent cattle pens were erected on the station platform, designed in such a way that the doors of the cattle wagons would open directly into them when the trains halted.¹³⁹ The mart proprietors seem to have viewed

¹³⁶ M. Lister, Map of Wharfedale and Areas, 02 January, 2014.

¹³⁷ Memorandum of Agreement, West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds, WYL 2276/Box 122 – Wharfedale Farmers Auction Market 1894-1927, File 1, 1920, Wharfedale Farmers Auction Market and H. D. Waite, B, 11 March, 1919.

¹³⁸ M. Lister, interview by J. Rowling, Otley, 02 January 2014.

¹³⁹ G. Haxby, Interview by J. Rowling, East Keswick, 03 October 2012.

the landscape very much as a map, drawing their eight mile radius as the crow flies. Mr Lister, and the farmers who supported him, on the other hand, appear to have seen their locality very differently. They took the 'eight miles' condition and applied it to the landscape which they saw, used, and lived in every day, judging eight miles by the distance one would have to walk cattle or drive a pony and trap between the two mart sites. By this measurement, Bingley Mart was well outside the eight mile distance stipulated in the contract, and obviously far enough that Mr Lister himself did not believe his post as salesman there constituted a conflict of interest. This interpretation of distance suggests that, at least in the early part of the study period, 'local' was a very fluid and subjective concept for farmers and agricultural people in Lower Wharfedale, relying on lived experience and ease of access for its definition, rather than positions on a map. The landscape and the 'local' were three-dimensional.

Conclusion

'Local' is a highly complex concept, which conveys very specific but very different meanings to different people, depending on how they interacted with their landscape and surroundings. The delineation of the study area has been made in accordance with the geographical, agricultural and social factors which can be discerned from the oral history evidence. This decision was informed by previous interpretations of the boundaries of Lower Wharfedale, but ultimately based on the social networks and local areas recognised by interviewees themselves. This approach resulted in the isolation of a single, geographically coherent location, a valley landscape, green and fertile enough for arable agriculture to take place during the ploughing up campaign of the wartime, but hilly and sparse enough for sheep farming to be a significant alternative form of agriculture, in which a scattered farming community existed through the personal links forged through shared interest in the type of land and agriculture which existed here, shared local knowledge, shared patronage of local businesses and businesspeople, and shared experiences of local events.

This investigation will consider the connections between the concepts of 'community' and 'local' in Lower Wharfedale between 1914 and 1951, in order to show how a shared sense of place linked people to their neighbours and impacted upon their sense of their own identity. This is particularly relevant to the exploration of a

farming community, to whom landscape and place were fundamental parts of everyday life and work. The study will examine how the linking of people to places engendered a feeling of belonging, and of recognition between members of the same community, and how this knowledge of place could be worn as a badge of insider status in the Wharfedale farming community. It will also briefly explore how this knowledge has been important, not only in Wharfedale's past, but in the course of this investigation itself.

2. Trust in a Masculine Space, and a Community within a Community: Auction Mart Culture in Lower Wharfedale, Yorkshire

(A version of this chapter was published in *Rural History* (Spring, 2015))

See: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/rural-history/article/trust-in-a-masculine-space-and-a-community-within-a-community-pre1950-auction-mart-culture-in-lower-wharfedale-yorkshire/30C58685DEEAB601565EEB01E532F568>)

In Wharfedale's farming community, as in many others, the auction mart was a space loaded with significance. Beyond its primary function as a location for business transactions, it effectively distilled and laid bare the social interactions of those who considered themselves the core element of the farming community: the farmers and labourers themselves. The mart site was physically, metaphorically, culturally and architecturally expressive of masculinity, segregation, identity and behavioural norms which starkly defined those who were in and those who were out. Furthermore, the particular atmosphere which surrounded the auction mart allowed these judgments to be made absolutely clear, in a way which would not be acceptable in another social situation. These qualities made the attendees of the auction mart a separate community within a community, which existed at predetermined intervals within the physical boundaries of the mart space.

The auction mart was, and still remains, a physical location to which livestock and occasionally other goods such as equestrian equipment or scrap may be brought for sale on designated days. The auctioneers' companies which run the sites often send out auctioneers and staff to run farm sales for private clients, for example at the close of a tenancy or following a significant change in agricultural focus. Cattle, sheep, pig, horse, fur and feather, and equipment or scrap sales take place on different days of the week, and the physical layout of the auction site separates, for instance, dairy from beef cattle, finished cattle from stores, and adult animals from juveniles.¹⁴⁰ The marts in neighbouring towns tend to co-operate with one another when arranging their sale

¹⁴⁰ Finished cattle are ready for slaughter, and will generally be bought by butchers. Stores are adult animals, but unfinished, which are sold to be fattened for meat.

schedules, so that it would be possible to visit different sales to buy the same variety of animal six days per week.

The mart staff are crucial members of this temporally redefinable community, recognised as having authority due to their position within the mart, and the skills upon which their employment is based, for example stock judging, animal handling, or overseeing monetary transactions. During the study period, mart staff would be male, confirming the masculine nature of the space, and I shall therefore refer to the auctioneer as ‘he’ in this chapter. However, as the twentieth century progressed, more women began to enter employment here. In the twenty-first century it is not unusual to see female staff handling animals, and working in the office, or as auctioneers. The auctioneer’s expertise allows him to value the animal as it enters the ring, and to set an initial asking price. He will then drop the price until he gets a bidder, at which time he will increase the price by small increments until the winning bid is made. Money is handed over in the mart office, commission is taken by the mart, and the seller receives the remainder.

In the twenty-first century auction marts are much reduced in number across England, having fallen from 554 in 1940 to just 90 in 2013.¹⁴¹ During the period 1914 to 1951, however, Wharfedale farmers were well supplied with locations to buy and sell livestock in this unique and highly ritualised social setting. In Wharfedale, local farmers could buy and sell livestock at Knaresborough, Wetherby, Pannal, Otley or Skipton, and in Otley alone four separate sites have hosted auction marts, with at least two being active simultaneously throughout the twentieth century, until the closure of Otley Bridge End Auction Mart in 2000.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ J. Wright, T. Stevens, R. Wilson, and J. Smith, ‘The effect of local livestock population changes on auction mart viability – a spatial analysis,’ *Journal of Rural Studies*, 18 (2002), p. 477.

The Livestock Auctioneers’ Association Limited, *Find an Auction Mart*, <http://www.laa.co.uk/find-auction-mart.php> [viewed 07.10.2013].

¹⁴² Otley marts: Otley Old Auction Mart on Station Road, 1874-1919; the Licks Cattle Market 1884 - 1934; Bridge End Auction Mart (the ‘bottom auction’) 1934-2000; Wharfedale Farmers’ Auction Mart on the Leeds Road (the ‘top auction’), 1893 – present.

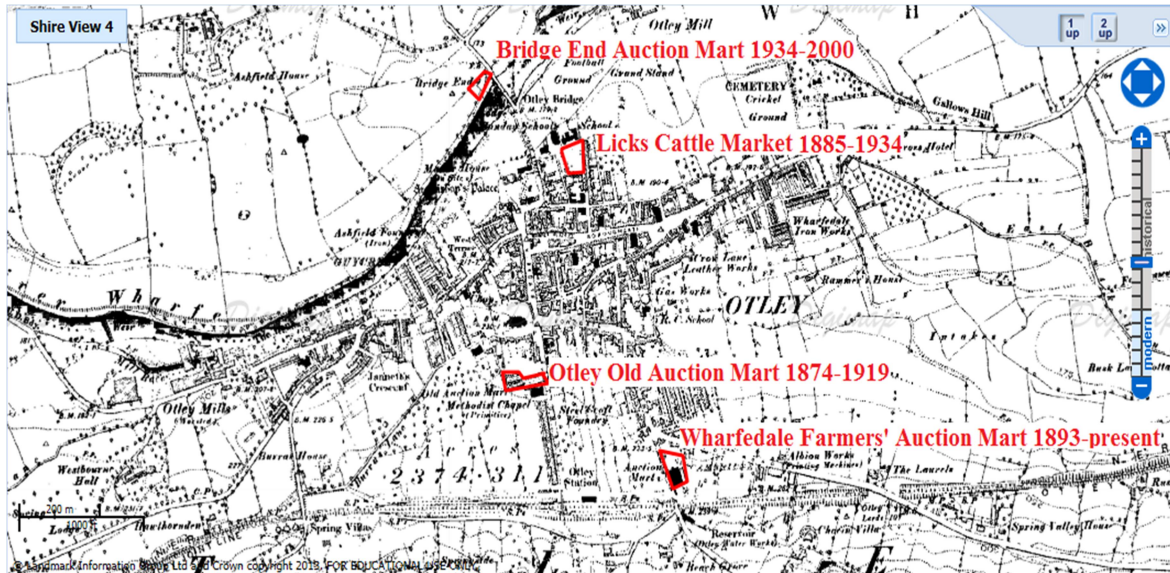


Fig. 2.1. Dates and locations of livestock markets in Otley¹⁴³

Literature, Theory, and the Mart

As a space which has been both physically and culturally closed throughout the study period, and remains so today, to a certain extent, the auction mart has stimulated little historical or sociological literature. The closed nature of the community which frequents the marts, and the perception of the mart sites as sanctuaries for insiders in the livestock farming community has preserved the cultural and behavioural norms and traditions into the present day, so that if one can gain admission to the community, one has access to a space which exists almost as a time capsule, and in which even small actions are loaded with traditional meaning.

These meanings come from the multiple functionality of the mart site. As well as providing a location for the sale of animals, the auction mart offers a secure arena for financial transactions, and acts as a social hub for an often scattered and isolated community. The communities belonging to the auction marts are, geographically, far larger than the market town and its immediate surroundings, but they demand rigorous adherence to a set of complex cultural norms to maintain insider status. Regular visits, long-term continuous attendance, and up-to-date knowledge of local information and

¹⁴³ Ordnance Survey County Series 1:10560, Yorkshire, 1st edition (1892), SE14, <http://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ancientroam/historic>. © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2014). All rights reserved. (1892).

price fluctuations are also necessary. In this way, the calendars of livestock farmers can often be dictated as much by the mart schedule as they are by the season.

The importance of the marts throughout the twentieth century can be seen in the popular culture of the wider farming community. In 1987, *The Dalesman* published a short collection of farming anecdotes and cartoons, including a story which many farmers, during interviews and in casual conversation, claim refers to one of their own family members or acquaintances. According to the story, a man's wife has died, and the family has met with the funeral director to make arrangements for the burial. After giving his condolences, the funeral director gently suggests a particular day might be suitable for the funeral. The family nod in agreement, but the widower pipes up, 'No, that won't do!' 'Why not?' he is asked. 'Well,' he replies, 'It's auction day!'¹⁴⁴ Sometimes the wife and widower are replaced by a deceased father and his eldest son, but the events remain the same. In all versions, the disagreeing speaker is male, and the one who might be expected to have most stake in the farm: the farmer who has to continue without his wife's support, or the eldest son who must take over from his father. The story should perhaps not be taken literally, but its repetition, and the common factors between repetitions, are significant in that they demonstrate the perception that mart attendance would be so important to *male* members of the farming community that they would place it above their own family, and would continue to have their schedules dictated by it even at a time of great family grief and upheaval.

The auction mart as a cultural space in the early twentieth century has not attracted a great deal of academic attention. In 1984, Koenraad Kuiper and Douglas Haggø conducted a study into the 'oral poetry' of the auction mart in New Zealand, in which they analysed the specific language and speech patterns of livestock auctioneers.¹⁴⁵ Rhoda Wilkie's *Livestock/Deadstock* (2010), an ethnographic study of agricultural workers in north-eastern Scotland discussed the meaning of the livestock mart to modern farmers in great detail, and explored the gendered culture which pertains to it.¹⁴⁶ This study investigated the importance of the mart to an agricultural community, and highlighted that tradition kept it alive. Wilkie referred to Charles

¹⁴⁴ The Dalesman, *Right in the Shippon* (Skipton, 1987), p. 6.

¹⁴⁵ K. Kuiper, and D. Haggø, 'Livestock auctions, oral poetry, and ordinary language,' *Language in Society*, 13, No. 2 (June, 1984).

¹⁴⁶ R. M. Wilkie, *Livestock/Deadstock: Working with Farm Animals from Birth to Slaughter* (Philadelphia, 2010).

Smith's 1989 *Auctions: The Social Construction of Value*, which acknowledges that the auction entity is governed by 'its own communal structures, rules, and practices, which determine everything from who can participate and the form of bidding to relationships among and between buyers and sellers and the role of the auctioneer.'¹⁴⁷ Aside from this, however, the majority of the literature relating to the auction mart approaches the subject from either an economic or nostalgic point of view. For example, C. Zulehner's article, 'Bidding behaviour in sequential cattle auctions' (2009) focuses heavily on questions such as 'the effects of the order of sale according to quality, secret reserve prices, bidders' multi-unit demands and the characteristics of the bidders' in auctions at Amstatten, in Austria.¹⁴⁸ Economists such as Paul Klemperer, Vijay Krishna and William Vickrey have written on the subject of 'auction theory,' which tackles the economic forces at work in both the ascending auction, such as the livestock mart, and in the first-price sealed-bid auction.¹⁴⁹ Ian Graham's PhD thesis from the University of Edinburgh, to which Wilkie also referred, addressed the rise of the electronic bidding system in order to question the wider understanding of the use of electronic commerce.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, an investigation into auction marts by J. Wright, T. Stephens, R. Wilson, and J. Smith produced 'The effect of local livestock population changes on auction market viability – a spatial analysis' (2002), which linked economic questions with those of science and animal welfare.¹⁵¹ At the opposite end of the spectrum lie articles like N. Farndale's 'Going, Going, Gone?' published in *Country Life* in 1995, which place the traditional auction mart in romantic countryside folklore, and simplify the complex social interactions and meanings which take place there. To Farndale:

The auctioneer's banter is as much a sound of the countryside as is the first cuckoo. His ability to read the minds and interpret the twitches and nods of craggy-faced buyers is as much a part of rural folklore as is the shepherd's delight of the red sky at dusk.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ C. Smith, *Auctions: The Social Construction of Value* (Berkeley, 1989), p. x.

¹⁴⁸ C. Zulehner, 'Bidding behaviour in sequential cattle auctions,' *International Journal of Industrial Organization*, 27 (2009), p. 33.

¹⁴⁹ P. Klemperer, *Auctions: Theory and Practice* (Oxford, 2004); V. Krishna, *Auction Theory* (London, 2002).

¹⁵⁰ I. Graham, 'The Construction of Electronic Markets,' Ph.D. diss., Edinburgh University (1999).

¹⁵¹ J. Wright, T. Stephens, R. Wilson, and J. Smith, 'The effect of local livestock population changes on auction mart viability – a spatial analysis,' *Journal of Rural Studies*, 18 (2002), p. 477.

¹⁵² N. Farndale, 'Going, going, gone?' *Country Life* (19 Jan., 1995), p. 26

Writing in 1995, he described the farmers who patronised the mart as ‘rubbing besmoked shoulders’ with one another.¹⁵³ The evocation of the image of a man in the final decade of the twentieth century wearing a smock, a garment which would have been outdated a century earlier, serves to emphasise the disparity between the mart of non-farming imagination and that of reality. This image, redolent of rural simplicity, also belies the complexity of social interactions in the mart environment. The multiple functions of the mart as a place of business, and a social space, a crucible where male farming identity was formed, and a sanctuary in which it was reinforced mean that it is high time that a number of theoretical aspects of auction mart culture be addressed.

This space is male-dominated today, and was almost exclusively masculine during the interwar, wartime, and immediate postwar periods. The theories surrounding masculinity are obviously deeply relevant to how male identities were moulded and recognised in this context, and to the questions about insider/outsider status which ran through almost every interaction within the farming community. This was particularly pertinent in the period beginning in 1914. As Joanna Bourke has shown in *Dismembering the Male: Men’s Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (1996), the First World War prompted questions about the nature and meaning of masculinity, and what it was to be a man.¹⁵⁴ Those who went to the Front had to face up to the idea that, simply by being male, the male body could apparently be maimed and sacrificed in a way which would not be socially acceptable for a female body; the injured soldier who was invalided home must deal with his new status as less than masculine, ‘the potent man *rendered* impotent;’ and the man who stayed at home, while remaining physically fully masculine, was compared unfavourably to the fully masculine soldier.¹⁵⁵

Bourke’s work is one of an increasing number to investigate the male body and the nature of masculinity in a historiography which has generally focused far more on the experience of the feminine. The twentieth-century surge in interest in the experience of life in the feminine private sphere was a backlash against the predominantly male, and therefore public, approach to history which had gone before. Aileen Kraditor explained that ‘strictly speaking, men have never had a “proper sphere,” since their

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁵⁴ J. Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men’s Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (1996, London, 1999), pp. 11-30.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 77, 38, 77.

sphere has been the world and all its activities.¹⁵⁶ However, those men who have shaped the 'world and all its activities' have been few, and in focusing on revealing the hidden history of the experience of women, the embodied experience of the ordinary man became, by virtue of its perceived universality, the experience of the ignored majority. Lawrence D. Berg and Robyn Longhurst cite Gillian Rose's *Feminism and Geography* (1993) as the beginning of an explicit focus on masculinism and masculinity in feminist and gender geography, yet writing on men's health in 2000, Jonathan Watson could still note that, 'what is striking is the absence of knowledge grounded in the everyday experiences of men themselves.'¹⁵⁷ This was also true in the case of the male body, in which the embodied experience of the privileged few was presented as representative of the whole, as historians studied the sports, public schools, and hunting expeditions of the élites which yielded the most evidence of nineteenth- and twentieth-century thought about the moulding of the male body.¹⁵⁸

In the unique environment of the auction mart, as in wider culture at this time, masculinity was linked to physical abilities of the male body. However, the mart also demanded a further dimension: knowledge about livestock, local people and the culture of the auction mart, and the skills to demonstrate this knowledge. Berg and Longhurst described masculinity as 'both temporally and geographically contingent,' and this absolutely applies to masculinity at the mart.¹⁵⁹ The aspects discussed here came together to form a body of proof that a particular individual was deserving of trust, and could therefore take insider status and masculinity at the auction mart as part of their personal identity. Many studies of the nature and meaning of 'community' have identified the importance of trust as a bonding agent between people who imagine themselves to be in a 'community'; indeed, Gerard Delanty identifies trust as one of the essential features of modern society, without which it could not function.¹⁶⁰ The reliance on trust, and the exclusivity of insider status, means that the mart space is also highly ritualised, and those who become insiders must endure a period of transition, such as the three-stage process identified by Arnold Van Gennep in *The Rites of*

¹⁵⁶ A. S. Kraditor, *Up from the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism* (Chicago, 1968), p. 9.

¹⁵⁷ L. D. Berg and R. Longhurst, 'Placing Masculinities and Geography,' *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 10, no. 4 (2003), p. 353; J. Watson, *Male Bodies: Health, Culture and Identity* (Buckingham, 2000), p. 2.

¹⁵⁸ Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p. 12.

¹⁵⁹ Berg and Longhurst, 'Placing Masculinities and Geography,' p. 352.

¹⁶⁰ G. Delanty, *Community* (2003, Oxon, 2010), p. 64.

Passage, and expanded upon by Victor Turner in *The Ritual Process*.¹⁶¹ The three stages, separation, margin, and aggregation, can be observed in terms of both individuals entering the community and in the community coming into its own identity in the late nineteenth century.¹⁶²

This chapter will argue that the people who attended this event regularly formed a community within a community; a separate, masculine, highly ritualised congregation inside the boundaries of the Wharfedale farming community. This inner community relied even more heavily than the more general farming community on the precepts of the ‘Benjaminian Community’: a feeling of ‘togetherness’, temporal redefinability, shared knowledge, and tradition. Through an exploration of the reasons auction marts were established; the skills on show there and their importance; initiation rites; the boundaries between insiders and outsiders; the rituals of membership; and the consequences of not obeying cultural norms, it argues that the dangers of the auction mart, both physical and financial, distilled the themes of status, belonging, trust, and identity which run throughout Wharfedale’s farming community to their most extreme forms.

Livestock, Skill, and the Establishment of Auction Mart Space

Otley’s first designated mart site was established on the Licks in the late 1880s, following a meeting of the Otley Local Board, reported in the *Ilkley Gazette* thus:

Mr Greaves referred to cattle dealers making use of the streets for the exposure of cattle for sale. It appeared that dealers were opposed to the market being removed from the streets. Mr Greaves said that before the Board proceeded to lay out a great sum of money in fitting up a new cattle market, they should first consider whether they could compel the dealers to go there.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (1908, London, 1977); V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (1969, New York, 1997).

¹⁶² Turner, *Ritual Process*, p. 94.

¹⁶³ ‘125 Years Ago - Cattle on the Streets of Otley,’ *Ilkley Gazette*, 19 February 2009, http://www.ilkelegazette.co.uk/features/featuresnostalgia/features_cross_old/4139088.Cattle_on_the_streets_of_Otley/ [viewed 07 October 2013].

Of course, specialised and physically separate livestock markets were far from an innovation by the 1880s. The first permanent site for a livestock market was created in Hawick, in the Scottish borders, in 1817. At this time, sales of animals by auction were subject to an auction tax of one shilling in the pound. The abolition of this tax in 1846 created a more encouraging environment for the establishment of permanent, dedicated livestock market sites.¹⁶⁴ The Smithfield Removal Act, which relocated live animals for sale from the streets of Smithfield, in London, to a dedicated site north of Islington, was passed in 1852, creating one of the largest and most iconic markets in the world.¹⁶⁵ The separation of the livestock market from the food and goods markets tended to be on the grounds of public health and public safety. In *The Adventures of Oliver Twist*, Charles Dickens described the Smithfield live-cattle market:

It was market-morning. The ground was covered, nearly ankle-deep, with filth and mire; and a thick steam, perpetually rising from the reeking bodies of the cattle... the whistling of drovers, the barking of dogs, the bellowing and plunging of oxen, the bleating of sheep, the grunting and squeaking of pigs; the cries of hawkers, the shouts, oaths, and quarrelling on all sides; the ringing of bells and roar of voices, that issued from every public house; the crowding, pushing, driving, beating, whooping and yelling; the hideous and discordant din...¹⁶⁶

These problems: manure, smells, noise, danger from loose animals, and inconvenience for the local populace, would be common, albeit on a much smaller scale, to every location at which cattle were sold in the streets. Non-specialised premises, such as the three acre open square with makeshift pens at Smithfield, or the winding streets of Otley, created problems for the men charged with handling the animals. Judith Flanders, in her detailed reconstruction of Dickens' London, described the way that the overcrowded and disorganised space resulted in cruelty to the animals, as they were beaten to force them to stand closer together, and 'hocked', beaten on the hind legs until

¹⁶⁴ 'A snapshot of auction markets over the decades,' *Farmers Guardian*, Anniversary Edition (07 February, 2014), p. 46.

¹⁶⁵ Smithfield Market Tenants' Association, *The Market: History of the Market* (2009-2012), <http://www.smithfieldmarket.com/content/market/history-of-the-market> [viewed 10 October 2013].

¹⁶⁶ C. Dickens, *The Adventures of Oliver Twist* (1838, London, 1866), p. 162.

they found it too painful to walk away.¹⁶⁷ Animals, particularly cattle, tired from their walk to the market, in pain and under extreme stress, with no proper facilities to contain them, were highly likely to get loose and cause chaos. Dickens, in *Dombey and Son* and his own diaries, described the cries of ‘Mad bull! Mad bull!’ and the screams and general pandemonium as people scrambled and fought one another to reach safety.¹⁶⁸

Despite the far smaller size of Otley’s market, some of the problems of Smithfield were echoed here. In 1885, in an article entitled ‘Board urged to tackle menace of cattle on Otley streets’, the *Wharfedale and Aireborough Observer* reported:

The cattle nuisance in the Otley streets has about reached its culminating point just as the Local Board has obtained its power to remedy it. On Easter Wednesday, the public thoroughfares were literally impassable, and I hope the Board will now adopt vigorous measures for speedily removing the intolerable nuisances. Last Friday there was a complete block at Robinson’s corner; three carriages had to stand still for some time until the drovers cleared a road through the herd of cattle, and that operation was not performed without the use of such language as should not have been heard by the occupants of the conveyances.¹⁶⁹

The solution to these problems was the establishment of the mart on the area of Otley known as The Licks, on Cattle Market Street. This appears originally to have been a public selling area, based on the bartering and haggling of the dealers, rather than an organised mart system with auctioneers. This is supported by the fact that John Dacre, of Dacre, Son and Hartley, a local firm then specialising in agriculture and livestock valuation, had built a small formal mart with a sale ring on the Otley Old Auction Mart

¹⁶⁷ J. Flanders, *The Victorian City: Everyday Life in Dickens’ London* (London, 2012), pp. 129-9.

¹⁶⁸ Flanders, *Victorian City*, p. 129.

¹⁶⁹ ‘Across the Years – 1885: Board urged to tackle menace of cattle on Otley streets’, *Wharfedale and Aireborough Observer* (15 April, 2010), http://www.wharfedaleobserver.co.uk/features/featuresnostalgia/8100030.Board_urged_to_tackle_menace_of_cattle_on_Otley_streets/ [viewed 16 October 2013]. ‘Robinson’s corner’ was probably the junction now known as ‘the Black Horse corner’, where a Grocer’s called Robinson’s used to stand opposite the pub. Adjacent to the market place and at the meeting point of the roads to Pool, Menston, and Otley Bridge, this junction remains one of the most congested in Otley.

site on Station Road in 1874.¹⁷⁰ The informal nature of the selling on the Licks is also supported by the lack of archival sources beyond a few photographs. Furthermore, the Ordnance Survey map of Otley from the 1890s, on which three separate spaces for selling livestock are marked, designated Otley Old Auction Mart and the Wharfedale Farmers' Auction Mart as 'Auction Mart', while the Licks is simply marked 'Cattle Market', indicating a subtle difference in the way the spaces were used.¹⁷¹ Photographs of the Licks Mart during its operation show hard standing for cattle, cobbled and sloped towards drainage channels to allow waste to be carried away. Fixed metal gates allowed cattle, sheep and pigs to be penned securely and more humanely, while high walls form a physical barrier between the auction site and the outside world.



Fig. 2.2. The Licks Cattle Market in the late nineteenth century (Otley Museum) O LK PH 3

¹⁷⁰ Dacre, Son & Hartley, 'History', http://www.dacres.co.uk/about_us/history/ [viewed 10 November 2013].

'Family History Steeped in Farming,' *Ripon Gazette* (02 July, 2007), <http://www.ripongazette.co.uk/news/local/family-history-steeped-in-farming-1-2633914> [viewed 10 November 2013].

¹⁷¹ Ordnance Survey County Series 1:2500, 1st edition, Yorkshire (1891), SE14, <http://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ancientroam/historic>.

This is Otley's first recorded instance of physical separation being enforced between those who were involved in agricultural business in the town, and those who were not, and as such may be viewed as deeply symbolic of the function the marts were to perform in future years. Crucially, it also removed the livestock and the men who handled the beasts from the space occupied by the rest of the town, and sequestered them away to a more private spot, where the animals would be controlled with high metal fences. The effect of this was to emphasise both the inherent danger in handling large animals, and, as a corollary to this, the skill of the men who did it.

This shift was an echo of that which occurred across a much wider geography in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and can be seen in the way the authors of contemporary regional rural fiction envision the landscapes and spaces their characters inhabit. Florence Bone, in *The Furrow on the Hill* describes:

It was market-day, and all the cobbled street was [sic] full of carts and stalls and farmers, who were all talking at once in a babel of broad Yorkshire about barley and oats, and sheep and pigs, and all the other things that belong to market-day in the country.¹⁷²

In this tale, published, tellingly, by the Religious Tract Society, the traditional Christian values of a highly traditional and somewhat sentimentalised rural Yorkshire village are contrasted with the starkly differing world of non-Christian India. Bone uses this very agriculturally-centred image of a small market town to suggest ideas of home, safety, and a comfortable belonging, which serves to cast her main character's experiences in India in an exaggeratedly alien light. It is striking, therefore, that a slightly nostalgic conjuring of 'home' in the earliest decades of the twentieth century should include such a high level of intermingling between agricultural and non-agricultural people.

Compare this to Ted and Betty Haxby's recollection of the market on the Licks in Otley during their childhood in the 1930s:

Mr Haxby: I never went to the auction, you know. I mean –

Mrs Haxby: You didn't, then, did you?

¹⁷² F. Bone, *The Furrow on the Hill* (London, 1912), p.80.

Mr Haxby: – they didn't allow – Well if you did you'd probably get chased out anyway, unless you knew somebody.¹⁷³

This presents a very different image of the market day, in which the market, removed from the streets, had become a closed space into which non-agricultural townspeople were no longer welcomed. To the majority of the increasingly urban population, the sights and sounds of the farmers buying and selling were no longer associated with 'home'. Kuiper and Haggo, in their linguistic exploration of auctioneers' patter noted that we cannot know how long the particular speech patterns of auctioneers today have been present, although they described the auctioneer as 'heir to an oral tradition.'¹⁷⁴ The study showed that way the auctioneer uses 'tone-units', or 'chunks' of words, coincides both with monetary units and with 'breath groups', while the famous repetitive patterns are a reaction to the heavy demands of the job on the short-term memory.¹⁷⁵ They further add that, 'auction speech sounds terribly fast to lay people [because of] its unfamiliarity. If they do not know the kinds of things that auctioneers say, they cannot follow what is being said.'¹⁷⁶ The mart was not simply a separate space, but it had its own separate vocabulary, the understanding of which emphasised its insiders' familiarity with the space.

By 1906, H. Rider Haggard, in his tour of rural England, could write of his visit to the nearby Farnley Estate: 'Otley, by the way, possesses two excellent auction marts, with weekly sales, at which are disposed of almost all the stock reared in the district.'¹⁷⁷ He also noted that the method of farming used in Lower Wharfedale to produce this stock, 'seems well suited to the locality, and new comers who attempt other fashions usually fail or fall into line with the local custom.'¹⁷⁸ From the beginning, therefore, the business of attending the marts in Otley became associated with skill and knowledge about livestock. The establishment of the first public livestock market site on the Licks signified a separation between those who could handle livestock, and those who could not; those who accepted the use of 'such language as should not have been heard by the occupants of the [carriages]' as a natural part of working with cattle, and those who did

¹⁷³ G. and E. Haxby, interview by J. Rowling, East Keswick, 03 October 2012.

¹⁷⁴ K. Kuiper and D. Haggo, 'Livestock auctions, oral poetry, and ordinary language,' *Language in Society*, 13, No. 2 (June, 1984), p. 207

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

¹⁷⁷ H. Rider Haggard, *Rural England*, vol. II (London, 1906), p. 305.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

not; those who believed that the selling of cattle was important enough to take over the town centre, and those who disagreed. The physical embodiment of ‘us’ and ‘them’ in the walls which encircled the mart sites were echoed in the cultural norms which sprang up to differentiate those who were welcomed inside from those who were perceived to have no business being there. This created the sense of ‘togetherness’ which Kia Lindroos identified as one of the central tenets of the ‘Benjaminian’ community model, and crafted the conditions in which knowledge could be shared privately among proven insiders only.

Additionally, van Gennep’s three stages of transition can be seen here, experienced by the mart community as a whole. Turner describes phase one as comprising ‘symbolic behaviour signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions (a “state”), or from both.’¹⁷⁹ For the mart community, this phase was a long one, shown in the fading of the cattle market from fictional and popular representations of ‘home’, and an increasing public disgust at livestock and their attendant dirt, noise and smells in the streets. The way in which non-farmers referred to the farmers and cattle-dealers as a group entirely separate from themselves in public conversation (conversation at meetings, which would be reported and read by the wider public) indicates an imaginary boundary was being constructed. The verbal ousting of the livestock-men from evocations of ‘us’ in the town, therefore, is symbolic of the impending transition. Phase two, the liminal period, is one of ambiguity, when the subject is neither of the past cultural realm nor the coming one.¹⁸⁰ Here this phase was characterised by the period in which existing practices were adapted to a more limited geography, but also by the simultaneous existence of a formal mart site on Station Road and the old fashioned bartering and haggling system in the streets. Containment of this system on the Licks made interactions there more formal, as dealers would have to work together to use the designated space. In the final phase, aggregation, ‘the ritual subject... is in a relatively stable state once more and, by virtue of this, has rights and obligations vis-à-vis others of a clearly defined and “structural” type.’¹⁸¹ In the case of the auction mart, this phase describes the new place the organisation would hold in the town: economically important, but physically separate. Formalised and given space and

¹⁷⁹ Turner, *Ritual Process*, p. 94.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

recognition, the mart now had the right to exist and to be respected as a legitimate business, but it also had an obligation to keep to its designated space.

Livestock knowledge could be demonstrated through the body, either through the masculine body of the handler, or through the body of the beast. Joanna Bourke explains the association in the early decades of the twentieth century, particularly during the First World War, between the whole, strong male body and masculinity. During wartime this feeling manifested itself as a sense that the injured, disabled, or otherwise incapable man was less than fully male, more a child than a man, because of his inability to fully take on traditional male work.¹⁸² Bourke illustrates this with the example of injured soldiers' compensation, which was awarded for the 'loss of amenity', rather than the 'loss of working capacity'. The missing or damaged body part 'incapacitated a man from "being" a man, rather than "acting" as one.'¹⁸³ Extrapolating this attitude from general society to the specific environment of the auction mart, it is arguable that the correct handling of the animals, demonstrating physical strength and physical skill, was a sign of a man being fully masculine. His ability to perform these tasks would be adversely affected by damage to his body, and limited by the same youth or old age which kept men from fighting in the trenches and thus rendered them unworthy of true masculinity.¹⁸⁴ Doreen Massey and John Allen have argued that a task performed by a male became categorised as skilled, rather than males gravitating towards skilled jobs.¹⁸⁵ To a certain extent, the community of the auction mart bears this out. The implicit association between physical skill and status is demonstrated in Lower Wharfedale by the surprise Ernest Cawkwell felt upon discovering his wife's talent for shearing sheep:

I were starting to clip, and I clipped two or three and then I showed her how we'd wrap the wool up, and of course she did that two or three times, and she says, "Can I have a do with the shears?"

So I says, "Aye!"

¹⁸² Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, pp. 38 and 74.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹⁸⁵ D. Massey and J. Allen (eds), *Geography Matters! A Reader* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 200.

So I tipped one up - caught it and tipped it up - and I just clipped round the neck and just started to open the belly up, and I says, "Aye, just have a go like."

This were with the hand shears. I were watching.

"Get on with your own!" She says! [laughs]

So I did and she clipped it like, and as she went on I could see she were getting better, you know. In fact she were bloody good!¹⁸⁶

A useful physical skill demanded respect, and in the masculine environment of the auction mart, physical skill denoted someone who had a right to be there, unlike women and non-farmers, who were less than masculine and therefore did not enter.

In the case of Wharfedale Farmers' Auction Mart, the masculine nature of the space is evident in its geography, particularly in the nature and placing of the facilities available to the patrons. On the 1891 Ordnance Survey map of Otley, the Wharfedale Farmers' Auction Mart site is marked, and its lone building stands on the same foundations as the mart's main building today (see Fig. 2.3). On the front wall of the building, in a location accessed easily from both the building and the yard where activities would also take place, is a small semi-circular structure labelled 'Urinal'.¹⁸⁷ The maleness of this particular facility is unquestionable, and it indicates the requirements of the mart clientele. This structure was replaced by the office at some point between the production of the 1909 and 1921 maps. The architectural evidence from today supports the idea that women's attendance at auction marts was a later development. While the men's toilets are situated at the corner of the main mart building, a central location from which all the sale rings are easily accessible, the women's toilets stand behind the café, in a spot which still appears to be empty on the 1964 map, and was filled with cattle pens in the 1921 edition.¹⁸⁸ This location is convenient for the café, but is liminal in terms of the business of the mart itself. Furthermore, while the men's toilets are incorporated into the traditional Yorkshire

¹⁸⁶ E. Cawkwell, interview by J. Rowling, Askwith, 08.10.2012.

¹⁸⁷ Ordnance Survey, County Series 1:2500, Yorkshire, 1st edition, <http://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ancientroam/historic> (1891), SE14.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. (1891, 1909, 1921, 1934, and 1964), SE14.

stone fabric of the surrounding buildings, and indeed much of Wharfedale, the women's toilets are built as a much later red brick lean-to structure, setting them apart, architecturally, from the rest of the space. The liminal and separate nature of the women's facilities echoes the liminal and separate nature of women throughout much of the auction mart's history, and marks mart space as masculine space.

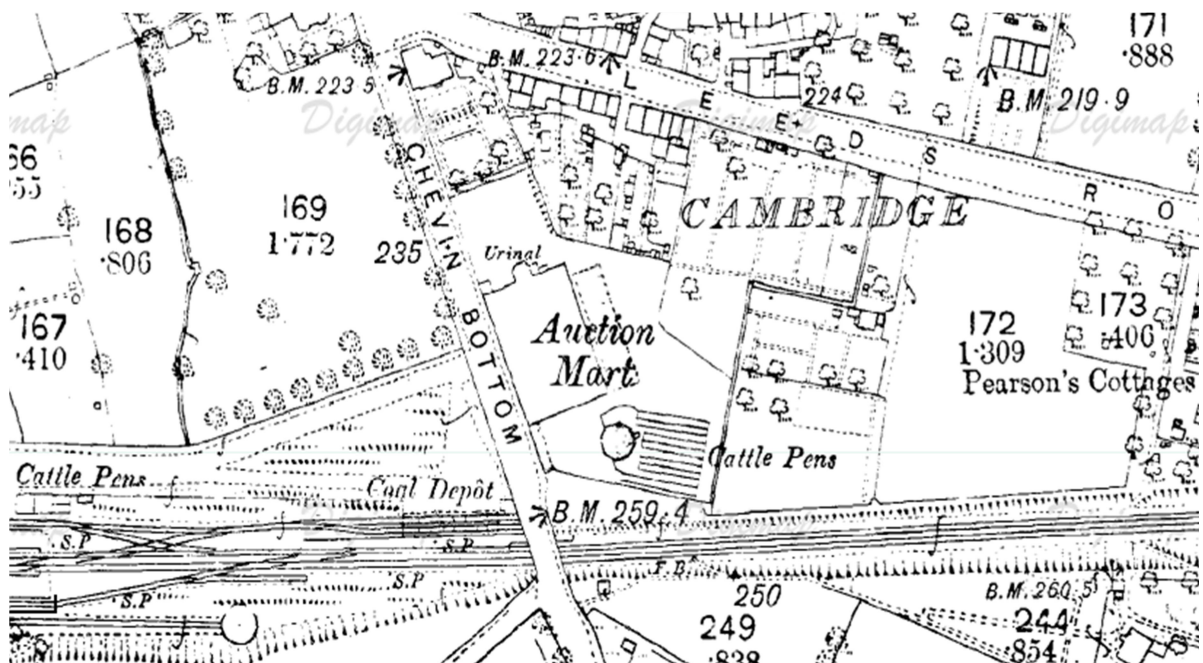


Fig. 2.3. Wharfedale Farmers' Auction Mart, 1890s, showing the urinal for the male attendees. The modern female toilets are situated where the cattle pens are marked on this map, while the main sale ring is inside the large building.¹⁸⁹

This was not mere prejudice, and the lines between insiders and outsiders, skilled and unskilled, were not drawn solely along gender lines. The need for physical skill also separated skilled farming men from unskilled male outsiders. Knowledge and the physical ability to handle animals was one of the cornerstones of trust in the mart environment, where large, stressed, unfamiliar animals would be gathered, creating a potential danger for everyone involved. In this context, it was crucial for the men attending to feel they could rely on one another's skills in order to ensure the safety of everyone there. One photograph, depicting the Christmas Show and Sale at Wharfedale

¹⁸⁹ Ordnance Survey County Series 1:10560, Yorkshire, 1st edition (1892), SE14, <http://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ancientroam/historic>. © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2014). All rights reserved. (1891).

Well, there were a window frame - no window in it, like, just the frame – and one of these bullocks had pushed this bloke straight up through the window frame, and he were laid on the ground looking up at us when we got back. It was funny, but we got a nasty letter from the government saying that we shouldn't have let him go in and all that. He didn't think it was funny. But it was funny.¹⁹⁰

In this case, the superiority of a lifetime's farming knowledge over that of the 'Ministry man' is tinged with an element of *Schadenfreude*, but the rendering of the words, 'Help! Oh, help!' into a significantly higher pitch than the interviewee's normal speaking voice implies that the inability to cope with livestock has less than masculine connotations. When a story about a woman handling livestock is related, an inability to do so was not met with the same derision. For example, Jimmy Goodall recalled his mother's attempts to help with moving cattle:

If they wanted help moving some cattle she would go there and try and flap her arms about, but if it came towards her she'd walk the other way. Yes, she used to look after drinkings for the farm staff during harvest and haymaking, and did all the cooking and everything, yes she used to do all that.¹⁹¹

Here, a woman's inability to handle livestock was balanced by a reiteration of the ways in which she was useful to the farm. It was a masculine quality, the lack of which did not detract from a woman's femaleness, whereas a man's position as fully male was questionable in the same situation.

Furthermore, many male interviewees made unconscious distinctions between the time they were not fully masculine, and the time that they became fully masculine. Victor Thompson expressed his difficulties handling milking cows as a young lad as a formative experience, which, once overcome, provided him with valuable skills and propelled him into leaving school early and taking on a man's role as a farm labourer:

¹⁹⁰ J. Dalby, interview by J. Rowling, Wike, 11 January 2011.

¹⁹¹ J. Goodall, interview by J. Rowling, Harrogate, 22 November 2012.

I could milk a cow, by hand, when I were about seven... and when I first sat down to a cow, on a stool a bit lower down than that, and I used to look up, and I thought, “well, if the bloody thing comes my way I’m going to be pushed down underneath that cow”... Anyway, it only ever happened once. I was sitting down with a three-legged stool and I had the bucket in one hand and the three-legged stool, and I put the stool down there, and this cow lashed out. Oh! It meant business, I’ll tell you! It lashed out, and it caught me all down this side with its back foot, but I were so near to it I didn’t get the full impact, if you know what I mean? And it lifted me over the grip - Where all the muck used to fall, like - It lifted me right across there, the bucket and the lot, like, and the wall was about three foot away from the first edge, like, you know, and it’d lifted me clear of it. By God I did curse that cow! I went looking for a stick, I thought, “I’m going to get my own back here!” [laughs] Anyway, that was one of the episodes, but I ended up so as I could milk six cows an hour by hand. Aye. And when I left school - I left school when I were fifteen - and I went to Guiseley and Aireborough Grammar School to finish up, and I got that pig sick of it I left a year early... We had this here cowman that were poorly, and then he died, so it was, “Right, Victor, you’re cowman now.” I just had thirty cows to milk, and youngstock to look after. I think there were about forty youngstock, different ages, and eventually, I ended up calving about a hundred heifers.¹⁹²

In the First World War, the very old and very young were left at home alongside the women and the disabled, thereby being spared the bodily destruction accorded to the true male on the battlefield, but also having their masculinity rendered questionable at best, illegitimate at worst.¹⁹³ Similarly, in the farming world of this period, the child and the old man, like women, were not expected to be capable of masculine responsibility for livestock. Men remembered with pride being permitted to attend the mart alone, or to walk animals to and from the sales for the first time. John Barr “J.B.” Liddle recalled:

¹⁹² V. Thompson, interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, 07 December 2012.

¹⁹³ Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p. 77.

In those days before transport we used to walk all our sheep that were sold, to Bolton Abbey Station. Anything we bought we walked from Bolton Abbey Station which was a good six miles. I've walked that road more times than I can count, and enjoyed every minute.¹⁹⁴

Similarly, Frank Morphet remembered the feeling of importance when he was allowed to take the cart horses, one ridden and one in hand, down to the blacksmith's for replacement shoes.¹⁹⁵ Throughout the interviews, being entrusted with the handling of livestock alone marked a transition from boyhood to manhood. Once again, this process can be viewed through the lens of van Gennep's three phases of transition. In stage one, separation, the individual became detached from his earlier fixed point in the social structure. In leaving school, going to the mart for the first time, or beginning to learn a new skill such as milking or droving, the young man or boy moved to spend at least some of his time in a new physical location, symbolically leaving his childhood behind. The second, liminal phase of this transition took the form of learning the skills and information necessary for full insider status and full masculinity. The achievement of this masculinity was the final phase of the transition, when the man would take over more responsible jobs such as pig-killing or purchasing livestock. At this point, say van Gennep and Turner, 'he is expected to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards binding on incumbents of social position in a system of such positions.'¹⁹⁶ At the auction and at home he was expected to manage livestock in a manner which ensured the safety of others.

This transformation was reversed when men became too old or physically restricted to handle livestock safely. John Dalby remembered:

The next farm along there, old Mr Hay, well, he was in his eighties and he used to walk with two sticks. Well, he went up to feed the sheep, and this ram come up behind him and knocked him to the floor – he had a job getting up anyway, like, with these sticks – but every time he got halfway up it used to come and knock him down again! He were there for about an hour or more before somebody saw him,

¹⁹⁴ J. B. Liddle, interview by A. Roberts, 13 August 1980.

¹⁹⁵ F. Morphet, interview by J. Rowling, Hampsthwaite, 18 July 2013.

¹⁹⁶ Turner, *Ritual Process*, p. 95.

like. Well, his son went, “Where’s my Dad?” and he went up the field and there was this bloody tup, knocking him down.¹⁹⁷

In this situation, the old man, although accorded respect in being referred to as ‘Mr’, had lost a part of his masculinity. Like the children, he was no longer capable of handling the livestock alone, and had to be rescued by his younger, fitter, and therefore more masculine son.

The male body, therefore, was of crucial importance in the auction mart, as men relied upon one another’s physical skills and strength when handling livestock to ensure safety for the whole group. A man who had insufficient knowledge or skill could not claim full insider status within the mart community as he could not be trusted with another man’s safety. The life cycle of the male body was also important. While men who were too aged to safely handle livestock would be removed from the dangerous areas of the mart, and so lose a degree of their masculinity, they remained incorporated into the mart community through the sense of ‘togetherness’ with those who had similar life experiences, and through sharing knowledge they had built up over a lifetime of farming. This links closely to the ‘Benjaminian’ model which characterises this farming community. The loss of full masculinity in no way correlated with a loss of respect, as the power of knowledge ensured this would still be given; it simply changed the method by which the man contributed to the mart community. This may explain why the social element of the mart in particular became so important to elderly farmers. In wider society their age made them a part of the group, identified by Joanna Bourke which was ‘not deemed to be worthy of active membership in the wider body-politic.’¹⁹⁸ At the mart, their knowledge was relevant and valuable, and, while they could no longer be fully physically active there, they could inform other men of the most effective ways to use their bodies, skills, and physical strength.

The importance of the body of the farmed animal in demonstrating livestock knowledge also arose repeatedly throughout the interview process. The most obvious way this could be seen was in the quality of the animals bought and sold in the public environment of the ring. J.B. Liddle succinctly described what reputation meant for livestock farmers: ‘It isn’t what you have, it’s who you have – Who’s looking for you,

¹⁹⁷ J. Dalby, interview by J. Rowling, Wike, 11 January 2011.

¹⁹⁸ Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p. 77.

and what you have produced to a certain standard.¹⁹⁹ The names of both vendor and purchaser would be announced for all to hear, and stock would be judged not only on its condition on the sale day, but also on its provenance, while the prices paid and beasts bought determined the reputation of a buyer as a man with a good eye for a bargain, or a fool who was ‘rash with his cash’.²⁰⁰

One great source of pride for particular farmers, and a sure method of securing a reputation as a good livestock man, was the ability to cure sick animals. By buying a cheap animal, which might not survive, and investing time and expertise, a greater profit could sometimes be made than in buying a fit beast with a higher chance of survival, but a higher price tag. This was a phenomenon which gradually reduced across the study period, as greater restrictions on the movement and treatment of ill stock were brought in. For example, Bert Verity recalled:

If twenty beasts get foot and mouth, probably fifteen or sixteen of them will survive, maybe more, maybe only one will die. It’s an infection of the tongue, the tongue swells, and they can’t eat for about a week. And if they’re in good strong condition when they get it, they can drink water but they can’t eat solids, you see. My father used to buy them when they had foot and mouth and nurse them better. Used to give them oatmeal porridge with a bit of warm water, and they could slurp it up and it kept them alive. And once they got over it they’d get fat in a month. They never looked back. And they never got it again, so they became immune from it.²⁰¹

This practice could not continue after compulsory slaughter for animals displaying the symptoms of foot and mouth was introduced. By 1922, Mr Verity remembers, things had changed:

It broke out at Pannal auction mart... Two hundred Irish bullocks had come to Pannal station, and they got the infection coming on the boat to Birkenhead. They came from

¹⁹⁹ J. B. Liddle, interview by A. Roberts, 13 August 1980, Otley Museum, O/S/dc/3.

²⁰⁰ The Dalesman, *Right in the Shippon*, p. 10.

²⁰¹ H. Verity, interview by J. Rowling, Kirkby Overblow, 28 December 2010.

Birkenhead to Pannal by train, and they broke out with it there. But they were all slaughtered and burnt.²⁰²

However, there were still other ailments which could be cured. Alan Dalby still uses an old trick involving brown sugar to deal with mild cases of New Forest Disease, a painful and highly infectious complaint in cattle, in which the eye clouds over and weeps, causing temporary blindness and photophobia which seriously disrupts grazing leading to weight loss and, if untreated, death. Combined with a willingness to take the time to pay extra attention to the infected beast, and the facilities to keep it isolated, this could be a way to make profits on undesirable stock:

It's only a matter of feeding them better, you see, to get rid, and anyway, you see, when I set off I had to take all that anybody didn't want, if there was some sort of a disease I tended to take them and sort it out like after, you see... But that's how you learn isn't it?²⁰³

David Lister was another interviewee who had a long history of association with the auction mart at Otley, and was a mine of information about non-standard treatments, many of which are no longer used, but which he recalled seeing performed:

There's a thing called Quarterfelon... They used to take a Hellebore leaf and just make a little incision, I think it was somewhere here [indicates neck area] an incision in the skin and just put this Hellebore leaf in and that was supposed to prevent it... Hellebore leaf against Quarterfelon, yes, well that is they die quickly, they get a swelling and it goes all crinkly under the flesh and the hindquarters, of course, swells up and then they die, I've seen it. And then, they used to also pierce a hole through the brisket and put tar, I think it was, or a string with tar on it, and just put this string through, and that was supposed to – I think that was for Quarterfelon.²⁰⁴

²⁰² H. Verity, interview by J. Rowling, Kirkby Overblow, 28 December 2010.

²⁰³ G. A. Dalby, interview by J. Rowling, Eccup, 07 August 2012.

²⁰⁴ D. Lister, interview by J. Rowling, Birstwith, 25 June 2013.

Some remedies required a combination of knowledge and physical strength. David Lister continued:

Another thing, I've done this a lot, we used to do it with the sheep. Have you heard of scawping them? Scawping them. Yes. When they weren't doing so well, these lambs in the autumn, they used to – I've done hundreds – my father used to say, "They want scawping." The scawp, that's the scalp, really, they used to go and get their forehead and give it a right [miming a thump]. The strong men would do it with their knuckle, or you'd do it with a good penknife, and they were what they called "double scawped" and funnily enough if one wasn't doing so well, a poor one, it usually had a double scawp... There's sort of a bit of regrowth somehow on the brain, on the scalp, and we used to crack it and [laughs] now I've never heard of that being done, not for years, but they used to do it regularly... Nobody ever mentions scawping nowadays. Whether there was anything in it I don't know, but you could tell, if there was a lamb that was doing badly it fairly crunched, you know. If you hit it and it was rock hard well, you'd find that it was alright anyway.²⁰⁵

These remedies and techniques performed the dual function of attempting to safeguard profits as well as displaying livestock knowledge and skill. Physical control would be required to make an incision to the correct depth, pierce the correct piece of skin, or crack the correct piece of bone. Of course, the efficacy of these methods is questionable from a twenty-first century standpoint, but, to contemporaries, their correct, clean, and swift application, and any subsequent improvement in the health of the beast, would carry a high level of prestige. It is interesting that Mr Lister emphasises the strength of the men who 'scawped' with their knuckle, as this links back to proving manliness through physical strength, but it also echoes the fighting culture of the time, identified by Joanna Bourke. She writes that the deliberate injuring of other men was part of growing up for the generation who experienced the First World War. 'To be

²⁰⁵ D. Lister, interview by J. Rowling, Birstwith, 25 June 2013.

“decorated” or “well-painted” with blood was a manly accomplishment.²⁰⁶ In such a culture, and in a particular livestock-farming setting, it is arguable that to be ‘well-painted’ with animal blood was of equal value to the forming of a masculine male identity. Indeed, J.B. Liddle recalled proudly:

The very first year I farmed I had a fat pig and I killed it and dressed it *myself* and cured the bacon and the fat. We used the lard for our own baking, the ladies baked our own bread and we had the bacon [Emphasis added].

Once again, killing and butchering a pig was a physical task, requiring strength, skill, animal handling skills, and a steady hand, but it was also a bloody task. To kill one’s own pig in the first year of farming alone was a symbol of full, adult masculinity, both physically and in terms of knowledge, and the distribution of bacon, ham, brawn, and so on to friends and neighbours was also an act loaded with symbolism. It would speak volumes about masculinity, completed rites of passage, and ‘togetherness’ within the community, all of which would communicate into the auction mart environment, promoting trust between the young farmer and the established members of the community.

Networking and the Right People

It is clear, therefore, that those who were established as insiders, well-respected and trusted, exerted considerable influence over the acceptance or rejection of prospective new community members. In N. J. Reed and J. S. Smelser’s *Usable Social Science*, the key factors in the understanding of the way networks function are identified as homophily, density of interaction, centrality, and the idea of ‘structural holes’ or gaps in communication. For this definition, ‘homophily’ describes ‘the principle that recruitment to networks is based on similarities in attitudes, behaviour..., ethnic and racial group identity, and “friends of friends”’.²⁰⁷ ‘Centrality’ refers to ‘the strategic place that discrete members have in networks, which is closely related to

²⁰⁶ Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, pp. 35-7.

²⁰⁷ N. J. Reed and J. S. Smelser, *Usable Social Science* (Berkeley, 2012), p. 137.

leadership.’²⁰⁸ These two aspects of the network were particularly relevant in the auction mart environment.

During the war, interwar, and immediate postwar periods, the pubs of Otley and other local market towns were filled with farmers on mart days. Ted Haxby remembers: ‘you could tell it was auction day because there were all these farmers about in pubs.’²⁰⁹ Bert Verity remembered:

You know the Licks? That used to be a selling place, and they used to garage the cows in the pub yards until 11 o clock on a Friday morning and they’d take them all down there and they’d have a market.²¹⁰

On these specific days, the pubs functioned as an extension to the auction mart space, in which insiders could continue to socialise, and create and cement network links even after the conclusion of the sale. For the younger farmers in particular, the post-mart drink was an invaluable opportunity to take part in the knowledge exchange which would induct them into the auction mart community. This was articulated particularly clearly by Jimmy Goodall:

We would go to market, and then if you’d been to market you went to the pub afterwards and had a drink, and that’s where you used to do some more dealing. In the olden days you would go to market and you’d take your cattle, et cetera, and you would sell them, and then you would come in. And you learnt, believe it or not, you learnt more in the pub afterwards than what you could do in a whole week on the farm, simply by talking to different farmers, saying, “I’m having a problem with so-and-so,” and someone would say, “Oh, I had that problem, years ago, and I found that so-and-so.”

“Oh, thank you very much indeed, I’ll try it,” and you could perhaps cure a cow or repair something by just going to market for a couple of hours and afterwards having a pint or

²⁰⁸ Reed and Smelser, *Usable Social Science*, p. 137.

²⁰⁹ G. Haxby, interview by J. Rowling, East Keswick, 03 October 2012.

²¹⁰ H. Verity, interview by J. Rowling, Harrogate, 11 April 2013.

whatever, a couple of pints, and then coming back home and carrying on working. That's what markets were for. It was a social occasion to a certain degree, but it was also a learning curve too, and that's what markets were for.²¹¹

This type of interaction embodies both the homophilic nature of networks as described by Reed and Smelser, and the importance of knowledge and information exchange in the 'Benjaminian' community model. By conversing with younger farmers in the pub, established members of the community were able to vet them for similarities in attitude, behaviour and background, and either accept them into the community by dispensing advice, or reject them by withholding it.

The vast majority of auction-attendees interviewed first went to the local auction marts with an older man, generally a father or an uncle, but occasionally an employer or fellow labourer, who was already an established member of the community. This satisfied the 'friends of friends' condition of acceptance into the homophilic network by verifying pre-existing links to the local farming world. Many interviewees also talked about loyalty to particular marts, wearing their lifetime of regular attendance as a badge of honour. For example, in a phrase which was often repeated by my own interviewees, J.B. Liddle told his interviewer: 'I have gone to Otley markets regularly all my life.'²¹² Reed and Smelser identify a particular form of network, based primarily on kinship and friendship, and identifications share many of the defining characteristics of groups: commonality, belonging, membership, and loyalty.²¹³ As the networks which existed within the auction mart, and the communities which were linked through it, were based on these foundations, this helps to explain some of the aspects of auction mart behaviour towards outsiders, such as that described by Thomas Mickle:

Some people, some didn't like you. They wanted to buy stuff and they didn't like you interrupting, did they? So they'd bid against you to knock you out, like.²¹⁴

Mr Mickle also described how some buyers expected a form of loyalty or generosity from other insiders, which went against the key principles of buying at auction:

²¹¹ J. Goodall, interview by J. Rowling, Harrogate, 22 November 2012.

²¹² J.B. Liddle, interview by Anne Roberts, 13 August 1980.

²¹³ Reed and Smelser, *Usable Social Science*, p. 139.

²¹⁴ T. Mickle, interview by J. Rowling, Askwith, 08 October 2012.

‘There’s some’d say, “Well, you knew I wanted to buy that, what were you bidding against me for?”’²¹⁵ This assumption of intimate knowledge accompanied by loyalty in a commercial environment could only occur within a kin or friendship based network, where intimate personal knowledge of another member’s tastes might be expected. Among strangers or acquaintances the idea would be ridiculous.

However, the networks which existed at the auction marts do not fully fit the sociological definition of ‘groups’, because they extended beyond known individuals and locations to form a national network in which prior personal connections and ‘friends of friends’ allowed trust to be established in unfamiliar marts, despite the ‘structural holes’ which existed due to a lack of personal communication with the unfamiliar mart itself. Thomas Mickle explained:

I’ve gone to markets where you’d to take a letter to say you could buy cattle on behalf of who you worked for, you know, or they wouldn’t accept your bids because they were frightened to death that you wouldn’t pay, you see. But when I used to go to Ireland I allus had a letter saying I could buy cattle on behalf of Major Horton-Fawkes with his heading, his title on, you see, signed by him. And of course you’d to take your cheques to pay for them, like, you allus had to pay on the day, you couldn’t say, “Well I’ll pay next week,” you had to pay on the day. But locally they never bothered, because, besides buying stuff at the markets, you sold stuff at the same markets, didn’t you, so they’d get to know you, you see... In fact I had a bit of a story about when I went down on holiday to Wales, and I went to the market at Abergele, and by there were a lot of good cattle! And I hadn’t any cheques or nothing like with me, and I went in, and the office that you went in, it were a right long narrow place, and I saw right at the bottom there were a chap from York, Joe Sleightholme, who were a dealer feller, you see, and I went in and I said, you know “I work for Long Stoop Partners at Norwood,” I said, “But I’ve

²¹⁵ Ibid.

no identification and any proof that I work for them, but,” I said, “I’d like to buy some store cattle.” But, you know, I’d have to send the cheque on, you see. “Oh,” he says, “That’s rather difficult like, when we don’t know you.” And, as I say I looked up and I said, “I know that feller down there, Joe Sleightholme.” “Well,” he says, “If you know Joe Sleightholme, right enough.” You see. And that were a reference to him, like, wasn’t it?²¹⁶

Knowing the right people, who had connections to other auction marts, allowed trust to spread through the national mart network, beyond the scope of kinship, friendship, or even acquaintance groups to form an entity which incorporated, but was not limited by, these ‘structural holes’ or gaps in communication. In her chapter, “‘You cannot be a Brahmin in the English countryside.’ The partitioning of status, and its representation within the farm family in Devon,” Mary Bouquet borrows her titular phrase from Julian Pitt-Rivers’ 1963 investigation into Mediterranean hospitality to explain the non-transferrable nature of status from one community to another.²¹⁷ Just as in Pitt-Rivers’ analogy, trustworthy status within the community of one auction mart did not translate to trust within the community of another. However, the links between communities which formed the nationwide mart network, connected people who were not intimately known to one another, but nevertheless shared similar attitudes, behaviours and backgrounds. This formulation of the network has much in common with Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*, in which members of a nation identify themselves as community despite the fact that they will in all probability never know, meet, or even hear of one another beyond a small handful of individuals.²¹⁸ However, it differs fundamentally from Anderson’s concept in that ‘community’ does not appear to have been considered or imagined between farmers from geographically distant marts. The network may be based on similar assumptions of sameness, but it was primarily functional for business, rather than providing the support and socialisation offered by a community.

²¹⁶ T. Mickle, interview by J. Rowling, Askwith, 08 October 2012.

²¹⁷ M. Bouquet, “‘You cannot be a Brahmin in the English countryside.’ The partitioning of status, and its representation within the farm family in Devon,” in A. P. Cohen (ed.), *Symbolising Boundaries: Identity and Diversity in British Cultures* (Manchester, 1986), p. 22.

²¹⁸ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London, 2006), p. 6.

The picture of the auction mart as a friendly community base, where young farmers could find support and advice should nevertheless not obscure the commercial and competitive elements of the mart. Alan Dalby explained how the importance of knowing people extended beyond social acceptance:

First thing when I get round the ring I size all the people up. Never mind cattle. People. And I think, well, he's going to buy that, and he's going to buy that, and he'll buy that, what am I going to buy? And the art of the job is to try to keep them eyeing what they're buying, and hope then to slip onto something they don't want. And I don't know what it's going to be. In fact you want to come home with some, but it can be anything... And that's the art of the job, you see, if you can keep the price up in what everybody else is buying, because there's two ways when you've bought. If you've bought them dear you're either going to keep them a long time or blow money, aren't you?²¹⁹

This demonstrates the other important reason to get to know other members of the community. Being able to predict behaviour and buying patterns by taking note of which individuals were present and becoming familiar with their personal tastes allowed, and continues to allow, farmers to make buying decisions to benefit their own business.

The ultimate insiders and 'trustees' in the auction mart were the auction staff, epitomised by the auctioneer. As shown in the oral history excerpts, the mart staff had the power to grant permission for buyers to pay their accounts in unconventional timeframes: taking the stock away and sending the cheque on later, or paying off the account at the following week's sale. The granting of this permission was a sign of great trust, as failure to pay off the debt would leave the mart accountable for the money owed to the seller, or even out of pocket if the seller had already collected his cheque at the time of sale.

²¹⁹ A. Dalby, Interview by J. Rowling, Eccup, 07 August 2012.

Cultural Norms

Insider status in many communities can be recognised through knowledge of, and adherence to the cultural norms of the group in question. A. P. Cohen's *The Symbolic Construction of Community* argues that symbols of the boundary between the insiders in a community and those outside it can heighten awareness of the community among its membership.²²⁰ These symbols can be physical, as in the case of the walls built around the auction sites, or behavioural, excluding outsiders through their unknowing non-compliance. This latter form of boundary contains strong ritualistic elements, seen in practice in the unofficial dress-code; the order of the sale day, organised to ensure fairness to all parties; and the financially redundant but culturally significant custom of giving and receiving 'luck money'. Cohen argued that, despite the myriad applications of the term 'ritual', most anthropologists can agree that, 'ritual confirms and strengthens social identity and people's sense of social location: it is an important means through which people experience community.'²²¹ In the case of the auction mart, we can link this to Benjamin's highlighting of the importance of tradition. Observing traditional rules and behaviours, and making them into ritual, preserves them, promoting a sense of 'togetherness' and communal identity which creates a scattered community among people whose interactions may be widely geographically and temporally dispersed, coming together only in the context of the auction mart on market day.

The behavioural tradition which is most obvious to the outsider is the uniformity of dress which can be observed both today and photographs showing the auction mart's past. Of course there are stylistic differences between different periods, the dress in nineteenth-century photographs, for example, does not resemble that from the Second World War or the 1960s. However, we can see certain themes in dress continue throughout the period covered by photographs. In the sample of photographs above and below, especially the photograph of the Wharfedale Farmers' Auction Mart Christmas Show 1935 above, the vast majority of the men present (and it is overwhelmingly men) wear hats or caps. Whatever the cut and style of clothes, the mart costume throughout the first sixty years of the twentieth century was a combination of smart and practical. The shirts and ties, and in some cases smart shoes, showed respect for the environment,

²²⁰ A. P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (1985, London, 2001), p. 50.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

without being inappropriately formal, they displayed the farmer as a businessman, and they indicated that he was taking the occasion seriously. However, concessions were made to practicality, and we can see in the photographs that the donning of a long coat to protect the smart outfit was almost universal.



Fig. 2.5 Photograph showing Bert Verity at Masham Calf Show in 1933 (M. Verity).



Fig. 2.6 Photograph showing Bridge End Auction Mart in the 1960s (Otley Museum), O B PH 62

Keith Liddle, speaking about the auction mart today, made it clear that the same guiding principles continue to influence appropriate dress: ‘you should go in your wellies, and a pair of waterproof trousers or leggings on, because I approve of them up to a point, because they’re easy to wash.’²²² While practicality naturally remains important, especially in an age which recognises the importance of disinfecting, we can also see that choosing an outfit which will conform to expectations has also stayed part of auction mart culture.²²³ The uniformity of dress, alongside modes of behaviour and the sharing of knowledge which confirmed shared backgrounds, was another aspect of the homophily which characterised the mart community. This is perhaps expressed best

²²² K. Liddle, interview by J. Rowling, Stainburn, 17 October 2012.

²²³ Today, wellies have taken the place of the heavy boot or clog usually worn by those handling cattle directly, although older men, who generally stand beside the auctioneer while a member of staff walks the animal around the ring on their behalf, may wear smart shoes. The shirt has remained a staple of auction mart dress, although the long coat has evolved into a fleece bodywarmer or jacket, due to the amount of available pockets it provides. Some older auction-goers, however, eschew the pocket for their most important documents, and instead keep their private paperwork quite literally under their hat! Another reason for the proliferation of hats in the older photographs, perhaps?

by the agricultural comedy writer Henry Brewis, in his poem ‘Out to Lunch’, which describes the mart canteen:

The dress is quite informal,
like the intellectual chat,
but you’re viewed with grave suspicion,
without wellies and a cap.²²⁴

As a good deal of the interaction in the auction mart environment is based on establishing and maintaining trust, it is unsurprising that fairness should be a key theme in the mart’s culture. The rituals of the mart have been designed in such a way that their performance leaves all participants with a sense that everyone will be treated equally. The importance of the rituals of fairness can be seen in a catalogue for the Otley Old Auction Mart, from 1902. The text reads:

CATALOGUE OF
CATTLE, SHEEP & PIGS

which will be

SOLD BY AUCTION

without the slightest reserve, by

LISTER’S LIVE AUCTION CO

It continues:

Notice to Vendors: All stock to be on the Ground not later than 10 a.m., and must not, under any circumstances, be sold privately.

Double Commission charged on all stock bought in or reserved.²²⁵

²²⁴ H. Brewis, ‘Out to Lunch,’ in *Chewing the Cud* (1990, Ipswich, 2008), p. 14.

²²⁵ Otley Old Auction Mart Catalogue (1902), Otley Museum, O/SR/cg/1.

These rules discourage, and in the case of private sales downright prohibit, tactics which may appear unfair. If a reserve price for an animal is not met, one might argue, the animal is probably not worth that price, and the vendor may be seen to be trying to make more money than he deserves. A private sale, on the other hand, means that the reserving buyer is taking away the chance for other bidders to try their luck. It essentially uses the auction mart facilities as a convenient handover location, without paying the mart commission. Discouraging such behaviours reinforces the idea that the mart staff are committed to ensuring fairness between all buyers, instilling confidence in the mart as a business. These rules were obviously necessary, as, in 1902, the same year that this sale catalogue was published, local man John Dickinson recorded in his diary: ‘These auction marts are vile places. A company of unprincipled jobbers are all ready to connive in any move to cheat or pervert a fair course of business.’²²⁶ Having rules to enforce fairness laid the foundations for the mart to become a space in which trust could be extended between individuals.

With the sale rules established and publicised the next step would be to enact the rituals which promised fairness during the sale. The first and most important of these is the ritual of taking the ballot. Animals for sale are placed in numbered pens, and a pen number is drawn at random to be the first into the ring. The next thirty or forty pens then follow in numerical order, according to the particular mart’s convention, and then the sequence restarts at number one. Any further pens then follow at the end. The reason for this lies in buying behaviour, as explained by Alan Dalby:

You’ve to be there before it starts, and a lot’ll come ten minutes too late, so that they might have missed a bargain, they might not, and when they’re getting near to the end of the sale, “Oh, I don’t want to be in the queue in the office, better be off!” So they’re all off, and there might be something. It doesn’t allus work but there might be something that eases off, are you with me?²²⁷

At the beginning and end of the sale, there are fewer bidders and fewer bids, meaning lower prices. The drawing of the ballot ensures that every vendor has an equal chance

²²⁶ R. Harker (ed.), *Timble Man: Diaries of a Dalesman* (Nelson, 1988), Monday, October 20, 1902, p. 128.

²²⁷ G. A. Dalby, interview by J. Rowling, Eccup, 07 August 2012.

of their pen of cattle falling in the coveted middle ballot. The result of the ballot is written on a chalkboard where it can be seen by everyone, an act which makes the ritual more than simply a process ensuring a level playing field, it becomes a public demonstration of fairness. This was explained explicitly by Dick Garnett, a former director of the Wharfedale Farmers' Mart:

I've drawn the ballot for donkeys' years at Otley, and even now, I was there last Monday, "Will you draw the ballot for us?" so I keep drawing it for them, but I mean, it is a thing that spreads it about, you know. You see, if you started at number one every Monday morning, all those that go early, and you could do with them going early, you know, so that you can get a lot done before, a rush comes in, they'd say, "Well I'm not coming here early on a morning because I'll be first in." And ninety per cent of the time, the price will increase from the start, ninety per cent, I mean it has been known to, if there's a very big show, sometimes it can go the other way, but nobody likes being on first, and especially regularly... So that's why, not the only reason, but so people have a fair chance of getting a different spot on the ballot. I mean, it is drawn fairly, at Otley at least, it's drawn fairly... What comes out is what's on that board.²²⁸

Not only is the importance of fairness and integrity made clear here, but Mr Garnett also highlights that the ballot must be drawn by a trustworthy person, known to the auction staff. This is a sign of a ritual taken seriously, and with some considerable weight of meaning behind it. It is not merely a tradition, but a functional action.

If the ritual of drawing the ballot defines the beginning of the sale, then the ritual of 'luck money' defines the end. 'Luck money' is a small sum of money which is given to the buyer by the vendor. It's origins seem to lie in a form of insurance, although stories which have been passed down orally from previous generations differ as to whether the subject of the insurance was the animal or the transaction itself. George Rice recounted:

²²⁸ R. Garnett, interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, 11 March 2013.

The luck was, really, in the olden days, the luck was like an insurance for travelling, you know, “oh give us a bit of luck money for travelling,” and that used to be a bit of insurance money, you know... Well that’s what it was, that’s what I was told. I once said, “what’s luck money about?” and, it were Tom Penny, he used to give about ten shillings in them days, but cows were only about 30 pound when I’m on about, you know, when I were twelve. 30 quid were a good piece, so he used to give like ten shilling for luck, and I think I once said to him, “what are you giving luck for?” and he said, “oh it’s like a bit of insurance money,” he says, “because if you don’t it’ll go break its bastard leg going home or summat!”

Mervyn Lister, on the other hand, believed the tradition could be traced back to the earliest days of the market:

It was up to you to find a customer, bargain about the price, and collect the money before you let the goods go. It was all up to the individual, and it was not a very safe practice because there were no bank notes, going back into the 1800s there were no banknotes, there were all coins, you know, [...] so because it wasn’t secure the way that they tended to do the trade was to agree on a price and not do the settling up with the money until later in the day. [...] So with all this in mind the practice was that you brought your cow, and I, having seen it, liked it and we agreed that the price was fifteen pounds or whatever, and at that point I, the buyer, would give you, the seller, a small value coin, usually a penny, just pass the penny over and that was a deposit but from that moment that was a binding contract and the law would back anybody up if someone came along and offered 16 quid you couldn’t take it because you’d struck a bargain at 15 and so that was rigidly adhered to. So then we would arrange to meet in the pub, at the Black Bull or the New Inn or somewhere, at two o’clock, and we’d go and in the comparative safety and security of the

pub, get round a table in an alcove and there you could sort out the money. I owe you so much, and you owe him so much, and he owes me so much, sort it all out and so when I'd paid my £15 for the cow, 15 sovereigns, you would invariably give back the penny that I had paid to you, you know, the deposit, give me that back, and wish me good luck with the cow, and that was the origin of what in this century everybody talks about as luck money. [...] It wasn't a generous gift, it was a legal practice that carried on, and that's how it began.

These stories have been passed down orally from father to son, and elderly employer to young employee, emphasising the importance of tradition to this community. These stories are important, not because they give a definitive answer as to where a cultural practice began, but because they impart a feeling of a shared heritage and a shared tradition, a shared history mixed with a touch of superstition, expressed through the continuation of the practice. Passing the stories on in order to cultivate understanding in the young is another method of granting insider status to them.

While not large enough to be of any real financial benefit to the buyer, the action of 'giving luck' is loaded with connotations of credibility, honesty, and confidence in the animal in question. The giver of luck demonstrates his insider status, and therefore his trustworthiness, by showing that he understands the expectation that luck will be given. Victor Thompson explained:

I once took two cows, and George didn't believe in owt like that, didn't our old boss, and he says, "How much did it make?" There were two of them, and I told him. I said, "I had to give a bit of luck money," and he played hell with me for giving luck money. But you see it was the done thing... You see, if it had been put about that I wasn't going to pay some luck money, it were only a couple of quid, but then cows only made about a hundred, hundred and fifty quid. So it were in balance with the price that they made, but he went berserk, did t'owd feller, and this Stanley Lawson, who were a friend of his, who farmed on Castley Lane, and he said, "Nay," he said,

“Don’t play hell wi’ t’lad,” he says, “He wouldn’t have sold the cows if he hadn’t given a bit o’ luck. It’s *dishonest!*” Well, it isn’t really, it’s bribery and corruption, but, you know! “Aye, you’re alright with him, he’ll give you a bit of luck money” you know.²²⁹

Dick Garnett continued:

Because they’ve helped you get a good trade, you give a little bit back... They used to give them a shilling in the pound if they paid on the day, because some people want a bit of never never, you know, pay next week or next fortnight, you know... But you know, they look for a bit of luck, and I think that it’s only a gesture of thanks, well, it’s something that’s carried on long enough it’s just one of those things now.²³⁰

Once again, tradition in Lower Wharfedale’s farming community, as in the theoretical model of the ‘Benjaminian community’, is shown to be a cornerstone to the functioning of the community to which it belongs. It was not only accepted, but expected, and the performance of the little ritual of handing over the small sum served to cement network links, reassure peers of honesty, reinforce confidence in animals for sale, and encourage trade through mutual benefit to buyer and seller alike. Likewise, the custom of the mart office giving another small sum as a reward for settling an account on the day of the sale created a sense of mutual benefit between buyer and business, and mirrored the tradition of luck. The vendor who did not give luck soon found his customer base shrinking; not to give luck was not only frowned upon, but considered dishonest. This indicates that failure to adhere to cultural norms, like giving luck money, would have a detrimental effect on a farm business. The efficacy of these traditions, and their value to the mart as an entity is proven by the fact that every ritual mentioned here continues today.

²²⁹ V. Thompson, interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, 07 December 2012.

²³⁰ R. Garnett, interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, 11 March 2013.

When Cultural Norms Broke Down

The difference between an interesting but esoteric cultural practice and a ritual or tradition which forms the basis for a community to function can be found in the consequences of cultural norms being broken. This was not a common occurrence at any mart in Wharfedale, but one case from 1921 may be taken as the exception which proves the rule.

The facts of the case, as summarised by Sinclair and Atkinson Solicitors of Otley in a letter to the secretary of the Wharfedale Farmers' Auction Mart, and supplemented by other correspondence, are thus: On the 3rd October 1921 Thomas Penny of Carlton Hall near Yeadon sold a cow through the Wharfedale Farmers' Auction Mart to Joseph Taylor of Nefferton House, Hull. The cow, lot fifty one, was described as a 'roan milk cow with down horns', and sold for twenty-one pounds and ten shillings.²³¹ On the 6th October, Taylor informed the Mart that the cow was a 'screw' and returned it to Otley by rail. The term 'screw' refers to an animal which has matured particularly poorly, usually being small and skinny for its age, with poor conformation, and is unlikely ever to make good. On the 7th October, Penny took the cow back to his home and arranged for a vet to examine it. On the 8th, Penny wrote to Taylor:

Dear Sir

I am writing to say that I cannot understand your reason for sending the cow back.

I have had this day the cow thoroughly examined by a Veterinary Surgeon and I am enclosing you a copy of certificate of the cow being correct.

The cow is here entirely at your risk and expense.

I enclose you the Vet's account and the railway charges are £1/4/10d.

Yours faithfully,

²³¹ At this time, and in this locality, it was most probably a dairy shorthorn. 'Down horns' indicates that the horns turned downwards.

T. Penny

The accompanying letter from W. M. Crawford M.R.C.V.S. certified that the vet found 'said animal healthy therefore in my opinion sound.'

On the 10th October, the following Monday, Taylor attended the Wharfedale Farmers' Auction Mart again, buying more cattle, deducting the cost of the 'screw' cow, and settling his account for twenty-one pounds and ten shillings less than the value of the cattle he had purchased that day. Sinclair and Atkinson's summary notes that, 'the mart assented to this.' Following this, on the 17th October, the Mart deducted the same twenty-one pounds ten shillings from an account which was to be paid to Penny. Penny subsequently sold the cow as 'in dispute' on the 14th November, this time only realising six pounds.

The conclusion of Sinclair and Atkinson was that, 'Taylor had no right to deduct the price of the cow against the mart, and the mart made a mistake in assenting to his doing so... Taylor still owes the mart £21.10.0 and the mart owes Penny the same amount.' On the 29th December the Live Stock Traders' Association of Great Britain became involved, supporting Joseph Taylor against the Mart, but things continued to escalate; on the 16th March 1922 a High Court of Justice (Chancery Division) summons was issued against the Wharfedale Farmers' Auction Mart, with Penny as the plaintiff. Backing away from such a serious legal step, discussions between the parties' various solicitors ensued, with the result that, on the 4th September 1922, a receipt was issued by the solicitors for the Wharfedale Farmers' Auction Mart for the fifteen pounds and ten shillings difference in the two sale prices of the disputed cow due to Thomas Penny, and a further five pounds and twelve shillings to cover the costs of the dispute.²³²

The reason this dispute went so far was due to the three key aspects of mart culture having been subverted. The livestock knowledge and skills of both men were called into question. Had Thomas Penny conceded that the cow was a 'screw', the quality of his livestock, and his ability as a stockman may have been doubted at subsequent sales. The second sale of the animal for only six pounds added to this risk. On the other hand, had Joseph Taylor been seen to accept paying over the odds for a

²³² Papers of Sinclair and Atkinson, Solicitors, Otley, West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds, WYL2276/Box 122 – Wharfedale Farmers Auction Market 1894-1927, File: Wharfedale Farmers Auction Mart Ltd – Penny and Taylor 1922, Docs 1-10.

‘screw’, which would have been visible to his neighbours as part of his herd, his ability to judge stock would have been doubted; he may have been described among his peers with the damning Yorkshire phrase: ‘more money than sense.’ Likewise if he had found himself in possession of an animal which was not in fact a ‘screw’, but which he was unable to pay for. Consequently, the loser in this dispute risked damage to his reputation and his standing at the mart, while the lack of fairness exhibited by the mart itself was contrary to the cultural norms of the auction and threatened to make a mockery of the rituals which sought to ensure fairness. The mart accepted the word of Joseph Taylor over that of Thomas Penny, and allowed Taylor to dictate how the finances should be reorganised before the dispute was resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, thereby violating the cultural norm of ensuring fairness.

One case alone is vulnerable to accusations that it is not representative, and often the apparent truism of ‘the exception which proves the rule’ is deeply questionable. However, in this instance there is an argument to support its meaning and representativeness. The documentary evidence which preserves this case comes from the archived papers of Sinclair and Atkinson, Solicitors of Otley, and not from the mart itself. In this case, it is also worth noting that, although the original sale took place on the 3rd October, and Penny consulted Sinclair and Atkinson on the 20th of the same month, the solicitors did not become involved with the auction mart as a party in the dispute until the 15th December. It is therefore likely that similar disputes on other occasions may have been resolved much more quietly and without recourse to legal representation. Indeed, the very fact that this case progressed so far is indication of how integral and effective the customs and cultural norms of the auction mart were to keeping the mart community functioning. Normally these would have been adequate to mediate such a disagreement, but this case, which threatened the very foundations of mart culture, caused unparalleled legal escalation.

Conclusion

The auction mart was not only a financial centre and a social hub for the farming community of Lower Wharfedale in the years 1914-1951, but it encompassed its own community within a community; a closely linked group of individuals, joined together by shared backgrounds, shared information, shared rituals, shared ideas about

masculinity, and, ultimately, shared identity. Acceptance into the farming community of the whole geographical area did not automatically grant inclusion in the mart's community, but insider status in the mart community could confer honorary membership of a distant mart community by virtue of the network of regulars visiting multiple marts. Geographically distant mart communities effectively overlapped due to sharing common values and cultural norms. The auction marts actively encouraged this building of networks by planning their schedules to allow men to visit a different mart for the same type of stock up to six days per week. However, the wide geographies covered by mart communities during non-sale time, and the consequent infrequency of meetings between members meant that the mart community was highly temporal in nature, fully functioning only on sale days, and becoming secondary to the wider farming community at other times.

Interactions with livestock provided the stimulus for the mart to become its own community, separated from the wider world by both physical and cultural boundaries. Non-auction-going individuals created the physical boundaries through council action to remove livestock from the streets, while the auction-goers themselves created the cultural boundaries by assessing aspiring insiders and demanding adherence to a complex set of behavioural norms and rituals in order for insider status to be achieved. Those who were not insiders were not afforded the same privileges, nor included in the sense of 'togetherness' pervading the mart community. Handling livestock in the context of the mart allowed proof of skill and physical ability to be shown in a semi-public setting, establishing masculine identities based on these traits. Reputations could be built and destroyed as a result of stock bought, stock sold, prices paid, prices realised, stock improvement, and adherence to the rituals and rules of fairness.

The marts were also a place to network, to learn, and to socialise, and this aspect was carried over into the pubs after the sales. In this context, it is possible to see the pubs as extensions of auction mart space, but, as with so many aspects of auction mart culture, this was only the case on a temporal basis, dictated by the sale days and times. The pub would not be extended auction space on a non-sale day, or on the morning of the sale, but for a few topics of conversation would allow it to be so. The fluid and temporally redefinable nature of the auction mart community permitted the movement of an individual between marts, but once again, pre-existing network links were crucial. This comes back to the theme of trust. In order to be an insider, one must be trusted,

and this could only occur by proving oneself to have the skills and knowledge necessary to keep other insiders safe and to fit in with established buying patterns: not putting forward substandard livestock with an unrealistic reserve price, and not bidding improbable amounts which cause inconvenience to other bidders.²³³

Observance of the cultural norms and unwritten rules of this community regarding appearance, knowledge, skill, communication and actions encompasses all of these aspects into a behavioural code by which individuals could demonstrate their similarities to established members of the community. This homophily, as identified by Reed and Smelser, was the key factor in the mart as a community, and the sense of 'togetherness' or *communitas* which existed within it.²³⁴ Violation of the rules was not only culturally subversive, but it threatened local social structure, confidence in the mart itself, and the stability of the wider farming network.

That van Gennep's three stages of transition can be applied to the creation of the auction mart community as a whole, to entry into farming manhood, and to an individual becoming part of the auction mart community indicates that these were separate 'states' of being, in which different cultural conditions existed.²³⁵ Furthermore, the twentieth-century auction mart as a separate community or 'state' of its own has not previously been examined in any depth beyond the usual image of the mart as a social place for old men, which does not take into account the full complexity of mart interactions, behaviours and networking, nor the influence of time and context.

This is important for the three key themes of the investigation into Lower Wharfedale's farmers in the period 1914-1951: community, identity, and status. As with so many other features of this locality, the auction mart conformed to Lindroos' 'Benjaminian' community model, in that it was temporally redefinable, it centred around feelings of togetherness and shared knowledge, while tradition played a role in

²³³ If bidding starts too low, it will continue for a long time, which is very inconvenient when a large number of animals are to be sold. Bidding too high pushes prices up and means that those whose businesses depend on them buying something every week either have to buy inferior stock, or pay a price which will ultimately cut into their profits. One particular bidding behaviour, known as 'running up', involves bidding against a newcomer and then dropping out at the last minute, forcing them to pay well over the odds for anything they buy. This is generally frowned upon as it violates the rules of fairness, but equally a newcomer who outbids all the regulars on the best stock will be highly unpopular as he is upsetting the usual balance of the mart and, as he is unknown, his bidding behaviour cannot be predicted and the regulars' behaviour adjusted accordingly.

²³⁴ Reed and Smelser, *Usable Social Science*, p. 137.

²³⁵ V. Turner, *The Ritual Process*, p. 94.

creating a feeling of shared history which emphasised the homophily of the group. The transition from membership of the wider farming community to the more select membership of the auction mart community implied a change in status, at least to those who were already insiders at the mart. In this way the mart community links to Benedict Anderson's concept of the imagined community, in which the community exists because it self-identifies as such. In the case of the mart, the insiders self-identify had a higher status than outsiders. This in turn connects to theories about identity. Not only was mart insider status subsumed into the individual's personal identity, but the same activities, knowledge and skills which promoted higher status within the context of the mart also contributed to the private masculine identity of the man.

3. Horsemen and Tractormen: Rural work and masculine identities in a period of agricultural change

The men and women who farmed in Britain during the period 1914-1951 saw what was, arguably, the greatest change in agricultural history: the almost wholesale replacement of horses as motive power with tractors. In 1910 the number of working horses in Great Britain peaked at 1,137,000.²³⁶ By 1952 this number had fallen below 300,000.²³⁷ Tractor numbers, in contrast, grew from nothing at the beginning of the twentieth century, and greatly accelerated by two world wars reached 324,960 by 1952.²³⁸ The effect of this momentous change on agriculture and agricultural society, both locally and nationally, has been investigated by historians such as Alun Howkins in *Reshaping Rural England*, and Paul Brassley in his work on the professionalization of English agriculture, or in collaboration with Jeremy Burchardt and Lynne Thompson in *The English Countryside between the Wars: Regeneration or Decline?*²³⁹ The shift to mechanical power has also inspired historical investigation in the United States, for example Katherine Jellison's *Entitled to Power: Farm Women and Technology, 1913-1963*.²⁴⁰

The period has also been popular as the subject of oral and personal recollections, as shown by the number sold as well as by the number produced, for example James Herriot's bestselling series, or the nationwide effort by the National Federation of Women's Institutes to collect personal recollections county by county in their *Within Living Memory* series.²⁴¹ Likewise, there is a large volume of literature for the vintage tractor enthusiast, and many of the tractors which were used during the study period now have dedicated clubs and devoted followings. Much contemporary literature about this technology was technical or analytical in nature, for example Claude Culpin's *Farm Machinery*, the Political and Economic Planning (PEP)

²³⁶ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF), *A Century of Agricultural Statistics: Great Britain 1866-1966* (London, 1968), p. 55.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

²³⁹ A. Howkins, *Reshaping Rural England: A social history, 1850-1925* (London, 1991); P. Brassley, 'The Professionalisation of English Agriculture,' *Rural History*, 16, No. 2 (October, 2005), pp. 235-251; P. Brassley, J. Burchardt and L. Thompson (eds), *The English Countryside between the Wars: Regeneration or Decline?* (Woodbridge, 2006).

²⁴⁰ K. Jellison, *Entitled to Power: Farm women and technology, 1913-1963* (London, 1993).

²⁴¹ North Yorkshire Federations of Women's Institutes, *North Yorkshire within Living Memory* (Newbury, 1995); West Yorkshire Federation of Women's Institutes, *West Yorkshire within Living Memory* (Newbury, 1996).

Engineering Reports, or the reports of Viscount Astor and B. Seeböhm Rowntree.²⁴² Books for steam and vintage tractor aficionados with large colour photographs and short snippets of information began to be published in the early 1970s. This coincided with the increasing popularity of vintage rallies, where people were able to meet and display their traction engines and vintage or classic tractors. In more recent years these rallies have become more popular, and the vintage tractor book has translated into films on video and DVD showing footage of the machines in their heyday. One problem for the historian of British agricultural technology is that a great deal of the literature written for enthusiasts comes from the USA, meaning that it is largely focused on American tractors, often with ‘Britain and Europe’ taking up only a paragraph or two.²⁴³

While these publications, particularly the popular literature for tractor enthusiasts, acknowledge the affection in which men might hold their tractor, there is little to be found which explicitly addresses the impact of the dawn of the tractor on concepts of masculinity. This is a significant lacuna as this period was a time when war and its direct consequences for male physique, as well as increased awareness of the effect of public health and welfare on the readiness of the male body for battle, was causing upheaval in public perceptions of what it was to be a man. Michael Perry in *My First Tractor* makes clear the significance of the first tractor for many of the farming men who saw the horse replaced by the first cabbles and quirky models: ‘I’ll pretty much guarantee you that for most farm kids the memory of the first time they “drove tractor” retains the approximate clarity of their first kiss.’²⁴⁴ Interviews for this project indicate that the first tractor held a similar significance, both emotionally and as a life experience, for the men of Lower Wharfedale. However, this does not address the question of masculinity, which has increasingly attracted scholarly attention during recent years.

²⁴² C. Culpin, *Farm Machinery* (London, 1938); Political and Economic Planning (PEP) Reports – 1, *Agricultural Machinery: A Report on the Organisation and Structure of the Industry, its Products, and its Market Prospects at Home and Abroad* (London, February 1949); W. Astor and B. Seeböhm Rowntree, *Mixed Farming and Muddled Thinking: An Analysis of Current Agricultural Policy, A Report and Enquiry* (London, 1946).

²⁴³ R. C. Williams, *Fordson, Farmall, and Poppin’ Johnny: A History of the Farm Tractor and its Impact on America* (Chicago, 1987); R. Moorhouse, *The Illustrated History of Tractors* (London, 2003); J. Apps (ed.), *My First Tractor: Stories of Farmers and their First Love* (Minneapolis, 2010).

²⁴⁴ M. Perry, ‘Drivin’ Tractor’ in J. Apps (ed.), *My First Tractor: Stories of Farmers and their First Love* (Minneapolis, 2010), p. 36.

The wartime period, when attention was drawn to the deficiency of many male bodies and previous notions of what it meant to be a man were disrupted by the movement of large numbers of women into the workforce, has proved a fertile ground for investigation into masculinity and the male body.²⁴⁵ The First and Second World Wars have been identified by a number of researchers as a turning point, or moment of questioning, in terms of masculinity and what it meant to be a man. Peter G. Filene described American men's experience of the dilemma of their own masculinity in the First World War as a 'psychic crisis'.²⁴⁶ This apparent turning point has meant that the figure of the soldier has drawn a good deal of study, for example in Graham Dawson's *Soldier Heroes*, which contrasted nineteenth- and early twentieth-century heroic masculinities to the contemporaneous lived experiences of men and boys.²⁴⁷ Joanna Bourke offered a more subtle interpretation, arguing that although war was disruptive to previous understandings and expressions of masculinity, this does not mean that the vast majority of men became disillusioned with them, or that the meaning of being a man underwent a sea change. Her study demonstrates that the feelings of betrayal and alienation expressed by war poets such as Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen were not representative of the feelings of the wider male population.²⁴⁸ Bourke's book, however, goes further than Dawson's in that it investigates the effect of the reconstructed, soldierly masculinity on the men who did not go to war.

Kate Murphy's *Fears and Fantasies* addressed the rural-urban divide and its links with gender in an Australian context, arguing that the rural is at least as important as the urban in understanding the meaning of modernity: 'the rural and the urban were always understood and articulated in relation to one another'.²⁴⁹ Furthermore, she argues, the gender dichotomy was not as simple as aligning the feminine with the city, and the masculine with the country, but that elite commentators in Australia actively encouraged imaginings of the rural as a space in which women were more feminine and

²⁴⁵ As with so many of the themes raised by this investigation, the historiography of discussions of the body has strong links to classic works of critical and political theory, philosophy and ontology, which continue to be relevant to recent scholarship, for example through Giorgio Agamben's *The Use of Bodies* (2014, Stanford, 2015), to Heidegger's concept of 'Dasein', all of which subtly inform the ways in which historians can approach the 'lived experience'.

²⁴⁶ P. G. Filene, *Him/Her/Self: Sex roles in modern America* (1974, New York, 1998), p. 100.

²⁴⁷ Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*.

²⁴⁸ Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p. 19.

²⁴⁹ K. Murphy, *Fears and Fantasies: Modernity, Gender, and the Rural-Urban Divide* (New York, 2010), p. 2.

men more masculine than those who lived in the city, which created more feminised men and women without a ‘natural’ mothering instinct.²⁵⁰ This idea can also be found in English rural thinking, for example in James Wentworth Day’s *Farming Adventure* (1943), in which the author records ‘old William’ saying:

An’ if you’ve got plenty of folks farmin’ an’ livin’ on the land you’ve got young fellers that ain’t only able to feed you, but are fit ter fight – not like some o’ these pore, herrin’-guttled, holler-chested little fellers what the towns breed... The towns o’ this country is too big. They swaller up the men an’ make monkeys on ‘em.²⁵¹

A similar idealisation of the working male body was found by John Field in his article on work camps in interwar Britain. He wrote that ‘the hardened worker’s body was a male body. The transition at work [in the urban camp-goers] was therefore one of entry, or re-entry, into full adult manhood.’²⁵² The transformative work performed in these camps was seen as ‘an antidote to the malign influences of contemporary [overwhelmingly urban] British life.’²⁵³ These anxieties about the de-masculinisation of the modernising urban male, on both sides of the world, paint the rural worker in the earlier half of the twentieth century as not only fit, but traditional, less modern and therefore more masculine. To ignore the effect of such a modernising influence as the tractor on this construction of masculinity is to ignore a huge part of the experience of being a man in a rural community at this time.

These historically-based studies fit into a wider, and growing, literature of masculinity and ‘men’s studies’ which grew out of the feminist-oriented women’s studies which developed from the 1960s onwards. This new discipline was also influenced, in the early years, by psychology, taking cues from Freudian and Jungian theories.²⁵⁴ Lynne Segal and Tim Carrigan, Bob Connell and John Lee have recognized a paper titled ‘The New Burdens of Masculinity,’ by Helen Hacker, published in

²⁵⁰ Murphy, *Fears and Fantasies*, pp. 2-3.

²⁵¹ J. Wentworth Day, *Farming Adventure: A Thousand Miles through England on a Horse* (1975, Wakefield, 1943), p. 53.

²⁵² J. Field, ‘An Anti-Urban Education? Work camps and ideals of the land in interwar Britain,’ *Rural History*, 23, no. 2 (October, 2012), p. 225.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

²⁵⁴ L. Segal, *Slow Motion: Changing masculinities, changing men* (London, 1990), p. 21; Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, pp. 27-29.

1957,²⁵⁵ as hugely influential, anticipating many of the contradictions and conflicts which were further expanded upon by the later practitioners of men's studies.²⁵⁶ David Jackson, on the other hand, traced modern masculinity studies from Sheila Rowbotham's 'challenge to conventional masculinity to start remaking itself by joining in the mutual investigation of gender identity' in her *Woman's Consciousness, Man's World*, published in 1973.²⁵⁷ Segal also mentioned the place of sex-role identity theory in the historiography of masculinity and men's studies.²⁵⁸ In this assessment she is joined by Joseph H. Pleck, who traced the rise, fall, and various incarnations of male sex-role identity (MSRI) theory from 1936 to the mid-1980s, when it was superseded by theories which fitted better with new attitudes to sex-roles, and which took account of new ideas surrounding the division of 'gender identity' and 'gender roles'. Broadly, MSRI theory contended that males became psychologically mature through acquiring sex-appropriate traits, attitudes, and interests. Studies focused on the question: 'What makes men less masculine than they should be, and what can we do about it?'²⁵⁹ Segal identified Andrew Tolson's 1977 *The Limit of Masculinity* as one of the seminal works in the earlier historiography of masculinity, as it addressed the institutionalization of, and class-divides within, masculinity.²⁶⁰

Harry Brod's edited volume, *The Making of Masculinities: The new men's studies*, published in 1987, was one of the earlier collections to address the meaning of being a man, and its contributors still felt the need to justify and explain the point of men's studies. Catherine R. Stimpson's foreword explained:

In part, the word "man" is manifold because of the work of a new intellectual enterprise, "men's studies", a complement to women's studies... As women's studies brought women into history, men's studies began to ask how men had experienced history *as men*, as carriers of masculinity.²⁶¹

²⁵⁵ H. M. Hacker, 'The New Burdens of Masculinity,' *Marriage and Family Living*, 19, No. 3 (Aug. 1957).

²⁵⁶ Segal, *Slow Motion*, p. 21; T. Carrigan, B. Connell, and J. Lee, 'Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity,' in H. Brod (ed.), *The Making of Masculinities: The new men's studies* (London, 1987), p. 73.

²⁵⁷ D. Jackson, *Unmasking Masculinity: A critical autobiography* (London, 1990), p. 1.

²⁵⁸ Segal, *Slow Motion*, pp. 67-69.

²⁵⁹ J. H. Pleck, 'The Theory of Male Sex-Role Identity: Its rise and fall, 1936 to the present,' in H. Brod (ed.), *The Making of Masculinities*, pp. 22-36.

²⁶⁰ Segal, *Slow Motion*, pp. 94-95.

²⁶¹ C. R. Stimpson, 'Foreword,' in H. Brod (ed.), *The Making of Masculinities*, p. xii.

Brod himself argued that, ‘while women have been obscured from our vision by being too much in the background, men have been obscured by being too much in foreground.’²⁶² He also stressed the need of men’s studies in the late 1980s to move beyond the restrictions of race and class, calling attention to the emphasis on Third World masculinities and black masculinities.²⁶³ This was echoed in the same volume by Joseph H. Pleck, who identified a focus on black male identity particularly in the 1950s and 1960s.²⁶⁴

Scholars of gender and men’s studies into the 1990s swiftly moved to address this imbalance, and to apply the new ideas and new approaches to masculinity across race and class divisions. Victor J. Seidler explored masculinity as a ‘historically-emergent experience,’ in the light of the complex and sometimes challenging relationship between masculinity and emergent feminism during the previous two decades.²⁶⁵ The result was a book which analysed the multifaceted masculine lived experience, what it was to be a man, and how this came to be so, through language, ideas of ‘reason’, power and control, concepts of identity, morality, sexuality, and perceived weaknesses.

Lynne Segal’s *Slow Motion: Changing masculinities, changing men* traced how the meaning of masculinity, and the study of men, had evolved over the twentieth century and been affected by different external circumstances. For example, there was the effect of fatherhood, and of social expectations surrounding fatherhood, or the conjecture that:

The constant pressure to confirm masculinity in its difference from femininity may also explain why it is only when men are seen at their most unquestionably masculine – as soldiers in combat, as footballers in action - that they can embrace, weep, display what Western manhood depicts as more feminine feelings and behaviour.²⁶⁶

²⁶² H. Brod, ‘The Case for Men’s Studies,’ in H. Brod (ed.) *The Making of Masculinities*, p. 38.

²⁶³ H. Brod, ‘Introduction: Themes and theses,’ in H. Brod (ed.), *The Making of Masculinities*, p. 12.

²⁶⁴ Pleck, ‘The theory of male sex role identity,’ in H. Brod (ed.), *The Making of Masculinities*, p. 34.

²⁶⁵ V. J. Seidler, *Rediscovering Masculinity: Reason, language and sexuality* (London, 1989), pp. ix; 3-4.

²⁶⁶ Segal, *Slow Motion*, p. 103.

This may further explain why war and sports have proved so attractive to those studying masculinities, and indeed both of these topics are covered, and linked, by Joanna Bourke's *Dismembering the Male*.²⁶⁷

We can also see the coming together of the 'men's studies' academic community in the 1990s, with the publication of *Unmasking Masculinity* by David Jackson, for which several of the abovementioned researchers featured on the editorial advisory board. Harry Brod, Bob Connell, Lynne Segal, and Victor Seidler are listed, alongside fourteen others, indicating that by this time the discipline was becoming more widely recognised. This was a very self-reflective book, subtitled 'A critical autobiography,' which encouraged 'excavating, in public, the sedimented layers of [men's] own particular and diverse life histories.'²⁶⁸ Clearly, the study of masculinity is bound up in the historiography of personal and oral histories.

An example of the interaction between men's studies and longer term, and document-based history, based outside the world of academics reflecting upon their own experiences can be seen in *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*, edited by Michael Roper and John Tosh.²⁶⁹ Martin Francis has described this book as being 'widely accepted as a landmark in the study of masculinity.'²⁷⁰ Roper and Tosh criticised the state of contemporary historical work on masculinity, saying that it left 'a great deal to be desired. The crucial problem is that women are almost entirely absent from these accounts, seemingly on the assumption that masculinity takes on a sharper focus when women are removed from the scene.'²⁷¹ They also called attention to the lacuna around the study of men and domesticity, and the relationships of power between men and women.²⁷² Their verdict on the meaning of masculinity in 1991 was that: 'masculinity entails an interweaving of men's social power with a range of cultural representations, both dominant and subordinate. This is further complicated by the fact that it is the product both of lived experience and fantasy.'²⁷³ Masculinity clearly remained a complex concept. Roper and Tosh argued that in order to explore such a

²⁶⁷ Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, pp. 35-37.

²⁶⁸ Jackson, *Unmasking Masculinities*, p. 3.

²⁶⁹ M. Roper and J. Tosh (eds), *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London, 1991).

²⁷⁰ M. Francis, 'The Domestication of the Male? Recent research on nineteenth- and twentieth-century British masculinity,' *The Historical Journal*, 45, no. 3 (2002), p. 638.

²⁷¹ M. Roper and J. Tosh, 'Introduction,' in Roper and Tosh (eds), *Manful Assertions*, p. 3.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

contradiction-riddled, changing, and conflictual subject, understandings must be securely rooted in historical perspective. Imagined and lived masculine identities are informed by what has gone before, and are constantly evolving and societal expectations develop and change.²⁷⁴

More recently, the study of masculinity has expanded to include investigations into the experience of being male in a variety of specific contexts and situations, for example, Martin Francis' 'The Domestication of the Male?' looked at British masculinity in the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries, with a focus on the man in family life.²⁷⁵ Owain Jones took a geographically-based approach in studying the relationship between the rural childhood and the differing expectations placed on male and female children, leading to rural female children adopting a 'quasi-male identity' in order fully to take part.²⁷⁶ Similarly, L. M. Bye's study of masculinity in Norway picked out the rural man as the focus.²⁷⁷ As noted above, questions surrounding this gendering of geographies have continued to be posed and answered, as in Kate Murphy's recent work on Australian ideas about the urban/rural divide.²⁷⁸ Indeed, in 2003, Lawrence D. Berg and Robyn Longhurst noted: 'There is a sure sign that studies of masculinity are beginning to mature in geography: the appearance of edited collections on such issues.'²⁷⁹ Jonathan Watson approached masculinities in a different way, by looking at the male body, and the embodied experience of being a man, particularly with regard to health and cultural expectations linked to the body.²⁸⁰ These ideas of the male body, and the embodied experience were central tenets of Joanna Bourke's excellent *Dismembering the Male*, which brought together several of the separate threads which had appeared in men's studies, and studies of masculinities, to form a multifaceted picture of different male experiences, divided by class, geography,

²⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 19.

²⁷⁵ Francis, M., 'The Domestication of the Male? Recent research on nineteenth- and twentieth-century British masculinity,' *The Historical Journal*, 45, no. 3 (2002).

²⁷⁶ O. Jones, 'Tomboy Tales: The rural, nature and the gender of childhood,' *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 6, no. 2 (1999), p. 118.

²⁷⁷ L. M. Bye, "'How to be a Rural Man': Young men's performances and negotiations of rural masculinities,' *Journal of Rural Studies*, 25 (2009), pp. 278-288.

²⁷⁸ Murphy, *Fears and Fantasies*.

²⁷⁹ L. D. Berg and R. Longhurst, 'Placing Masculinities and Geography,' *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 10, no. 4 (2003), p. 355.

²⁸⁰ J. Watson, *Male Bodies: Health, culture and identity* (Buckingham, 2000).

and physical ability, but unified by the experience of the Great War and its after-effects on society and culture.²⁸¹

This chapter aims to explore, not the specific masculinity of farmers and farmworkers, as it would be facile to suggest that they were totally different to other men in their masculinity, but rather the ways that a sense of identity as men, and embodied masculine experiences were shaped by those things which uniquely affected farmers, and how this in turn impacted upon the culture of a small farming community. Furthermore, the chapter will consider these changes in contrast with about the role of women and feminism in this rural community, in order to create an image of gender relations during this 1914-1951 period of dynamic and lasting social change. It will argue that changing technology subtly shifted the cultural goalposts regarding masculinity and masculine identity, forcing men to reconcile themselves with new ideas in order to retain self-esteem. In terms of wider themes, it will demonstrate shared knowledge, and masculine spaces, both for work and for recreation, engendering a sense of 'togetherness'.

Core Values of Masculinity

At the core of masculinity as a concept are a group of values which are repeatedly identified as pertaining to the idealised, masculinised male: the strength, stoicism and physicality of stereotype. In the early years of men's studies, and research into the experience of maleness, male and female identities were measured against this core composite to categorise them according to their degree of masculinity. This method is now out-dated, but the masculine values upon which it rested can be recognised as part of a cultural construction of the man, against which he may be measured by himself and others. This is an important shift, which removes the judgment from the hands of the researcher, and instead allows a focus on how this same judgment, by wider society, impacts upon, and ultimately shapes, men's perceptions of their own identities.

Physical strength is one of the key core values of traditional masculinity, and is picked up by researchers into men's studies internationally, being mentioned in Kate

²⁸¹ Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*.

Murphy's Australian study, *Fears and Fantasies*, and L. M. Bye's "'How to be a rural man",' which investigated the performance of rural masculinity in Norway, as well as in numerous British and American studies.²⁸² Along with physical strength, many researchers identify the importance of physical skill. For example, Bye quoted an interviewee who discusses the difficulty of fitting in for men who are not 'handy'; there is a need to be skilled with the hands as well as possessing brute force.²⁸³ Traditionally, there has been an association of men's work with skill, often resulting in men's work paying higher wages, and the movement of women into a previously male type of work declassified the task from skilled to unskilled, rather than promoting such women to the status of skilled workers. S. Brooke has argued that, 'the dilution of male labour by female labour during the First World War left the identification between skilled work and masculinity less sure.'²⁸⁴ However, the changing of associations in reality is not always reflected by changes in ideals. At the same time as Brooke identifies this dilution occurring, Bourke notes that the injuring of the male body in battle, and consequent experience of disability, was equated with a loss of masculinity. Loss of a limb was not compensated solely as a loss of working capacity, but as a man incapacitated from 'being' a man through his loss of physical ability, skill and dexterity.²⁸⁵ Furthermore, the experience of maleness is closely bound up with self-perception, and therefore socially conditioned expectations, derived from literature, film, and orally reproduced tales, and therefore the experience of maleness will not be judged against an academic understanding of masculinity, but against an older, slower-changing model of socially constructed roles of masculinity.

In many ways, the wartime and interwar vision of the ideal male could be found in the farmworkers of the British countryside. They performed skilled but physical labour in a traditionally gendered setting, and as part of a socially bonded group of males. John Field has argued that, 'Physically, as well as ideologically, work made bodies. Socially, work represented a means of belonging and a basis for social solidarity.'²⁸⁶ The body of the physically active outdoor worker was obviously desirable during this period, as a reaction to the well-documented lack of fit and healthy men

²⁸² Murphy, *Fears and Fantasies*, p. 121; Bye, "'How to be a Rural Man",' p. 281.

²⁸³ Bye, "'How to be a Rural Man",' p. 281.

²⁸⁴ S. Brooke, 'Gender and Working Class Identity in Britain during the 1950s,' *Journal of Social History*, 34, no. 4 (Summer, 2001), p. 776.

²⁸⁵ Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p. 65.

²⁸⁶ Field, 'An Anti-Urban Education?', p. 224.

available to fight during the First World War, and earlier during the Boer War of 1899-1902, in which only 14,000 of the 20,000 British volunteers were judged 'fit' to enlist, a trend which was most pronounced in urban areas.²⁸⁷ The association of the outdoors with health, according to Field, had a marked gender dimension since this ideology was marketed almost exclusively towards men and boys, for example in the establishment of the scouting movement.²⁸⁸ This has obvious parallels with the work of Kate Murphy on the Australian urban-rural divide and its gender dimensions, discussed above, in which Murphy posits that 'the rural was figured as a space in which ideal and authentic qualities of masculinity and femininity were fostered.'²⁸⁹ She also quotes contemporary Australian social reformers who clearly made the connection between the rural setting and the idealised male. James W. Barrett highlighted the physical strength of the agricultural worker, 'with his muscle, bone and outdoor outlook,' comparing him favourably with the physically weaker urban-dweller, while C. E. W. Bean's *In Your Hands, Australia* of 1918 asserted that rural men were 'better', as in the countryside, 'a man is mostly his own master and has to make up his mind for himself and contrive all sorts of things for himself which in the cities are provided for him.'²⁹⁰ This concurrence about the healthy and masculine nature of the rural extends into work on childhood, for example O. Jones' 'Tomboy Tales', which discussed the place of the country childhood in popular culture as 'the apotheosis of what childhood should be.'²⁹¹ Jones argues that rural childhood has been overwhelmingly conceptualised as male children performing activities which are supposed to be enjoyed by male children, almost all requiring a degree of physical fitness and dexterity, and that in order to participate fully in this idyllic, active, and healthy childhood, female children have to adopt the 'quasi-male identity' of the tomboy.²⁹² Once again, even in childhood, research has shown that the rural and the masculine, incorporating physical health and physical skill, have been inextricably culturally linked.

²⁸⁷ Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p. 13.

²⁸⁸ Field, 'An Anti-Urban Education?', pp. 213 and 224.

²⁸⁹ Murphy, *Fears and Fantasies*, p. 2.

²⁹⁰ James W. Barrett, *The Twin Ideals: An Educated Commonwealth*, vol. 1 (London, 1918), pp. 23-4, quoted in Murphy, *Fears and Fantasies*, p. 121; C. E. W. Bean, *In Your Hands, Australia* (1918), quoted in Murphy, *Fears and Fantasies*, p. 147.

²⁹¹ Jones, 'Tomboy Tales,' p. 118.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 117-118.

Masculinity and Community

The connection between masculinity and physical strength is a very basic one to make, but this does not mean that it is unimportant. Indeed, Joanna Bourke has written that ‘there is no clear distinction between the study of men’s bodies and masculinity,’ suggesting a firm cultural association between the two.²⁹³ We have already seen that social reformers and government officials across the world have located physical strength and fitness at the centre of desirable masculinity, both for reasons of national health, and for military power. As Graham Dawson noted, the state actively promoted the forms of masculinity which furthered nationalist endeavours, while rejecting, in ‘explicitly national terms’, those ‘subversive’ forms of masculinity such as the effeminate or homosexual man.²⁹⁴ Bourke has also noted the importance of physical strength, and its manifestation in the appearance of the male body, in the letters, memoirs and diaries of men who lived through the Great War. In one particular diary extract, used by Bourke, soldier Ralph Scott recorded:

I looked at my great murderous maulers and wondered idly how they had evolved from the sensitive manicured fingers that used to pen theses on “Colloidal Fuel” and “The Theory of Heat Distribution in Cylinder Walls.” And I found the comparison good.²⁹⁵

This indicates the fulfilment of a desire to achieve a masculine body through physical work, in this case in the armed forces. Physical work, and the new ‘full’ adult male identity with which the participant in such work was imbued, was an important part of contemporary manhood for both urban and rural men.²⁹⁶

The evidence for this emphasis on physical change, physical strength, and physical exercise among men who looked at agriculture from the outside during the war and interwar years is, as shown above, not difficult to find. Closer to the study locality, the Ministry of Information film, ‘Factory to Farm and Back Again’, released in 1944, featured mechanics from an urban factory taking their ‘holiday’ at a Yorkshire

²⁹³ Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p. 11.

²⁹⁴ Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, pp. 1-2.

²⁹⁵ R. Scott, *A Soldier’s Diary* (London, 1923), p. 174 quoted in Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, pp. 15-16.

²⁹⁶ Field, ‘An Anti-Urban Education?’, p. 225.

volunteer agricultural camp, and later, back at their factory, recommending the experience. After showing the mechanics helping to bring in the harvest, relaxing in their tents, and playing games in the sunshine, one man assures the audience: 'it wasn't all holiday, it was hard work too, fresh air and exercise. I'll have to go again next year.'²⁹⁷ Although this film was very clearly an advertisement for the volunteer agricultural camps, and therefore may not be wholly reflective of the reality of the camps, it is telling that the format used to attract volunteers is that of a man endorsing hard work and exercise. This, and the implications of improved health and strength which accompany those things in a rural environment, were obviously thought to be desirable to the urban males who would view the film in their factory canteens.

Finding evidence of the constituent parts and meanings of masculinity within the Wharfedale farming community is more of a challenge, however. As with women who expressed no opinion on feminism, the nature of masculinity was something which many men simply had not thought about. Jonathan Watson's investigation into men's bodies and men's health found that if men had a mental image of their own body at all, then it tended to be a representation of their body at an earlier point in time, before the assumption of adult social identities and adult social obligations.²⁹⁸ Nevertheless, some of the recollections by Wharfedale farmers indirectly reveal the importance of physical strength in early twentieth-century constructions of what it meant to be a man. As Watson described, these often come in the form of memories of what the body was able to achieve at an earlier point in time, but there are also recollections of what other, older men could do, physically, before the interviewee himself was an adult. In these cases, the older man, by virtue of his physical strength, appears to have been a role model for the younger man's forming masculinity. This is suggested by the instances in which young men tried to copy what older men were doing.

One particularly clear recollection of this phenomenon comes from George Rice, who remembered thrashing days as a young farm labourer during the Second World War:

It used to be a good laugh... After dinner, the fellers used to go in with the 56 pound weights, and be lifting them up above

²⁹⁷ Ministry of Information, 'Factory to Farm and Back Again' (1944), Yorkshire Film Archive, Film ID: 3395.

²⁹⁸ Watson, *Male Bodies*, p. 95.

their heads and seeing who could lift two of them. And some could lift three. Fred Wagstaff, he used to tie a piece of string round one of them, lift it up, put it in his teeth, like that, and then one in each arm and put them up and bang them together at the top, and I've never done it in my life, whether I was too long in the arm or – I was strong enough to do it, but never ever could I get them to the top, never ever in my life, I've tried. I've done it on a night when I finished work, I used to go up into what we called the granary and mess about with weights, knacking myself... And then another one was a .303, you know, a rifle, because a good few farmers were in the Home Guard, and they had a rifle, and they used to get the rifle, put it at your arm's length, bend it over, touch your nose with it, and then put it back. By, that took some doing, did that.²⁹⁹

Derrick Goodall remembered how older, more experienced men who worked on top of the thrashing machines would push the more junior workers who carried the sacks full of grain away, and the use of humour at their expense to discourage complaining:

With how fast it were coming down I had to jump off the last four granary steps because the bag would be running over. Oats came down right fast, and those on the top you see, you hadn't to say anything or they'd go faster! Because they were laughing at you because you were running, you see.³⁰⁰

Other interviewees remembered feats of strength performed as part of work, for example David Lister's recollection that the 'strong men' on his father's farm would 'scawp' ailing lambs with just their knuckle, while others would have to use a good penknife. 'Scawping' was the process of cracking the overgrown bone on the forehead of an ailing lamb.³⁰¹ A similar activity which many men remember doing themselves in their youth, and which many blame for back, hip and knee problems in later life, was

²⁹⁹ G. Rice, Interview by J. Rowling, Yeadon, 17 December 2013.

³⁰⁰ D. Goodall, Interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, 13 August 2012.

³⁰¹ D. Lister, interview by J. Rowling, Birstwith, 25 June 2013. See Auction Mart chapter p. 77 for more information on 'scawping'.

carrying sacks of grain into upstairs granaries and storerooms after thrashing. The sacks used were from the railways and would hold sixteen stones (101.6kg) of grain. Those who were thought to be slacking, or were simply the victims of practical jokers, might find a 56 pound weight added to the bottom of their sack.³⁰²

While the jokes and break-time games had no practical purpose, and ‘scawping’ with a knuckle held no practical advantage over using a penknife for the same task, given that the vast majority of farmers and labourers would carry a penknife with them anyway, it is far too simplistic to merely equate physical strength with masculinity and therefore conclude that it was a desirable trait for men in this community. However, in a community which was formed around physical work, physical strength was naturally a key component in bonding and the development of trust between men. In this, parallels can be drawn with studies of soldiers, such as that by Bourke, in which the concept of ‘mateship’ is formed between men undertaking physically demanding tasks as part of a group or team.³⁰³ Likewise, it is evident in Dawson’s recognition of the regiment as the localised context and audience for soldiers’ stories, in which actions are understood, as opposed to the story being construed by the wider public as a part of an abstract national identity.³⁰⁴

In the early 1970s Studs Terkel drew on Marxist principles when he wrote that work was ‘about violence – to the spirit as well as to body’.³⁰⁵ In Lower Wharfedale’s farming community, the argument that work can be seen as violence wrought upon the body is indisputable. Robin Cowgill recalled sitting in the yard of Otley Auction: ‘I was just watching, and nearly every other person that walked across that yard were limping, you know. You don’t see office workers and bank men and all these limping, you know, like these farmers that get water in their bones!’³⁰⁶ Many other interviewees mentioned the effects of a lifetime of farming on their own bodies, with much of the damage attributed to heavy work performed at a young age. Frank Fearnley recalled the physical demands placed upon him as a child:

³⁰² F. Fearnley, Interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, 20 September 2012.

³⁰³ Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p. 151.

³⁰⁴ Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, p. 24.

³⁰⁵ S. Terkel, *Working: People talk about what they do all day and how they feel about what they do* (Harmondsworth, 1975), p. xiii.

³⁰⁶ R. Cowgill, interview by J. Rowling, Otley, 19 December 2013.

When I were twelve year old I could pick a twelve stone bag of oats up off the floor and put it on my shoulder. Now four stone's too heavy! [laugh] But I just liked to keep fit in them days, and I were strong, but I've never grown any taller since I were twelve year old, I were six foot then!

In this recollection we can see a contraindication to the idea that work was also violent to the spirit. The ability to take violence to the body, to do the work, and to be 'strong' imparted a sense of pride, and a feeling of having graduated to an adult masculinity. Looking back at their lives in agriculture, almost every interviewee who grew up during the study period linked their identities to farming, with one of the most common sentiments, appearing across different, unrelated interviews, being 'I've really enjoyed my life.' Harry Denton was one of those who used a variant on this phrase, and made explicit the extent to which his 'work' was conflated with his 'life':

I've enjoyed my life, you know, I don't think I'd ever want to change it, Jane. There were times you wished it all in hell, you know, you could have pushed the lot down into the river, but you get that, don't you, with any occupation. But generally speaking no, I've enjoyed what I've done, all the time love, yes. Yes. I've never made any money. You can never make money out of this job! But money isn't everything, is it? I've enjoyed doing my work.³⁰⁷

This idea picks up on themes developed by John Kirk and Christine Wall in their study of work identity. Influenced by Harry Braverman's work on the 'degradation' of labour, and more recently L. Clarke and C. Winch on the meaning of 'skill', Kirk and Wall link traditional understandings of 'skill' in British culture to the physical, embodied experience of masculinity.³⁰⁸ The physical ability to cope with manual labour, physical dexterity, knowledge of the materials involved in the labour, and the successful creation of a specified output within a timeframe which would not be possible for an unskilled

³⁰⁷ H. Denton, interview by J. Rowling, Castley, 22 January 2012.

³⁰⁸ J. Kirk and C. Wall, *Work Identity: Historical and Cultural Contexts* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 42; p. 60. See also H. Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1974); L. Clarke and C. Winch, 'A European skills framework? – but what are skills? Anglo-Saxon versus German concepts,' *Journal of Education and Work*, 19, No. 3 (2006), pp. 255-269.

person are all key components in this notion of traditional, noble, masculinised skill which Kirk and Wall trace back to Ruskin and Adam Smith.³⁰⁹ This definition fits with the community themes which run this particular study in a number of aspects.

In previous chapters we have already touched on the importance of knowledge to this community, in order to prove insider status by knowing the right people, and reinforcing insider status by only passing on farming knowledge to recognised insiders. This knowledge would then be taken back to the farm and demonstrated by the production of a ‘specified output’, in this case a successfully ploughed, sowed and harvested field. The successful management of a field was a public demonstration of masculinity, as knowledge and skill would be laid out for all to see in straight furrows, even sowing, and level stubble. Adrian Bell in *Corduroy* recalled, ‘When motoring, Mr Colville would exclaim, “That looks a strong bit of wheat,” or “That barley shows well”’ as they passed the fields of neighbouring farmers.³¹⁰ Likewise, poor crops would be on show for knowledgeable eyes to judge. Victor Thompson described the care which would go into ploughing a field perfectly:

What they used to do to start ploughing a field – if you had a trailer plough you needed a wider headland to turn to get back down where you wanted to come up again – so what you did, you drove round as near as you could tell, and you used to put a peg in, a couple of pegs in, at the corners, and drive round, and tilt your plough so that it were only turning one furrow over. Just a marker, as it were. And you used to go round like that, right round, and then if you had enough time, mark your rigs out. So you’d go down one side, just with one furrow, and then you’d come back up the other side, and you’d make it so that that furrow and the one at your left the last time up, they met so they were flat, and then the next lot that you came, you’d put your plough down to the proper depth and it used to cover them up to about there [indicating a short distance on fingers], and then you went that way round, what you call halving it out, going to the left, and then when you got so you couldn’t do

³⁰⁹ Kirk and Wall, *Work Identity*, p. 42.

³¹⁰ A. Bell, *Corduroy* (1930, Oxford, 1998), p. 194.

anything else, you just went up and down and finished it off. But when you finished a furrow off, you just went that little bit deeper on the last time down, because if you didn't the plough used to wander, because it were on wheels, you see, and it only had a trailer hitch to the tractor, it wasn't on hydraulics or owt like that, and if you didn't do that bit of extra depth it used to wander about all over the place... You can do what you like and say what you like, but the bloke that taught me, I know it's right, because he was a prize winner.³¹¹

Despite referring to tractor ploughing during the later part of the study period, this is reminiscent of Adrian Bell's description of his first attempt at ploughing with a horse in the 1920s, on which he commented, 'One hears talk of the monotony of ploughing, but I found it a keen exercise of hand and eye.'³¹² Those who felt especially confident in their ploughing skills could choose to take them into an even more public sphere, and display them at a ploughing match. As suggested by Victor Thompson's reference to his mentor, a prizewinning ploughman would have a high status in his community. The public performance of skill seems to have confirmed farming knowledge, and skill, and reputation. This in turn facilitated the dissemination of knowledge by providing a form of qualification for more experienced ploughmen to teach others, as well as the ploughing matches serving as a meeting place for the horsemen and, later, tractormen, much as the auction mart did for the stockmen, reinforcing social networks and 'togetherness' among the arable specialists in the area. Finally, the regular repetition of ploughing matches, becoming tradition, was part of the 'continuous elaboration of the culture' which enabled the community to maintain itself.³¹³ It is important to note that, like the auction marts, ploughing matches during the study period were overwhelmingly male affairs. There may have been women in the audience at these events, but they were ostensibly performances by men for the benefit of other men, and female interviewees for this project did not display any marked enthusiasm for judging the quality of a man's ploughing. Nevertheless, there was an element of collusion by women in confirming their husband's sense of a masculine self, by emphasising their

³¹¹ V. Thompson, interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, 7 December 2012.

³¹² Bell, *Corduroy*, p. 133.

³¹³ A. P. Cohen (ed.), *Belonging: Identity and social organisation in British rural cultures* (Manchester, 1982), p. 5.

own inability to fully master this machinery. For example, Betty Illingworth laughingly recalled her driving experiences:

One got away with me, going down a hill [laughs] a Fordson Major it was... Oh, and yes, and then the van... I was going for my test that time! Yes! Going for my test, so I had to cancel it. I got out to open the gate, and I drove through, but of course I had to go back and fasten the gate, and when I was doing that I looked and it was going way down the hill... It went into the beck! Oh I did get into trouble! [laughs] so I had to cancel the test, and say that it had broken down or something – which it had! Oh dear!³¹⁴

Assertions of inability like this, presented in contrast to male competence, serve to bolster the status of the man as a skilled individual.

The ploughing matches of rural England joined in the tradition of sport as a vehicle for the formation and maintenance of masculine identity and male friendship. Sport has long been associated with masculinity, but rural sport serves as a reinforcement of a particularly rural masculinity. Albion M. Urdank, writing on the development of British sheepdog trials, discussed the way that the rationalisation and reformulation of the sport, culminating in the establishment of the International Sheep Dog Society (ISDS), prompted improvements in sheepdog breeding and shepherding skills.³¹⁵ Importantly, the common feature shared by ploughing matches and sheepdog trials was that they displayed practical skills which were used as part of daily labour by the competitors. Therefore success at a competition could equate to increased status at work. Victor Thompson trained sheepdogs for trials throughout his working life, and recalled of a farmer for whom he worked:

Old George used to say [to the other labourers], “I can send Victor on his own to do that job,” he said, “It takes four of you buggers!” [laugh] Oh, I could walk down the road in front of the cows and let the dog bring them on,

³¹⁴ B. Illingworth, interview by J. Rowling, East Keswick, 6 August 2012.

³¹⁵ A. M. Urdank, ‘The rationalisation of rural sport: British sheepdog trials, 1873-1946,’ *Rural History*, 17, No. 1 (2006), pp. 65-82.

and I could turn them in at whichever gate I wanted.
Aye. No bother. I bet they must have missed me when I
gave up! [laugh]³¹⁶

This quote suggests that the skills which were being tested during rural sports were ones which gave men a real sense of their own identity and self-worth. For Victor Thompson, his prowess as a dog trainer was a source of great pride. It gave him something unique and useful to offer to his community, and through which to support himself and his family. It therefore allowed him to fulfil the key criterion of contemporary adult masculinity: that of contributing significantly to the domestic economy of his own household.³¹⁷

For boys and young men, who had perhaps not yet developed a sufficient skill level to compete with older ploughmen or shepherds, sports and games were important tools in finding and maintaining a masculine identity. Sport performed a similar function among young men to that performed by work among full adult males. Many male interviewees have mentioned playing cricket, in particular, in their youth, and these games, often at village level, seem to have played an important role in fostering social networks between young men. Cricketing companions often seem to have evolved into working relationships. For example, Donald Rhodes remembered:

I used to play a bit of cricket with [the sons of a local farming family]. This is going back a lot of years now. There were three of them. There were Peter, and there were Brian who always wore right thick glasses, but the problem was he couldn't see the ball 'til it was too late! [laugh] ... He wasn't a bad cricketer, wasn't Peter ... I were only a kid at school, they were all sort of older than me, well, there were Frank Stewart, he used to be the wicket keeper, there were Eric Todd and there were Eric Harris ... he used to live in Eccup because he came to Adel School did Eric Harris.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ V. Thompson, 7 December 2012.

³¹⁷ J. Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p. 169.

³¹⁸ D. Rhodes, interview by J. Rowling, Shadwell, 26 June 2013.

These individuals were subsequently mentioned as people with whom Mr Rhodes worked, and whom he saw regularly and counted as part of his community. Michael Curran had a similar experience:

You'd get different people from different areas that, say you wanted help, they'd come and help you, you know. You'd say, "Can you come and give us a hand?" "Right," you know. Same as Derek, you've met Derek, have you? Illingworth? ... Well he used to come to [the farm], you see, he were a butcher really, you see ... He used to do a bit of tractor driving and, you know, on the land, but on a night during hay time and harvest, he'd come and help us up at [the farm], you see, that's how it was, because he were friends of theirs as well. He used to come and play cricket with them and all that as well, as you know, yes, aye. So I've worked alongside him.³¹⁹

Derek Illingworth himself remembered cricket as something which brought together boys from different classes in rural society, recalling the two sons of the then Earl of Harewood playing in cricket matches between the villages of Harewood and East Keswick prior to the Second World War.³²⁰ Michael Messner has pointed out that, for young males, the rules and clear boundaries of organised sports provide a psychologically 'safe' space in which to develop social connections.³²¹ Earlier work on the meanings and sociology of play stretches back to Roger Caillois' ground-breaking *Man, Play and Games* (1958), in which one theory of games was summarised thus:

The spirit of play is the source of the fertile conventions that permit the evolution of culture. It stimulates ingenuity, refinement, and invention. At the same time it teaches loyalty in the face of the adversary and illustrates competition in which rivalry does not survive the encounter.³²²

³¹⁹ M. Curran, interview by J. Rowling, East Keswick, 14 August 2012.

³²⁰ D. Illingworth, interview by J. Rowling, East Keswick, 6 August 2012.

³²¹ M. Messner, 'The meaning of success: The athletic experience and the development of male identity,' in H. Brod (ed.), *The Making of Masculinities*, p. 198.

³²² R. Caillois (M. Barash trans.), *Man, Play and Games* (1958, Chicago, 2001), p.58.

All of these aspects of play can clearly be applied to the world of work in agriculture. As shown in the chapter discussing the auction mart, familiarity with other local men, with their physical capabilities and with their approach to work, was crucial to maintaining mutual trust and safety in a particularly dangerous occupation. Men would not only rely on one another at the auction mart, but also at large community work events, such as haymaking time or thrashing day, when farmers and labourers would come together to help one another to get the job done as a team. Teams of workers who had played organised team sports together as boys had already formed the social networks necessary to work as a successful team, they had grown up seeing one another engaged in physical activity, relied upon one another's physical abilities, and knew by reputation and experience whether a particular man was a team player or a shirker, honest or inclined to cheat, trustworthy or not. This knowledge was of enormous importance in the arable field as well as in the cattle sale ring in order to keep all participants safe. Whether the work was performed with horses, tractors, or even steam power, the potential for disaster was always present.

The vast majority of male interviewees remembered accidents, injuries, and near misses which occurred while working the land, both with tractors and with horses, although remembered fatalities were thankfully few and far between. Often interviewees used tales of accidents and injuries to highlight the dangers of lone working and carelessness, particularly with the often unguarded equipment from the period under investigation, emphasising the importance of having a trustworthy team, or mate, with whom to work. This is very similar to the way in which interviewees who dealt mainly with livestock told stories about inexperienced livestock handlers, highlighting the superior knowledge and skill of the storyteller, reinforcing his status as an insider in the community. Derek Illingworth gave one example, recalling his time as a farm labourer from the late 1930s onwards:

Luckily we hadn't any accidents when I was there, and I don't think they have had on that farm. It was a well-run farm, and everything was as it should be. No, no tractors tipped up or anything like that, maybe a load of corn might tip off when you were leading it and went through a rut and threw all the lot off, but no, we'd no damage done at all to anyone or anything... But there was one on the next farm, who got his coat caught in a

potato machine, and luckily his mate that was sort of with him stopped the tractor, but it had wound his raincoat, it was pulling him in. Aye, and you haven't much chance then. But now everything's more guarded, you've to have shields and guards on, whereas in our day, 1930s, '40s, '50s it wasn't compulsory, a fan would pull your coat in if you put your hand inside it.³²³

Victor Thompson, a member of the same age group as Mr Illingworth, spent much of his career working alone, and therefore it is unsurprising that he stressed the dangers of carelessness:

I've never seen an accident. No. Never ever once seen an accident. No. Because I was allus sort of careful, and more so with tractors, because if you just did, you know, say you had your foot on the clutch and you were just doing summat, and if your foot slipped off of the clutch, and the tractor set off, it could have killed anybody right easy. No I never had any bother like that. I used to stop and put it out of gear to do anything, to do any alterations. Yes. I never saw an accident with a tractor... Farming's a dangerous occupation. It's carelessness that causes it to be dangerous.³²⁴

Derrick Goodall likewise emphasised the dangers of carelessness, with tractors from the 1940s, and with horses a generation earlier:

I remember, my father when he was at the Nunnery - they farmed with quite a few horses there - I remember him coming with a pair of young horses, and I think he was coming out in the farmyard where the drive is to the gate, and they knocked him down and they were pulling chain harrows, and they went over him... I've known a lad over the other side... at Weeton. Well he were messing about with that small baler I were on about and you see, he had it in gear, the PTO were going, you

³²³ D. Illingworth, interview by J. Rowling, East Keswick, 6 August 2012.

³²⁴ V. Thompson, interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, 17 December 2012.

see, and the needle went through his hand, you see, a big needle. But you see, a lot of things, it was carelessness.³²⁵

Michael Curran chose to highlight the importance of teamwork throughout the study period:

Everybody kept an eye on each other, and I can't say – all the time I've been in it – I've never seen any accidents, you know, because they were all careful with the horses and everything, you know.³²⁶

As with the dangers at the auction mart, great care was needed in the fields to avoid accidents, and the necessity of relying on the skills, strength, and knowledge of others similarly brought the themes of status, belonging, trust and identity to the surface. However, unlike the skills which helped to define masculinity in the world of the auction mart, the skills which performed the same function in the fields would undergo a radical change during the period 1914-1951, creating a schism between old and new ideas of what it was to be a farming man.

Horsemen

George Ewart Evans' valuable work on the old horsemen of East Anglia, for example in his *Horse Power and Magic*, and *The Horse in the Furrow*, recorded the words, beliefs and practices of the old horsemen, who learned their craft before the invention of the tractor. The traditions which they followed in their work were still relevant to the older generations at the beginning of the First World War, but by the Second, the tractor revolution was well under way. This meant that a new type of agricultural worker, the tractorman, with a new set of skills, appeared in the fields. As work and skills were so closely bound up with masculine identity, this provoked polarisation between the identities of horsemen and tractormen, in which both sides

³²⁵ D. Goodall, interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, 13 August 2012. 'PTO' refers to the power take-off shaft which transfers power from the tractor to a piece of equipment fastened behind it, such as a baler, which must have power in order to function. The shaft, today covered by a guard, rotates extremely quickly, and is therefore highly dangerous.

³²⁶ M. Curran, interview by J. Rowling, East Keswick, 14 August 2012.

believed themselves possessed of crucial agricultural skills and experiences which proved masculinity.

The progress from horse work to tractor work was a slow one in Lower Wharfedale, and was by no means a *fait accompli* by the end of the study period. The National Farm Survey shows that almost one fifth (19.2 per cent) of farms in the area in the early 1940s owned unbroken horses and heavy horses under one year old, a group of animals which might be described as ‘potential horsepower’, being physically unready for work but kept in anticipation of replacing an older horse. This was long-term planning for the use of horses in agriculture. As late as the 1960s, men remained in the Lower Wharfedale area who identified themselves as horsemen, and continued to work with horses. One interviewee remembered: ‘Old Jim Walmesly worked horses, right. I’ve been here about fifty years. Fifty years ago, aye, Jim was still using horses here. They got him a tractor and he couldn’t make anything of it.’³²⁷ Similarly, David Rowling recalled hearing about his grandfather’s choice between horse work and tractor work during the First World War:

He wouldn’t use a tractor. I mean, he was the first man ever in the district to drive a tractor when he worked agin Eccup Reservoir, I think that was 1914 he drove the first tractor. He was sent to pick it up from Leeds Station, and they started it up for him, showed him how to make it go forwards and backwards, and said, “Right you’re on your way!” And he drove it back to the farm and he never drove it again! Made sure that someone else drove it!³²⁸

George Rice was another who admitted a preference for working with horses over tractors when they became more common in the early 1940s, and suggested that the root of this preference lay in the way that horse-work reinforced a connection to the landscape.

I hated going in the tractor, in the cab, because when you’re ploughing and when you’re mowing grass you get the smell of it, and when they put cabs on you lost all that. You lost it.

³²⁷ Anonymous, interview by J. Rowling, Harrogate, 28 December 2010.

³²⁸ D. Rowling, telephone interview by J. Rowling, 10 March 2012.

And, you see, when you were harrowing and rolling and all that, you missed seeing all the little mice running about. You missed stuff that were there, young leverets, you know, you saw them, and then when you got up on the tractor you flipping – when you hit them it used to sicken you, because I like to see them running about.³²⁹

Once again, this description recalls Adrian Bell's earlier observation that the ploughmen of Suffolk, working with horses in the 1920s, were acutely conscious of the wind, and could predict the weather with unerring accuracy.³³⁰ One of the skills associated with horse work was reading the landscape and a deep familiarity with its most minute details. This familiarity and knowledge, linked so closely to skill, is one of the central tenets of Lindroos' 'Benjaminian' community model. Furthermore, it reinforces the sense that this type of rural community used the landscape, its boundaries, physical geography, and minutiae as a basis for forming an identity. Part of the horseman's identity was his connection with the land he worked, and its role in displaying his skill, and therefore his masculinity, to other male insiders.

The key to a horseman's identity, however, lay in his connection with his horse, and the value of, and prestige brought by, a well-trained, well-maintained, and responsive animal. Frank Morphet summed up the feelings of the horseman with the words: 'I worked with horses for years. They're everything, horses. It's a lot better than tractors.'³³¹ The memories and experiences of this work allowed the identity of a 'horseman' to continue well into the twentieth century, and to remain with some interviewees today, despite years of tractor work. As Mervyn Lister pointed out:

I think it is true that people who have had a great experience with horses would always prefer horses if other things didn't matter, but other things do matter, and the thing that matters most is being able to survive financially, and there are jobs that horses can do that tractors can't, but not many.³³²

Derrick Goodall agreed, saying regretfully:

³²⁹ G. Rice, interview by J. Rowling, Carlton, 17 December 2013.

³³⁰ Bell, *Corduroy*, p. 135.

³³¹ F. Morphet, interview by J. Rowling, Hampsthwaite, 18 July 2013.

³³² M. Lister, interview by J. Rowling, Otley, 2 January 2014.

Well I suppose you've got to go with the times. That's the trouble, isn't it, you see. And, you know, I couldn't – you had to do because they did away with the horse plough. But it's much quicker and whatever, you see, driving the tractor like.³³³

After the Second World War, the tractor's place in British agriculture was assured, but still some men continued to perceive themselves as horsemen rather than tractormen. The survival of this self-perception is important in understanding this community, because it shows how people viewed themselves.³³⁴ David Lister firmly placed his own identity away from that of the 'tractorman':

I remember this Allis Chalmers, we used to start it on petrol, and then turn it over on to TVO [Tractor Vaporising Oil], I just remember that, but I was never any good on tractors, actually, so I've never really been a big tractor man.³³⁵

Derrick Goodall went further, confirming his identity as a horseman by recalling the pride he felt in the first horse he worked with as a young teenager prior to the Second World War:

I've always liked the horses, and I still do, shire horses, I love them, and as I say, if I'd my time to come over again, I'd like to go back to that stage, when it was hard work, but the shire horses, I loved them. I mean, the first day when I went to work at Mr Wardle's, and I were only fourteen, I can see it now, I can remember it plain as day, Monday, it was, and I got a horse and cart to lead muck out, and I thought I was King Kong, you know, I thought it were marvellous, you know. Now as I say, I'd been mad on the farm, but to have a horse and cart of my *own*, [original emphasis] I know I had it to fill,

³³³ D. Goodall, interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, 13 August 2012.

³³⁴ See L. Danielson, 'The Folklorist, the Oral Historian, and Local History,' in D. K. Dunaway and W. K. Baum (eds), *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, 2nd edition (1984, London and Walnut Creek, CA, USA, 1996), p. 190: 'it is as important to analyse the "inaccurate" account as it is to reconstruct the "objective reality".'

³³⁵ D. Lister, interview by J. Rowling, Birstwith, 25 June 2013.

and take muck out, but I thought I was King Kong, I thought it were marvellous, and I've never forgot that [...] and that horse, Bonnie, I loved it. I groomed it so you could see yourself in it, and this chap who went in the army – you see I stayed for my dinner and when I got my dinner, like, I used to always be brushing the horse and you could see yourself in it – and this chap who went in the army, he used to drive the pair of horses, and do ploughing you see, I did with one horse, you see. He were an Irishman and he would have killed me if he could. He used to say, “Oh, your horse gets all the best stuff and does the least work!” you know, chuntering on at me, but it was the way I looked after it. Bonnie, they called it. I'll never forget that.³³⁶

It is clear that, for Mr Goodall, the responsibility and trust placed in him, at fourteen, when he was placed in charge of Bonnie, was a source of great pride, and a moment of transition from boyhood to manhood. It is also apparent that he felt that the appearance of his horse reflected upon him, and his ability to do his work alongside adult male workers. In terms of van Gennep's three-stage process of transition, fourteen year old Derrick Goodall was in the middle stage of his transition into a state of full adult masculinity: marginality.³³⁷ During in this stage he was not a fully-fledged adult member of the community, as shown by the disdain with which his work was treated by his adult colleague, but he had moved out of the childish world of the schoolroom and into the adult world of work. The association of this formative time in his life, which effectively made him a man, with the Shire horse made Mr Goodall identify himself as a horseman despite the years he spent working with tractors as an adult from the 1940s onwards.

Manuel Castells has drawn a distinction between 'identity' and 'role', holding roles to be structured and imposed by society, whereas identities are formed when the individual internalises the self-definition and constructs their own meaning around it, defining their purpose in life from the internalised identity. He writes that identity, and

³³⁶ D. Goodall, interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, 13 August 2012.

³³⁷ A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (1908, London, 1977); V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (1969, New York, 1997), pp. 94-95.

the meaning it imparts, is self-sustaining across time and space.³³⁸ Applying this theory to the community in question indicates that men who worked with horses through their liminal period during their transition to adulthood, and who associated horse work with a high level of skill or pride, then constructed their own personal identity as a ‘horseman’, despite later taking on the role of a tractorman due to economic necessity.

The enduring nature of the horseman’s identity may also be attributed to the all-consuming nature of the work in which they saw themselves as most skilled. When asked if he missed working with his horses in the 1930s, Bert Verity explained:

Oh yes. Because the horseman, he was part of – you see – when he was ploughing, a man and a pair of horses ploughed about an acre a day. If he had a 12 acre field to plough it took him about 12 days, and he would go in a morning at 7 or 8 o’clock, he’d take a bit of bait with him, put it at the back of the hedge. Have it. He’d go home at lunch time for his lunch. Back again. At night the same, and then those horses had to be groomed and fed every night, cleaned and bedded up and watered and fed, you know. Bedtime. They really took a lot of looking after.³³⁹

In this repetitive day, in which certain set routines had to be followed, and almost every waking moment would be spent in equine company, the correct care of the horse became ritualistic. Often these rituals relied upon the horseman’s partnership with his own particular horse, and his intimate knowledge of its individual habits and quirks. This was shown by a conversation between Thomas Mickle and Ernest Cawkwell, remembering their days working with horses in the 1930s and into the 1940s:

Mr Mickle: Oh there’d be a few injuries with horses wouldn’t there? Getting on your feet, standing on your feet, on your toes, and biting you, they were buggers for biting you, weren’t they?

Mr Cawkwell: Biting. They could bite, by God.

³³⁸ M. Castells, *The Power of Identity*, second edition (Oxford, 2004), pp. 6-7.

³³⁹ H. Verity, interview by J. Rowling, Harrogate, 11 April 2013.

Mr Mickle: Particular when you were backing them and you were watching where you were going, they'd have your elbow before you knew where you were! Aye. Aye, they were characters weren't they like, horses.

Mr Cawkwell: Oh yes.

Mr Mickle: A lot of them, they all had their own bits of –

Mr Cawkwell: -To-dos.

Mr Mickle: Aye. Some used to, when you were taking them out of the harness, when you were taking them out of the cart, as soon as they felt the weight go off their back they used to set off, so you always had to make sure that you had your back chain off and your hame chain off, and your chains off before you lifted your back-bend up or they'd be off and they'd drag the cart if, you know. No, they were characters a lot of them. Some you couldn't catch, could you? If you wanted them for working they wouldn't come would they?

Mr Cawkwell: Aye.³⁴⁰

Similarly, George Rice recalled:

You'd know if one had a dodge like, if one might kick you, going up that side of it, you know, you obviously went up and bobbed under its neck to do the other side. Some of the horses didn't like you going up near the offside of them. I don't know why. And then, well, they'd be bad to get a collar on, so you'd get a collar that would undo, and then clasped it round its neck, because to put the collar on you'd put it over its head, you see, and then you'd to twist it on that part of its neck to make it go back onto its shoulders, but some of them obviously didn't like that so you had to have a collar that undid at the top. It was no trouble, but sometimes you lost the

³⁴⁰ T. Mickle and E. Cawkwell, interview by J. Rowling, Askwith, 8 October 2012.

strap and then you'd to go round the other side, put it back up, and, you know, it were a bit of a job, pulling the strap up on a great big horse up there, and pulling it and getting it tight enough so that it didn't rub its shoulders. When they were going to have a right hard day, when we were mowing, and hay time, we used to rub methylated spirits on their shoulders to get them hard, keep them hard, and if it broke the skin, if they did rub – which they very rarely did rub, but if they did rub a sore – it was laid off for a week, because if they didn't, well, that was the bad point of them was their shoulders. Well they did a lot of pulling, didn't they, on their shoulders with the collars, that's how they did it.³⁴¹

These examples demonstrate Braverman's theory that 'skill' has been visualised as a combination of physical and mental dexterities, and therefore as an embodied experience, bound up inextricably with concepts of masculinity.³⁴² Failure to anticipate a horse's reaction to certain stimuli, or to harness the horse correctly would lead to painful physical consequences for the horseman. The result of good horsemanship, and a highly skilled horseman, was the kind of horse with which Victor Thompson first learned to plough in the 1930s:

I had a shire, and a shire and Clydesdale cross, and the shire horse, it had big wide feet, and it was what you called the furrow horse, and it used to just walk up the furrow, and it never bothered to stray, right up to the end, pushed the hedge in with its chest, then turned short back, and the other horse wasn't just as good at that, and eventually it got so it knew. They're not daft, aren't horses. Not by a long way, I'll tell you. And it got so that it'd go. And that horse, it had feet that width [indicating with hands], and it never trod down the edge of the furrow on the new land that you were ploughing out. You just had a little dent in what you'd turned over, and it were a marvellous horse. Somebody had done a right good job

³⁴¹ G. Rice, interview by J. Rowling, Carlton, 17 December 2013.

³⁴² Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital* in Kirk and Wall, *Work Identity*, p. 42.

of breaking it in. I don't know who it was like, because it were broken in when they got it. But, oh aye. Same as when you were harrowing, you know, seedlings, you know what I'm talking about? You know, they drill it in stripes don't they? It used to go up and down these here rows of turnips, just with a scruffler, and it used to turn short back into the next row without yanking on the reins or owt like that, and it never trod on a plant. No! Not one. No, it never trod on a plant. It were a marvellous horse. Aye. The other were good, but it just didn't have the same knowledge as the Shire horse.³⁴³

A horse of this type served as a vehicle for trust between the arable men in the community, both as a symbol of a shared identity, and quite literally as a way to disseminate knowledge and skill in the years leading up to the Second World War, before the influx of tractors into the study area. In much the same way that livestock men could recognise one another and share information through conversation at the auction mart and in pubs, horsemen could share information and recognise one another in conversation by the use of specialist language at threshing days or ploughing matches. Further, the selling on or lending of a horse would allow an inexperienced horseman to learn the necessary skills, and the teaming up of an experienced horse with a 'green' one would educate the younger horse. In trusting an experienced horse to guide an inexperienced ploughman or a younger horse, the farmer was indirectly placing trust in the horseman who originally broke the horse. Therefore the movement of working horses through the community, in private sales or public auctions, lending and borrowing between neighbours in busy periods, or the pairing of newly employed labouring lads with experienced horses, helped to reinforce the sense of 'togetherness', shared knowledge, and tradition which characterises Lindroos' 'Benjaminian' community model.

³⁴³ V. Thompson, interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, 7 December 2012.

Tractormen

According to Stephen Caunce, 'History unfolds around us constantly; what is happening now is part of a process that stretches back into the past without a break.'³⁴⁴ It is therefore important to remember that the agricultural methods and technologies of the twenty-first century are a product of those of the early twentieth, and before. The earliest tractors, revolutionary though they appeared, were essentially mechanical horses. In the intervening years between these mechanical horses and the monsters which farm our fields today, another, stealthier revolution has taken place. The modern tractor has as little in common with its ancestor as that ancestor had with a horse, and so the people who have operated the early machines now find themselves in a similar situation to that faced by their fathers and grandfathers upon the arrival of the very first tractors.

Victor Thompson laughed about the enormous twenty-first century tractors which have appeared on the farm where he worked as a young man:

I got on one, one day, I was going to move it, and I couldn't even find the button to move speeds! There were that many buttons, and I'm sat there thinking, "Well how the hell do I move this tractor?" and I can't reach – I can't work the pedals because the seat were too high up or else too low down or summat.³⁴⁵

In much the same way that the horsemen felt that their skills, which defined their identities and their work, were being lost by the younger generation who were becoming adept at using the new tractors and moving away from horsemanship, the men who defined themselves and their work by the ability to master the earliest tractors

³⁴⁴ S. Caunce, *Oral History and the Local Historian* (Harlow, 1994), p. 86.

This image is very similar to Benjamin's concept of the 'Angel of History' from his *Ninth Thesis on the Philosophy of History*: 'A Klee drawing named "Angelus Novus" shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe that keeps piling ruin upon ruin and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.'

³⁴⁵ V. Thompson, interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, 7 December 2012.

now categorise the modern tractor driver as a ‘button-pusher’. Derek Illingworth remembered his excitement at escaping the monotony of horse-work in the Second World War, but contrasted this with the perceived soullessness of modern machinery:

I used to follow horses up and down the field, harrowing, rollering, harvesting, binding, reaping, and then we got the tractor and oh! You were in heaven then, but I don’t know what I’d think now with all this wireless and television and heated cab, dust-free. It’s all change now, big change. Pressing buttons, that’s all they do now, press buttons [...] Oh all this electronically controlled – I couldn’t do with it. Well, you’ve got to be brought up with it, haven’t you, and learn as you go along, and they get bigger and bigger now. Too big some of them. [pause] No it was grand to get a riding job in them days.³⁴⁶

For the tractormen in the 1940s, the defining experience of their liminality in moving from the schoolroom to a work environment was their first tractor. Just as Derrick Goodall felt like ‘King Kong’ the first time he sat up on his own horse-drawn muck cart, many committed tractormen recalled a feeling of immense pride, and of responsibility, when they found themselves in charge of a tractor for the first time. The introduction of a new tractor could be a risky time, according to Robin Cowgill:

I think in those early days of tractors and machinery men had no – well not no idea – but just didn’t realise the risks they were taking by just having a poke here or, you know, just easing it up there where it wasn’t just working right³⁴⁷

Similarly, Bert Verity’s experience of tractor ownership through the 1940s and beyond the study period was: ‘buying an old tractor and struggling with it for a year, and then getting a new one, and then getting a better one’³⁴⁸ Here again we can see van Gennep’s three stages of transition in effect. A whole community was adapting to new technology, struggling, and making mistakes in its liminal phase, having signified the

³⁴⁶ D. Illingworth, interview by J. Rowling, East Keswick, 6 August 2012.

³⁴⁷ R. Cowgill, interview by J. Rowling, Otley, 19 December 2013.

³⁴⁸ H. Verity, interview by J. Rowling, Harrogate, 11 April 2013.

decision to move away from horses by a significant financial investment in tractors and tractor-driven machinery. This was a lengthy transition, which occurred at different speeds across the country, but the learning process placed a premium upon the skill of the tractorman. Simply obtaining work driving a tractor was not sufficient to secure a tractorman's identity. Experience and intimate knowledge of tractor-powered agriculture were vital. As Harry Denton explained, during the Second World War,

I do know of one or two, yes, one, two, three, four, that went farming, and two that got jobs on the War Ag, that certainly weren't tractor drivers, Jane, that did it... to get out of going in the army, or the forces like. I know one or two that did that, so, I suppose they did shirk like, Jane, yes. But I never did, I was in it before and I've been in it ever since. I mean even when I was at the farm, the boss used to get a form every six months to say that I was still employed with him. Now then, when I left and I started for myself, I still got that form. They told me I had to stop in agriculture for seventy per cent of my time, otherwise I could have been called up, Jane... but of course I was in it a hundred per cent, never mind seventy per cent of my time... So yes I suppose there was quite a few that did shirk it. Because as I say they weren't tractor drivers before and they weren't tractor drivers afterwards, but it served the part like.³⁴⁹

There is a clear distinction drawn here between a real 'tractor driver' and someone who simply drove a tractor. The difference was in the time dedicated to learning and improving the skill, and this would impact upon the skill level displayed by the individual. Derrick Goodall remembered that the tricks to starting an early tractor and keeping it running properly were every bit as complex as the 'dodges' which were used previously to avoid injury and get the best work from a horse:

It was a spade lugged tractor, a Fordson, and to start by hand, you know. [...] They started on petrol and then you turned them over. They had a little tank which about held a gallon, I

³⁴⁹ H. Denton, interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, 22 July 2012.

think, and then what I used to do to make it easier was when we came in at night with it, just turned it onto petrol, don't stop it on TVO, you see. That was paraffin, but they called it TVO. I used to just turn it onto petrol just for a second or two so it had petrol fumes around the plug, do you know what I mean? And then when you come to start it you turned it, and then if it kicked back it could knock you over, you see, you'd to wind them up, you see, but if you didn't and you missed it like, if you oiled them up and you got them on three plugs, oh! That were a job, like! You'd to take the plug out and clean it, or put another one in, and as I say, they took some winding, and the same when you were working them. If it started alright and you went on your job ploughing, if anybody come or if you stopped at the end to do something, you'd to keep it on fairly good revs, because if it was idling, you know, just stood running, it would get onto three plugs. But we got used to it like. You pulled the throttle and had a few revs on, so it were revving even if you weren't on it, but it kept it going so it wouldn't go on three plugs, because, oh! If you got on three plugs it were a heck of a job, and even if you'd got a clean one, you know, you'd a heck of a job to get it back on four, and without being on four plugs it had no power at all, you see, it wouldn't go at all, it were just chucking smoke out, you know, chucking fumes out! [laugh]³⁵⁰

For Derek Illingworth, working with tractors came as a natural progression from working with horses: 'Well as I say it was sort of in your blood and farmers doing little things with horses and carts in little fields, haymaking, and I could do it.'³⁵¹ Just as the strength needed to work with horses in the early part of the period was equated with masculinity, the later tractormen like Harry Denton also emphasised the strength used in their work:

³⁵⁰ D. Goodall, interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, 13 August 2012.

³⁵¹ D. Illingworth, interview by J. Rowling, East Keswick, 6 August 2012.

They were really, really handy tractors, and, as I say, there hasn't been one as handy as that old Fordson. But, they were noisy. There were no cabs or owt like that in them days, they were a bit hard on the steering, but, well, you were young then and you got some good muscles with it [laugh]³⁵²

Similarly, Keith Liddle equated successful tractor use with adulthood and strength:

What was the Fordson like to drive? Oh it was lovely. Except hard to start for youngsters. Very hard to start. You see, the thing was, it held 12 gallons of water, a milk-can full, and you had to drain it out. There were no anti-freeze then. The only thing you had, you could put some paraffin in with the water. But by, you couldn't wind it up! It used to be that hard, and the oil was thick.³⁵³

For tractormen, therefore, the ability to master the new technology was a confirmation of their masculinity, and had aspects in common with the old standards of masculinity as judged by the horsemen, in that the work required physical strength and left its mark upon the male body. Of course the marked body was not simply one which had carried heavy loads or accomplished feats of strength, but also one which had been mutilated and broken by the machines. Robin Cowgill remembered:

I think as modern machinery came on, people took risks, you know. I've done silly things myself, you know. With the old cutter bar machines, you know, and often you'd be poking about, maybe not with your fingers, but something, maybe your foot, and you'd still have the cutter bar running, you know. But when you're young and you want to get on – all such silly stuff as that. Oh, and power take off shafts before they came compulsory. I don't know if it was always compulsory to have the guard on but a lot of people didn't until these safety people came round the farms and that, but the number of people that's got a bit of clothing and it's killed

³⁵² H. Denton, interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, 22 July 2012.

³⁵³ K. Liddle, interview by J. Rowling, Stainburn, 17 October 2012.

them, maimed them, took their arm off, because if you left the PTO running the tractor didn't know if you got caught in it. Oh there's been some terrible, terrible accidents.³⁵⁴

One of the most common accidents among male interviewees and their immediate circle of farming friends and family was the loss, or partial loss, of one or more fingers. As Thomas Mickle said: 'If you went among a thousand farmers today, of our age, I bet there'd be a lot with fingers missing, or finger ends missing.'³⁵⁵ In this way, tractormen were often permanently, physically marked by the work they had performed, and in a way which, although not totally debilitating, was on show to everyone with whom they interacted. As with Bourke's observation that, 'To be "decorated" or "well-painted" with blood was a manly accomplishment' during sport or the establishment of male hierarchies in a street or village, the loss of a finger appears to have been something of a status symbol among these early tractormen.³⁵⁶ It provides a good story, in which a manly overcoming of pain, often with humour, can be emphasised, and which can be used to attempt to shock a young lady interviewer. To other rural workers it speaks of working with unguarded machinery, and it remains a symbol of work performed in a community where work was, and still is, at the heart of identity.

The acquisition of a tractor was, in itself, a sign that the outside world had recognised a farmer's work, and his valuable contribution to feeding the nation during the war years, as Bert Verity explained:

When you first got them you couldn't go to a shop and buy them, you had to go to a merchant and apply for a license to buy a tractor, and you filled a form in, but you had to have so many acre of arable land before you got a tractor. I can remember when there were farm sales, and there was a tractor advertised for sale. It never went to the highest bidder. They all had to put their names in a hat. It was sold at a fixed price.

³⁵⁴ R. Cowgill, interview by J. Rowling, Otley, 19 December 2013.

³⁵⁵ T. Mickle, interview by J. Rowling, Askwith, 8 October 2012.

³⁵⁶ Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p. 37.

It had to be sold at a fixed price. So you'd get a lot of farmers, you'd get 20 men to put their names in, you see.³⁵⁷

Through this type of system, the prestige of tractor ownership was increased, reinforcing the links between mechanisation and progressive, high-quality agriculture. As noted above, physical skill and effectiveness in agricultural production were inherently bound up with ideas of masculinity.

The identity of a tractorman also had links to the landscape, but not in the same way as that of the horsemen. While the horseman was linked to the minute details of the land, the tractorman experienced a widening of the meaning of 'local', as a consequence of working on a machine which could travel increasingly lengthy distances without needing rest. This went hand in hand with the association of different areas with different tractor manufacturers. Dick Garnett explained:

We never got into the Ferguson line, I don't know why. Tractors seemed to go more in areas, you know. Fordsons seemed to be in that area, and John Deeres seemed to be in that area, you know. More in those days than they do now, I think.³⁵⁸

In Otley, the local tractor dealer, specialising in Fordson tractors, was W. Annison Bull, known among the local farming boys as 'Owd Aniseed Balls.'³⁵⁹ The brand was also supplied by Tate's of Leeds.³⁶⁰ The vast majority of men interviewed remember their first tractor, either the first they owned, or the first they drove when working for another farmer, as being a Fordson. The exceptions were Frank Morphet, who began tractor work on a David Brown, but later moved to a Fordson; David Lister, whose father first purchased an Allis Chalmers; and in David Rowling's memories of their grandfather, who had driven a very early Titan model from Leeds Railway Station to Alwoodley for his then employer in 1916.³⁶¹ It is interesting to note that these three exceptions were all on the margins of the community under investigation. T. H. Rowling's tractor-driving

³⁵⁷ H. Verity, interview by J. Rowling, Harrogate, 11 April 2013.

³⁵⁸ R. Garnett, interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, 11 March 2013.

³⁵⁹ K. Liddle, interview by J. Rowling, Stainburn, 17 October 2012.

³⁶⁰ H. Denton, interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, 22 January 2012.

³⁶¹ F. Morphet, interview by J. Rowling, Hampsthwaite, 18 July 2013; D. Lister, interview by J. Rowling, Birstwith, 25 June 2013; D. Rowling, Telephone interview by J. Rowling, 10 March 2012.

experience was in 1916, at the very beginning of the study period, and Mr Morphet and Mr Lister both lived close to the moorland edge of the study area, and therefore temporally and geographically they were distant from W. Annison Bull's dealership and Tate's of Leeds, which supplied the main body of the study locality in the late 1930s and early 1940s, when most farms acquired their first tractor. However, both visualisations of the landscape, from the point of view of the horseman, and of the tractorman, had implications for the meaning of 'local' and the sense of place which it inspired.

Conclusion – Masculinity in Agricultural Change

The world of the farming man closely echoes that of the soldier in the First World War as investigated by Joanna Bourke. Just as the public expectation that a 'real' man would go to fight meant that damage to the male body in war became acceptable, even central to ideologies of masculinity, so the expression of farming masculinity through work with dangerous horses and machinery, or even through very heavy labour, meant that the farming man's body could also acceptably be damaged. Masculinity, of both horsemen and tractormen, was based heavily upon physical strength, and the ability to do the job, but this was not simply strength for its own sake. In a community which relied on members lending their labour at busy times of the year, strength was required to make sure that the task was completed on every farm within the very short window allowed by the weather. Lack of physical skill and strength in the workforce could be devastating for the farmer whose crop remained outside as the weather turned. Teamwork was another important part of this, resting on network links formed through childhood games and sports, and fostered through the increasing relationship of competition to occupation as men grew older. Derrick Goodall summed up the attitude of many men who farmed during the study period:

I'd go up to Warrington's and down to your granddad's and go there you see. And I remember your granddad saying, "Will you carry corn, Derrick?" and I used to say, "Yes if you've got big bags!" We always wanted big bags. But, as I say, we were always so strong. We've carried up to sixteen stone in a bag, and if it was a railway bag, and you were

selling it, a railway sack, you always had a railway sack on the scales because if you just weighed, put the bag on full, you wouldn't have sixteen stone, because the bag weighed nearly a stone. [...] We'd always put a bag on the scale, so you'd more than sixteen stone on your back, you'd sixteen stone of corn plus a bag, thick bags, really heavy. And we used to carry them, but normally they were less and we just shot it out, but we've carried up to sixteen stone. Well I think now they aren't supposed to carry above three stone. Are they? I often wonder what we would do if we were thrashing now. How would we do? If you couldn't carry that? You'd just have to pass it in buckets or something, what would you do?³⁶²

Just as the generation who attained adulthood during the study period now look at modern farm workers and see a lack of physical strength and skill, a labour-force of 'button-pushers', so the earlier horsemen saw a deviation from their understanding of masculinity in the new tractormen who appeared in Lower Wharfedale during and after the Second World War.

Farming men in this area during the study period defined their personal identity largely through work, and the skills required to perform their work to a high standard, and the terms 'horsemen' and 'tractormen' have been used here based on the words that interviewees chose to describe themselves. While work with horses and with early tractors had some aspects in common, the necessity of physical strength and dexterity being the most important, there were also aspects which differed, for example, mechanical skill and the ability to read a horse's body language to predict behaviour. Both types of work required intimate knowledge of the quirks of an unpredictable and potentially dangerous source of motive power, and this knowledge could only come from experience. As with the auction mart, the presence of an inexperienced worker, whose physical strength and knowledge of the task at hand was not up to the standard of the group, created a risky situation, not only for the inexperienced worker, but for the rest of the team who were relying upon him. Familiarity and network links were

³⁶² D. Goodall, interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, 13 August 2012.

therefore crucial in the development and maintenance of trust for both horsemen and tractormen.

As tractor use became more common, horse-work became increasingly the province of old men, and therefore no longer truly masculine. As Bourke points out, it is the youthful and vigorous male body which epitomises masculinity, and the elderly man in the early twentieth century was envisioned alongside the child and the woman in that they were incapable of ‘masculine’ fighting or heavy work, and therefore must be protected. However, this protection negated their membership of the wider body-politic.³⁶³ Tractor work began to make increasing economic sense, forcing young men who had already formed an idea of themselves as horsemen to use the new machines alongside those who had enthusiastically embraced the new technology, while older men, often older men who farmed in a small way, persevered with the horses they knew, not wanting to invest in an expensive machine and replacement ‘tackle’ to go with it. In this way, the tractor became the tool of the young: the progressive farmer with new ideas; the young labourer working for a larger neighbour; the energetic son. This idea was actively reinforced by the tractor manufacturers and advertisers. R. C. Williams remarked that mechanisation, and the acquisition of a tractor, was presented to American farmers as the solution to the problem of keeping an ambitious son on the family farm.³⁶⁴ Motifs of youth, future and progressive farming appeared throughout the advertisements for John Deere’s tractors, with one 1931 advert declaring: ‘John Deere Tractors are unusually easy for the farm boy to operate.’³⁶⁵ In 1938, another announced, ‘The Old Gives Way – to the Modern John Deere Way.’³⁶⁶ As these young men and boys grew up, and more and more young men joined their ranks, the standards by which they judged their own masculinity became the standards for judging masculinity across the community as a whole. This links back to Lindroos’ ‘Benjaminian’ community model in that what made a man a man in this community was redefined as a result of change over time. The core ideals of a rural, farming masculinity remained the same: physical strength, skill, ‘mateship’, and connection to the landscape, but they were expressed and understood in different ways, creating a schism between the differing identities of horseman and tractorman. These identities

³⁶³ Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p. 77.

³⁶⁴ Williams, *Fordson, Farmall, and Poppin’ Johnny*, p. 140.

³⁶⁵ A. C. King (ed.), *John Deere: An Advertising History, 1889-1940* (1986), p. 20.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

and their differences show that men's ideas about themselves and their work could change in response to outside developments, but the core sense of what it meant to be a farming man remained unaltered.

4. Changing Roles, New Self-Perceptions: Rural Women in Lower Wharfedale

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See: <http://www.ohs.org.uk/journals/index.php> to access.)

The early twentieth-century rural Yorkshire woman is a highly stereotyped figure. In contemporary and recent fiction, recollections in autobiographical literature, and in the popular imagination she is highly domestic, straightforward, honest and hardworking, dutiful and self-sacrificing, and devoted to serving her menfolk. In many ways she conforms to the ideology of ‘separate spheres’, in which men and women inhabit almost totally independent worlds, the public and the private, respectively. The Yorkshire farmwife of stereotype is located firmly within the home, and, on an even smaller scale, within the kitchen. Here she remains, long after her urban sisters have embraced feminism and stepped out into the public sphere.

The veracity of this stereotype is deeply questionable. Not only does it diminish the farmwife to a two-dimensional character and render her work invisible, but it perpetuates the idea that all forms of early twentieth-century feminism were purely urban phenomena. It also ignores the limitations traditional gender roles on the farm placed upon the agricultural male, as the ‘separate spheres’ ideology concentrates heavily on feminine restrictions, contrasted with masculine freedoms. This chapter argues that, far from being invisible, and confined to the farm kitchen, the early twentieth-century Yorkshire farm woman was an active, valuable, and powerful figure in the home, on the farm, and in the wider community. By examining women in the domestic setting, and women as lynchpins in the community, it will question the way in which the theory of ‘separate spheres’ has traditionally constructed women’s role in this community. Primarily using oral history, it will demonstrate that, throughout the study period, a form of ‘practical feminism’ allowed the Wharfedale farm woman to take steps beyond domesticity and into the traditionally male spheres of business and physical labour. However, her links to the domestic remained, not through containment in the feminine ‘sphere’, but through embracing the value and freedom of female labour

while male labour did not experience a similar breaking down of boundaries to allow men comfortably into the domestic workspace.

Women's Space and Place in Existing Literature

Academic study of feminism among rural women was slower to progress than that in an urban milieu. In 2001, Berit Brandth noted that much feminist work until that point had assumed that all women were united by a common experience of oppression under patriarchy, but that this was an overwhelmingly white, middle-class, and urban construction.³⁶⁷ Probably the most well-known and long-lasting theory in women's history is that of separate spheres.

L. K. Kerber attributed the initial concept of 'separate spheres' to Alexis de Tocqueville, as in his *Democracy in America*, published in 1840, he provided the theory of the limiting boundary on female choices and the image of the circle which continued to endure for well over a century.³⁶⁸ In the latter half of the twentieth century, researchers began to consider the place of men in the ideology of separate spheres. Kerber noted that while men's activities affected women's sphere, the activities defined as belonging to women's sphere set limitations on what men could choose to do. By the 1990s, the concept of 'separate spheres' was being questioned. How far could prescriptive literature which advocated such a society represent real relationships between men and women? Amanda Vickery suggested that the local study was a useful way to address this question, as it could reveal patterns of behaviour and belief which crossed cultural and class boundaries, and those which did not.³⁶⁹ Despite being questioned and reworked, the theory of 'separate spheres' has remained widely influential and relevant. This has been shown in Rhoda Wilkie's recent *Livestock/Deadstock*, which discusses the place of women in a modern agricultural

³⁶⁷ B. Brandth, 'On the relationship between feminism and farm women,' *Agriculture and Human Values*, vol 19 (2002), p 112.

³⁶⁸ L. K. Kerber, 'Separate spheres, female worlds, woman's place: The rhetoric of women's history,' *The Journal of American History*, vol 75, no 1 (June, 1988), pp 9-10.

³⁶⁹ A. Vickery, 'Golden age to separate spheres? A review of the categories and chronology of English women's history,' *Historical Journal*, vol 36, no 2 (June, 1993), p 397.

community in north-eastern Scotland, and the contrasts between the roles assigned to and accepted by each gender.³⁷⁰

This study follows the tradition of the community study, which has been a useful vehicle for the study of women's oral history. Classic community studies include W. M. Williams' *Gosforth*, or Ronald Blythe's *Akenfield*.³⁷¹ One of the best known community studies focusing on women was Mary Chamberlain's *Fenwomen*.³⁷² Chamberlain's work influenced questions about feelings surrounding women's work and gender relations in this study, but where Chamberlain's selection and interpretation of oral evidence exposes a grim picture of women as downtrodden, deprived of romance and forced into manual labour, this study focuses on the extent to which women's own choices played a part in the work they performed. It also covers a locality characterised by a different type of agriculture, in which the toil associated with arable concerns was carried on out on a far smaller scale than that on the Fens. In the late twentieth century, studies of women's lives began to be produced in the context of an increasing body of literature on masculinity, such as Joanna Bourke's *Dismembering the Male*, Lynne Segal's *Slow Motion*, or Graham Dawson's *Soldier Heroes*.³⁷³ This type of work prompted a more reflective women's history, in which gender relations, relations between women, and relationships between different approaches to feminism itself led writers like Lynne Segal to question *Why Feminism?*³⁷⁴ Periods and themes characterised by disruption have also been fertile grounds for oral historians interested in women's history, for example Catriona Clear's investigation into women in Ireland between 1921 and 1961, or Anna Bryson's study of Maghera in Mid-Ulster, 1945-1969.³⁷⁵ Similarly, Shelley Egoz spoke to many women when investigating the

³⁷⁰ R. M. Wilkie, *Livestock/Deadstock: Working with Farm Animals from Birth to Slaughter*, (Philadelphia, 2010).

³⁷¹ W. M. Williams, *The Sociology of an English Village: Gosforth*, (London, 1956); R. Blythe, *Akenfield: Portrait of an English Village* (London, 1969).

³⁷² M. Chamberlain, *Fenwomen: A Portrait of Women in an English Village* (London, 1975).

³⁷³ J. Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London, 1996, 1999); L. Segal, *Slow Motion: Changing masculinities, changing men* (London, 1990); G. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British adventure, empire and the imagining of masculinities* (London, 1994).

³⁷⁴ L. Segal, *Why Feminism? Gender, psychology, politics* (Cambridge, 1999, 2002).

³⁷⁵ C. Clear, 'Hardship, help and happiness in oral history narratives of women's lives in Ireland, 1921-1961,' *Oral History*, vol 31, no 2 (Autumn, 2003), pp 33-42; A. Bryson, "'Whatever you say, say nothing': Researching memory and identity in Mid-Ulster, 1945-1969,' *Oral History*, vol 35, no 2, Conflicts and Continuity (Autumn, 2007), pp 45-56.

‘contested landscapes’ of organic farms in New Zealand.³⁷⁶ Much literature on women in English communities focuses on the wartime, interwar, and immediate postwar periods, which have been described as highly disruptive to femininity and traditional gender roles.³⁷⁷ These studies are often closely linked to localities, for example Angela Davis’ ‘Uncovering the lives of women in post-war Oxfordshire’ aimed to ‘investigate the importance of locality upon lived experience.’³⁷⁸ As with these examples, and the wider trends they represent, this chapter investigates women’s lives during a period of disruption to social and cultural norms in a northern locality which has not previously received a great deal of academic attention, and in a way which aims to take account of women as part of a gendered community, rather than as an isolated femininity.

The value of domestic labour is a question which has intrigued historians, sociologists, economists, and others from a range of disciplines in the twenty-first century. In 2000, Joel Mokyr used his expertise in economics to question why the growing opportunities to mechanise housework in the period 1870-1945 were not matched by increased leisure time for housewives. He used marginal utility theory, which deals with the satisfaction level brought by consumption, and the phenomenon of diminishing marginal utility, that increased consumption rarely correlates with an equal increase in satisfaction. Therefore, he wrote:

The opportunity cost of housework is leisure, and elementary economics suggests that women who set their own schedules will work in their homes until the marginal utility of leisure equals the perceived value of the marginal utility product of housework.³⁷⁹

Because of this, the value the housewife places on her own labour dictates the amount of leisure time she allows herself. Placed in the context of this study, as reduced numbers of men through war increased the perceived value of women’s work on the farm, and advances in science and public health raised the appreciation and importance

³⁷⁶ S. Egoz, ‘Clean and green but messy: The contested landscape of New Zealand’s organic farms,’ *Oral History*, vol 28, no 1, Landscapes of Memory (Spring, 2000), pp 63-74.

³⁷⁷ Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p 18.

³⁷⁸ A. Davis, ‘Uncovering the lives of women in post-war Oxfordshire: An oral history approach.’ *Rural History*, vol 19, no 1 (2008), p 106.

³⁷⁹ J. Mokyr, ‘Why “More work for Mother?” Knowledge and household behaviour, 1870-1945,’ *Journal of Economic History*, vol 60, no 1 (March, 2000), p 5.

of women's domestic work, a shift in women's self-perceptions could link in with the kind of feminism Maggie Andrews has identified in the Women's Institute. Similarly, Alison Woodeson picked up themes of women's choices surrounding war work in her paper on women's memories of wartime work on the land.³⁸⁰ This is a feminism which revolves around self-perception and individual identity, and is not recognised by the women themselves as being part of a more theoretical feminism which would acknowledge ideas such as patriarchy or 'separate spheres'. Manuel Castells described this phenomenon as 'practical feminism', in which feminism exists without feminist consciousness.³⁸¹

Constructions of space also have deep implications for this work. The space which women occupy impacts upon their power, and their identities. Doreen Massey's *Spatial Divisions of Labour* focused on industrial geography since the 1960s, but her ideas in this area can equally be applied to the geography of the home and farmyard, which, in stereotype, are very definite male and female spaces, in which labour was divided accordingly. Particularly, she points to the division between skilled and unskilled within the working class, and how prominently this figures in the location patterns of industry.³⁸² This can be linked to the changing perceptions of women's work from unskilled to skilled, which Maggie Morgan identifies as one of the effects of the spread of the Women's Institute among rural villages nationwide.³⁸³ This chapter will explore the opening of outside workspace to women during the study period, and the effect this had on self-perception.

Literary Fiction

Contemporary regional fiction has been a hugely influential source for the establishment of the Yorkshire farmwife stereotype. Early twentieth-century regional, rural novels such as J. S. Fletcher's *The Threshing Floor*, Florence Bone's *The Furrow on the Hill*, Winifred Holtby's *Anderby Wold* or Naomi Jacob's *They Left the Land* and

³⁸⁰ A. Woodeson, 'Going back to the land: Rhetoric and reality in Women's Land Army memories,' *Oral History*, vol 21, no 2, (Autumn, 1993).

³⁸¹ M. Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, UK, 1997, 2004), p 259.

³⁸² D. M. Massey, *Spatial Divisions of Labour: Social structures and the geography of production*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke, 1995).

³⁸³ M. Morgan, 'Jam, Jerusalem and feminism,' *Oral History*, vol 23, no 1, Health and Welfare (Spring, 1995), p 87.

The Plough present these character types.³⁸⁴ The idea is generally applied to live-in servants and the wives and daughters of small farmers, rather than wealthier women. In the early pages of *They Left the Land*, Topliss Langdon compares his brother's new wife, the daughter of an important local family, to other farmers' wives and daughters, noting their 'too ready laugh', 'anxiety to agree with everyone', and minds which 'stopped short at the misdemeanors of servants'.³⁸⁵ Similarly, in Fletcher's *The Threshing Floor*, the elderly servant Hannah is described as 'a hard-featured, shrewd, practical-looking person'.³⁸⁶ Throughout the book Hannah is shown engaged in domestic or dairy work, and is contrasted with the younger, more frivolous servant, Lizzie, who becomes embroiled in the personal life of her employer through eavesdropping and gossiping. Devotion to appropriate work keeps Hannah away from petty gossip, and she is ultimately rewarded with a husband and cottage, while Lizzie's fascination with the business of her social betters results in her becoming an unwed mother. In Bone's *The Furrow on the Hill*, village shopkeeper Mrs Nicholson, the only character whose dialogue is not in standard English, indicating that she may represent a more stereotyped or localised figure than the main characters, displays generosity and common sense, but is ultimately uninterested in life beyond her own village.³⁸⁷ Likewise, Hannah, the live-in servant in Jacob's *The Plough*, is sensible and hardworking, but rather dour and suspicious of change: 'speaking little and never wasting words, able to do more work in an hour than young Bessie did in three... she went on mechanically, never checking, and far too proud ever to complain'; she is also deeply suspicious of the new dairy implements, believing that new technology would inevitably go wrong.³⁸⁸ The tendency of fictional, elderly, female farm servants to be cautious of innovation in this way suggests a lack of imagination, or entrepreneurial spirit, demonstrating the cliché that the rural woman of this period was capable in her proper place, but needed male guidance to go beyond this. One example of this, Bess in *They Left the Land*, is praised for being capable and serious, but is unable to run the farm without male help. She makes a success of her market stall, but must fill it from her garden alone, giving up most of the land she farmed when directed by a man. The

³⁸⁴ J. Smith Fletcher, *The Threshing Floor* (London, 1905); Florence Bone, *The Furrow on the Hill* (London, 1912); W. Holtby, *Anderby Wold* (London, 1923, 1981); N. Jacob, *They Left the Land* (London, 1940, 1954).

³⁸⁵ Jacob, *They Left the Land*, p 7.

³⁸⁶ Fletcher, *Threshing Floor*.

³⁸⁷ Bone, *Furrow*, pp 120-123.

³⁸⁸ N. Jacob, *The Plough* (London, 1927, 1942), pp 280-281.

epitome of the Yorkshire farmwife can be found in Holtby's Mary Robson.³⁸⁹ She is obsessed with image and keeping up her place in the community of Anderby village, eminently capable in the running of her own home, but totally out of her depth when confronted with social change and progress in the form of a young man intent on forming a farm labourers' union. The portrayal of submissive, domestic, dour countrywomen, sensible regarding household work, but backward-thinking, prone to trivial gossip, and needful of male supervision, persists throughout the literature of this period.

Women and Domesticity

Contemporary fiction offers a window into how different attitudes and qualities were perceived in women at a particular time. Heroines are given traits which are considered admirable, or are rewarded for socially acceptable behaviour, while inappropriate behaviour from the antagonist encourages the reader's disapprobation. In early twentieth-century literature, the proper place for a rural woman is shown to be in the home and its immediate surroundings: the hen houses, the dairy, or the back-yard pigsty. For example, Bess, the heroine of Naomi Jacobs' *They Left the Land*, begs to be allowed to work on the farm after her marriage, but her ambitions do not extend beyond 't'dairy an' t'calves an' suchlike.' She is described as 'as good as onny lad' but is still at the beck and call of her husband, absorbed in domesticity, and defers to the nearest man over finances.³⁹⁰ This aspect of life for some rural women cannot be ignored. The clearest interviewed example is Eliza Fearnley, who was a married mother to three children during the study period. Her daughter recalled:

With my father, he'd sit at the table and he'd say – they called my mother Eliza – “‘Liza! There's no salt!’ you see? And he was very much like that. He didn't like women drivers, so my mother never learned to drive. She wanted to, but no, it wasn't her place to drive, and he didn't, in those days, like women wearing trousers. They were for work people, trousers [...] A lot of farmers' wives, they wanted them to do the milking as

³⁸⁹ Holtby, *Anderby Wold*.

³⁹⁰ Jacob, *They Left the Land*, p 59.

well. Do the milking and then go inside and cook them bacon and eggs for breakfast!³⁹¹

However, Mrs Fearnley refused to learn to milk, thereby choosing to perform only domestic labour.³⁹² Almost all interviewees related ideas reminiscent of ‘separate spheres’ to female family members well into the twentieth century, although the theory was not explicitly invoked. Susan Armitage recalls her mother, who was married in the early 1940s:

I remember her mostly in the house. She seemed to have very definite ideas about what were women’s roles and what were the men’s roles, and she was mostly in the house. She saw herself as doing the cooking, and the sewing.³⁹³

Similarly, Susan’s brother David remembers: ‘She did everything. She did all the housework. Yes. All the lot!’³⁹⁴ This included looking after her in-laws, who lived in the same house as Joyce, her husband and growing family. She was the eldest daughter in her family, with a bedridden mother, and had had to leave grammar school, abandon ambitions of nursing, and take on a mother’s role to her seven siblings while still in her teens. In one sense this devotion to duty and hard work makes Joyce the ‘typical’ early twentieth-century farmwife, with parallels to Jacob’s character, Bess, who leaves her beloved farm to look after her estranged husband when he becomes ill. However, a local man noted ‘not many daughters would do what [Joyce] did, never mind daughters-in-law,’³⁹⁵ suggesting ‘typical’ according to popular imaginings does not represent the majority in Lower Wharfedale. Furthermore, Joyce herself would often repeat the story that she had immediately volunteered to do the housework and ‘allowed’ her sister to help with milking, as she desperately did not want to milk, suggesting an element of choice in her lifestyle.

Women with busy households could face loneliness. A farmer’s wife quoted in *Yorkshire’s Farm Life* describes a typical day, devoted to looking after the men, with no mention of seeing anyone from outside her own household, or any conversation within

³⁹¹ P. King, interview by J. Rowling, Huby, 22 October 2012.

³⁹² P. King, interview by J. Rowling, Huby, 22 October 2012.

³⁹³ S. Armitage, interview by J. Rowling, Howden, 30 December 2011.

³⁹⁴ D. Rowling, interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, 10 March 2012.

³⁹⁵ D. Goodall, interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, 13 August 2012.

it, including with her husband and son. She constantly places herself second to the men, ensuring they can eat quickly and get back out to the farmyard.³⁹⁶ As Joyce Wood points out, busy women could easily miss socialising opportunities: 'I didn't particularly get to the proper services [at chapel] because it was milking time'.³⁹⁷ This phenomenon has been observed elsewhere. It was noted by Williams in *Gosforth*: 'a farmer's wife and daughters tend to have little social intercourse with the women-folk of neighbouring farms'.³⁹⁸ It was also picked up by Leah Leneman in her work on women and Scottish land settlement after the First World War.³⁹⁹ The construction of farmhouses may have contributed to this. Before widespread refrigerator ownership, the urban woman would have to shop nearly every day in order to have fresh food, but Wharfedale's farmhouses generally contained a cellar or pantry, built at least partially below ground. This kept food cold, meaning women would need to venture out much less frequently.

It took effort, planning and determination to visit social gatherings. Dances, whist drives, domino drives, beetle drives and church outings were available, and popular with young people.⁴⁰⁰ Later in the period, the Women's Institute offered another chance to socialise. However, for married farm women with children it could be difficult to take these opportunities. Eliza Fearnley had strategies to ensure she left the house:

She never had a hairdresser come to the house because she preferred to go out to the hairdresser's. She went on a Tuesday; it was pensioners' day in Otley so therefore it was cheaper. She felt going to the hairdressers' was an event for her, but if she'd had the hairdresser to come home she wouldn't be out of them four walls, so that's why she always went to the hairdresser's, and played her bridge, because it got her out of the house.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁶ D. Joy (ed), *Yorkshire's Farm Life* (Skipton, 1994), pp 31-34.

³⁹⁷ M. J. Wood, interview by J. Rowling, Otley, 28 August 2012.

³⁹⁸ Williams, *Gosforth*, p 150.

³⁹⁹ L. Leneman, 'Fit for heroines? Women and Scottish land settlement after World War I', *Oral History*, vol 19, no 2 (Autumn 1991), p 58.

⁴⁰⁰ E. Cawkwell and T. Mickle, interview by J. Rowling, Askwith, 8 October 2012.

⁴⁰¹ P. King, interview by J. Rowling, Huby, 22 October 2012.

Women's personal circumstances, geographical isolation, or an extended family restricted their involvement in activities beyond the home. Working to live up to expectations of how a well-run home should look curtailed women's ability to pursue their own interests. In this context, the presence of women's groups such as the Women's Institute or the Mothers' Union was a key means by which women asserted their own identities. Furthermore, these groups were educative as well as social, teaching women skills which they could apply to their own homes, making membership socially acceptable as a method of improving useful domestic skills, but also a means of self-improvement and building self-esteem, a cornerstone of feminism.⁴⁰²

However, women could apply pressure as well as give support. Joanna Bourke has commented on the visibility of women's work to other women, and the punishment, through social ostracism and gossip, of those who did not meet expectations.⁴⁰³ Wharfedale was far from unusual in this regard. As the vicar's wife and host to Mothers' Union meetings from the 1930s onwards, Janet Clack had local farmwives in her house on a weekly basis. She remembers baking, cleaning and tidying, before 21 critical neighbours descended upon her.

I always used to make sure we'd always got a clean tea cloth in the kitchen, because the farmers' wives, after the meeting - we usually had a speaker or something - and then it would be a cup of tea time, and they'd go in my kitchen making sure I'd made it clean! Because once, I can remember hearing them talk, and one said to the other, "Can you remember Mrs So-and-so's tea cloth? Wasn't it dirty!"⁴⁰⁴

This pressure was not confined to organised social groups, but also to informal meetings of neighbours. For example, Sue Ford remembers conversations between women of her mother's generation:

They'd talk to each other and yes, I think they took a great pride – well, the ones I knew did anyway – in keeping their homes in prime condition, and scouring the step, and having

⁴⁰² See M. Andrews, *The Acceptable Face of Feminism: The Women's Institute as a Social Movement* (London, 1997), pp. 1-15.

⁴⁰³ J. Bourke, 'Housewifery in working-class England 1860-1914,' *Past & Present*, vol 143 (1994), p 197.

⁴⁰⁴ S. J. Clack, interview by J. Rowling, Ilkley, 18 August 2012.

the washing nice and clean on the line, because they'd say, you know, "Oh! Mrs So-and-so's washing, it wasn't right clean!"⁴⁰⁵

In fiction the stereotype of the gossipy farm woman was portrayed as a fault, and likely to lead women into trouble, whereas in reality it seems to have been a bonding exercise between neighbours, confirming their own adherence to behavioural standards through the criticism of those who fell short. It was important to conform, not only to the expectations of families, but also to the more critical expectations of other women. Mrs Clack says, with justifiable pride, that she 'always had a good Mothers' Union' in her parishes.⁴⁰⁶ Additionally, Maggie Andrews' work on the National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI) highlighted the active domesticity promoted by the movement, which encouraged women to see housework as a skilled occupation.⁴⁰⁷ This suggests that inclusion in, and acceptance by, such social groups was important to a woman's sense of identity and self-esteem, and therefore that ideas of 'women's work' were informed by more than simply patriarchy. The collusion of women in promoting the idea that a 'woman's place' and 'women's work' was inside the home, sometimes to the extent of refusing to work outside, exposes the input of women themselves in apparently upholding some of the norms of a patriarchal society. Women could make an active choice to focus on the home rather than the farm, and this was as much an act of practical feminism as choosing to work in the fields.

Groups like the Mothers' Union and the Women's Institute offered women another community association alongside their links to the farming community. These small, single gender communities of connected women came into being in specific times and locations within the overarching rural community, in much the same way as the auction mart worked for farming men. Attending these meetings allowed farming women to explore a different affiliation, and a different part of their personal identity, but without this superseding their membership of the farming community.

⁴⁰⁵ S. Ford, interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, 1 August 2012.

⁴⁰⁶ S. J. Clack, interview by J. Rowling, Ilkley, 18 August 2012.

⁴⁰⁷ Andrews, *Acceptable Face of Feminism*, p 9.

Women as lynchpins

Far from being unable to function without male guidance, Lower Wharfedale's rural women took on roles as lynchpins around which people could gather. In America, *Farm Journal*'s Ruth Sayre wrote, 'It is women's part to do in the community the kind of things they do for their own homes,' and this appears to be a sentiment with which many Lower Wharfedale women would have agreed.⁴⁰⁸ This can be seen in the similarities between women of different classes when they acted as the hub of a social gathering or the figurehead representing a section of the community.

Women were crucial to big events such as Harvest Suppers and threshing days, in which food was a focal point and the home was the venue. In these cases, female provision of food, hospitality and a well-prepared location placed hostesses in a position of authority. As a vicar's wife, Janet Clack was prominent in community events.

I used to have to decorate the church at Christmas and Harvest Festival. The farmers' wives always came to help to decorate the church and everything [...] And then of course there was the Harvest Supper, when all the farmers and their wives came, and one of the farmers would act as the auctioneer, because it was all sold. Things were taken out to the sick, that wasn't sold [...] and the farmers' wives, of course, would be running the kitchen, making the tea and whatnot.⁴⁰⁹

Here we discern the pattern of women taking on any job which needed to be done, contrasting with the well-demarcated role of the male, for example as 'auctioneer', or 'farmer', 'labourer', 'butcher' and so on, in contrast to women's self-definition as 'farmer's wife' or 'butcher's daughter'. This description does not give information about the woman herself, and indicates the fluidity of women's work, in which they could be domestic, do farm labour, be responsible for financial matters, and take on leadership roles at community events, without incongruity.

⁴⁰⁸ R. Sayre, *Farm Journal* (Jan. 1947) in J. Adams, 'The *Farm Journal*'s discourse of farm women's femininity,' *Anthropology and Humanism*, vol 29, no 1 (June 2004), p 51.

⁴⁰⁹ S. J. Clack, interview by J. Rowling, Ilkley, 18 August 2012.

Food also played an important role in secular events, reaffirming social bonds through helping neighbours, accepting help in return and eating together. The high-point of the agricultural calendar was threshing day. Every recollection of this occasion includes the threshing machine, the number of people and the food. In a typical example, one interviewee recalled: ‘there were a good few people came, you know, and you worked with a gang, and you used to get a right big dinner at dinner time’.⁴¹⁰ The arrival of the threshing machine, which travelled from farm to farm, was an exciting event: ‘It used to come steaming up the village, and all us kids used to think it was marvellous running with it into the farmyard’.⁴¹¹ This evidence, representative of the majority of recollections, displays the importance of threshing day to the people of Lower Wharfedale, and food was a central part of it. Vast amounts of food were provided by the women. The tradition of midday meals and afternoon ‘drinkin’s’ or ‘lowance’, reinforced a community spirit among neighbours by offering an opportunity to bond over hard work and communal eating. This was crucial in forming and maintaining social networks at a time when communications with other local farming people may have been infrequent.

Non-agricultural events also centred on food. For instance, ‘Christmas was a time when the family really did all get round the table and that, I mean, we all used to go up and they always had a lovely big spread around the table so that was quite a time for getting all the family there, and Grandma’s was the house everybody used to go to’.⁴¹² This clearly illustrates an event being associated with a particular female figure, demonstrating her place as lynchpin in her family’s kinship arrangements. The gathering of a large family around an elderly female figurehead suggests a somewhat matriarchal aspect to community life when it came to socialising, which, while by no means upsetting the patriarchal nature of early twentieth-century society, nevertheless indicates that women were able to exercise some significant influence.⁴¹³

This idea is echoed in the highest echelons of early twentieth-century Lower Wharfedale society, in which wealthy women were able to play a hugely influential

⁴¹⁰ Anonymous, interview by J. Rowling, Harrogate, 28 December 2010.

⁴¹¹ K. Newby, *A Tribute to my Mother* (undated), Pool Archives, Pool Village Memorial Hall, Pool-in-Wharfedale, File 6.

⁴¹² S. Ford, interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, 1 August 2012.

⁴¹³ This was of course lampooned especially in Stella Gibbons’ *Cold Comfort Farm* (1932), based in Sussex.

role, helping to organise activities and promote community spirit, thereby providing high-profile central figures around which to build a local identity. One of the most significant women in the area, Princess Mary, the Princess Royal, at Harewood Estate, emerged as a visible and active community leader from her marriage to Henry, Viscount Lascelles, the future sixth Earl of Harewood in 1922, until her death in 1965. In his memoirs, George Lascelles, the seventh Earl of Harewood, remembers conversations with his parents: ‘We did not talk of love and affection and what we meant to each other, but rather – and even about that not easily – of duty and behaviour and what we ought to do’.⁴¹⁴ The Princess Royal is remembered for her sense of duty towards her community which has left a lasting impression, particularly during the war and inter-war years, when her young sons played cricket with local boys, emphasising the family’s place within the community. Interviewees who grew up in and around Harewood remember the Princess Royal’s involvement with local school prize-giving events and annual concerts, as well as her air of accessibility, as local people saw her regularly.⁴¹⁵ A typical recollection comes from Derek and Betty Illingworth:

Princess Mary was part of the community, and the boys were, her sons - Lord Harewood that’s just died – they used to, you know, mix with the village people [...] She was really a country woman and she thought a lot about Harewood, and she was very friendly with my grandmother.⁴¹⁶

She was also a patron of local business, as Derek Illingworth, a former Harewood butcher recalls: ‘we supplied Harewood House, the Princess Royal, all her married life, until she died’.⁴¹⁷ This pride and sense of personal connection helped to foster a feeling of local identity around the Princess Royal as a figurehead.

This indicates the influence which women of any social status could wield within Lower Wharfedale’s community, whether over entire estates or simply family gatherings. These lynchpin roles extend the mothering role, in which patriarchalism casts women, beyond the bounds of the home and into the wider community.

⁴¹⁴ G. Lascelles, *The Tongs and the Bones: The Memoirs of Lord Harewood* (London, UK, 1981), p 26.

⁴¹⁵ M. Curran, interview by J. Rowling, East Keswick, 14 August 2012.

⁴¹⁶ D. Illingworth, interview by J. Rowling, East Keswick, 6 August 2012.

⁴¹⁷ D. Illingworth, interview by J. Rowling, East Keswick, 6 August 2012.

Separate Spheres?

In her discussion of gender roles in Deerfield, Massachusetts in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Deborah Rotman argued that the separation of public and private, male and female is an artificial construct, which does not allow for the fluidity of real social relations.⁴¹⁸ The fluid nature of women's roles may have contributed to the development, during this period, of an increased freedom for women in Lower Wharfedale to move between traditionally masculine and feminine spheres of work. This forms an interesting comparison with M. Francis' view of the interwar working man as emasculated by the unemployment inherent to the slump.⁴¹⁹ Perhaps the farming attitude that there is always work to be done, and the physical nature of that work, allowed agricultural men to cling to deeply ingrained, undomesticated masculinity for a longer time than their urban counterparts, despite the determined entry of women into traditionally male spaces.

There are parallels between the experiences of men and women brought up on farms in Lower Wharfedale. It was common for both to leave school before fifteen. Phyllis King remembers that she and her brothers all left school at fourteen, even in the later part of the study period:

You didn't have a choice. The work was there for you waiting for you to leave school [...] There was plenty of work on the farm, but there were no wages, they just gave you spending money. Everybody did that, on the farms.⁴²⁰

The practice of giving adult children 'spending money' plus bed and board at home rather than paying wages meant that many had no choice but to farm alongside their parents. During the two World Wars all available hands were needed for agricultural production. In the aftermath of war, when men who might have been expected to return did not, either due to death, or to reluctance to go back to bed, board and 'spending money' after receiving a real wage, opportunities were created for women to step beyond their traditional role. Rural men, having spent this period engaged in

⁴¹⁸ D. Rotman, 'Separate spheres? Beyond the dichotomies of domesticity,' *Current Anthropology*, vol 47, no 4 (August 2006), p 667.

⁴¹⁹ M. Francis, 'The domestication of the male? Recent research on nineteenth and twentieth-century British masculinity,' *The Historical Journal* vol 45, no 3 (2002), p 650.

⁴²⁰ P. King, interview by J. Rowling, Huby, 22 October 2012.

‘masculine’ outdoor work, had not made steps to develop the same freedom to move between types and places of work.

This was coupled with an expectation that daughters would also help on the farm, despite the reluctance of men to be involved in domestic work. This is supported by the fact that important events would be impossible without women providing food, cleaning up after the meal and assisting with the outside work. Such a work ethic was seen as admirable in a woman, whereas a man helping women to prepare food would be mocked by other men.⁴²¹ In *Up from the Pedestal*, Aileen Kraditor wrote, ‘strictly speaking, men have never had a “proper sphere,” since their sphere has been the world and all its activities.’⁴²² Among agricultural people in this locality, however, domestic work was still deemed an unacceptable use of male time. This is tacitly acknowledged in the local community, with one elderly male farmer joking, ‘my dad wouldn’t do nothing in the house – I might be a bit the same way myself!’⁴²³ Other men have also recognised that farm women had to work even harder than the men to keep both the house and the farm running smoothly. They regarded rag-rugging, indoors and overseen by women, as merely a ‘night job’, to be done by men only when it was too dark to work outside.⁴²⁴

The idea that some work was not for men is also preserved in local memory, in which some men are still discussed mockingly for helping the women carry food out, mix baking ingredients on threshing days instead of working in the fields with the other men, or for sitting inside with the women when it was raining instead of covering harvested crops. Once again, this evidence points to a strictly limited set of tasks which were thought acceptable for men to perform, and to the contrasting state of affairs for women, in which both inside and outside work was acceptable, even encouraged.

A man from Timble, John Dickinson, had kept a diary between 1878 and 1912, in which he recorded his day to day life, often in poetic form. In November 1907 and April 1909, he wrote short poems regarding the activities of his wife and daughter in the house, and their effect upon him. The 1907 verse reads:

⁴²¹ D. Lister, interview by J. Rowling, Birstwith, 25 June 2013.

⁴²² A. S. Kraditor, *Up from the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism* (Chicago, USA, 1968), p 9.

⁴²³ F. Fearnley, interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, 20 September 2012.

⁴²⁴ E. Cawkwell and T. Mickle, interview by J. Rowling, Askwith, 8 October 2012.

The days are dark and dull

Our women push and pull

At cleaning up and all about

No rest inside so I go out.⁴²⁵

Similarly, in the April of 1909, he clearly felt excluded from the domestic flurry of spring cleaning:

This cleaning down comes sure as Spring

It is a most annoying thing

When Nature dons her gayest dress

Our home's a contrast – what a mess!

No peace I have by day or night

I cannot do a thing that's right.⁴²⁶

This suggests that the generation entering the study period as mature, even rather elderly, adults (Dickinson was in his sixties when he penned these lines) viewed domesticity as the sole preserve of women. Words like 'annoying' trivialise female domestic labour, in the same way that rag-rugging was relegated to a 'night job', not really suitable for men if there was something more important to be done. However, we can see hints here that women were complicit in excluding men from the domestic sphere. Dickinson gives the impression of being hounded out of his own home by the working women, and, in finishing his 1909 poem with the rather plaintive line, 'I cannot do a thing that's right,' he casts his wife and daughter as managers of the home, investing them with a certain amount of authority over him while they are working. Although Dickinson died in 1912, just before the commencement of this study period, his attitudes and social expectations represent those which would have informed ideas of gender roles in the early part of the period.

⁴²⁵ R. Harker (ed.), *Timble Man: Diaries of a Dalesman* (Nelson, 1988), Wednesday, November 27, 1907, p. 140.

⁴²⁶ Harker (ed.), *Timble Man*, Thursday, April 29, 1909, p. 155.

Men of the older generations generally did not challenge their exclusion from the domestic sphere, appearing largely unwilling to work in the house.⁴²⁷ Janet Clack recalls the behaviour of her late husband during the study period.

I can't remember [my husband] ever using a carpet sweeper or the Hoover when we got Hoovers, and never would he put the washer on! Didn't know how to use it, he used to say! It's your job, he used to say! That's how it was.⁴²⁸

Phyllis King recollects, 'I used to think it was very hard work for my mother, because my father was very demanding'.⁴²⁹ Susan Armitage also remembers her mother taking sole responsibility for the children. She says, 'To be honest, I had very little communication with my dad about most things really. He certainly left all that sort of thing to Joyce'.⁴³⁰ This indicates a clear gender divide in roles within the home, one which had begun to be eroded out in the fields and the farmyard.

This erosion is clear in the entrepreneurial farm women who began to take an active part in the economic side of farm life in Lower Wharfedale toward the later 1930s, and 1940s, in the latter part of the study period. Women were often responsible for part of the family income, through taking in lodgers, selling direct to the public from the farm business, working on the farm and taking responsibility for farm accounts. Kendal Newby remembered his mother taking in lodgers to make extra money.⁴³¹ Janet Clack also recalls a farmer's wife opening a post office in her front room.⁴³² Many women had milk rounds; this is remembered as enjoyable work. Joyce Wood recalls delivering milk in Pool and Castley during the Second World War:

I did enjoy doing it, because you met all the different people and that. Mind, sometimes when you went you didn't see them every day, because very often when you went there'd be

⁴²⁷ P. King, interview by J. Rowling, Huby, 22 October 2012.

⁴²⁸ S. J. Clack, interview by J. Rowling, Ilkley, 18 August 2012.

⁴²⁹ P. King, interview by J. Rowling, Huby, 22 October 2012.

⁴³⁰ S. Armitage, interview by J. Rowling, Howden, 30 December 2011.

⁴³¹ Newby (undated), File 6.

⁴³² S. J. Clack, interview by J. Rowling, Ilkley, 18 August 2012.

either pans or basins or whatever on the doorsteps to put your
milk in.⁴³³

Similarly, one female interviewee of a similar age remembered growing up near Burley-in-Wharfedale: 'I always used to want to farm, I used to milk cows before I married. I loved it. I left school at 14, and we had a milk round, and I wanted Dad to save it until I could learn to drive then I could do it, but he'd had enough'.⁴³⁴ Phyllis King remembers her mother having a butter and egg round, for which she churned the butter.⁴³⁵ It appears to have been common for women to take over the sale of produce from the farm and to take pride in contributing to the business. These jobs can all be seen as an extension to farm women's more longstanding contribution to farm finances selling farm produce from a stall on market day. This was picked up in Naomi Jacobs' *They Left the Land*, in which the heroine, Bess, takes a market stall to support her son's schooling. It was also the subject of another short poem by John Dickinson, who described Otley market thus:

The farmers' wives they troop away
From farm and village on this day
To sell their eggs as well as butter
And on the Cross cause quite a flutter
They drive their bargains very mean
And take you in if you are green.⁴³⁶

Jacobs emphasised fictional Bess's naive, unambitious nature, by saying that the market stall 'was a career' to her.⁴³⁷ This would have contributed to her place as a sympathetic character within the novel, and may have struck a chord with a readership of urban housewives moving out of the home and into the workplace for the first time in 1940, the year of publication. However, we can see from Dickinson's diary that the women of Lower Wharfedale's farms, even as early as 1901, were financially shrewd.

⁴³³ M. J. Wood, interview by J. Rowling, Otley, 28 August 2012.

⁴³⁴ Anonymous, interview by J. Rowling, Arthington, 04 January 2011.

⁴³⁵ P. King, interview by J. Rowling, Huby, 22 October 2012.

⁴³⁶ Harker (ed.), *Timble Man*, Friday, March 01, 1901, p. 115.

⁴³⁷ Jacobs, *They Left the Land*, p. 129.

Other women went further, taking over whole farm businesses, even expanding them. Bert Verity's mother, abandoned by her husband, share-farmed with her son.⁴³⁸ The clearest example encountered during interviews for this research, but by no means the only one, was Joyce Wood's step-mother. Mrs Wood remembers:

She was very much into the farming was my step-mother. As I say, we took the bigger farm, a lot bigger farm, really, right down in Castley [...] She'd be the one up early for milking and everything. No, she was great. She was very strict. But I expect she had to be with four of us, and it was a big thing really to take on [...] She was a real, real worker, she really, really was.⁴³⁹

This was the case of a woman widowed and left with four step-children after only eighteen months of marriage. Not only did she fulfil her domestic duties by keeping her new family together, but she grew the farm business and was ambitious enough to move it to larger premises. Through this, she placed herself as the dominant figure in the business, above the three sons, who may earlier have been expected to take control upon their father's death. This family forms a stark contrast to the Fearnleys in Pool-in-Wharfedale, who also had a daughter and three sons. Daughter Phyllis King's characterisation of her upbringing as 'old-fashioned' may be due to the number of young, male family members, meaning that the women were possibly not required to work outside. However, Joyce Wood joined her brothers outside, driving tractors, stooking, stacking, and working with the cattle. This indicates that the change in women's work locations was cultural rather than simply due to labour shortages.

Analysis of oral testimony reveals a breakdown in the idea of separate spheres, as it applied to women, across the period, becoming much more obvious and widespread during the Second World War and the immediate post-war period. Strikingly, those who described women as 'slaves' to men, and believed that men and women held separate roles appropriate to their gender, were either among the oldest interviewees, or they described their upbringing and family life as 'old-fashioned'. The younger participants, and those who described individual women of their parents'

⁴³⁸ B. Verity, interview by J. Rowling, Harrogate, 11 April 2013.

⁴³⁹ M. J. Wood, interview by J. Rowling, Otley, 28 August 2012.

generation as ‘extraordinary’ were less likely to believe that division of labour along gender lines was a feature of life in Lower Wharfedale between 1914 and 1951.

This period was one in which everyone was directly affected by war and the shortage of men which resulted. It is well-documented that women took on essential jobs in order to keep the country running. What is surprising is the sheer number who proved themselves capable of taking on traditional ‘men’s work’ and even surpassing them in terms of quality or productivity. In Lower Wharfedale, this seems to have led to the segregated, submissive farmwife being gradually overtaken by a very different individual, who viewed agricultural work as an opportunity rather than exploitation and regarded her traditional contemporaries as ‘old-fashioned’. She also demanded respect, and this is picked up in the use of words like ‘running’, denoting a managerial aspect to women’s work in the home. Donald Rhodes remembered his neighbour during the 1940s:

Well she always looked like a land girl did Dorothy [...], because she used to wear like, you know how land girls used to wear them like tawny overalls, she always had them on [laugh]. Well, I mean, she’d be as much good as a bloke really, because she’d watched on the farm and that like. Well she’d have to do both, because [...] even as a kid I can’t remember another lady there. Dorothy would be running the house and helping outside as well, wouldn’t she? She always seemed to be working outside like.⁴⁴⁰

Of course women worked in the fields well before the twentieth century, but the change which occurred here between 1914 and 1951 was one of status. Women were taking control of their work, and proving themselves competent, confident and competitive in it. As shown in Donald Rhodes’ memories of his neighbour, Dorothy, women’s new workmanlike self-image also began to be expressed through choices of clothing which was practical for both indoor and outdoor work. His description of Dorothy epitomises the new farm woman of this time who moved freely between work types and work locations.

⁴⁴⁰ D. Rhodes, interview by J. Rowling, Shadwell, 26 June 2013.

Such developments may initially have been enabled by wartime and interwar demographic changes, bringing women out onto the land to replace men, forcing changes in contemporary beliefs regarding women's capabilities. Any doubts that women could do the same work as men were swept away by the women who joined the Women's Land Army, who volunteered to work on farms to replace enlisted men during the Second World War. A hostel in Weeton housed the women who worked on Wharfedale's farms, and Thomas Mickle remembers:

They used to be on the stack forking corn into the threshing machine, and there used to be rats all over, and they used to tie a rope round their leg there, because they used to go up their trouser legs! And they never bothered did they, you know. That was one of the main jobs they did, but they got doing all jobs, ploughing and everything [...] There were some damn good women workers, always, where I've been. Farmers' wives, they could do as much outside as the man could do, and work in the house and look after the family and all.⁴⁴¹

This is a good example of the way that women are described as doing the same work as men and looking after the house and family as well, further suggesting that men saw their work as very clearly defined, and very definitely not including housework. Wartime advances in technology also led to the greater mechanisation of agriculture. This made farm work physically easier. It was now possible to ride on a tractor to work the fields, rather than trudging behind a horse, and the development of the auger in the 1940s mechanised the process of lifting grain into upstairs granaries, ending the carrying of sacks weighing up to sixteen stones on a man's back.⁴⁴²

Female Sexuality

As women's work began to be recognised as skilled, and therefore useful, it appears that women's sexuality began to appear more valid, less taboo. Throughout the study period, a woman was not only judged on her domestic management skills, but

⁴⁴¹ T. Mickle, interview by J. Rowling, Askwith, 8 October 2012.

⁴⁴² F. Fearnley, interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, 20 September 2012.

also on her behaviour; in particular, her sexual behaviour, but towards the end of the period in question we can see hints that attitudes were starting to change, at the same time as women began to step out of the domestic sphere and into traditionally masculine workplaces. This was, of course, a difficult subject to broach in an interview with elderly people, and therefore it was only addressed in interviews if the participant offered a memory or opinion based on this. A modest and somewhat naïve attitude to sexual relationships is displayed in some of the oral evidence, indicating a culture of silence when it came to sexual education. Maureen Sutton's *We Didn't Know Aught* discusses the way that sexuality was a taboo subject in Lincolnshire in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s.⁴⁴³ Contributors to Mary Chamberlain's *Fenwomen* also expressed similar sentiments, emphasising the absolute naivety of young women in the early twentieth century.⁴⁴⁴ Conversations with elderly Wharfedale residents suggests that Sutton's and Chamberlain's findings are applicable to a wider geographical area, but with the modification that attitudes were relaxing when contrasted with those of the generation who would have been elderly during the study period. Janet Clack remembered her naiveté upon her marriage, and the absolute ban on fraternisation between the sexes when she worked as a nurse at Harrogate hospital during the Second World War.⁴⁴⁵ When discussing the birth of my own grandfather in 1917, exactly ten weeks after the wedding, my great-grandmother always insisted that the baby had been so premature that he couldn't be touched and had to be carried about on a silk cushion, indicating both a fundamental misunderstanding of reproduction and foetal development, and the pressure women could feel to conform to an expected standard of behaviour. An example of the reason for this is recorded in the diary of 'Timble Man' John Dickinson, who, having seduced local girl 'E. B.', recorded: 'Went to Blubberhouses to meet E. B. Came home with her. We mutually agreed to give up keeping company as I had no intention of making her my wife. The poor girl cried and I felt very sorry for her. But what can one do? She is ruined.'⁴⁴⁶ This idea is supported by the recollections of James Herriot, who commented, 'I often think that one of the least permissive societies in the history of mankind was the agricultural community of rural Yorkshire in the thirties.

⁴⁴³ Sutton, M., *We Didn't Know Aught: A Study of Sexuality, Superstition and Death in Women's Lives in Lincolnshire in the 1930s, '40s and '50s* (Stamford, 1992).

⁴⁴⁴ M. Chamberlain, *Fenwomen: A portrait of women in an English village* (London, 1975).

⁴⁴⁵ Clack, S. J., interview by J. Rowling, Ilkley, 18 August 2012.

⁴⁴⁶ R. Harker (ed.), *Timble Man: Diaries of a Dalesman* (Nelson, 1988), Sunday, January 5 1879, p. 29.

Among the farmers anything to do with sex or the natural functions was unmentionable.’⁴⁴⁷

However, as in attitudes towards women’s work, we see a split between the older and younger generations during the study period. This was demonstrated particularly clearly by Keith Liddle, who recalled a young couple from Fewston during the Second World War, who were separated due to the man going to France to fight:

[She] and another girl from Fewston, [...] they played about a bit [...] But the old aunties were all very staunch Methodists, you see, up at Norwood and all about, so, by! What a tale they had to tell when [he] came back! And [he] said, “Well what the hell do you think I’ve been doing for six years?!” He says, “I didn’t know if I were going to get my head blown off today or tomorrow!” He says, “If she behaves herself when I’ve come home that’s all that matters!” But that was two ways of looking at it wasn’t it? But [he] said, “I’d no idea when I would come home, if I ever did!” Because he was six years away, and he was in some rough areas, if you know what I mean. So that quietened the old aunties a bit, right. So it’s how you go. Nature will take its course, my dear! Don’t get me wrong, it doesn’t matter! It’s no business what other people do! That’s their life! Yes! You only live once! [laugh] No good being all goody-goodies! You get my meaning? There’s nothing wrong with it. But you don’t carry it about on a plate!’⁴⁴⁸

Likewise, Phyllis King remembered the uncertain nature of relationships between young men and women at this time:

I once went with a lad and he was in the army and they posted him abroad for two years – I’ve forgotten where he went – and

⁴⁴⁷ Herriot, J., *Vets Might Fly* (1977, London, 2006), p.166.

⁴⁴⁸ K. Liddle, interview by J. Rowling, Stainburn, 17 October 2012.

I thought well, I can't wait for him for two years, I'll have to find somebody else! [laugh] Oh dear!⁴⁴⁹

Donald Rhodes drew attention to the contrast between a girl of his own age who became pregnant, and married the child's father, a local farmers son, with the words: 'You might make me marry you, but you won't bloody make me live with you!' and her new mother-in-law, a 'quaint', 'old-fashioned' woman, 'she had like a long sort of dress on that were just missing the floor, she were like a right heavy-made lady, not one of the tallest, and she sort of waddled when she walked, but, you know, a right old country type of woman.'⁴⁵⁰

The ages of the people described by interviewees as having a less 'old-fashioned' attitude to female sexuality, and the time at which the stories occurred, suggests that, in certain circumstances, greater tolerance was being exercised over incidents which would previously have been regarded as serious and inexcusable transgressions. This can be linked both to the emergence of women into the publicly visible workforce and the increased status engendered by the performance of recognisably skilled labour, and to the external events of the time. As indicated by the reaction of the young husband in Keith Liddle's recollection, an awareness of the deaths among their contemporaries may have led younger people to place less emphasis upon the ideals of separate spheres, and more on the satisfaction of immediate needs.

Conclusion

This chapter has set the small farming community of Lower Wharfedale in the context of current debates regarding gender roles, the relevance and application of the theory of 'separate spheres', and the use of oral history. My place within the community has enabled me to interview people who would not have spoken to another researcher, and interviewees were genuinely interested in my background and spoke much more freely once my local, farming upbringing was established. The 'snowball' sampling method used to contact interviewees beyond my own personal circle of acquaintances was similar to that used in other small community studies, for example those by Rhoda

⁴⁴⁹ P. King, interview by J. Rowling, Huby, 22 October 2012.

⁴⁵⁰ D. Rhodes, interview by J. Rowling, Shadwell, 26 June 2013.

Wilkie and Anna Bryson. This method has limitations, most obviously that those who are not linked to local networks may not be picked up for interview. However, attempts were made to minimise this by striking out in different directions, both in terms of geography and social circles.

Contemporary regional fiction, on which a large proportion of the stereotype of the Yorkshire farmwife is based, for the most part acknowledges the role of judgment from the wider community in shaping farm women's lives, and portrays the practical farm woman in a positive light. Significantly, however, these aspects of farm women's lives are passed off as mere gossip and being a good helpmeet to the man. In order to gain sympathy for a character from a contemporary audience, connotations of practical feminism and functional gossip are not made clear, rendering the early twentieth-century Northern farming woman of stereotype a rather two-dimensional figure. The comparison of this stereotype with oral history accounts adds a greater depth to the understanding of women who are represented in this way. Analysis of women and domesticity has shown that women's work indoors was not necessarily the invisible product of drudgery, but it could be an expression of choice, power and practical feminism. Furthermore, women could use their domestic expertise, in food preparation and in their role as mothers to become lynchpins in the community beyond the confines of the home. This freedom of choice and influence calls into question the traditional construct of 'separate spheres.'

Lower Wharfedale's farming women in 1914-1951 did not form a single, conveniently analysed, easily characterised group. Some were heavily involved in community life while others might go a week or longer without seeing anyone outside their immediate family. Some were part of distinct social entities, others joined in everything and some appeared to have no social life at all. There may have been a class or economic aspect to this, with wealthier families able to take on more land, justifying the employment of labourers, and allowing women leisure time. Nevertheless, sweeping statements appear in both primary and secondary literature regarding the limited role which women, regardless of individual desires and talents, were supposed to fill. Due to the multitude of roles performed by women, Lower Wharfedale during the study period was bustling with visible female activity, outside the home as well as within, without which local businesses and communities would not have been viable.

In 2002, Brandth noted that the question of why farm women are reluctant to identify with feminism was a common one in feminist research on rural women.⁴⁵¹ In answer to this, he pointed out that, in agriculture, business relations and family relations, paid and unpaid work are intertwined in a world where close mutual cooperation between family members is necessary.⁴⁵² He adds:

Concerning farm women, it is not evident that they saw the family (even if it was patriarchally organized) as a site of oppression. Historically, farm women who were in charge of indoor work on the farm, exercised greater influence in their area of work. But, when they participated in outdoor work, they become farm hands or helpers to the male farmer.⁴⁵³

In Lower Wharfedale, questions of gender relations, class and feminism among the generation who grew up during the study period are typically answered with: ‘I never really thought about it’.⁴⁵⁴ Such responses might suggest that male oppression led farm women in this area meekly to accept their lot as helpmeet without considering the possibility of another option. In the light of the independent, entrepreneurial women in this farming community, however, there is scope to argue that a feminism dominated by the urban middle class seemed irrelevant to rural women’s lives. In the context of the equal potential importance of both genders, if not an equal division of labour, we can see why a rural woman might not interest herself in feminist ideas, being far too busy thinking about the advancement of her family as an individual unit, rather than the advancement of women as a loosely related and cross-class group. Nevertheless, one can identify aspects of Manuel Castells’ *practical feminism*, in which women are feminist in practice, without thinking about opposition to patriarchy or a collective female identity.⁴⁵⁵ It is also possible to balance the work of men and women in terms of an economy of satisfaction, whereby the satisfaction women gained through the kudos of performing outdoor farm labour held a greater marginal utility than that gained by men performing housework, tempered as it was by the judgement and condemnation of their peers.

⁴⁵¹ Brandth, ‘Feminism and farm women,’ p 107.

⁴⁵² Ibid., p 115.

⁴⁵³ Ibid., p 112.

⁴⁵⁴ J. Dalby, interview by J. Rowling, Eccup, 7 August 2012.

⁴⁵⁵ Castells, *Power of Identity*, p. 259.

While women were, indeed, restricted by the demands of farm and family, they must have been aware that men were also expected to leave school as early as possible, to give up ambitions of work outside the family business and to engage in hard, physical labour, with little reward and little in the way of opportunities to relax and socialise. For both sexes, life centred around doing everything possible to get the best from the business and many men and women were, first and foremost, married to the farm. This may be due to the nature of farms in this locality as generally small, tenanted and staffed by family. This echoes Nicola Verdon's research into letters to the *Farmers Weekly*, which observed the correspondents protesting that women were practically involved in farm work and that their work was appreciated by their husbands.⁴⁵⁶ This suggests that changes in this locality were part of a wider shift.

Overall, women became freer to move between public and private spheres and to choose to take opportunities to expand their family businesses, whereas men were still curtailed by the expectation that they should not be seen engaged in certain activities, which were conceptualised as 'not men's work', in a way that, by the end of the period, farm labour was no longer conceptualised as 'not women's work'. Similarly, and significantly at the same time as this shift was occurring, attitudes about sexual behaviour also seemed to undergo an alteration. While not suggesting any form of radical liberalisation, it does appear that female sexuality began to be recognised as valid at the same time as female work was being recognised as valuable and skilled.

These changes had enormous implications for the meanings of community, identity, and status in Lower Wharfedale during the period 1914-1951, altering the make-up of the social structures of which people considered themselves to be a part, and reducing the homogeneity between family units. In one respect, this may have weakened internal bonds within the community, as the emergence of women into the fields, coupled with the mechanisation of farm labour, reduced opportunities for male-only bonding through work and mutual assistance which had characterised agricultural life in the early part of the period. On the other hand, however, the female half of the community had begun to explore new roles and experiences beyond the confines of the farmhouse, which extended their opportunities to forge new social relationships, into new female-only spaces such as organised clubs, as well as a multi-gendered working

⁴⁵⁶ N. Verdon, "'The modern countrywoman': Farm women, domesticity and social change in interwar Britain,' *History Workshops Journal*, vol 70 (2010), p 87.

environment. They also allowed women to develop traditionally masculine skills, leading to the phrase ‘as good as a man’, in its various forms, to be repeated throughout this investigation, in both oral testimony and contemporary literature. In the context of the period being discussed, this phrase seems to acknowledge the disparity between traditionally masculine and feminine work, through which male labour had been classified as skilled because it was performed by men, while labour performed by women had been likewise conceptualised as unskilled.⁴⁵⁷ The regularity with which this phrase has been used throughout the source material is a powerful indicator of the way in which women were challenging the stereotype at this time.

⁴⁵⁷ D. Massey and J. Allen (eds.), *Geography Matters! A Reader* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 200.

5. The Extended Farming Community: Related Occupations

Agriculture in Lower Wharfedale in the period 1914 to 1951 was not carried out in a vacuum. It required subsidiary trades and skills to keep it functioning. It provided support for a number of other trades and occupations which could not carry on without it, and still further service-providers were required to sustain the large, temporally redefinable community which existed across rural Lower Wharfedale between 1914 and 1951. One of the key sources of evidence for the existence of a farming community beyond farmers, their families, and others directly employed in agriculture full-time, is the National Farm Survey (1941-1943), which lists a huge number of farmers who were also involved in other occupations, either alongside agriculture, or as a main source of income supplemented by small-scale farming. Furthermore, the oral evidence is filled with references to community members, and businesses, which the farming community relied upon, which were not necessarily directly associated with agriculture.

This is a theme which can be found in numerous fictional and fictionalised accounts of farming life during the study period; however they are usually peripheral characters, and rarely the focus of the story. Adrian Bell's account of his farming apprenticeship in Sussex, *Corduroy*, mainly describes day-to-day interactions and conversations with the farmer, Mr Colville, his family, and his labourers, but these are intermingled with glimpses of the vicar, local shopkeepers, huntsmen, the blacksmith, and so on, who are all aware of Mr Colville's status within the farming community, and who all judge the young Adrian Bell and place him within their community according to his farming knowledge, his masculinity, and how much trust they are able to place in him. As he learns and begins to prove himself, assisted by his close relationship with the highly respected Mr Colville, his status within the community rises.⁴⁵⁸

Stephen Caunce's work on farming in the north east of England has highlighted the importance of skilled men such as blacksmiths and consulting engineers in beginning the transition from horse-based to mechanised agriculture.⁴⁵⁹ He also pointed out the diversification which accompanied the technological revolution in agriculture, noting farmers turning to haulage as an example.⁴⁶⁰ It is this combination of

⁴⁵⁸ A. Bell, *Corduroy* (1930, Oxford, 1998).

⁴⁵⁹ S. A. Caunce, 'Mechanisation and Society in English Agriculture: The experience of the North-East, 1850-1914,' *Rural History*, 17, No. 1 (April, 2006), p. 26.

⁴⁶⁰ Caunce, 'Mechanisation and Society,' p. 30.

mechanisation and diversification which has led many to argue that the early twentieth century was a period of decline in rural society. Paul Brassley, Jeremy Burchardt and Lynne Thompson described the history of rural England between the 1870s and the 1930s as characterised by a ‘continuity of decline that culminated in the interwar years.’⁴⁶¹ In 1992, Brian Short argued that English identity in the early part of the twentieth century was overwhelmingly rural, a fact which was played upon at the time to promote patriotism during the war years.⁴⁶² However, in his *The English Rural Community: Image and Analysis*, Short pointed out that:

Painters of the rural scene in the 20th century have been notorious for their inability to see pylons and silage towers. “Discussing the Milk Quota” and “Artificial Insemination Day” are still, I believe, subjects awaiting their debut at the Royal Academy.⁴⁶³

England’s rural identity was an idealised one, which did not perhaps reflect the everyday realities of farming life. Yet the people who entered the farming community in order to make artificial insemination available to farmers, to educate them on silage-making, and to assist the farmer in running his business, became part of the community by virtue of their knowledge and closeness to it.

As with so many other aspects of the farming community in Lower Wharfedale, the question of related occupations is closely linked to theories of belonging and boundaries. Once again, Kia Lindroos’ ‘Benjaminian’ community model provides an important framework within which we can understand how people in related occupations moved across the boundaries of Lower Wharfedale’s farming community, into and out of states of belonging, on a temporal basis. One of the most influential writers on the subject of social groups was the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century philosopher and sociologist Georg Simmel, who believed that, ‘the consciousness of constituting with the others a unity is actually all there is to this unity.’⁴⁶⁴ Margaret Gilbert, in her examination of the study of social groups, describes this statement as both controversial and provocative, risking a ‘too hasty rejection’ of Simmel’s theory, on the grounds that the belief in an entity does not guarantee the existence of that

⁴⁶¹ P. Brassley, J. Burchardt, and L. Thompson (eds), *The English Countryside Between the Wars: Regeneration or Decline?* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 1.

⁴⁶² B. Short, *The English Rural Community: Image and Analysis* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 4.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴⁶⁴ G. Simmel quoted in M. Gilbert, *On Social Facts* (Oxford, 1989), p. 146.

entity.⁴⁶⁵ The idea has obvious parallels with Benedict Anderson's theory of 'imagined communities,' originally posited almost eighty years later, in 1983, and reissued in several editions since then. It is arguable, therefore, that the boundaries of a community can be said to lie wherever the community's members imagine them to lie. However, this idea is inherently problematic, as a community is made up of individuals who may each have a different view on who was included within the boundaries of insider status. Howard Newby, in *The Deferential Worker*, noted that 'the community had a dual existence – as an ideology and as a local social system. It is necessary to keep these two facets carefully separated.'⁴⁶⁶ Newby drew lines between the occupational communities which encompassed both labourers and employers in East Anglia, and the 'communal solidarity' within the village, from which farmers and landlords were excluded. Within this village community, discussion of work-related subjects reinforced a group identity through a connection with a common occupation.⁴⁶⁷ The high levels of deference which Newby found in East Anglia are not replicated in the oral evidence from Lower Wharfedale, perhaps due to the differing employment structures fostered by different agricultural styles. However, the establishment of a connection through talk of a common occupation is a recurring theme in both the historiography and in the oral evidence from Lower Wharfedale.

The part of the community structure occupied by people in related occupations was liminal to the main body of the farming community of Lower Wharfedale, but there was movement between the inner circle of community members and the margins, as well as between the margins and those outside the community altogether. Victor Turner has discussed how an individual or a group which has been through the liminal stage of a transition and has reached a stable state of assimilation into a community, is consequently assigned certain rights and obligations, and held to certain behavioural standards, which are not expected of, nor assigned to, those who are not fully part of the community.⁴⁶⁸ Therefore, those who remained on the margins of the farming community were not required to demonstrate all of the behaviours and cultural

⁴⁶⁵ M. Gilbert, *On Social Facts* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 147-148.

⁴⁶⁶ H. Newby, *The Deferential Worker: A study of farm workers in East Anglia* (1977, Harmondsworth, 1979), p. 45.

⁴⁶⁷ Newby, *Deferential Worker*, pp. 46-47.

⁴⁶⁸ V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (1969, New York, 1997) p. 95.

understandings which were expected of those who identified themselves as permanently part of the farming community.

This idea was developed in John S. Reed and Neil J. Smelser's *Usable Social Science*, in which the authors differentiated the levels of trust which exist in groups as opposed to networks. Groups engender a sense of membership which generates trust, often unspoken, while networks force more explicit statements of trust due to their tendency to involve relationships with near-strangers.⁴⁶⁹ This provides a model for the levels of community which existed among those in agriculturally-related occupations in Lower Wharfedale. It emphasises the importance of cultural norms as expressions of insider status, establishing and maintaining trust. In this, those on the margins of the community did not fit into Lindroos' 'Benjaminian' community model, as they could not fulfil the 'shared knowledge' condition of a scattered community. It is therefore more appropriate to describe people in marginal but agriculturally related occupations, and those who were involved in farming on a part-time basis, as forming a network which supported the main body of the permanent farming community, and whose role was 'temporally redefinable', changing according to external circumstances.

This chapter explores the kinds of people who inhabited the peripheries of Lower Wharfedale's farming community. It discusses the social, economic, and supporting roles which were taken on by people and places in relation to agriculture, and how important these were in maintaining the community as a whole. It also demonstrates the temporally redefinable nature of the study community by showing how the impact of war changed relationships between certain types of individuals and the community at large, using the cases of the County War Agricultural Executive Committee (CWAEC) officers, and the Prisoners of War. It argues that the perception of a rural community breaking down and ceasing to exist, as numbers of rural labourers decreased in the early twentieth century is not wholly accurate. While accepting that quantitative decline in rural communities from 1914 to 1951 is self-evident, with numbers of agricultural workers across England and Wales declining from over 1.4 million in 1921 to around 1.2 million just twenty years later,⁴⁷⁰ the farming community of Lower Wharfedale at its broadest level displays qualitative change which is at odds

⁴⁶⁹ N. J. Reed and J. S. Smelser, *Usable Social Science* (Berkeley, 2012), p. 140.

⁴⁷⁰ A. Howkins, 'Death and Rebirth? English rural society 1920-1940,' in Brassley, Burchardt and Thompson (eds), *The English Countryside between the Wars*, p. 16.

with an image of decline. As older craft traditions and craftsmen disappeared, many of their roles were filled by small numbers of workers skilled in new techniques and technologies who performed a similar supportive function, both socially and in terms of business. As Alun Howkins has noted, decline in rural population has long been linked with agricultural problems and held to indicate the “end” of an old rural England,’ however, as Howkins goes on to demonstrate, this view ignores the rebirth of rural England as a new and different entity.⁴⁷¹ These differing interpretations have most recently been addressed by K. D. M. Snell in his *Spirits of Community* (2016), in which he explored the meanings of community identity or ‘community spirit’ in different periods and using different disciplines, through the work of contemporary writers such as Adrian Bell and James Wentworth Day, among others. These two examples point particularly to the importance of the personal account based on experience in understanding the meanings behind the term ‘community.’⁴⁷² As a collection of personal accounts, oral history is key in understanding the way in which communities continued to adapt and function as their numbers shrank. Howkins writes that ‘the experiences of those who lived through the “locust years” are the flesh on the bones of the often grim accounts of economic change.’⁴⁷³

The Wider Farming Community, and Related Occupations in the National Farm Survey (1941-1943)

Of the 523 individuals for whom occupations were given in the National Farm Survey sample taken from Lower Wharfedale, only 380 were listed as full-time farmers. The remaining 27 per cent of respondents for whom records were accessible were part-time, spare-time, or hobby farmers, or farmed full-time alongside a second occupation. Generally, these individuals farmed acreages which tended towards the smaller end of the scale for the area, with the majority being less than 50 acres.

Occupation	Acreage Farmed
Part-time farmer, wool comber, and wool merchant	232
Part-time farmer and wool merchant	1250

⁴⁷¹ Howkins, ‘Death and Rebirth?’ p. 24.

⁴⁷² K. D. M. Snell, *Spirits of Community: English Senses of Belonging and Loss, 1750-2000* (London, 2016).

⁴⁷³ A. Howkins, *The Death of Rural England: A Social History of the Countryside since 1900* (London, 2003), p. 54.

Part-time farmer and agricultural contractor	202
Hobby farmer and mill owner	71.238
Spare-time farmer and timber merchant	192
Hobby farmer	60
Part-time farmer and pig dealer	106
Hobby farmer, miller, and corn merchant	107
Full-time farmer and solicitor	62
Part-time farmer	53
Part-time farmer and corn merchant	73
Full-time farmer and cattle remover	66.5
Full-time farmer and cattle dealer	109
Part-time farmer and cattle dealer	60.5
Part-time farmer, employed by M. J. Green Timber Merchant	53

Fig. 5.1 Size of land over 50 acres farmed by men and women other than single-occupation full-time farmers

Fig. 5.1 shows the occupations listed for individuals who farmed more than 50 acres but were not solely occupied in full-time farming. We can see from this that merchants and livestock dealers were most likely to combine their occupations with farming larger acreages.

The breadth of occupations performed by part-time and spare-time farmers alongside agriculture suggests the extent to which lines at the edges of the farming community were blurred. While many worked as farm labourers or estate workers, or in occupations which were ancillary to agriculture such as blacksmiths or butchers, almost as many others were occupied outside agriculture, as in the cases of solicitors, hoteliers, bus drivers, or postmen.

Social Roles:

Pubs and Publicans, Auctions and Auctioneers, Shows and Judges

We have already seen the importance of social spaces to a scattered community. They provide islands in time, in which information can be exchanged, traditions can be reinforced, network bonds cemented, new community members assessed, and trust established. The auction mart provided one such space, the role of which has already been extensively explored, but other spaces were likewise appropriated by members of the farming community at certain times, based on the agricultural calendar. Each of these spaces came with an associated person, or group of people, such as the auction staff, or the show committees, who formed another facet to the scattered and disparate collection of individuals who held among themselves a common sense of identity as members of Lower Wharfedale's farming community.

One of the key peripheral locations of the Lower Wharfedale farming community in the earlier part of the twentieth century was the pub. This location was of course also associated, to a greater or lesser degree, with a number of other communities which were based heavily around masculine labour. The pubs of Lower Wharfedale's market towns were closely linked with the auction marts, both as repositories for livestock before the sale, and as places for meeting after the sales. Ted Haxby remembered: 'You could tell it was auction day because there were all these farmers about in pubs.'⁴⁷⁴ This connection was made explicit by the employment of men at the pubs to look after the cattle which would be housed there. David Lister recalled his childhood in the 1930s:

Oh, the Three Horseshoes. I remember going there with my father, and, I'm not certain of this, but I think we'd get the cows there before the weekend, and then on the Monday morning, I think we used to walk them up to the auction from the Three Horseshoes. That's just as you come into Otley from the Bridge End side there. I remember going in there and there were these stables, and there were a chap there who used to look after them over the weekend. And when we

⁴⁷⁴ G. Haxby, Interview by J. Rowling, East Keswick, West Yorkshire, 03 October 2012.

got there he had them all fit and bagged up, you know, and their udders were done with dolly pink, to make them look good. Yes.⁴⁷⁵

The rural pubs, outside the towns also acted as locations for sales outside the towns. One such location in Lower Wharfedale was the Hopper Lane Hotel at Fewston. Mervyn Lister remembered:

In my grandfather's lifetime, say from 1900 to 1950, that sort of period, there were lots of sales of livestock took place that were not at a market as we would know them, but they would have a collective sale of sheep at Kilnsey, Barden, Bolton Abbey, Ilkley, Otley. We had one at Hopper Lane at Fewston. And these places were all about 6 miles apart and when there was going to be a sale, we had ours in a field at the Hopper Lane Hotel, and farmers from about three miles around would bring their store lambs to sell there. Sometimes a few cattle. But they were not markets in the way that most people think of an auction mart with a hard paved surface and a sale ring under cover. This was just in a field, you know.⁴⁷⁶

These events placed the publican into the farming community for the duration of the sale. While many publicans, particularly in towns, were not farmers themselves, the provision of pubs and their attached facilities, were vital to farmers' ability to trade their livestock and exchange information between themselves. The fact that farmers were willing to leave valuable livestock on pub property overnight indicates that the publicans and their staff were considered trustworthy. However, there is no indication that these men were permanent members of the community. Unless they were also farmers themselves, they did not spend time interacting with other community members outside the context of the sale day. At other times, they would have identified with their own personal community centring around their own everyday activities. Once again, this links back to the 'Benjaminian' community model, in which the community is temporally redefinable; the shape and inclusivity of the community alters according to the external circumstances in which it finds itself.

⁴⁷⁵ D. Lister, Interview by J. Rowling, Clint, North Yorkshire, 25 June 2013.

⁴⁷⁶ M. Lister, interview by J. Rowling, Otley, West Yorkshire, 02 January 2014.

‘Local’ auctions and sales allowed meeting and information exchange between community members who would not otherwise cross paths. There was one larger definition of ‘local’ which allowed even less frequent meetings between even more widely scattered farming insiders: the local show. During the first part of the twentieth century, agricultural showing was very popular. Robin Cowgill remembered:

There’d be eight, nine, ten people in every class. Well, I remember when [another farmer], who farmed out the other side of Drifffield, he would come to places like Weeton, even small shows like that. Yes, very - tremendous. I’ve both showed there and judged it. Tremendous dairy show in those days, could be twenty odd new heifers in milk at Gargrave Show. I’ve both judged there when there’s been over twenty heifers in milk and shown there when there was over twenty, you know.⁴⁷⁷

These small, local shows do not carry the same prestige and are not on the same scale as better known events, such as the Great Yorkshire Show, yet large numbers of people were attracted from considerable distances away. The shows were also an opportunity for non-agricultural people to get closer to agriculture, observing livestock close-up, which they would perhaps not normally get the opportunity to do. Footage, such as a film of Arthington Show in 1953, kept at the Yorkshire Film Archive, indicates the popularity of agricultural shows as an event for the village or town, not just the farming community. The background of almost every scene is packed with people.⁴⁷⁸ The show was a liminal zone, in which the boundaries between the livestock handlers and the crowds of potential outsiders were physically reduced from stone walls to rope fences, as we can see in Fig. 8.1, a photograph of Washburn Valley Tenant Farmers’ Association Show at Timble in 1906.⁴⁷⁹ In this photograph we can see that the onlookers are held back from the livestock-judging area by a rope, physically marking the separation between those showing and those watching, those who were at work and those out for a day’s entertainment. This can be seen in other show photographs for example those from Bert Verity’s long showing career.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁷ R. Cowgill, interview by J. Rowling, Weston, West Yorkshire, 19 December 2013.

⁴⁷⁸ Arthington Show (1953), Yorkshire Film Archive, Film No. 971.

⁴⁷⁹ Washburn Valley T. F. A. Show at Timble, 15/9/06, Otley Museum, O T P H 1.

⁴⁸⁰ Photographs, M. Verity, personal collection.



Fig. 5.2 Washburn Valley Tenant Farmers' Association Show at Timble, 15 September 1906, Otley Museum, O T PH 1.



Fig. 5.3 H. Verity, Masham Show, 1946, M. Verity, personal collection.

As we have already seen, a good reputation for livestock knowledge and livestock production was critical for achieving success at the auction mart, and for preserving a place at the centre of the local farming community. One of the ways in which a reputation could be made and maintained was through showing. This was true not only in terms of the quality of animal shown, but also in terms of the animal's training, which in turn fed back into the efficiency and safety on the farm. Robin Cowgill recalled training calves to walk on the halter, from the late 1940s onwards:

What we tried to do on a Saturday morning, if we'd a spare hour, was to halter a calf, and of course it was a lot easier than haltering an adult cattle, and it's a bit like learning to ride a bike, once they'd been haltered they never forgot it, you could halter them at – well, I'm talking up to six months old – a calf, three months, and then never put a halter on them again, if you put a halter on them for two hours, three hours on a Saturday morning, mastered them, and then never again until they came in as newly calved heifers, but if you'd missed any calves being haltered you could tell, as a newly calved heifer, and also apart from showing, I mean in those days if you wanted them in for

the inseminator coming, if you could tie them up with the halter they were far more settled and so they'd far more chance of getting them in calf than if they'd been all upset, and then if you'd cows in two fields over there when the inseminator had been you could walk them out there on the halter, you know, even if you never took the beast to a show. There were always an advantage to having them haltered, but it took us quite a lot of years to realise we should do that. And I've talked to people and they've said, "Oh we haven't time to halter calves, to do that with a calf." Well, if you reckon up three hours to a calf in its lifetime isn't really a lot of time, to the benefits you get... So it was always an advantage to have a beast that you could be happy with and it was happy with what it were doing... There's people who did them all ways, used to tie them on the back of a tractor. Folks have had, well you probably know, a frame that goes onto the three-point linkage, and you can tie one, two, three or four to it and just ease them on, you see. But then, once you get them following the tractor you can't just take the tractor to the show with you! And I've gone to Friesian sales and chaps have had maybe one or two, "Oh we had a bit of an accident with it with the tractor and halter, it's fallen and knocked its knee," or something, and that's when you realise that your two hours or three hours as a calf has been cheap. Oh yes, we've haltered plenty, first time on, well, we didn't have any steers, but especially a young heifer, in calf. Well, you don't want to be slinging an in-calf heifer about. Oh, yes, it can be a roughish job first time, and many a time you've got to spend hours, days, taking them out each day and hoping they get better.⁴⁸¹

Preparation for showing, therefore, could have a positive impact on a farm business, even for the animals which were not destined for the show ring. A well trained heifer, for example, as Mr Cowgill explained, would be easier to handle, easier to get in calf, and easier to sell. Additionally, the prize money at shows could boost a farm income. Keith Liddle explained:

⁴⁸¹ R. Cowgill, interview by J. Rowling, Weston, West Yorkshire, 19 December 2013.

My dad was a good breeder of sheep, you see, and during all in the '30s he showed a lot of sheep because they milked the cows morning and night, but through the day there wasn't much, and he could earn more going to the shows and winning prizes, as being at home after they'd done their jobs morning and night.⁴⁸²

Showing was, furthermore, good for business beyond the farming community itself, such as expanding a milk round. George Rice recalled:

You see, we did [showing] when Wagstaff were on the go. We used to like to get his name in the paper because we bottled milk, and it helped us to, you know, sell the milk. You know, it helped to have prizewinning cattle, and give them some bumf, these people that wanted it, you know, because you know in them days you see there was that Hawkesworth Estate at Adel being built, there was that Ireland Wood, they called it, being built, there were all them places. You used to see the boss at the builders and that, giving, you know, a dozen eggs and a bit of bacon and a week's milk for nowt, and then he used to tell us who was coming in, and we used to write to them and say, "Oh you're coming from – wherever they were coming from – but you're coming into where we deliver milk, would you like your milk delivering?" and so we had them. Yes, and people used to say "How the hell have you got that?" so I'd say, "Oh, secret service!" you know. So from investing about 2 pound you got the milk trade, bottling the milk like, so that's how we got these milk rounds built up, you know.⁴⁸³

The prestige and business opportunities brought by successful showing provided more opportunities for women to contribute to the farm's finances and prestige. Many women made and sold butter, and J. B. Liddle recalled:

Mrs Liddle's mother was a champion butter maker, she showed all over the country, including Otley show. It was their way of living you

⁴⁸² K. Liddle, interview by J. Rowling, Stainburn, North Yorkshire, 17 October 2012.

⁴⁸³ G. Rice, interview by J. Rowling, Carlton, West Yorkshire, 17 December 2013.

see. They made this butter and took it to Otley Market every Friday.⁴⁸⁴

The success of Mrs Liddle's mother in competitive butter making was recorded in the 1938 edition of the *Wharfedale Pictorial*, an annual publication showing photographs of important local events from the previous year, captioned 'Mrs Jessie Houseman, Champion Butter Maker, Prospect Farm, Lindley.'⁴⁸⁵ This would raise the profile of the farm's produce, increasing the price at which it could be sold, and the size of the farm's customer base.

Showing was also a community event. It was a chance, as at the auction, for a scattered community to get together, meet one another, share information, knowledge, and gossip, and to see what other farmers had produced. This slightly mediated the competitive element of showing. Robin Cowgill recalled a story told to him by a female acquaintance:

She was born and bred in the village of Askwith, and she's about my age, and we were talking, I think it was at Askwith Show this time, and she said the first time she ever showed at Askwith she was a young girl, and she won, and came home all smiles and showed her father what she'd won, and he were very pleased, and then he said to her, he says, "Well if another year you come home and you've nothing to show me, I still want you to look as pleased as you do today." And I think that's very good advice. And John Howard was another very great cattle man, showman, dealer, and he said when you show you've always got to be prepared to be beat, but more than that, he says, you've always got to be prepared to be beat by something that's worse than what you have, you know. And another thing, they moan, some people, but you see, you've known who was judging before you went, don't blame the judge. You put your faith in him, showing under him, you know, and now you haven't done so well, if

⁴⁸⁴ J. B. Liddle, interview by A. Roberts, 13 August 1980, Otley Museum.

⁴⁸⁵ *The Wharfedale Pictorial* (1938).

you didn't like him, you know, you shouldn't have bothered entering!⁴⁸⁶

This example places the judge in a key position. Often the judge would be chosen from the local area; Robin Cowgill was himself a respected dairy judge, and to be asked to judge a show was a significant mark of respect to an individual, his knowledge and experience, and his animals. George Rice conflated the idea of a good judge with that of a good cattleman when talking about Mr Cowgill:

He's been all over, he's been to Ireland judging, has Robin. Very good. Very good judge, yes. There used to be a lot of them, very good, but round here was a bit of a hotspot, you know, just good cattlemen round here in them days.⁴⁸⁷

This quote not only demonstrates the straightforward link between good cattlemen and good judges, but also the sense of place engendered by a community event. A show was an opportunity to reaffirm the identity of the area and the farming community therein, the strength of local competition helped to confirm in the minds of the community that 'round here' was a location populated by good cattlemen, or whichever type of producer was particularly prevalent in that place. Despite their infrequency, the shows and the judges were therefore an important aspect in maintaining the community's identity, and confirming the personal connections, skills and experience by which people defined the community as an entity and associated it with a locality. This adheres to Simmel's theory that unity is created by a consciousness of the unity itself, but suggests that consciousness is not the sole reason for the unity's perpetuation.⁴⁸⁸ Rather, joint action to reaffirm unity is the key to maintaining the consciousness which allows it to exist.

⁴⁸⁶ R. Cowgill, interview by J. Rowling, Weston, West Yorkshire, 19 December 2013.

⁴⁸⁷ G. Rice, interview by J. Rowling, Carlton, West Yorkshire, 17 December 2013.

⁴⁸⁸ G. Simmel quoted in M. Gilbert, *On Social Facts* (Oxford, 1989), p. 146.

Supporting Roles:

Maintenance of Motive Power

The maintenance of sources of motive power was crucial to the business of farming, whether power was derived from horses, stationary engines, steam, or a tractor. This meant that, like other related occupations, those in the business of repairing, fitting, and supplying parts for these power sources were of great importance to the farming community. This importance was increased by the place that sources of motive power held for farmers and farm labourers. We have already seen how many men classified themselves as ‘horsemen’ or ‘tractormen’, so working relationships with the blacksmith and the mechanic were essential to the maintenance of an identity as well as a power source. It is striking how many men remembered taking horses to be shod as an enjoyable moment in which they were trusted with a vitally important task. Frank Morphet remembered taking four horses at once to be shod at Stainburn:

Oh aye, if you rode one horse you’d a sore arse by the time you got there, and nobody ever knew why! ... It were just that one horse. Whoever rode it to the blacksmith... But it were a hell of a horse were that, but you’d a sore arse if you rode it there. Because it were allus bareback. You’d just jump on and go... Just blinders on and the bit, and reins on. Yes it were alright. They were used to the blinders all the time, because they were working then. One on one, and then another on the helter at the side of you, and then somebody else on another and one on the helter, and you’d take four of them. Yes, it was all fun. And then when you came out of the blacksmith’s and set off home, bloody hell! It’s a different clonking, isn’t it? [laughs] It were alright!⁴⁸⁹

The responsibility associated with this job made it an attractive one, which children often volunteered for. The visit to the blacksmith would be a regularly occurring event; if horses were travelling on roads frequently then shoes would have to be replaced every six to eight weeks. Therefore the blacksmith would be a regularly encountered figure in farming life.

⁴⁸⁹ F. Morphet, interview by J. Rowling, Hampsthwaite, North Yorkshire, 18 July 2013.

Blacksmithing was often a family business. The Woods were a prominent family of blacksmiths in Lower Wharfedale, plying their trade in Eccup, Otley and Stainburn, while the tiny village of Wike was home to two blacksmiths; the Hartley brothers. Several of the farmers interviewed described how they, or their neighbours, were related to the Woods or the Hartleys, drawing attention to the close association between the two trades, with Michael Curran commenting: ‘Keep it in the family! Blacksmiths and farmers, you know. Oh yes!’⁴⁹⁰

In this way, much as auction mart attendees reiterated lists of relatives and friends in common with one another in order to cement social bonds, members of the farming community maintained awareness of familial links, however convoluted, to confirm their own place within the structure of the social group. This linking of commercial transactions with familial and neighbourly networks blurred the lines between Tönnies’ ‘*Gemeinschaft*’ and ‘*Gesellschaft*’, keeping financial dealings within the confines of the community. Reed and Smelser identify unspoken loyalty and mutual trust as prominent features in the functioning of a group.⁴⁹¹ These features are, of course, incredibly important when it is considered that these blacksmiths held the key part of the farm’s essential motive power, quite literally, in their hands. As the saying goes, ‘no foot, no horse,’ and in an agricultural context one might extend that to ‘no horse, no farm.’

While the practice of using horses as motive power on the farm had largely died out by the 1950s, and the blacksmith himself became a member of a shrinking profession, his place in the community, in terms of relationships with other community members and importance to farming operations, was largely taken over by the mechanic.

Bert Verity has seen the emergence of the mechanic into the farming community, and recalled a typical incident on his father’s farm near Masham:

I’ll give you an instance of what happened. You know a binder? It came before a combine, but it didn’t thresh the straw, it just cut it, and made them into sheaves. Well in 1925 or six, I’m not sure, one of the two, twenty five, we were in the middle of harvest and suddenly our

⁴⁹⁰ M. Curran, interview by J. Rowling, East Keswick, West Yorkshire, 14 August 2012.

⁴⁹¹ N. J. Reed and J. S. Smelser, *Usable Social Science* (Berkeley, 2012), p. 140.

binder... it stopped tying knots. Wouldn't tie knots. How do I put this? You see, so much corn has to go into a sheaf, and then the string has to go round and tie and knot and then kick it out. Well, I can remember this knotter, they tried all ways to make it work and couldn't do. So they had to ring up the merchant, it was a firm in York. This was when we lived at Nutwith Cote. Now to get that message to that merchant, my father sent one of my brothers, Charlie, I think, to Masham on his pushbike, to the Post Office, to send a telegram to Bushel's in York, the agents who supplied, you know, like Ripon Farm Services today. He sent a message to say send a man out to put this machine right. So he – there was no telephones, you see, only very few, from Post Office in one town to Post Office in another. So the Post Office at Masham would ring through to York, and they had this telegram boy, who were all on a bike, and they would send this telegram boy to Bushel's with this message, and he'd have to wait for an answer. And I can remember the answer coming back. He came back from Masham, a man on a pushbike came from Masham with the answer. Meet a mechanic on the train, Masham train. They had to meet him on the ten o'clock train at Masham railway station. They had to go pick this mechanic up at Masham, bring him home. He sorted it out and got this machine going, and stopped to see it working, and then they'd take him back and he'd catch the train back again. That's how things were done. And then you had garages starting up, merchants starting up with depots, and if you broke anything you took it to get mended. Aye. When you think of it, all that today. Somebody in a combine has a breakdown, somebody comes out.⁴⁹²

Note that the mechanic was only called out when attempts at home maintenance had failed. Michael Curran confirmed that this was often the case in Lower Wharfedale after the general introduction of tractors in the 1940s:

⁴⁹² H. Verity, interview by J. Rowling, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, 11 April 2013.

[Tractormen] could, you know, change spark plugs, and quite often they'd start going on one cylinder and they'd take it out and clean it and all that, you know. You could do a lot of home maintenance, they were so simple, you see, a lot of it were home maintenance, we only brought the mechanics in when it was necessary, you know, but most of the time you'd do it yourself.

In the early days of mechanisation the blacksmith and the agricultural engineer might form a working relationship, as remembered by Michael Curran:

My Dad was an engineer really, so he was in, he was connected with [farming], you see, but engineering, welding, that sort of stuff, but he allus used to go to the blacksmiths and sell his welding plants, and welding were coming into, by electric welding, you see, so he was sort of connected to farming all the time, but he was an engineer, so it's been an interesting exercise really, all through... Farmers in them days were brought up as farmers, mechanics and blacksmiths, you know.⁴⁹³

However, as tractors and their associated implements developed and became more complex, and operators began to have accidents, it became clearer that specialist expertise was needed to maintain the new machinery, as Robin Cowgill explained:

I think in those early days of tractors and machinery men had no – well not no idea but – just didn't realise the risks they were taking by just having a poke here or you know, just easing it up there where it wasn't just working right.⁴⁹⁴

This realisation was prompted by the advent of machinery such as the three-point linkage, and by the addition of electrics, for example electric lights, to vehicles. Advances in metalwork also prompted a need for more specialist workers and equipment, as forge welding, which could be performed by blacksmiths, would not be suitable for higher grade metals. Firms such as Tate's or Addison Bull at Otley already sold tractors, but were able to expand to provide maintenance and repair services, while

⁴⁹³ M. Curran, interview by J. Rowling, East Keswick, West Yorkshire, 14 August 2012.

⁴⁹⁴ R. Cowgill, interview by J. Rowling, Weston, West Yorkshire, 19 December 2013.

mechanically minded individuals who were increasingly called on for help by neighbours might turn their hobby into a business as in the case of T. H. Rowling and Son, farmers and agricultural engineers at Arthington. Of these firms, Addison Bull was the most commonly mentioned during interviews as the place where farmers in the area had gone to buy their tractors. Mr Addison Bull himself seems to have been a recognised local character, and very much part of the community, nicknamed ‘Aniseed Balls’ by farming children.⁴⁹⁵ This suggests a degree of familiarity, which is corroborated by Keith Liddle’s memory of him arriving regularly at his parents’ farm:

Old Aniseed – we called him Aniseed Balls all us kids [laughs] – he used to land up on a Sunday morning, with his basket on his arm, for a few eggs and a bit of ham [laughs] and a few delicacies.⁴⁹⁶

This evidence indicates that the move away from horse power and traditional crafts such as blacksmithing is not perhaps as simple as has been suggested by discussions about ‘the decline of the rural community’. The place the blacksmith held within the community, as a familiar face, and a repository of knowledge, was taken by the mechanic and the tractor dealer, so that the composition of the community was altered, but the pattern over time was one of qualitative and technical change, rather than straightforward decline.

Landlords and Tenants

The landlord-tenant relationship in rural England during the early twentieth century was explored by Howard Newby in *The Deferential Worker*. Newby’s study was based in East Anglia, which differed agriculturally from West Yorkshire in that it was heavily focused on arable, and average farm size was considerably bigger, corresponding to greater numbers of labourers working on fewer, larger holdings. Newby wrote that, almost by definition, rural landowners possessed a monopoly over employment opportunities in this period, resulting in agricultural workers who ‘bit their tongues and busily developed their notorious taciturnity and ability somewhat sullenly

⁴⁹⁵ K. Liddle, interview by J. Rowling, Stainburn, North Yorkshire, 17 October 2012.

⁴⁹⁶ K. Liddle, interview by J. Rowling, Stainburn, North Yorkshire, 17 October 2012.

to “keep themselves to themselves”.⁴⁹⁷ Newby hypothesised that the rural village ‘represented a dual community’, drawing on Hobsbawm and Rudé’s concept of ‘the dark village’ contrasted with the ‘official village’ in which people at all levels of society took part.⁴⁹⁸ It would be an exaggeration to claim that this was wholly untrue in Lower Wharfedale, but smaller farmers with smaller numbers of labourers do appear to have developed closer relationships with their employees than those discussed by Newby. This may have been a result of labourers having access to a greater number of potential employers in this local area than their East Anglian counterparts. It is more likely, however, that personal relationships grew up naturally between farmers and a small number of labourers who worked alongside one another on a regular basis, due to small acreages and a different type of agriculture from that of East Anglia making large numbers of staff uneconomical. The National Farm Survey (1941-1943) returns from Lower Wharfedale show that around 17.5 per cent of respondents were landowners, compared to 73.3 per cent who were tenants. A further 1.2 per cent described themselves as a combination of the two, while 7.8 per cent did not respond to this question.

Many men from Lower Wharfedale viewed older male employers as father-figures. J. B. Liddle recalled his relationship with Major Horton-Fawkes, the landlord of Farnley Estate:

Major Fawkes and I built up a marvellous relationship, and I taught him what I knew about farming, he taught me a terrible lot of things. He used to have demonstrations, like silage making, when there was no silage made except here. Then there was land reclamation. The first piece of hill land reclamation was done on this land at Fewston that I had, and is there today as an example. These have been the pleasures of my life. Major Fawkes encouraged me, he appreciated what was done on his estate, I was a tenant on his estate.⁴⁹⁹

One of the skills which Mr Liddle learned from Major Horton-Fawkes was public speaking, which he was then able to use in order to disseminate information about

⁴⁹⁷ Newby, *Deferential Worker*, p. 47.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁴⁹⁹ J. B. Liddle, interview by A. Roberts, 13 August 1980, Otley Museum, O/S/dc/3.

agriculture at meetings with other farmers. Derrick Goodall also had a close relationship with his employer at Burden Head Farm:

The one I worked for, when I worked for Mr Wardle, he was just like a father to me, he were a lovely man. He couldn't have been better... He was really, really, really good. It broke my heart when he died. Because I'd worked for him 27 year and he'd been a really, really lovely man. A really lovely man.⁵⁰⁰

Mr Wardle paid for dental treatment for Mr Goodall, as well as driving him into Otley, visiting his home to share meals, and buying him small luxuries such as a watch.⁵⁰¹ George Rice had a similar relationship with his first employer, who taught him the business of farming from a young age:

Well where I lived in Guiseley there were a cattle dealer, and he used to drive cows, with just a few buildings and that, and a field, and he used to rent it off us. And then, as the cows calved when he wasn't there, he used to say, "Watch them for us," and he used to give us a penny or tuppence for going across and telling him a cow had calved, and then I started – I was about 10 – and I used to sit at the side of the road with the cows, eating the road sides off. You know, you used to graze all the road sides in them days, and so I used to go there. And then when I got to 12 I used to go milk by hand. Well, I could allus milk because I was fairly strong in the arm. And I used to milk for him, a few cows, and it got, you know, bigger and bigger, and then when I was 12 he bought us a brand new bike, and I says, "What's that for?" and he says, "So you can take the cows," and we used to walk them from Guiseley to Otley, to the auction on a Monday, and then I used to fly home and go to school, and then I used to go back to Otley and get what he'd bought, or what he hadn't sold, and walk them back to Guiseley.⁵⁰²

⁵⁰⁰ D. Goodall, interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, West Yorkshire, 13 August 2012.

⁵⁰¹ D. Goodall, interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, West Yorkshire, 13 August 2012.

⁵⁰² G. Rice, interview by J. Rowling, Carlton, West Yorkshire, 17 December 2013.

Similarly, women from landowning families could take on the role of a mother-figure in the community. Derrick Goodall recalled Princess Mary, the Princess Royal, from Harewood House:

She mixed a lot with us when we went to school, and I've books in there that she bought and presented them to us, they're seventy odd years old... We had Cubs and Scouts and Brownies and Girl Guides, and she always, she mixed with us. We were never shy of her because she was just like ordinary, she mixed with us that much, you see, and there was always something going on with Scouts, and that was good for young ones, you see. And she always mixed with us and we weren't frightened of her at all, or shy with her. No it was - you see now it's altogether different - but they were all Harewood people and East Keswick, all them that went to school, you mixed together and you knew everybody.⁵⁰³

This feeling of togetherness, and community crossing class and socio-economic boundaries, was heightened by the children of labourers, farmers and landowners playing sport together. Derek Illingworth recalled:

Princess Mary was part of the community, and the boys were. The boys, her sons – Lord Harewood that's just died – they used to, you know, mix with the village people... They used to play East Keswick School at cricket, you know, when they played cricket, the two Lascelles boys. This was before the war... Until 1939 Keswick and Harewood were coming to play cricket. But the Princess Royal, no, she was really a country woman and she thought a lot about Harewood, and she was very friendly with my grandmother. She used to go down for tea, although that's nothing to do with farming!⁵⁰⁴

This integration of different classes of rural society through sport returns us to Roger Caillois' exploration of the sociology of games, mentioned in an earlier chapter. Caillois defined 'play' as 'free, separate, uncertain, and unproductive, yet regulated and

⁵⁰³ D. Goodall, Interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, West Yorkshire, 13 August 2012.

⁵⁰⁴ D. Illingworth, interview by J. Rowling, East Keswick, West Yorkshire, 06 August 2012.

make-believe.’⁵⁰⁵ Within this definition, he identified four categories: competition, chance, simulation, and vertigo, writing that ‘each of the basic categories of play has socialized aspects... and has become socially legitimate because of its prevalence and stability. For *agōn* [competition], the socialized form is essentially sports.’⁵⁰⁶ He added, ‘to the degree that he is influenced by play, man can check the monotony, determinism, and brutality of nature. He learns to construct order, conceive economy, and establish equity.’⁵⁰⁷ In rural Lower Wharfedale in the period 1914-1951, sports like cricket provided a safe, regulated, and ordered space in which a certain amount of equity could be established between those of higher and lower class status, and from different educational backgrounds. This could then influence how working people viewed their employers as they moved into adulthood and began to take their place in the community structure. It encouraged a form of ‘knowing’ between individuals who might otherwise never have crossed paths, beginning to fulfil the ‘knowledge and information’ caveat of Lindroos’ ‘Benjaminian’ community model.

In the Lower Wharfedale farming community, those who were on the fringes of the main body of the community, young men who had not found a place for themselves, were helped through the transitional phase, identified by van Gennep and expanded upon by Turner, by established community members. In return for tuition and a small financial investment, the established man could expect a loyal labourer who would be trained to the standards of his own farm. For example, Derrick Goodall remembered:

Up there in them days you could have a few cows here, about 6 cows here, and then maybe 7 here and in other places, and you could carry [hay] across the yard, even if it were windy, without wasting any, you see. Because they were very particular in those days. Before we got the baler we used to take it across, if it was windy, in a sheet, and if you dropped some you had to pick it up or else you’d get called so-and-so. Oh! They were very keen on not wasting anything.⁵⁰⁸

Mr Goodall carried this attitude of pride and care in his work on into his next job when he had to leave Burden Head Farm:

⁵⁰⁵ M. Barash, ‘Translator’s Note’ in R. Caillois (M. Barash trans.), *Man, Play and Games* (1958, Chicago, 2001), p. ix-x.

⁵⁰⁶ R. Caillois (M. Barash trans.), *Man, Play and Games* (1958, Chicago, 2001), p. 41.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁵⁰⁸ D. Goodall, interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, West Yorkshire, 13 August 2012.

You don't just work like hell because the boss is there, because he knows, 'well he's only doing that because I'm there.' But it's what you do when the boss isn't there, because he can tell then that he's been working while he hasn't been there. No I never were bothered if the boss caught me stood about, I wasn't bothered, because as I say, I cracked on.⁵⁰⁹

As employers aged, the lads they had employed and with whom they had built fatherly relationships, would be trusted to take care of them, as Frank Fearnley remembered:

The old Major, that were this lad's grandfather, when I started going there I used to look after him on a shoot... I used to go up to the hall and pick him up on a morning, a shoot morning, bring him across to where the others met... and he'd draw his number and then I used to ride him as near as I could to his peg for each drive, and then I used to load for him and look after him like and load them for him. I'll always remember when he were getting old like, he were above 80, and he couldn't see too well, and the last time ever he shot at Farnley, I looked after him, and we were stood at Copy Wood – I'll never forget it – we were stood at Copy Wood and the birds used to come really fast, and when one were coming I'd to tell him whether it were right left or centre, and then he'd say, "Oh I see it now!" and when he saw it he didn't know how far it was off, so I'd to tell him when it were near enough to shoot! [laughs] and don't ask me how he did it, but he shot eleven pheasants that day! God knows how he did it [laughs] but he did it. And every time I looked after him he was a perfect gentleman like, you know, every time I looked after him like that there'd be a knock on the door and a feller would come with a bottle of whisky for me. Every time I'd looked after him in the daytime there were always a knock on the door and he'd send a man down with a bottle of whisky. Aye. Smashing feller.⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁹ D. Goodall, interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, West Yorkshire, 13 August 2012.

⁵¹⁰ F. Fearnley, interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, West Yorkshire, 20 September 2012.

These recollections take us back to the themes of gift-giving and of trust. The thread which runs through all of these accounts, and the recollections of other interviewees is the theme of giving. Whether the ‘gift’ was an object or a skill, or simply an individual’s time, something was being given to the labourer or tenant (the dependent party), independently of financial or labour obligations. In return, the dependent party offered loyalty. Marcel Mauss’ *The Gift* is the iconic work in the study of reciprocity and exchange, and the symbolisms inherent therein. It discusses the importance of gift-giving in creating and cementing bonds both among family members and in a wider community. Mauss concluded that ‘things have values which are emotional as well as material; indeed in some cases the values are entirely emotional,’ and that a thing, material or emotional, given but not yet repaid dishonours the man who accepts it.⁵¹¹ Therefore, when Frank Fearnley assisted the elderly Major Horton-Fawkes for a day’s shooting, a man would be sent to give him a bottle of whisky the same evening. He was later asked to run the Farnley Estate shoot himself.⁵¹² This example clearly demonstrates a level of reciprocity and trust between worker and landlord, bearing out Mauss’ principles. As a basic transaction, this was the payment of a bottle of whisky for a man’s time, however, Mr Fearnley’s help allowed the elderly man the pleasure of taking part in a sport which he enjoyed but would be unable to pursue without assistance, taking him from place to place, and directing him towards the birds, while the building of a relationship with the landlord’s family over many years placed Mr Fearnley in a position of personal prestige and responsibility as a direct result of this repeated exchange.

Mutual trust between landowners and labourers meant that labourers could rely on employers to help them during times of need, and in turn employers could rely on labourers and tenants whom they had trained themselves to maintain the standards that the employer had set. This ties to one of the earliest theoretical explorations of community, Ferdinand Tönnies’ *Community and Society* (*Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*), originally published in German in 1887. Tönnies found that authority in the *Gemeinschaft* was paternal in nature, in that ‘authority’ did not imply exploitation by the authority figure, but education and instruction, sharing experience and

⁵¹¹ M. Mauss (I. Cunnison trans.), *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (1954, Mansfield Centre, CT, USA, 2011), p. 63.

⁵¹² F. Fearnley, interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, West Yorkshire, 20 September 2012.

information as a gift which will eventually be reciprocated.⁵¹³ Thus we can see evidence that many employer-employee relationships in early twentieth-century rural Lower Wharfedale were constructed as long-term ones, in which early input by an older employer would be reciprocated by a young employee in years to come.

The differences in social status of the involved parties marks these relationships out from friendships or kin-relationships between two labourers or two landowners. These relationships are somewhat more formal, evoking the patron-client relationships discussed by S. N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger in their *Patrons, Clients and Friends* (1984) in which the frameworks of ‘solidarity, trust, meaning and information’ are balanced by the ‘regulation of the flow of instrumental and power resources.’⁵¹⁴ In terms of this particular community this means that these relationships fit within the ‘Benjaminian’ model as the parties involved share experiences, information, and a sense of togetherness, but they include an extra dimension by which landowners and employers were able to give both material goods and education in order to enable the worker to perform his duties better and so increase the value of the landowner’s property. This is not to suggest cynical or selfish motives for cultivating friendships or kin-like relationships between employer and employee, but to emphasise the different means by which exchange and the consequent build-up of trust could take place between two people at different socio-economic levels within the community.

Lower Wharfedale’s landowner-labourer relations did not represent a rural idyll, however. As Keith Liddle summarised: ‘My father got on well with both the next squire and the land agent... Some people can’t get on with them. There’s some people that would fall out with their shadow.’⁵¹⁵ In accordance with the importance of trust in the community, the vast majority of interviewees who had personally known landlords spoke positively about their relationships, while those who did not come into regular contact with landlords, or worked land owned by corporations were more likely to remember their landlord negatively. For example, despite the positive recollections of those who often came into personal contact with Major Horton-Fawkes through their work, Thomas Mickle recalled of the Horton-Fawkes family:

⁵¹³ C. P. Loomis (trans.), F. Tönnies, *Community and Society* (1887, New York, 2002), p. 39.

⁵¹⁴ S. N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger, *Patrons, Clients and Friends: Interpersonal relations and the structure of trust in society* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 33.

⁵¹⁵ K. Liddle, interview by J. Rowling, Stainburn, North Yorkshire, 17 October 2012.

They'd be among themselves wouldn't they? They'd be very clannish, wouldn't they? You know, you wouldn't come into contact very much with Major Horton-Fawkes himself, just now and again, because they had an agent who saw to the running of the estate... His wife had a thing about litter and she'd come up with like a matchbox, "I've found this up so-and-so, have you dropped it?" Well no, I hadn't dropped it! Anybody could have dropped it!... I think the attitude with them is, you're their workers, aren't you? And you know, they're better than you are. I allus felt that way when the missus were talking to you particularly. She were a right so-and-so, you know, but the old Major weren't so bad. He used to come to the Young Farmers a bit. I were the club leader of the Young Farmers, and he used to come and he used to teach public speaking to them, he were very good that way. But she were a bit bad to get on with like, you know.⁵¹⁶

Other interviewees recalled landlords who did not understand or support their farming tenants, and were consequently rejected from the 'togetherness' which bound the community and signified belonging. One interviewee described the events around the sale of Arthington Estate:

They agreed to sell the farms to all the tenants. And the tenants had agreed to buy them, and they'd agreed to go and sign up to buy them on the Tuesday or Wednesday at the Village Hall, all together, because that was the deal that all the farmers had to buy them. And our neighbour... went to Otley Auction on the Monday, and saw the auctioneer and land agent there... and he said to him, "I'm your new agent," and he said, "No you're not," and he said, "Yes I am, we've bought it... So I'm going to be your new agent." And [the agent] was the original agent on this farm for Arthington Estate, and he came round, because he'd had a share in this deal, and he came round to tell all the tenants that the estate had been sold, and my grandfather said to him that we had arranged to buy it along with the others. And he said "No, we've done this for you, it's in your best interests to remain

⁵¹⁶ T. Mickle, interview by J. Rowling, Askwith, West Yorkshire, 08 October 2012.

as tenants.” And my grandfather, who never swore, did on that occasion. He said ‘[The agent], you either are a c***, or you talk like one,” and turned round and walked away, and [the agent] never set foot back on this farm again.⁵¹⁷

Similarly, J. B. Liddle voiced resentment towards Leeds Corporation, for the buying up and flooding of the Washburn Valley:

The farming community who have farmed in that valley as tenants, when they got to retiring age and their families had grown up, where could they live? They didn’t want to go into Otley, into Pateley, they wanted to stay.⁵¹⁸

While positive views of Lower Wharfedale’s landowners are far more numerous than negative ones, the negative views are revealing, as they demonstrate the differences between those landowners perceived as part of the community, and those still remembered as interfering outsiders. The common theme in negative memories of local elites is a failure to understand and appreciate working people and their close relationship with their landscape. Geography and landscape, of course, played a huge part in the formation of identity. Individuals associated themselves with particular localities, particular landscapes, particular farms, and, as J. B. Liddle said, for those who had spent a lifetime living and working in one place, to be removed from it was to lose an enormous part of one’s personal identity. This was also expressed in the pride farming families felt in the land they had cultivated and improved. One farmer recalled how his grandfather came to take on the tenancy of the family farm:

In 1936 he got tenancy of this place, and it was a run-down place then. It had had about half a dozen different tenants in about as many years. Mawsons who had it before we came, they’d only had it about 18 month or two years... Oh there were Lambs here as well, there were lots of people, but they didn’t stay, and then he came, and they

⁵¹⁷ Anonymous, interview by J. Rowling, Arthington, West Yorkshire, 11 January 2011.

⁵¹⁸ J. B. Liddle, interview by A. Roberts, 13 August 1980, Otley Museum.

said to him, “Well you won’t be there long!” and we’ve been here ever since.⁵¹⁹

The failure of a landlord to understand this pride and sense of connection could be catastrophic for a landlord-tenant relationship. The difference between good landowner-worker relationships and bad ones lay in the development of a mutual trust and a mutual respect, which recognised that both parties possessed expertise which were of equal value to the community, although in different ways. Relationships turned sour when attention was drawn to socio-economic differences between the parties, and those who worked the land were reminded that the landscape which made up such a huge part of their identities did not actually, legally, belong to them. This explains the extreme and out of character reaction of the tenants of Arthington to having the chance at legal possession of their farms taken away from them. Nevertheless, it is important not to conflate the existence of ‘community’ with good relationships. The ‘Benjaminian’ community model allows for disagreement and discord as it is not based upon the coherence of values, but instead upon the coherence of experience.⁵²⁰ It is therefore conceivable that two parties might hold opposing views but might remain part of the same community, and recognise one another as such, through shared experiences of and within the landscape of Lower Wharfedale.

The Impact of War

The external circumstances of this period made people aware of the temporally redefinable nature of the whole Lower Wharfedale farming community. The impact of war on national farming is well-documented, but the conflict also changed the shape of the local farming community. In her analysis of Walter Benjamin’s work, Kia Lindroos wrote that ‘communities’ ‘appear as human networks that are temporally redefinable according to the actual conditions of their existence.’⁵²¹ During the First and Second World Wars, the farming community was shifted and altered by an influx of foreign Prisoners of War, some of whom became part of the farming community. At the same

⁵¹⁹ Anonymous, interview by author, Arthington, West Yorkshire, 11 January 2011.

⁵²⁰ K. Lindroos, ‘Scattering community: Benjamin on experience, narrative and history,’ *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 27: 6 (2001), p. 35.

⁵²¹ K. Lindroos, ‘Scattering Community: Benjamin on experience, narrative and history,’ *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 27, no. 6 (2001), p. 35.

time, established members of the farming community moved towards the peripheries as they took on work for the County War Agricultural Executive Committees which involved surveying, judging, and reporting on their fellow farmers.

Bert Verity was a member of his local County War Agricultural Executive Committee. He described his role:

I became a member of the War Agricultural Committee. That meant I had to go round other farmers and ask them to grow more produce, and that was a precarious business. Because you went to a farmer, and that farmer was a man who was a little bit hard up, he was stretched to the point where he had – you had to ask him to grow more, and it was amazing what effort they did put into it, you know, growing, ploughing land, kept more cattle, kept more sheep, kept more pigs, more poultry, you know, and grew more potatoes and things like that.⁵²²

He discussed this further in another interview:

We were government officials. I was a government official. I had the power to go onto a farm, and say to that farmer, you must grow ten acres of potatoes, you must grow twenty acres of wheat, you must grow so much of this and you must produce so much, so many pigs, keep so many poultry. I had the power to do that, as to what I thought that farm was capable of producing. Supposing I'd gone to Tony, and I'd say, "Do you keep pigs?" and he said, "No," I'd say, "Do you have a building that would keep pigs?" and I'd say, "Well you have to keep so many pigs." And that's what you'd have to do [...] The trouble was that I didn't go to a farm and say you must do this and you must do that. I used to go and talk to them, and say, "Have you any suggestions you would like to do, would you like to keep pigs?" And if he was adamant he didn't want to keep pigs then I'd say, "Well what are you prepared to do then?" Well he'd keep extra cattle, he'd keep extra sheep, he'd grow more wheat, but he didn't want to keep

⁵²² H. Verity, interview by J. Rowling, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, 11 March 2013.

pigs. So I would say, “Well alright then.” You know, you went along with them, but if they were adamant that they weren’t going to do this and they weren’t going to do that, I used to class them as a C farmer [...] and they were turned over then to the War Agricultural Committee that was based in Northallerton. And they would come along, with my recommendations to say that I said he should keep so many of this and grow so many fields of wheat and so many acres of potatoes and suchlike, you see. And they would say that Mr Lambert you’ve got to grow twelve acres of potatoes, you’ve got to keep so much stock, and he would have a list of what to do. And they would go, there would be an inspector go every week to see if he was doing it. [If the recommendations were not followed] they got heavily fined, you see. I will say this, they didn’t make a success of it, because they were reluctant to do it. I found the other way was much better. I used to say well I don’t want to, etc. I only sent one C farmer, and he was arrogant, he wouldn’t do anything. And he still wouldn’t do anything when they took him in charge. [...] I’ll tell you what he did. He planted twelve acres of potatoes because they told him to. But he planted them with the tiniest – they weren’t big potatoes, no bigger than my thumbnail. They were seed potatoes, what they call thirds. They weren’t fit to grow you see. Well he didn’t bother, he just dropped them in behind the plough. Scattered, broadcasted them. And of course they were a failure. They’d have been a lot better if they’d let him grow a field of wheat or a field of barley, but he just didn’t want to grow potatoes you see. And I used to liaise with these people and say well if you don’t want to grow potatoes, will you grow extra wheat, or will you grow extra something else you see.⁵²³

Mr Verity was a farmer himself, had been a member of Masham Young Farmers’ Club, and had numerous local farming connections through his kinship network, and was therefore firmly placed within the main body of the local farming community. In taking on the role of a CWAEC officer, he stepped into a temporary position of liminality. However, in his liminal role, he was able to exploit his position within the farming

⁵²³ B. Verity, interview by J. Rowling, Kirkby Overblow, North Yorkshire, 28 December 2010.

community in order to get the best result for both the campaign to increase food production, and for the individual farmer.

Wartime also significantly changed the makeup of many communities, particularly in agricultural areas. By 1946, Prisoners of War formed around one fifth of the rural workforce nationally.⁵²⁴ Camps were established at Ripon, Embsay near Skipton, Weston outside Otley, and Grange Park at Wetherby, from which prisoners were sent out to work on farms across the area. This accounts for the ubiquity of POWs in recollections of wartime among Lower Wharfedale's farming community. This aspect of the community really demonstrates the 'Benjaminian' model's 'temporal redefinability' feature in action.

During the inter-war and post-war periods, foreign soldiers were very much absent from concepts of the community. They conformed to none of the qualifying features which could have made them part of the community, for obvious reasons. They simply did not figure in the everyday life of a Lower Wharfedale farmer. During the Second World War, however, the context in which the community existed was altered, as production targets were increased and more tightly controlled, and labour shortages affected the workload. Against this background the community was forced to redefine its boundaries in order to ensure its own survival. The POWs were accepted into the community, and did not merely work on its margins, and this is demonstrated by the way in which interviewees recalled the German and Italian men who came to their farms. Many interviewees spoke about 'their' POW by name, or in possessive terms, in the same way that they would speak about other farmers when reaffirming their place in the community, demonstrating knowledge of other people and listing personal connections. This is not a new observation. As early as 1954, H. T. Williams described his findings that billeted POWs were more productive than non-billeted, and explained this by referencing POWs' growing experience, and reductions in hostility and irresponsibility.⁵²⁵ However, viewing POWs in terms of their productivity ignores the impact they had on the day-to-day life of the community.

⁵²⁴ J. Custodis, 'Employing the enemy: The contribution of German and Italian Prisoners of War to British agriculture during and after the Second World War,' *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 60, Part 2 (2012), p. 243.

⁵²⁵ H. T. Williams, 'Changes in the productivity of labour in British agriculture,' *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 10 (1954), pp. 333-334 in Custodis, 'Employing the enemy,' p. 258.

In common with many other interviewees, David Lister remembered details of the POW who lived in at his parents' farm:

Well I think we only had one living in, but I think they had a camp at Ripon you see, a prisoner of war camp at Ripon, and they used to bring them out to various farms. I remember that some of them were very nice people. One or two were a bit – [pause]. We had one living in here who was a doctor, a beautiful pianist. He used to play our piano, you know. So we'd quite a good relationship with them really... It was Helmut Schäfer. Helmut Schäfer. Schäfer is German for shepherd, I think.

It seems that German POWs were largely welcomed into the homes of Lower Wharfedale's farming families, and provided with food just as paid labourers were. Joyce Wood remembered:

We used to have a German prisoner of war dropped off every day, from Harrogate way. So he was dropped off in a morning and they collected them round about tea time every day. You weren't supposed to feed them but he used to come in with the family. Hermut. He was great, was Hermut.⁵²⁶

Phyllis King's memories of the POWs on her parents' farm similarly centred around providing food for them:

We used to employ German Prisoners of War, and so we had to cook for them. They always had their lunch under the barn at the bottom and I used to have to take it to these German Prisoners of War. They used to come and help with the harvest.⁵²⁷

Sharing food is a well-recognised symbol of hospitality, trust, and acceptance, and this is emphasised by the ideas of sharing with the family, or food being carried out by a child. Marcel Mauss focused on food in his exploration of forms of exchange, explaining that a gift of food comes with certain obligations for the recipient, 'You accept the food and you do so because you mean to take up the challenge and prove that

⁵²⁶ M. J. Wood, interview by J. Rowling, Otley, West Yorkshire, 28 August 2012.

⁵²⁷ P. King, interview by J. Rowling, Huby, North Yorkshire, 22 October 2012.

you are not unworthy.’⁵²⁸ Thus an offer of food from the farming family acted as an invitation for the POW to demonstrate a similar level of trust and a gesture of commitment to the community. A great deal of trust could be placed in familiar POWs. Keith Liddle explained:

We had three [POWs]. Yes. We had a little cottage up there, it’s still there, we’re just doing it up, we let it off, and it was empty, and they lived in there and two worked at the farm here, and two worked at our farm across the fields, across there, and the last one didn’t go while 1948, because they were repatriated as they’d been caught. Right. And so one stayed a long time. And then there was one at the farm up there, there was one at the farm up there [pointing], and then on a Saturday night they congregated for games of cards, you know, there’d be five or six or seven or eight of them, and my mother used to cook them a big lump of bacon, mind you it was fat bacon, but it didn’t bother them, and they could get some potatoes and turnips, or whatever they got, and they cooked and looked after themselves. They were really good, and really appreciative, do you know what I mean?... When they first came they used to come out at eight o’clock and go back at five, then as things got better and they were more reliable you could keep them while nine o’clock at night, if you took them back. If you were haymaking, or your work, they could stay... We didn’t have an Italian. We had a Ukrainian, one time, for a while, and he was a good feller, nothing wrong with him. But the others were Germans, there was an elderly one that was a farmer... And then the young one, he were only seventeen, he came out of the Hitler Youth, but wasn’t a Hitlerite. He were, oh, he were good as gold!... But that is why, when people say how could me and my dad go off to Scotland all the time? Well that is why, because those Germans could work as well as you. Just as well. They were dedicated, you know. Oh! With cows, they’d think nothing of going with a dandy brush and brushing the cows for half an hour, top to bottom, right down the cow house.

⁵²⁸ M. Mauss (I. Cunnison trans.), *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (1954, Mansfield, CT, USA, 2011), p. 40.

Something you never had time to do! But they made time, and jobs like that they were professionals in doing something right. Right. Whether they were sweeping up or mucking out or what they were doing, it was done right.⁵²⁹

Similarly, Ernest Cawkwell described a hardworking, and consequently trusted, POW at Barden:

There were one farmer, at actual Barden Towers, he had one that came out, and he thought he were a right man, and he let him live in. Fritz, they called him, and he were a right feller. And I can remember, this were right at the beginning of the war like, and of course somebody said like, they put different fields down and they'd to be ploughed up, so anyway the actual War Ag, which were the governing body in them days, they came and they ploughed this field, and then they'd finished and gone, anyway, Fritz were missing, but like Jim Boothman, he never really bothered, anyway, he were sat down milking were Jim, in the building, and Fritz walked in like. "Where've you been?" "Well, I've been down in the ploughing." So he thought it were strange this. Anyway, Fritz took over milking and Jim thought, "I'll have a walk down here," and all through the night he'd dug every headland out right to the wall, he'd dug it all the way round, had this German. You couldn't believe how much he'd dug. Aye. Yes. But, this Fritz, his father were a farmer in Germany, and evidently that's the way they do. Aye.⁵³⁰

Willingness to work was an admired quality in the POWs, and one which facilitated their entry into the community. The contrast between this way of talking about the POWs and the way in which men who refused to work are discussed is striking, and made clear by Bert Verity:

Now I had two German prisoners of war working for me, and they were good workers, they were nice chaps. One was a bank clerk, and the other was an accountant. They'd never had any farm training but

⁵²⁹ K. Liddle, interview by J. Rowling, Stainburn, North Yorkshire, 17 October 2012.

⁵³⁰ E. Cawkwell, interview by J. Rowling, Askwith, West Yorkshire, 08 October 2012.

they were quick to learn. Now I lost them and I got them replaced by two Italians, and they were useless. They were bone idle. And we were threshing one day, and there was one of these men, he wouldn't work. I put him behind to fork the straw onto the stack. He wouldn't... So I said to the driver when he came for them – they went back to the camp at night – I said, “Don't bring that big feller tomorrow, he's no good.”

“Alright.”

We were on two or three days threshing, and next morning the first one off the wagon was this big feller again, and there was a soldier followed him off. He said which was the one that wouldn't work? I said, “That one.” He said, “He'll work today!” He did. He stood guard with the gun held up the side of him. You see there was fantastic things happen, that you couldn't visualise, a man standing like that.⁵³¹

The hardworking German POWs are remembered in terms of their individual identities, as a bank clerk and an accountant, whereas no personal details at all are attached to the memory of the prisoner who refused to work.

It is significant that almost all interviewees explicitly dissociate their POW from Hitler and the Nazis, drawing these men, who were, after all, captured enemy soldiers, into the farming community and away from any suggestion of wrong doing on their part. For example, Richard Garnett drew a distinction between an older POW who ‘had been a bit of a Nazi... old Hitler had instilled in him a bit,’ and, ‘Robert, he was a younger feller and he was... sort of a genuine sort of a German lad.’⁵³² Similarly, Robin Cowgill had fond memories of the POWs who came to his parents' farm at Silsden, and, while acknowledging that, of course, the German POW had fought for the enemy, distanced him from Hitler and his ideologies using humour:

I can remember a few, actually. Well the first one we had was an Italian, Carlo. And then, I don't know what happened to him, I think he got moved. And then there were two, I'm just thinking now of all

⁵³¹ H. Verity, interview by J. Rowling, Kirkby Overblow, North Yorkshire, 28 December 2010.

⁵³² R. Garnett, interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, West Yorkshire, 11 March 2013.

these Romanians, two Romanian brothers came, but Hitler had invaded Romania, you see, so they had to fight, they were conscripted into the German army. Rudolf and Cornell. Well Rudolf, he stayed on after the war. And then we had a German called Arto, and I'll just tell you this. It's quite a story. A little feller with glasses on, Arto Hass, H A double S, Arto Hass, and he stayed on and became naturalised... I can always remember saying to him, "How were you captured?" You know, and he says [imitating German accent], "I was running like fucking hell!" he says [laughs]. He says, "I knew ven Hitler wanted me, who couldn't even see his enemy" – he had right thick glasses – "I knew we'd lost the war when Hitler wanted me. I could not see him, never mind shoot him!" He says. Aye. Little Arto! But he stayed on, I don't know what happened to him when he left Silsden, whether he ever got married. I don't know. But it's not rude is it? It's just the way he said it that made it so funny [laughs].⁵³³

Ernest Cawkwell also remembered favoured and accepted POWs being included in the kind of teasing and joking which would not seem out of place among established community insiders:

Barden Moor, there were actually eighteen farms all the way round it, and everybody used to put sheep on it, so of course on the moor they were all mixed up, and if they were bringing them in there was a big sorting place and each farmer used to take his own into his own land. Anyway there was twelve of Jim Boothman's had got wrong and landed to Drebley, so they'd to send word down that Jim had twelve to fetch, so he goes out one morning, and they called his dog Jack, and it were human. He just turned round, did Jim, 'Hey Jack,' he says, 'Just go to Drebley and fetch the twelve ewes back,' and he turns to Fritz, he says, 'Fritz! You open the gates for Jack!' [laughs]⁵³⁴

These POWs are being remembered as named, skilled, characterful individuals, who had value to the farming community, and with whom humour was shared. Humour is a

⁵³³ R. Cowgill, interview by J. Rowling, Weston, West Yorkshire, 19 December 2013.

⁵³⁴ E. Cawkwell, interview by J. Rowling, Askwith, West Yorkshire, 08 October 2012.

hugely important factor in bringing people together to form personal bonds. In her 1998 study of humour, Alison Ross explains: ‘The social context is important for the creation and reception of humour. It is hard for humour to cross boundaries of time and social groups— humour becomes outdated as quickly as fashion, and is often dependent on particular cultures and attitudes.’⁵³⁵ Sharing humour for Arto the POW and the Cowgills may have been a way to emphasise the breaking down of cultural and social boundaries between them, symbolic of Arto’s acceptance into the community by his incorporation into domesticity. In these cases the families with whom they had ‘lived in’ might stay in touch after they had returned to Germany. Tom Grange remembered:

We’d two Prisoners of War worked on the farm. One they called Emil, and I can’t remember what they called the other one, but when they went back to Germany there were nothing. You know, [the family] used to send letters, to send them some cigarettes or send them something to eat, you know. There were nowt. It was in a right state.⁵³⁶

Some POWs further cemented their place in the farming community by marrying local girls and remaining in the area after the repatriations had taken place.⁵³⁷ However, the majority of POWs, particularly those who had not lived in with farming families, did not remain in England following the War. This therefore conforms to Lindroos’ temporally redefinable community, in that the community changed its boundaries in response to an outside stimulus, and then returned to its previous state once the outside stimulus was removed.

Conclusion

Lower Wharfedale’s farming community, viewed in its broadest sense, experienced a quantitative decline over the first half of the twentieth century, but this did not automatically go hand in hand with a qualitative decline. In his *Community and Everyday Life*, Graham Day draws on the work of other sociologists to warn that referring to a set of people as a ‘community’ risks endowing a disparate collection of

⁵³⁵ A. Ross, *Language of Humour* (Florence, KY, USA, 1998), p. 2.

⁵³⁶ T. Grange, interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, West Yorkshire, 16 July 2012.

⁵³⁷ R. Holmes, interview by J. Rowling, Birstwith, West Yorkshire, 30 October 2012.

individuals with a spurious sense of togetherness and caring.⁵³⁸ This risk is increased when studying the wartime community, as the idea of the nation ‘pulling together’ is so ingrained in memories and ideas about this period. Day adds that ‘if they are not simply to vanish into society as a whole, communities maintain their distinctiveness, and somehow protect their boundaries.’⁵³⁹

The liminal or temporal community members who formed the network which supported the permanent farming community bridged the gap between this economically core group of people and the wider population, so often spoken of in separating terms by contemporary writers and politicians. Election material during the war, interwar and immediate post-war period stressed how the publishing party alone understood farmers’ and farmworkers’ concerns, and how their role in maintaining Britain through the war set them apart from wider society. This kind of war electioneering began very early, and examples from the period 1914 to 1951 range from, ‘Conservatives being practical people who know the countryside will pursue a policy that will enable British agriculture to go ahead steadily and take its rightful and, indeed, essential place in the life of the nation,’⁵⁴⁰ to ‘the skill and industry of the countryman are one of the country’s greatest assets. Townsmen are quick to acknowledge this in wartime. They sometimes forget it when there are no submarines to stop the flow of food from overseas.’⁵⁴¹ This divisive language separated the rural community from the urban, and played on previously established antipathies. In such an environment, insider and outsider status in a community assumed a greater importance, as a marker of a genuine cultural divide. This cultural boundary was straddled by those on the margins of the community.

⁵³⁸ G. Day, *Community and Everyday Life* (Oxon, 2006), p. 14.

⁵³⁹ Day, *Community and Everyday Life*, p. 44.

⁵⁴⁰ Conservative Party, *Policy for the Land*, Mass Observation Archive, University of Sussex, Box 6: General Elections 1945-55, File F: Election Publications Aimed at Farmers, p.8.

⁵⁴¹ CP, *Facts for Farmworkers!*, MOA, Box 6, File F.

6. The Farming Community in the Twenty-First Century

An important development in the historiography of community has been the follow-up study, returning to a community to observe the changes and continuities which have taken place since the first investigation. The best-known example of this is Craig Taylor's *Return to Akenfield* (2003), in which the author visited the village which was the subject of Ronald Blythe's 1969 *Akenfield: Portrait of an English Village* and interviewed those residents who had taken part in the original research, as well as meeting newcomers, observing change in the village, and discussing it with Ronald Blythe himself.⁵⁴² Throughout our exploration of Lower Wharfedale, the links between the early twentieth-century farming community, and its counterpart one hundred years later have been crucial to the success of the project. The networks and connections between individuals have been instrumental in obtaining willing participants for interviews, while key locations for the earlier community, such as the auction marts, remain important for Lower Wharfedale's farmers today, and more participants have been found through these.

In terms of the lived experience, the farming community of Lower Wharfedale has experienced change rather than continuity. The most obvious change which has occurred was explained by Tom Grange:

I think that's been the biggest thing in my lifetime has been just the total disappearance of people from agriculture. Definitely. I mean a lot of it is you can do now in a day with machinery what used to take weeks, so a lot of the labour isn't needed, but a lot of the little jobs aren't getting done either, like draining. I mean, at Farnley, a lot of the drains we come across, my great grandfather put in, and they still work, except with modern machinery they get fallen in... I mean farming life in them days it revolved around big days. Thrashing day, pig killing day, haymaking, all the big events sort of worked your calendar

⁵⁴² C. Taylor, *Return to Akenfield: Portrait of an English Village in the 21st Century* (London, 2003). Also M. Havinden, *Estate villages revisited: A second, up-dated edition of a study of the Oxfordshire (formerly Berkshire) villages of Ardington and Lockinge* (Reading, 1999).

through, you know. Whereas now it's more, you know – and like when things came into season, like plums or pears, or, you know, that sort of thing, and that's what you looked out for, a flood, anything that were different, you know. Whereas today you watch it all happening in front of you on the box, don't you? But it was all happening there. Everything was more in reality, do you know what I mean? I mean there's people now who never see reality because they spent all their time looking at a blooming screen! But then everything was sort of reality, everything was different.⁵⁴³

Discussions about farmers' life experiences throughout the twentieth century displayed a community which felt cut off and sidelined as a result of outside interference in agricultural affairs.⁵⁴⁴ During the earliest interviews for this study, in January 2011, one farmer claimed that the problem with modern British farming was that: 'British farmers will not stick together. They'll cut one another's throats for a quid.'⁵⁴⁵ In the early twenty-first century, this perception was a marked move away from the feeling of 'togetherness' recalled by those questioned on early twentieth-century topics.

One of the key changes to affect the farming community over the past hundred years has been the large-scale closure of auction marts across the country. Numbers of auction marts in Britain have fallen from 554 in 1940 to just 90 in 2013.⁵⁴⁶ The importance of these spaces to the community has already been established, so their disappearance has had a significant effect. Mervyn Lister explained:

[The auction mart] was a very important part in the early part of the 20th century [...] I would say that in the last 20 years since about the early 1990s a lot of markets have given up and it has taken away quite a lot of the interaction which occurs between

⁵⁴³ T. Grange, interview by author, Pool-in-Wharfedale, West Yorkshire, 16 July 2012.

⁵⁴⁴ J. Rowling, 'From "one of the country's greatest assets" to Alienation and Anger: Voices of the Lower Wharfedale Farming Community in the Twentieth Century,' *Family and Community History*, 17, no. 1 (Spring 2014), pp. 21-35.

⁵⁴⁵ Anonymous, interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, West Yorkshire, 12 January 2011.

⁵⁴⁶ J. Wright, T. Stevens, R. Wilson, and J. Smith, 'The effect of local livestock population changes on auction mart viability – a spatial analysis,' *Journal of Rural Studies*, 18 (2002), p. 477. The Livestock Auctioneers' Association Limited, *Find an Auction Mart*, <http://www.laa.co.uk/find-auction-mart.php> [viewed 07.10.2013].

people in the farming community, who on the whole face a fairly isolated life in a way because they spend a lot of time out on their own land and with their own stock and that's a fairly demanding occupation, and so for a lot of years it was the one occasion, when they went to the market, on market day that they were able to see friends and relations and contacts and people from other areas who were there, and there was a very important function provided by the exchange of information, you know. And that has disappeared a lot in recent times because of the other changes in agriculture where farms have got bigger and bigger. There aren't many changes of occupation of farms take place. In 1950, or up to the end of the war, people like us had a farm stock sale, on a farm, just about every week of the year, and they did the same thing. People came to those farm sales and they got to meet lots of folk, some of whom they knew and some of whom they didn't know until they got to the sale. But with fewer farms and bigger farms, farm sales are a rarity now, aren't they? If you get one in a year in any locality that's as many as there are. So those opportunities for people to mix have not been there. I know communications have changed in other ways with telephones and suchlike things, but they certainly were a very important factor in business life in the early 1900s.⁵⁴⁷

Other farmers argued that the sense of community itself had been lost. One farmer said,

Well I won't give no names or owt like that, but we had some land, not so far away from here, rented it like, and the feller sold it to someone else he knew, this land, and as soon as he sold it, another farmer stepped in and took it off us. We only had it year to year like, and he took it instead of us. So we had to take some then somewhere else to replace it, and then for, I think, three years, every time he came to his land, he went past here, and

⁵⁴⁷ M. Lister, interview by J. Rowling, Otley, West Yorkshire, 02 January 2014.

every time we went to our land, we went past him, his farm. Well, there were neither sense nor reason! He ought to have taken that land and us this, and we wouldn't have had half of the travelling. But farmers won't do that, they won't stick together. Years and years ago, when we made milk, I said – the price were terrible once – I said if all the farmers would get together, spread the milk on the field for three days [...] the price would be up. But they wouldn't. If you'd have said you were going to do that you'd have seen all the farmers, after dark, going round the back doors of the houses taking them some milk. They will though, they'll cut your throat for a quid, farmers.⁵⁴⁸

Another farmer added: 'If farmers would only get together they'd have the power then, because we've got the food and the fuel, and you could have your own way then.'⁵⁴⁹ Nevertheless, as Wharfedale's farming community moved into the twenty-first century, there appears to be evidence of a remaining 'community spirit' between farming people. Recent farming crises have demonstrated a sense of togetherness, and duty towards others with similar experiences, which has more in common with the early twentieth-century community than with the perceptions about modern farming people.

The themes which have been identified in the early twentieth-century farming community, and in Kia Lindroos' 'Benjaminian' community model – trust, shared traditions and experiences, and the exchange of information – can still be found in the twenty-first century, although in a much more fragmented and scattered way. This twenty-first century community is geographically greatly expanded from the Lower Wharfedale community of almost a century before, in line with changing ideas of 'local' engendered by improved transport, roads, and communications technologies. A farmer from Otley may now consider Gisburn, in Lancashire, a 'local' mart, while travel to neighbouring counties to buy stock privately may be an afternoon's work.

Walter Benjamin rejected the idea that a modern community could be a united one, and therefore a community at all, as the individual narrative replaced pre-modern

⁵⁴⁸ Anonymous, interview by author, Otley, West Yorkshire, 12th January, 2011.

⁵⁴⁹ Anonymous, interview by author, Otley, West Yorkshire, 11th January, 2011.

collective storytelling which bound communities together by the construction of shared cultural myths, and the protection of a tradition of experiences. He saw a unifying culture of oral narration being replaced by an individual exchange of temporary experiences.⁵⁵⁰ For Benjamin, this was exemplified in the birth of the modern novel, but the twenty-first century is awash with individual exchanges of temporary experiences, and individuals can create their own narratives without recourse to collective memory. Today farm sales, auction reports, show results, farming news, and calls for help are shared on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. The 2012 #sosdairy campaign raised awareness about the disparity between the retail price of milk and the amount received by the producers, resulting in a fairer price for farmers.⁵⁵¹ In 2014 another hashtag campaign, #forageaid, was responsible for gathering forage and transport to help farmers in the flood-hit South-West.⁵⁵² More routine interaction also takes place using these platforms, for example the *Farmers Guardian*'s annual '24 Hours in Farming' event in which farmers are encouraged to post photographs, videos, and information about their everyday activities for a predetermined twenty-four hour period, using the hashtag #Farm24.⁵⁵³ This is designed to showcase the work done by farmers. It also provides a focus for feelings of togetherness by providing an online 'location' for community members to demonstrate their insider status through displaying their working practices and knowledge in much the same way as their predecessors were doing during their regular meetings at auction marts, shows, and pubs. This parallel is further reinforced by the auction marts' emergence in the online world as virtual 'gatherings' of farming people, with most auction marts having a presence, including websites and Facebook pages.⁵⁵⁴ These pages include information about upcoming events, photographs of previous sales, previously sold livestock, lots to be sold at future farm sales, competition winners, and often news items of interest to the community in the auction's locality, for example reports of thefts or suspicious vehicles

⁵⁵⁰ Lindroos, 'Scattering Community,' pp. 22-23.

⁵⁵¹ 'SOS Dairy: Farmers end 2012 with heads held high,' *Farmers Weekly*, 29 December 2012, <http://www.fwi.co.uk/business/sos-dairy-farmers-end-2012-with-heads-held-high.htm>.

⁵⁵² O. Midgley, 'Farmers Guardian reporter gets forage to farming flood victims,' *Farmers Guardian*, 17 February 2014, <https://www.fginsight.com/news/farmers-guardian-reporter-gets-forage-to-farming-flood-victims>.

⁵⁵³ '24 Hours in Farming: August 2016,' *FGInsight*, <https://www.fginsight.com/farm-24?aokeywords=&aoca=81&aocr=209&campaignRef=1> [viewed 19 September 2016].

⁵⁵⁴ E.g. CCM Auctions at Skipton: <https://www.facebook.com/ccm.auctions/?fref=ts>; Gisburn Auction Mart: <https://www.facebook.com/gisburnauction/?fref=ts>; Wharfedale Farmers' Auction Mart at Otley: <https://www.facebook.com/Wharfedale-Farmers-Auction-Mart-Ltd-201522873191895/?fref=ts>.

seen in the area.⁵⁵⁵ Once again, this is important information for insiders within the farming community, an opportunity for insiders to help one another, and the performance of an interaction which would previously have taken place within a face-to-face meeting at a mart, pub, or similar location. This is a point which has recently been picked up by farmers writing in the agricultural press. James Powell, a farmer from Powys and a regular contributor to the *Farmers Guardian*'s 'In Your Field' series, wrote, 'Nowadays, a single tweet could lead to a close bond formed, breeding stock sold on trust, farm tours in foreign countries, with people who have never met each other, and eating carrot cake together in the farmhouse kitchen.'⁵⁵⁶ Powell invokes the themes of trust, and of sharing, particularly referring to food, which have been explored above in the context of early twentieth-century Lower Wharfedale, but recognises that in a geographically larger community, modern technology can support social interactions which might otherwise not take place. This allows the community to sustain itself and respond to finding itself in a new context, just as it did on a smaller scale in reaction to the influx of Prisoners of War during the 1940s, and to the revolution in motive power with the arrival of the tractor. This latter has other parallels with the farming community's reaction to twenty-first century technology. In both cases, the new technology is largely taken up by young people, who then use it to shape the future of their farming community, by altering business models and methods to utilise this new technology and include people with the skills to make the most of it. This is not to suggest that the twenty-first century's farming community use social media differently to other contemporary groups, but that the use of these means to communicate and connect between individuals facilitates the aspects of 'community' which have been found in the Lower Wharfedale farming community of 1914-1951.

The creators of social media apps and websites deliberately invoke 'community' among members through their use of language; encouraging users to 'share' and to communicate with 'friends'. It is therefore risky to place too much emphasis on the relationships which develop within this space, perhaps mistaking an artificially constructed network for one which picks up the threads of the community which existed

⁵⁵⁵ E.g. Gisburn Auction Mart Facebook page, Timeline, 17 September, 2016, https://www.facebook.com/gisburnauction/?hc_ref=PAGES_TIMELINE&fref=nf. This is a status update regarding stolen sheep, giving details of the sheep, the location, and the type of vehicles involved.

⁵⁵⁶ J. Powell, 'In Your Field: It is a job to fit farming into our busy social (media) lives,' *Farmers Guardian* (30 September, 2016), p. 131.

a century earlier. However, the responses to campaigns, appeals, and trends on Twitter and Facebook can be found making an impression in respected agricultural publications such as the *Farmers Guardian*, and in the national news. They also reflect the interactions and conversations which take place when insiders in the community do meet in physical locations. While this facet of the twenty-first century farming community must be treated with care, it is also important to note the ‘real-world’ actions which result from the ways social media is used by the farming community on both local and national levels.

The reaction of the national farming community to events which affect agriculture as a whole indicates that the sense of community which existed among Lower Wharfedale’s farmers in the earlier part of the twentieth century is still present in between members of an expanded network of farming people in the twenty-first. The development of transport technology may have fractured and extended the meaning of local, making it harder for former local networking centres, like the auction marts, to survive, but, despite bleak pronouncements to the contrary from older farmers, there is evidence that the sharing of experiences and information, and the sense of ‘togetherness’ which prompts offers of help in times of crisis, are taking place and being reinforced through online interactions.

In early 2014, the South West of Britain was hit by severe flooding. As well as the enormous damage to property, the rising waters threatened many farmers’ livestock. The *Farmers Guardian* reported that:

Farmers and rural organisations joined forces to find and deliver forage and bedding to hard hit areas where some farms have been submerged for several weeks. Charities said they have been inundated with calls from people pledging their support and farmers have been organising their own ‘tractor-aid’ runs to deliver aid to those in turmoil. Wakefield NFU member Philip Rowbottom, who made the 225-mile journey to Bridgwater in Somerset yesterday (Thursday),

said the massive relief effort showed the “solidarity” within the Great British farming unity.⁵⁵⁷

The article highlighted the way that flooded farmers felt they had been failed:

As the political blame-game at times descended into farce, Mr Cameron refused to give his backing to Environment Agency chairman Lord Smith, who has come under increasing pressure to resign over his handling of the catastrophe. Somerset Levels farmer Edwin White, a former chairman of the Royal Bath and West Society, said the group had warned Mr Cameron of the “urgent need” to dredge the rivers Parrett and Tone twice last year. Levels farmer Gavin Sadler added: “Last year Lord Smith came here and said something would be done within six months, but nothing has happened. This is what happens when you take no action.”⁵⁵⁸

This contrasts with the ‘togetherness’ theme displayed in an article in the same newspaper just four days earlier, when reporting on the #forageaid campaign:

[Wakefield NFU member Philip Rowbottom] said Yorkshire had suffered its fair share of severe flooding, so farmers there were aware of the ‘heart-break it can bring’. “Seeing the situation develop over recent days in Somerset left many of us wanting to help and show just how the farming industry can respond,” he said.⁵⁵⁹

As this story develops through the pages of the *Farmers Guardian*, it becomes clear that those who count themselves ‘insiders’ in the British farming community perceive themselves as the possessors of knowledge about land management, which those ‘outsiders’ in power do not understand. They also feel a connection between farming people across an extremely

⁵⁵⁷ O. Midgley, ‘Britain’s farmers unite as floods crisis continues,’ *Farmers Guardian*, 15 February 2014, <https://www.fginsight.com/news/britains-farmers-unite-as-floods-crisis-continues-464>.

⁵⁵⁸ O. Midgley, ‘Britain’s farmers unite as floods crisis continues,’ *Farmers Guardian*, 15 February 2014, <https://www.fginsight.com/news/britains-farmers-unite-as-floods-crisis-continues-464>.

⁵⁵⁹ A. Driver, ‘225-mile “tractor aid” run to help stricken Somerset farmers,’ *Farmers Guardian*, 11 February 2014, <https://www.fginsight.com/news/225-mile-tractor-aid-run-to-help-stricken-somerset-farmers-495>.

wide geography. These gestures of ‘community spirit’ have parallels in early twentieth-century Lower Wharfedale, for example in Derrick Goodall’s anecdote:

I was going down there [past King Lane Farm] to work one morning, and as I started coming down the hill I could see smoke coming out of one of the buildings, and – on fire you see – and, whether it was my bike or motorbike, anyway, I got off it and I knocked Tommy up and he came out and we went into the cow shed. Well, cows then were all tied up by the chain, you see, and we went into the mistal, well, the straw where you bed them up was on fire and up above it was the loft and there were slates, and it had got burnt and burnt, slates were dropping down in the loft, and as I say, the straw were on fire. Anyway, we – you never think like, you’re not frightened: “oh! I’m not going in there!” We just dived in you see, and getting the cows, and finding the chain and the loop for getting it out - but we loosed them all and just – well they were used to going up the road and into a field on the right, so we just loosed the chains and out they ran, and away up the road, and anyway Tommy had rung for the fire engine, and anyway I said, “Well I can’t do owt now, I’d better get off to get to work,” you see, but they did say that one of the cows had got badly burnt on its back and it had to be put down, you know. But it was really frightening, you know, all the smoke, you can imagine it, and all the straw - and I mean if I hadn’t gone when I did, unless Tommy had heard it, all the cows could have been, well you know, burnt badly to have been destroyed. But you never think, you know, when you go in and there’s all the straw on the bottom, fire and the blooming slates were banging like on here, you know [indicating ceiling] it were lower than this, well it had burnt the wood that were holding the slates up and that’s where all the smoke was coming from you see, and the slates were banging on the loft floor. It had come through the loft floor [laughs] it were frightening but anyway we got in and as I say, you don’t

think about it, and it's dangerous for you to go in, you automatically go in.⁵⁶⁰

These events not only demonstrate the theme of 'togetherness', but also that of shared skills and knowledge, in the ability to handle frightened livestock in an emergency situation.

These gestures take us back to Ferdinand Tönnies' concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. In many ways, modern agriculture epitomises *Gesellschaft*. It functions as a series of interactions between individuals with the aim of personal gain. However, a subcategory of Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft*, *Gemeinschaft* of mind, can still be seen in the desire to 'show solidarity' between farming people performing actions which did not carry any financial imperative.⁵⁶¹ It is interesting that the reports frame these actions in terms of 'community', using words like 'unite', 'us' in reference to farmers as a whole, and 'the response from the local farming community'.⁵⁶²

This idea links with both Benedict Anderson's theory of 'imagined communities', which was influenced by the work of Walter Benjamin, in that the belief in a unified 'British farming community' works more in terms of excluding those who are not part of it than in finding definite links between those who are. This observation holds similarities to earlier, local, defining moments in the development of the sense of community in Lower Wharfedale: the physical and cultural separation of the auction mart from the market frequented by non-farming people; the differentiation of live-in PoWs from 'Nazi' PoWs; the pub-based vetting of younger farmers before sharing information. It fits more precariously, however, with the key elements in other community studies from the pre-internet historiography. For example, Durant's 1959 description of 'a territorial group of people with a common mode of living striving for common objectives,' Warren's definition of 'community' as 'a specific population living within a specific geographic area with shared institutions and values and significant social interaction,' or Lee and Newby's argument that a 'community' is 'a

⁵⁶⁰ D. Goodall, Interview by author, Harewood, West Yorkshire, 13 August 2012.

⁵⁶¹ Tönnies, *Community and Society*, p. 42.

⁵⁶² O. Midgeley, 'Britain's farmers unite as floods crisis continues,' *Farmers Guardian* (15 February, 2014), <https://www.fginsight.com/news/britains-farmers-unite-as-floods-crisis-continues-464>; O. Midgeley, 'Agriculture in crisis as spring snow thrashes UK,' *Farmers Guardian* (30 March, 2013), <https://www.fginsight.com/news/agriculture-in-crisis-as-spring-snow-thrashes-uk>. A. Driver, '225-mile 'tractor aid' run to help stricken Somerset farmers,' *Farmers Guardian* (11 February, 2014), <https://www.fginsight.com/news/225-mile-tractor-aid-run-to-help-stricken-somerset-farmers>.

sense of common identity, enduring ties of affiliation and harmony based upon personal knowledge and face-to-face contact.’⁵⁶³ In moving into the digital age, it seems that the ‘farming community’ as a concept is framed much better by earlier definitions which allow for change in the boundaries as a response to outside stimuli, than by more recent frameworks which focus heavily on geography as a delimiting factor.

Interestingly, this enlarged ‘local’ area has given rise to a resurgence in the work of the cattle dealer, who, as in the early twentieth-century, will buy livestock to order at the marts, and sell on to clients who remain on the farm, keeping the ‘luck’ for themselves. Travel to marts further afield is time-consuming, and many busy farmers, often farming larger acreages and with fewer staff than their early twentieth-century counterparts, do not have the time to attend, or to wait through what may be several hours of selling to secure the animals they want. It is far more economical for one man to attend with orders from several others, and so be bidding more frequently throughout the sale. Trust and personal connections are still tremendously important to this profession, as the buyer is essentially buying unseen, and placing his farm’s future in the hands of the dealer. Mervyn Lister explained the trust that was placed in cattle dealers, using his great grandfather as an example:

When farmers out away from a market town were relying upon a trader like my great grandfather, they had to trust him to sell the animal for the best possible price, and to come back and give the man in the village the full price, less 10 shillings for doing the job, or whatever the fee was at the time. The man back in the village had no idea what his animal was worth until that dealer, that trader came back and said, ‘I went to the market on so-and-so and your cow was worth 19 pounds or 16 pounds’ or whatever the figure was. Now with transport becoming much easier, people having the ability to take their own transport and go to Skipton or go to wherever, they were able to go and see for themselves just what price their animals were sold at. That was a great improvement, you know, as far as knowledge was concerned.⁵⁶⁴

Bert Verity also described the role of the cattle dealer in the farming community:

⁵⁶³ G. Day, *Community and Everyday Life* (Oxon, 2006), p. 9.

⁵⁶⁴ M. Lister, interview by J. Rowling, Otley, West Yorkshire, 02 January 2014.

Well you can go back a hundred years if you want, but you see, countryside trading, even when I was a boy, there were dealers. There were a lot of fairs, and auction marts were just starting. A lot of farmers relied on a dealer coming, and if they had a new calven cow they would sell it to a dealer. Now that dealer, I can give you one typical dealer. Ellis who lived at Kirkby Malzeard, and his headquarters were at Kirkby Malzeard, but every Friday he brought cows to Otley. They'd come by train I should think, or walk. Now he just went round, he knew his farmers, and he'd probably buy a couple of heifer cows, and, you know generally he'd buy a sheep or two but some of them just specialised in cows.⁵⁶⁵

In this way, the cattle dealer of the early twentieth century would maintain a network of contacts across a much wider area than the localities familiar to farmers, who may not have travelled further than the nearest market town, but these interviews also demonstrate why there are fewer mentions of cattle dealers in more recent memories, and more mentions of farmers or their staff going to the auctions themselves. This recollection also shows how new forms of transport enabled these networks to grow, as dealers were able to use the train to transport livestock to auction. Wharfedale Farmers' Auction Mart in Otley was built opposite Otley Railway Station, and the Ordnance Survey map of the area from the 1890s shows cattle pens on the station platform. These pens were remembered by Ted Haxby, who grew up in Otley in the 1930s and 1940s:

Cattle were taken away on the railway [...] and on the side of the station there was like ramps up and then pens, again like iron railings and pens, of course it took the platforms up level with cattle trucks which would come in, so they would drive cattle up into these pens and then the cattle trucks would come along and open the doors and the cattle went into the truck, you see. They didn't have to go up – I mean, they went just straight in.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶⁵ H. Verity, interview by J. Rowling, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, 11 April 2013.

⁵⁶⁶ G. Haxby, interview by J. Rowling, East Keswick, West Yorkshire, 03 October 2012.

The close association between agriculture and transport has continued into the twenty-first century, with bigger trailers and trucks allowing dealers to move ever increasing numbers of cattle or sheep between mart and farm. It is also important to note that Mr Ellis, in Bert Verity's recollection, would have been seen regularly on farms, and at auction marts, and so would build up a personal relationship with farmers. This is the same for dealers today.

My own great grandfather was fond of saying, 'farming will come good again, but you just might not live long enough to see it.' It is this cyclical nature of both the industry and the community associated with it which can be identified in the application of the historiography in this study, as well as in the memories of the interviewees. While agriculture as a profession has changed almost beyond recognition from the farming that the community of 1914-1951 would have known, the structure of the community which performs this work is a self-perpetuating one. It has changed qualitatively in response to outside circumstances and changes in the context in which it exists, in order to maintain its own existence. This has resulted in the community finding a new geographical scale on which it can operate successfully in the context of twenty-first century agriculture, politics and society. This is much like how the farming community in Lower Wharfedale, 1914 to 1951 changed in size and shape in response to the technological innovations of its day. While keeping the essential factors which made it an identifiable community, its twenty-first century equivalent has expanded over a vast geography, and begun to embrace new technologies in order to maintain the bonds which make community. Information can be shared more easily than ever, while shared experiences are created, promoted, and repeated using social and traditional media. However, despite all of these changes, and the repeated pattern of younger community members grasping new technologies to further their family businesses, the basic factors of community remain: trust, reciprocity, sharing – of information, of knowledge, of experiences, and of food – and a fundamental belief in the existence of a 'farming community'.

7. Conclusion

‘Community’ has long been the subject of historical, anthropological and sociological debate, which has its roots in a number of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century classic works of critical theory and philosophy, and has expanded into a vast range of subjects, encompassing dialogues on gender, embodiment, humour, work, reciprocity, space, place, landscape, childhood, transitions between life stages, liminality and storytelling, to name some which have been particularly relevant to this study. The word has very different meanings for different people, even when those people share a sense of being a part of the same entity. This study aimed to produce a definition for the rather nebulous and overused terms ‘community’ and ‘local’, using Lower Wharfedale in the period 1914 to 1951 as a detailed case study against which to test and apply different aspects of community theory.

These different aspects have been investigated from several perspectives: from within the auction mart, which has previously been overlooked in the historiography of rural community studies; in terms of gender, and ideas about the gendered body; through the revolution in agricultural technology which took place across the whole of the period 1914 to 1951; in the context of the wider agricultural community; and in the twenty-first century farming community. Several different key ideas have influenced the way in which this study has been approached. It is situated within the tradition of community studies which have been closely associated with local and oral history throughout the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries. It incorporates several previous lacunae in the historiography of rural communities, addressing the importance of the auction mart, the concept of the male body in agriculture, and themes of qualitative continuity in a way of life largely characterised by change. The role of women has also been important to this study. In many ways, women’s engagement with the community was similar to men’s. Skill and knowledge about their work was important, women could be known local characters with established insider status as well as men, and the wartime and interwar periods were characterised by the movement of women into previously male spaces. However, there remain aspects of community which appeared to be solely masculine, and likewise aspects which were only recognised among women. Between 1914 and 1951, the auction mart, for example, was largely a masculine space, whereas a Mother’s Union or Women’s Institute meeting would be a

female zone, yet both of these spaces provided a similar function to the gender they mainly serviced, creating a sense of membership in the context of a temporally-dependent sub-community which existed inside Lower Wharfedale's farming community at regular, designated times. Both provided an arena for insiders to assess unfamiliar individuals, pass on knowledge to other acceptable insiders, and to establish trust through mutual understanding of a set of cultural norms and display of relevant skills, from animal handling to butter making. The period and location studied here – rural West Yorkshire between 1914 and 1951 – have also been somewhat overlooked by historians in comparison to localities further south, such as East Anglia or Wales, and nineteenth-century study periods. By analysing oral testimony from interviewees who occupied different segments of the community – men and women, landowners and tenants, farmers and farm labourers, younger and older, horsemen and tractor-men, those directly employed in agriculture, and those a step removed – it is possible to build a picture of what it means to be a community, how a community views itself, defines itself, and perceives its own social and geographical extent. This picture can then be carried forward and applied successfully to the same community in a different context, that of the early twenty-first century.

What has emerged is a complex concept, in which the 'community' structure is highly dependent upon external factors. The community changes size and shape, and constantly redefines its own boundaries in response to the context in which it finds itself, whether that context is war or peace, economic boom or depression, technological advances, or changing weather conditions. Throughout these changes, the community is manifested in three key ways: the performance of community, the possession of community by its members, and the use of community as a 'passport' to new personal connections and new knowledge.

'Community' was performed through the everyday activities of its members, with the skilful completion of allotted tasks, and participation in reiterating joint narratives and knowledge serving as a display of insider status. For those connected with agriculture in the local area between 1914 and 1951, and into the present day, membership of Lower Wharfedale's farming community was one of the building blocks of an individual's identity. This belonging was just one component of an identity which would also include gender, age, socio-economic status, embodied experience, and physical and mental skills, among other factors. These additional

building blocks of identity helped to determine how an individual would perform his or her membership of the community. Insiders in the community working and socialising alongside one another gained shared experiences, forming the narrative of the community which could be remembered, reiterated and re-performed at later gatherings, fostering a feeling of collective identity and a community spirit. However, to speak of an unqualified 'sense of togetherness' in relation to community is simply substituting one rather woolly term for another. What is 'togetherness'? In all the examples throughout the interviews for this project there has been a sense of 'Us'. This was manifest in the phrase 'people like us', used by Mervyn Lister to describe farm sale attendees.⁵⁶⁷ Indeed, it displayed itself in the way that interviews were arranged by exploiting existing and trusted connections with the community. These shared experiences, and the pre-existing knowledge which allowed a group of men from different farms to come together to work as a team, for example at threshing time, constituted the performance of community. This was, and still is, accompanied by the affirmation and reaffirmation of friendship and kin connections, common geographies, and shared knowledge. In my own case, the interviewing process was punctuated with sentiments like Derrick Goodall's:

You are like your dad! By gum, but he's a lovely man is your dad. I love having a chat to him, but he is. I admire your father for he works really hard, and he's a lovely man to talk to. I like to have a chat to him, he's lovely... But I knew your granny and granddad before they were married so you can tell I've been here – as I say, I've been going up there since I were fourteen and I've known all them lot round here.⁵⁶⁸

This pattern was repeated in other interviews, and in informal conversations prior to setting up interviews, as well as in anecdotes from the period under study. We can see layers of meaning in this example, which establish the speaker as an 'insider' in the local farming community. Mr Goodall associates himself clearly with 'round here' as a locality, as well as with its population, emphasising the longevity of his connection with both, and with my father as another recognised insider. The reiteration of shared local and personal knowledge was a common feature of most of my interactions with

⁵⁶⁷ M. Lister, interview by J. Rowling, Otley, 2 January 2014.

⁵⁶⁸ D. Goodall, interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, 13 August 2012.

interviewees, which served to establish the relationship between interviewer and interviewee as the basis upon which the interview could be conducted. In this almost ritualistic reiteration, community was performed in order to confirm my place as an insider in the community I was investigating, meaning that interviewees felt able to share information which they would not have revealed to an unknown researcher. This may separate my study from some other community studies. Shared experiences, geographies, knowledge, and personal connections have been key to maintaining the feeling of ‘togetherness’, trust, and the boundaries which separated the Lower Wharfedale farming community from wider society. Shared humour has been another important element in the performance of community, often focused around friendly competition, sport, and pushing others to work harder with joking and teasing. Simon Critchley makes this connection in his *On Humour* in which he argues that jokes work as ‘clarificatory remarks, that make situations perspicuous, that provide us with some sort of synopsis or overview of a particular state of affairs... They are acts of “everyday anamnesis”, that remind us what we already know in a new way.’⁵⁶⁹ In the context of community, then, joking and humour are statements of commonality between individuals who share knowledge and understanding about a particular social milieu, while also serving to downplay differences or tensions.

Invoking ideas of common ground and shared experiences worked like a passport to allow individuals to recognise one another, and to carry them through the liminal phase of the three-stage transition from outsider to insider.⁵⁷⁰ This could be done by demonstrating a skill which would be of value to the community, for example animal handling or the provision of food for field workers. It could also be done by demonstrating familiarity with local land, known community members, or customs viewed by existing members as part of their identity as a community. Such customs may not have been particularly complex or highly ritualised, but an awareness of expectations around behavioural conventions in certain locations, wearing acceptable clothing for a specified activity, or producing work to a satisfactory standard, despite

⁵⁶⁹ S. Critchley, *On Humour* (London, 2002), p. 86.

⁵⁷⁰ A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (1908, London, 1977); V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (1969, New York, 1997).

being a commonplace event, served as a ‘metaphorical statement of the culture in which it occurs.’⁵⁷¹

‘Community’ is also something which belongs to its members, which is decided by them, which can be given like a gift, and, like a gift, it comes with obligations and an implied expectation of reciprocity, in the form of physical gifts, labour, or respect. Passing on information and skills from established members to those still in the liminal phase has been explored throughout this study. This occurred between older and younger men, and women, working in the fields, between long-time auction-goers and those new to the environment, between women established in social groups and organised societies and younger, often newly-married incoming women, and between Prisoners of War and the families with whom they lived and worked. This kind of gift is still given today, for example during my interview with Victor Thompson:

I taught [a man working at another farm] how to put a fence up, and keep straight, without putting a line down. You know how to do that? [...] What you do, this is your field, you go and you measure your strides across here and you put a post in, and then you measure your strides at this end of the field and you put a peg in, or a post or summat, and then you go up here and you stand like that [feet apart] and you look down between your legs and then you look up like that and if your posts aren’t in the middle of your eyesight – do you follow me? – You’re way out. But if you get down like that and look to see where your other post is, you’ve to move one way or the other, you can bet your life that fence when you put it up will go straight across, dead straight. You don’t need to measure it, you don’t need to measure it, just a post at this side, a post at that side, and you just go up and down, and as long as you stand in the middle, or where you think is the middle, and look up like that and then

⁵⁷¹ A. P. Cohen (ed.), *Belonging: Identity and Social Organisation in British Rural Cultures* (Manchester, 1982), p. 5.

bend down and look between your legs, it should be – you should only just see one thing.⁵⁷²

In this testimony, Mr Thompson not only gave a gift of information, but in doing so acknowledged my place as part of the community by virtue of our mutual knowledge, landscape, and acquaintances, which had previously been discussed when setting up the interview, and recognised that learning this skill might be useful to me. Furthermore, by offering this advice, Mr Thompson drew attention to his established place in the farming community by emphasising the fact that he possessed this knowledge, and that he had given advice on the topic before. In return, I was able to express gratitude, and show my respect for his experience and knowledge by agreeing to try this method of erecting a straight fence. Here, similarities can be seen with the way in which a young Jimmy Goodall received the gift of advice from older farmers in the pub after the auction mart:

You learnt – believe it or not – you learnt more in the pub afterwards than what you could do in a whole week on the farm, simply by talking to different farmers, saying, “I’m having a problem with so-and-so,” and someone would say, “Oh I had that problem, years ago, and I found that so-and-so,” “oh, thank you very much indeed, I’ll try it,” and you could perhaps cure a cow or repair something by just going to market for a couple of hours afterwards and having a pint or whatever, a couple of pints, and then coming back home and carrying on working.⁵⁷³

This was also a feature of the early twentieth-century rural community on a wider geographical scale. Dorothy Hartley’s regular *Daily Sketch* articles, ‘In England Now’ originally published between 1933 and 1936, often demonstrated the same establishment of mutually shared knowledge, landscapes, and acquaintances, before Hartley’s interviewees revealed a skill, a useful tip, or a nugget of information to

⁵⁷² V. Turner, interview by J. Rowling, Harewood, 7 December 2012. I can confirm that this method does indeed work.

⁵⁷³ J. Goodall, interview by J. Rowling, Harrogate, 22 November 2012.

her.⁵⁷⁴ The sharing of advice and skills following a ‘vetting’ of the prospective learner is a mechanism by which the community propagates itself, admitting new members who have an appropriate background or set of interests, and giving established members an opportunity to exclude those who are not deemed ready to move from outsider to insider status. By extending a helping hand to those in the liminal zone of the community, more firmly established members give a gift which comes with an unspoken obligation to reciprocate at a later time. Acts of reciprocation included helping an elderly landowner during a shoot, assisting during large-scale events like threshing days, or with minor mishaps like catching escaped livestock.⁵⁷⁵ These small interactions and the obligations they created shaped and moulded the people who made up the community, building up a network based on trust and reciprocity. Community, then, is an object which can be given, and a performance which is carried out through a myriad of tiny everyday activities, as well as a means by which people define their identities, and a passport by which they can access new relationships.

This concept draws heavily on Kia Lindroos’ ‘Benjaminian’ community model, Victor Turner’s structure and anti-structure dichotomy, Benedict Anderson’s ‘imagined communities’, Doreen Massey’s identification of the ‘relational’ model of identity, and A. P. Cohen’s emphasis on the importance of prescribed behaviour in the performance of everyday tasks as the key to differentiating a ‘community’ from the wider society in which it exists. These five ideas, drawing primarily on philosophy, social science, anthropology, ontology, history, and human geography all share a common factor in the importance of the lived experience. Lived, shared, and remembered experiences form the basis of the sense of togetherness which Lindroos identifies as a key component of her ‘Benjaminian’ community model, and which applies either in the short term, as in the performance of a routine task in a particular way, or in the long term, in a life-changing transformation from one state of being to another. These experiences are so important in creating and maintaining ‘community’, because the most basic requirement for the existence of ‘community’ is arguably its

⁵⁷⁴ A. Bailey, ‘Introduction,’ in D. Hartley, *Lost World: England 1933-1936* (Totnes, 2012), p. 15. Dorothy Hartley was, in fact, born in Skipton in Lower Wharfedale, the daughter of the headmaster of Skipton Grammar School for Boys.

⁵⁷⁵ F. Fearnley, interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, 20 September 2012.

members' belief in it.⁵⁷⁶ This belief comes from the relational nature of community. One belongs to a particular community because one is 'in' with Group A, and 'out' of Group B, and an identity is built up around the idea that one is therefore different from Group B. These differences from 'outsiders' comprise one of the external factors by which communities define themselves. In the case of Lower Wharfedale's early twentieth-century farming community, the mundane details and experiences of farming life in this particular locality, the events, the type of agriculture, the local characters, and so on, create shared experiences, knowledge, and memories which demarcate insiders from outsiders. In order for there to be a sense of 'Us' there must also exist a sense of 'Them' against which it is counterbalanced; 'togetherness', 'community', and 'Us' cannot exist in isolation. Howard Newby finds his us/them dichotomy in the Essex workers and the landowners, Benedict Anderson in home and abroad, and Ferdinand Tönnies in *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. In agricultural Lower Wharfedale 1914 – 1951 this dichotomy existed between those who possessed knowledge of agriculture and those who did not. Exhaustive knowledge of all aspects of agriculture was not necessary for inclusion in 'Us', but the knowledge had to be relevant (to contemporary farming or to the history of the locality), and it had to be shared, as in the 'Benjaminian' community model put forward by Lindroos.

Shared experience also has strong links to landscape. This may seem self-evident in a rural community, but its importance should not be underestimated. Place is a significant factor in identity, and it was striking how many participants equated who they were with the farm they worked on, the auction mart they attended, or the estate on which they were a tenant. This raises parallels with Margaret Stacey's study of Banbury, in which the erosion of the traditional community by the incoming urban workers is reflected in the landscape; the Birds factory overshadowing the spire of the church. It is an aspect of the community study which was covered by George Ewart Evans, but has not entered a great deal into more recent, perhaps more sociologically-based, community studies. It cannot be over-emphasised how much the landscape influenced the sense of place which made people define themselves as part of one farming community or another. This sense did not strictly follow the geography of the map, but rather that of the lived experience, encompassing quite a large area of

⁵⁷⁶ G. Simmel in M. Gilbert, *On Social Facts* (Oxford, 1989), p. 146; L. Danielson, 'The Folklorist, the Oral Historian, and Local History,' in D. K. Dunaway and W. K. Baum (eds), *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, 2nd Edition (1984, London, 1996), p. 189.

neighbouring Nidderdale into the district defined as 'Lower Wharfedale' for the purposes of this study, simply because that was the way that the community envisioned itself.

The idea of the community existing simply because it believes in its own existence has several precedents in classic philosophical, ontological, and anthropological literature, as well as in oral history. Elements of this can be found in Heidegger's concept of *Dasein*, which is 'constantly more than it factually is... [but] never more than in factually is, for potentiality-for-being belongs essentially to its facticity;' it is always part of something bigger, an action or idea greater than itself, but equally always 'in-the-world'.⁵⁷⁷ Likewise the community we have seen through this study always functioned within a wider political and social context, but to the people within it, it was greater than the sum of its parts. It influenced the way they viewed themselves and their own identities, and the way they performed routine, everyday tasks.

'Community' has a temporal aspect which not only allows it to react to outside circumstances, and reconcile itself with events which affect the wider society of which it forms a small part, but, in doing so, enables it to survive. Overall, Lindroos' 'Benjaminian' model for a scattered community holds true for Lower Wharfedale's farming community between 1914 and 1951. Where Benjamin rejected the possibility of a united community in the modern age, as the individual narrative replaced the construction of shared cultural myths, Lindroos posited a scattered community bonded together through shared traditions, shared knowledge, and a feeling of togetherness within community boundaries; a community still based on Benjamin's Theses, but perhaps not one which that writer himself would have recognised. Lindroos' 'Benjaminian communities' are temporally redefinable human networks, which expand, contract, and shift their boundaries according to the context in which they find themselves.⁵⁷⁸ Lower Wharfedale's farming community expanded to take in new members, as shown by its opening up to Prisoners of War, and it can shrink in response to loss, for example the death of many traditional rural crafts and their practitioners. The 'community' can also expand geographically, in this case as the transport revolution and the closure of auction marts altered the meaning of 'local.' These

⁵⁷⁷ M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, quoted in M. Inwood, *Heidegger: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 1997), p. 45; and in C. Lafont (G. Harman, trans.), *Heidegger, Language, and World-Disclosure* (1994, Cambridge, 2000), p. 48.

⁵⁷⁸ Lindroos, 'Scattering community,' p. 35.

changes have exposed a ‘core’ community of farming people, whose names appeared repeatedly in interviews. They were generally small farmers and long-serving farm labourers, often those with long family histories of connections with the locality. In Lower Wharfedale in particular, this core formed a community within a community based around the hub of the local auction mart, and local shows, which facilitated the exchange of information and knowledge alongside livestock and money, and fostered personal relationships in areas which were physically sectioned off from the non-farming world. In many ways, the early twentieth-century Lower Wharfedale farming community, and especially this core group, continues to influence the farming community in the same area today. The characters who made up this auction-based core group introduced their sons and daughters to other insiders, and offered knowledge and advice to younger farmers, selecting those they considered worthy to receive it. Additionally, those factors which formed the identities of those who farmed between 1914 and 1951 continue to influence the identities of those who farm today. The landscape, shared experiences, shared knowledge, traditions, interactions at the auction mart, and shared memories of local characters are as strong now as they ever were. This much is demonstrated by the ‘snowball sampling’ methodology alone, which has allowed participants to be recruited by tracing networks of acquaintances. My own experience as a researcher was one of using my name and the names of family members and close acquaintances as a passport to enable me to speak to people who would not otherwise have engaged with a researcher. This was also the experience of members of the Lower Wharfedale farming community in the period 1914-1951, who were able to use well-known names as passports to gain access to auction marts farther afield than usual, to enter into other local or regional communities of parallel values, which could partially overlap. One can see young people benefitting by association with an older, established community member in order to gain employment or experiences which helped them to move from childhood, through the period of liminality, and into adulthood. The cultural norms of this community are replicated in other, similar communities around the country, allowing the geographical boundaries to change over time, and for insiders in one community to temporarily be accepted and trusted at a distant auction mart, as when Thomas Mickle from Lower Wharfedale was able to buy at Abergele by virtue of his familiarity with a cattle dealer there.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁹ T. Mickle, interview by J. Rowling, Askwith, 08 October 2012.

The concept of 'local' has also been significant to the way that the farming community has viewed itself. The phrase 'round here' has been used frequently to describe different areas at different times. As shown by the examples of participatory mapping (see Appendix 1), separate individuals saw 'round here' as comprising local geographies which differ according to the travel habits of the individual. These roles and habits were influenced to a large extent by the work role of the individual as well as by the transport technology available to them. In the early part of the study period, during and immediately after the First World War, the area defined as 'round here' or 'local' was largely based on the distance which people could walk, cycle, or ride a horse, carry out their business, and then return home in the space of a day. Geography and locality were viewed in terms of the spaces that people moved through, with field boundaries and sites of agricultural importance often taking precedence over more urban landmarks. By the 1950s, motorised transport for both people and animals was far more widely available, meaning that travel farther afield was possible and concepts of 'local' grew correspondingly larger. As 'local' became bigger, community boundaries adapted, ensuring the community's survival as an entity despite wider contextual changes.

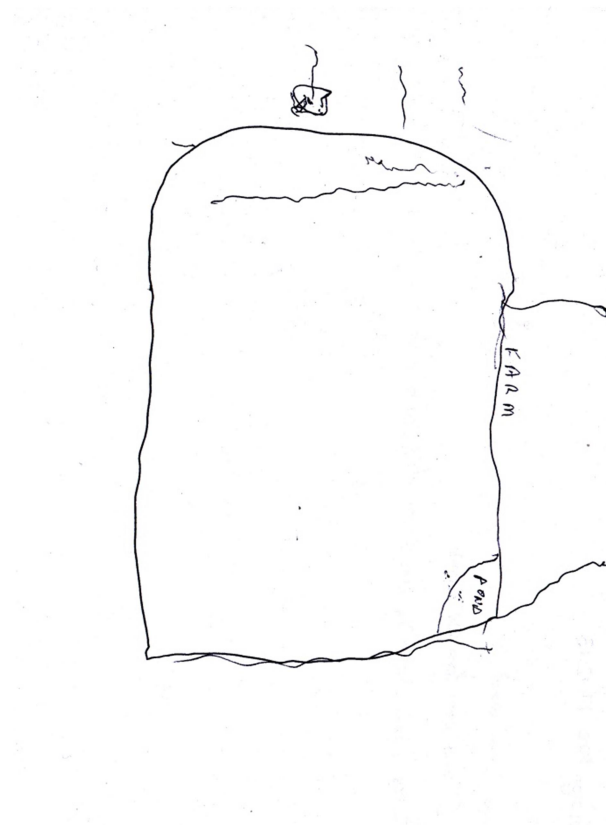
While the word 'community' must be approached with care, and cannot be too readily given either positive or negative connotations, it is a state of being which the farming population in this locality, at least, continue to gravitate towards. There is a continuing belief in the existence of a farming community, and efforts continue to be made to maintain it, although this seems to occur in a cyclical fashion. My own great grandfather, a farmer in Lower Wharfedale, strongly believed in the cyclical nature of farming, which could not only be seen in the landscape around which he moulded his personal identity, but also on a longer term, less immediately tangible basis. He would often say that, 'farming will come good again, but you just might not be alive to see it.' This is echoed in the way that the early twentieth-century farming community is reflected in its modern counterpart. There has been an interesting shift in recent years, which documents a continuing belief in the existence of a farming community despite changing practices, technological advancements, bigger farms, and more aggressive competition. During the earliest interviews for this study, in January 2011, one farmer claimed that the problem with modern British farming was that: 'British farmers will

not stick together. They'll cut one another's throats for a quid.'⁵⁸⁰ Since then the agricultural community has seen farmers join together to protest about milk prices, organise schemes to donate fodder and transport it to farmers who had lost theirs due to severe rain and snow, and scores of individuals with tractors and livestock trailers converging upon flooded farms to rescue cattle and sheep from the rising water. These events and behaviours echo, on a larger scale, the ideas about 'farming community' which were current in Lower Wharfedale in the period 1914-1951. 'Local' may have become bigger, but there remains a 'local farming community' all the same.

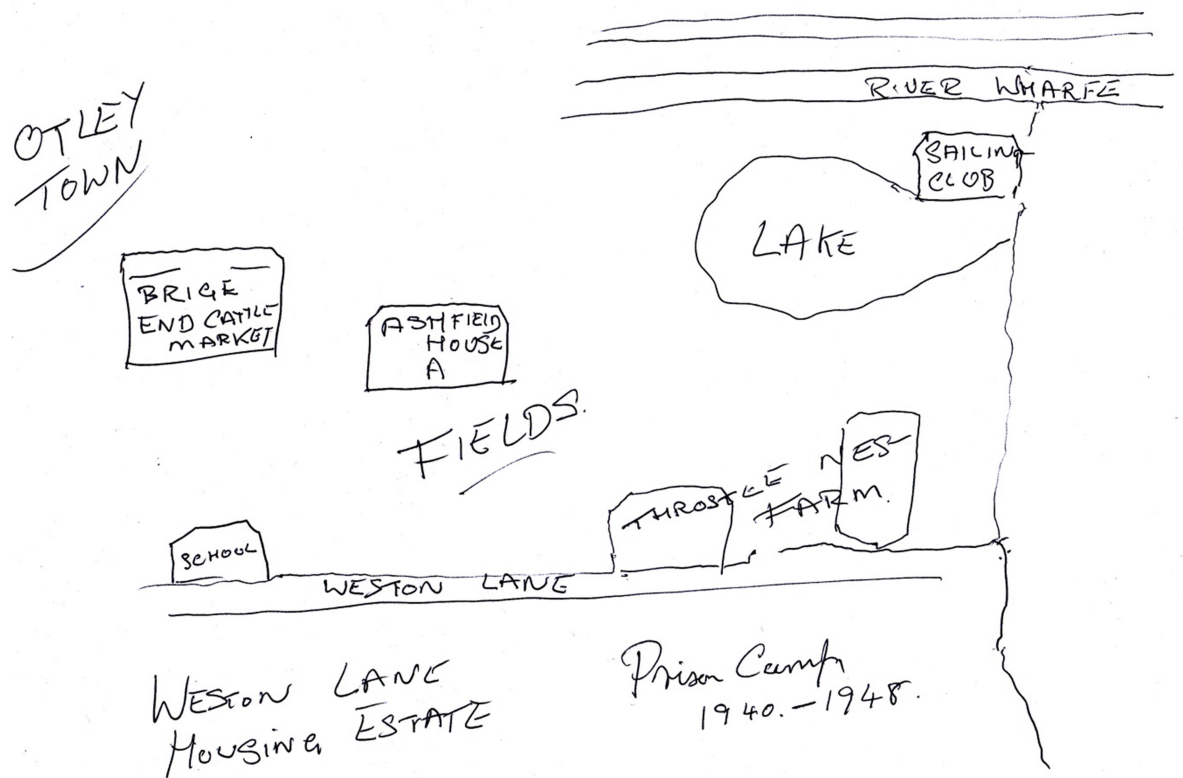
⁵⁸⁰ Anonymous, interview by J. Rowling, Pool-in-Wharfedale, 12 January 2011.

Appendices

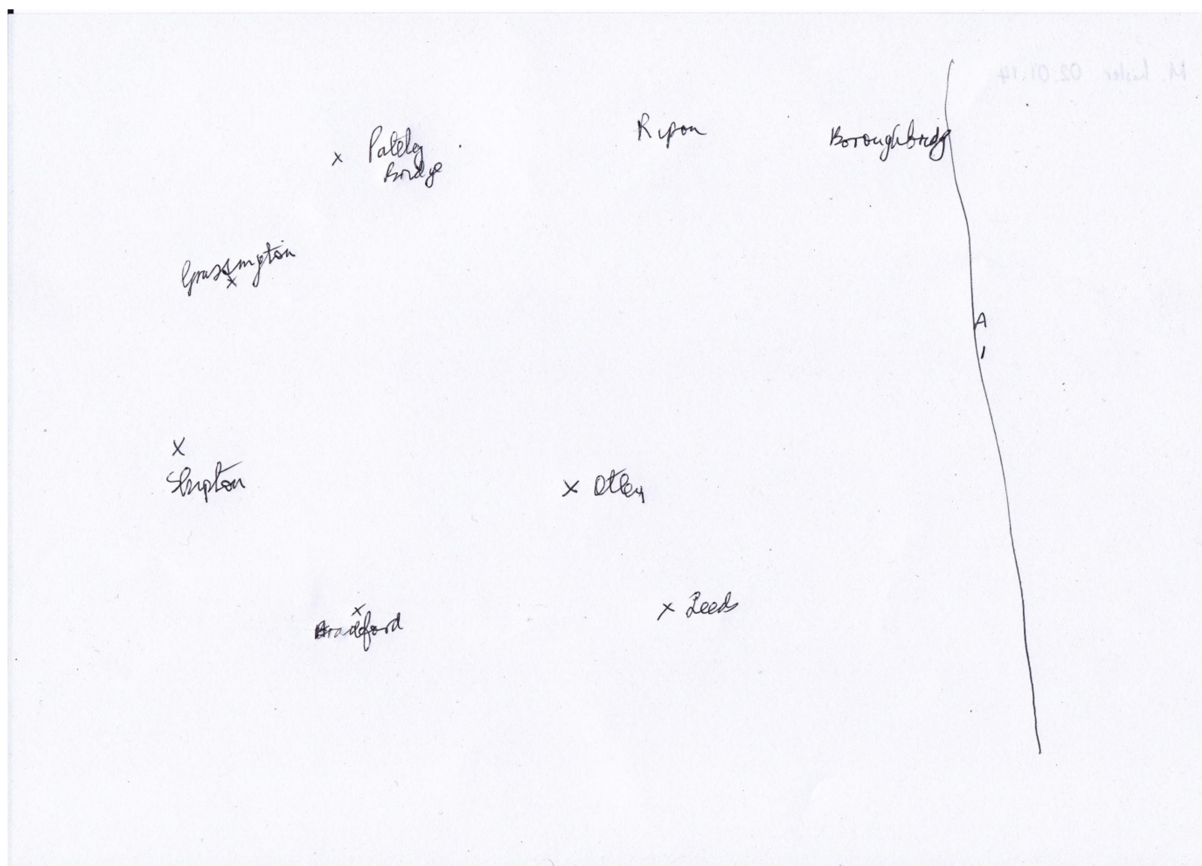
Appendix 1: Participatory maps mentioned in text



G. Rice, map of Carlton, drawn 17 December 2013.



R. Cowgill, map of Weston, drawn 19 December 2013.



M. Lister, map of Otley and surrounding area, drawn 2 January 2014.

Appendix 2: Template interviewee permission and copyright form

Permission and Copyright

COPYRIGHT ASSIGNMENT & CONSENT FORM FOR ORAL HISTORY RECORDINGS

The purpose of this assignment and consent is to enable Jane Rowling to permanently retain and use the recorded recollections of individuals.

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Date:

(Print name):

Address:

.....

Postcode

Telephone:

Email:

Jane Rowling

Signed

Subject of deposit:

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