

THE KENTMERE QUARTER PASTURES

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Until the middle of the 19th century Kentmere had four large enclosed rough pastures on the upper land of the dale. Each was named for, and evidently provided for the cattle of the four hamlets of Hallow Bank Quarter; Green Quarter; Cragg Quarter and Wrea Quarter. (Fig. 1). These four Quarter Pastures and the unenclosed grazing on Fell Head and Pike in Kentmere, though not specifically named, evidently enter recorded history as early as 1372. The lord of the manor of Kentmere had recently died and an Inquest Post-Mortem (I.P.M.) was held to determine what land he held, and of whom he held it; what were its perquisites and who was his heir:-

Miles de Stapleton of Hathelsay In Yorkshire, chivalier, died seized of the soil and herbage of a several dale called Kentmere, lying in the Bailiwick of Kendale with free chase of salvaine within the dale (this describes Miles' hunting rights); there are tenants-at-will who hold the herbage and several pastures (meaning separately held pastures, and almost certainly referring to the four Quarter Pastures) for 40 marks yearly rent, according to the ancient customs of the forest of Kendale (my emphasis); there is a pool there with the fish¹...Thomas de Stapleton, his son, aged 22 years is his heir.²

This makes it quite clear that while the lord of the manor held the soil and herbage, the tenants had long-held grazing rights for which they paid 40 marks (1 mark = 13 shillings and four pence; 13s.4d.) annually. There are records in the 18th century showing tenants were still paying 13s. 4d. for a 10 cattlegate right of grazing over 500 years later.³

Some forty years before Miles de Stapleton died, the Lay Subsidy list of 1332 provides us with the names of some of these tenants in Kentmere and records the amount of tax each paid.⁴ This was a tax paid at the rate of one fifteenth of what was calculated as his "surplus wealth" (my term); that is, there was some notion of what was needed for a reasonable living for his household and he was taxed on the surplus at about 6%. Poorer people were exempt so we only have the names of the richer tenants. Many of the names of those listed in Kentmere were names that are still found in the wider district today - de Ayra, de Brockbanke, de Trouthale, de Coupland, Broune. Others were the

"Gilbert, son of John" type - soon to become surnames ending in ... son. e.g: Gilbert Johnson. The 14th century was very much the period when surnames developed.

Comparing the total sum paid by each township in the whole of the Barony of Kendale and dividing it by the number of tenants who paid, it is evident that, rather surprisingly, it was the wealthier men in the upland areas of the Barony who paid the most. This suggests that it was the value of their animals that contributed to their wealth and underlines the importance and value of the pastures and meadows of the upland dales.

There seems to be no further information about the pastures of Kentmere until a very detailed account appears in 1760.⁵ It arose out of a dispute between the villagers and the owner or tenant of Kentmere Hall over the performing of the duties of Constable in the township. Being the Constable was not a popular job. The office was usually held for one year in turn by the farmer of each 10 cattlegate tenement, the number of "cattlegates" representing its right to graze so many beasts on the Quarter Pasture.

A court was held to settle the argument, and older members of the community testified to the custom that prevailed. Joseph Park aged 77 years had known Kentmere for 58 years, and had lived in Cragg Quarter for 35 years. He said that:-

The township of Kentmere comprised 4 Quarters called Green Quarter, Hallowbank Quarter, Cragg Quarter and Wrea Quarter, and that there were 15 ancient tenements in each quarter save that 3 tenements have been taken from Wrea Quarter, in which Kentmere Hall is situated, and added to Cragg Quarter so that now Cragg Quarter consisted of 18 tenements. And that now only Kentmere Hall remained in Wrea Quarter (because the remaining tenements had been eliminated). And, he said, an ancient tenement consisted of 10 cattles or cattlegates. (i.e. had the privilege for 10 cattle to go in a common stinted pasture.) And that every Quarter had a common stinted Pasture of its own but Kentmere Hall Cattle Pasture was a separate enclosure of its own. (What he was saying therefore was that on each of the four Quarter Pastures there would be 150 cattle (15 tenements each with a 10 cattle share)

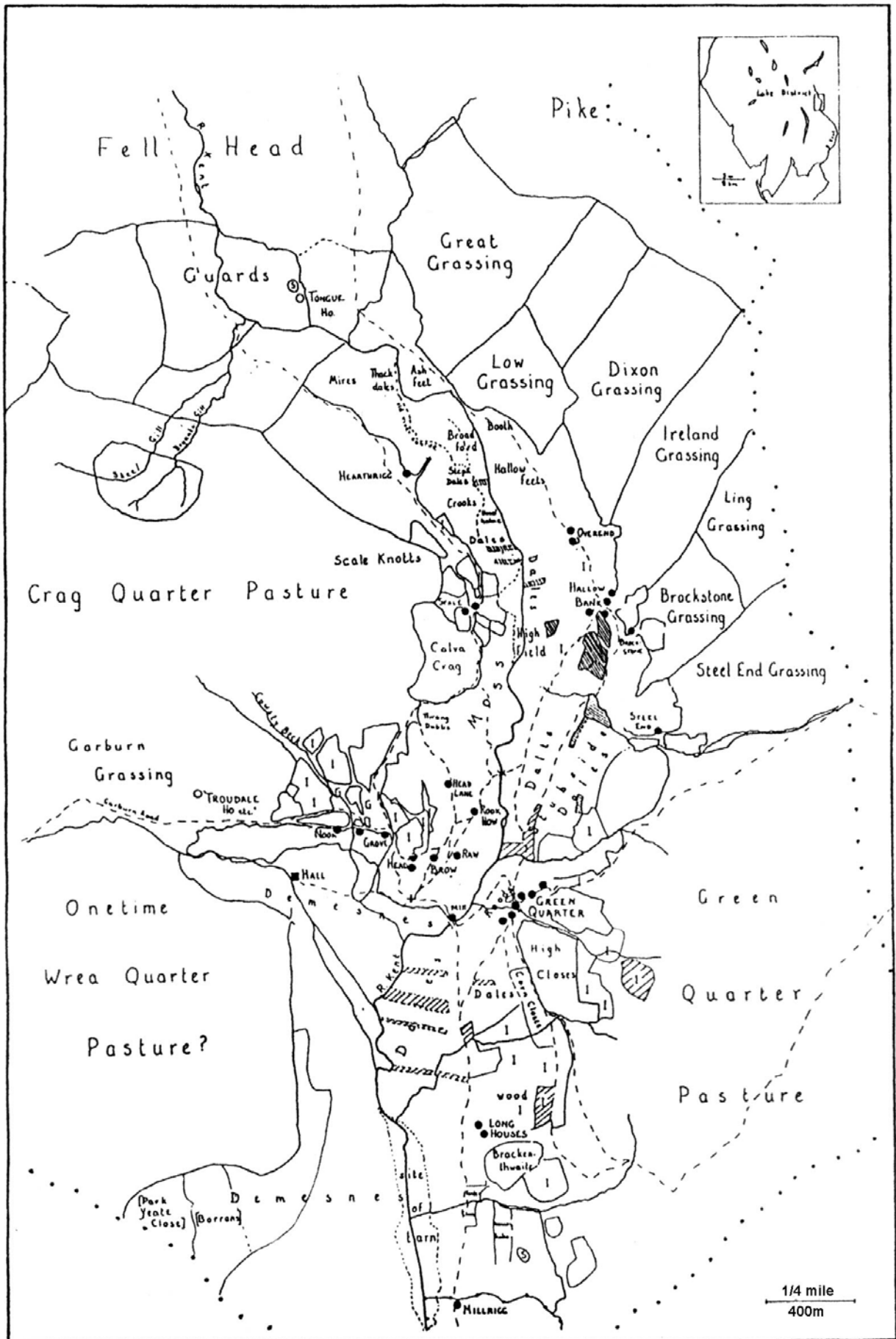


Fig 1 Field names in Kentmere, 1836 (the holdings of two farms are shaded. I denotes intake; S denotes 'native' settlement.)

but on Wrea Quarter Pasture Kentmere Hall had taken 12 tenements' share to itself; i.e. 15 tenements minus the 3 tenements added to Cragg Quarter.⁶

And, Joseph Park continued, every ancient tenement had the privilege to put 80 sheep to graze in a Sheep-heath at the Dale Head not divided or separated by fences, but in which every man knows his own sheep heath distinguished by metes and bounds, and that Kentmere Hall also has such a Sheep-heath in the Dale Head (meaning 960 sheep viz. 12 tenements-worth of 80 sheep).

And furthermore, that each Quarter had a "grass teller" whose office was to take account of each man's stint. The grass teller was responsible for seeing that no man put more stock on the Pasture than his ration allowed, showing clear concern that the Pastures should not be over-grazed. For this service he was allowed to put 20 more sheep on the Dale head. And he said Kentmere Hall also claimed the right to have a grass teller's extra 20 sheep. This adds up to a total of 4,880 sheep on the Dale Head, 980 of the total being the share claimed by the Hall.

Other members of the community supported Joseph Park's testimony, and the court then announced their opinion which was that serving the office of Constable by rotation in proportion to the number of ancient tenements was a good custom, and therefore Kentmere Hall should perform its 12 ancient tenements' share of duties (i.e. do 12 years stint of being Constable). Which seems to me, a very fair judgement!

These 150 cattle are large numbers of stock. It is feasible that the Quarter pastures were larger than they are today (they seem to be about 700 to 800 acres in the 19th century) because it is clear from the number of field-names like "Intake" that little fields and paddocks have been nibbled out of the Pastures along the edge of the moor-wall (or head-dyke) probably over centuries. Even so, it seems that they were reckoning perhaps 7 acres of rough grazing per beast. This is probably a reasonable stocking ratio in summer, but Mrs. Clara Black, who raised the question during the discussion after the SDHS lecture in March 2005, was certainly correct in doubting that so many could be fed through the winter. In this respect it is worth comparing the figures with those recorded on the large, specialist cattle farms (vaccaries) belonging to Roger de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln at the turn of the 1290-1300s in the Forest

of Pendle in Lancashire.

Comparison with cattle farms of Pendle Forest in the Middle Ages⁷

The highly organised and centralised de Lacy Estate in East Lancashire demanded a detailed account of stock numbers of different ages on each vaccary to be recorded every Michaelmas. These figures can provide a degree of comparison with the likely numbers of stock of different ages in Kentmere at that period. Those recorded in 1295-6 and 1305-6 are the most complete which have survived.

The eleven Pendle vaccaries of the Estate all lay between about 450 and 600 feet along the valleys of the Sabden Brook and Pendle Water on the south-facing lower slopes of Pendle Hill. Pendle Hill itself was unenclosed and provided summer grazing for most of the stock as did the Quarter Pastures in Kentmere. But the whole Pendle Estate included some low-lying farmland along the Calder valley. This provided additional grazings which would not be available to the Kentmere farms, so total numbers for Kentmere would have to be somewhat fewer. The desired end product of the Pendle vaccaries was evidently plough oxen to be sent to the capital manor which was at Pontefract in lowland Yorkshire, whereas the Kentmere aim was probably for cheese, a limited amount of meat for their own food, and perhaps a few surplus stock for sale.

At Michaelmas (29th Sept) each vaccary averaged about 80 animals. These consisted of about 40 cows and their calves of that spring (rarely more than 20; a very poor calving ratio); and a slightly smaller number (about 15) of the previous year's calves (1½ year-olds); and a smaller number again (about 12) of the progeny of the year before that (2½ year-olds) now distinguished as heifers and steers; and, usually, 1 bull. These were the animals which would graze the enclosed land within the vaccary through the winter until Elenmas (May 3rd) when the lowland meadows and probably some of the lower pastures were closed to stock in order to allow grass to grow for the hay crop.

These steadily reducing numbers in each of the four generations of cattle on each vaccary were mainly because of the high losses to disease (called "murrain" in the records, but without indication of the nature of the disease) and to wolf attack. The big losses were to murrain, not wolves. In the year 1295-6 over the 11 Pendle

vaccaries only one animal, a 1½ year old, was killed by wolves, but 46 animals were lost through murrain. Of these 27 were calves of that year. The risk of wolf attack, however, especially in winter and early spring, made it essential for any animals put out on further pastures to have a herdsman, perhaps with some additional children as look-outs, and probably a dog or two.⁸ Not all of them were put out to graze on the unenclosed land; those cows which had calved for the first time previous years were sent with their calves of the year to the special lower pastures of the central farm from which the whole estate of Pendle was managed. Some of the “crones” (older animals) were also sent away from the vaccaries to be fattened for meat in the following autumn, leaving some 50 to 60 animals to be grazed on the unenclosed rough pasture outside the vaccary.

Comparing the figures on the Pendle vaccaries with the 150 cattle said to be allowed to graze the Quarter Pastures of Kentmere and assuming similar proportions of stock of different ages Kentmere appears to have had as many animals allowed on each Quarter Pasture as two Pendle vaccaries, which is highly unlikely. It is probable that the figure of 150 in Kentmere referred specifically to the number of animals which could be put on the Quarter pastures in summer and that they would have to reduce the numbers for the winter months in proportion to the available winter fodder.

It was customary to feed up barren or old cows during the summer for slaughter at Michaelmas or Martinmas (early November) and surplus males may also have been sold or killed at Martinmas to provide for Christmas or salted for later in the winter. That might reduce the total stock numbers by several per household, reducing the total within each Quarter to between 100 and 110, and this is without allowing for stock losses caused by murrain or wolves.

Losses to murrain in Kentmere are unlikely to be any lower than those in Pendle, and the incidence of wolf attack is likely to have been greater, which may have appreciably reduced numbers. Even allowing that they would be small hill-type cattle comparable with today's Galloway breeds, this number of cattle still seems likely to have overburdened the winter pasture available. Some, if not most would be housed and fed on the available hay, leaving some to be herded by the day onto the Pastures and brought to the low pastures at night.

The problem of winter provision for their stock does raise the possibility that the figure of 150 apparent in the 1760 account of Kentmere's Quarter Pastures may have allowed for some agistment of “outsider” cattle during the summer. The view of agricultural historians today however is that agistment does not seem to have been common practice in the middle ages. Comparing notes recently with my neighbour farmer, he reckons he is maintaining a self-contained herd of Galloway cattle grazed there summer and winter on limestone rough pasture, (plus some additional concentrate cake) at a rate of about 10 acres per head. This appears to be a rather more generous stocking rate than in Kentmere in 1760.

The Farming Year

Figure 2 is a diagram I made to show the farming year as it was managed on the upland sheep-grazings of Malham Moor in Yorkshire in the middle ages.⁹ The Moor was a huge inter-commoned pasture on which villagers in the dales below had had grazing rights probably from earliest times. But from the 1120s several ecclesiastical institutions whose emphasis was almost wholly on the production of wool, were also granted grazing rights which led to a number of disputes. The records of Fountains Abbey are the most accessible and detailed of these ecclesiastical bodies. Traditionally the grazing period of the unenclosed pastures on the Moor also ran from Elenmas (3rd May) to Martinmas (11th November), and the Abbey sheep, which were mostly wether (castrated males) flocks, were returned to their lowland pastures which were on farms well outside the area. The hardier hill sheep would be left to get food where they could, principally from the heather (ling) in Dec/Feb, followed by the mosscrop, which is the name given to the barely visible, but nourishing, flower shoots of cotton grass, which the narrow mouths of sheep could reach into and pull out.

Late April to early May could often be a “hungry gap” when seasonal grasses were delayed by poor weather, but from then forward into the summer the animals, still herded, could work for their own bite, leaving farmers and their families time to cut, dry and gather peat from the turbaries, clip the sheep, cut and make hay, and prepare for the (mainly) oats and barley (bere) harvest. If all went smoothly then Michaelmas (29th Sept) could be a time of rejoicing.

A summer chore for the women and girls was making cheeses, some of which may have gone to

market. Most was probably retained for the household in winter. While the hardy sheep of the Yorkshire Dales would be wintered on the fell pastures, the Kentmere Quarter Pastures appear to have been wholly reserved for cattle which

traditionally in the north would be brought down to in-by-land at Martinmas (11th November) though it is likely that if the hill pastures could still feed beasts, a few might be herded there in daylight hours.

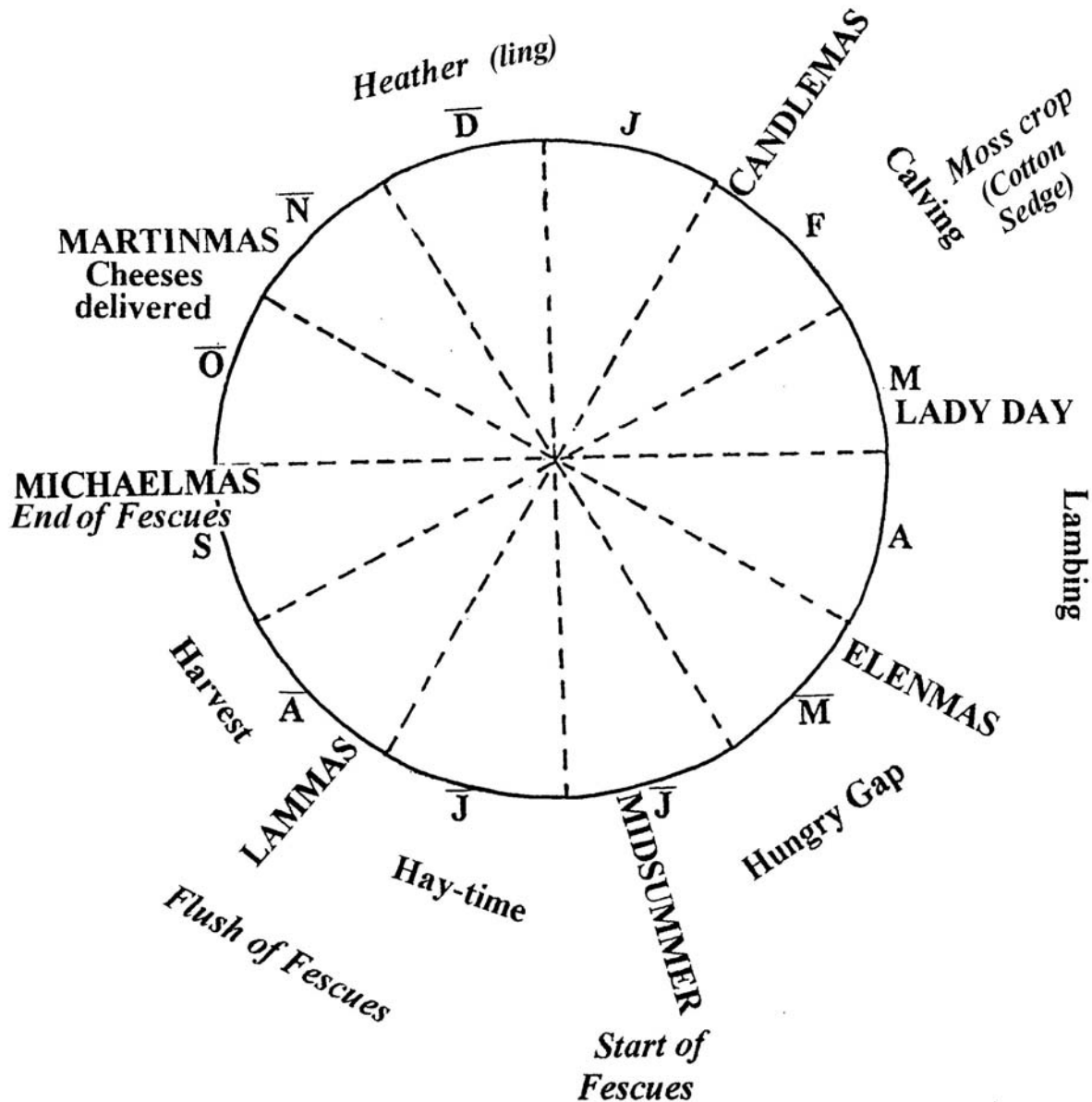


Figure 2 The farming year on Malham Moor in the Middle Ages

Beginnings of Change.

When Joseph Park (then aged 77) gave his account of the management of the pastures in 1760, he was recalling the arrangements of the early years of that century, and also recounting information which he had learnt about earlier periods when near-medieval customs still prevailed and had continued largely undisturbed

until sometime within his own lifetime. During the 18th century however the more substantial farmers were beginning to see advantages in buying themselves free of manorial custom. This would give them freedom to buy and sell land and probably most particularly to buy (and sell) cattlegates. This would give them the right to put extra stock on the Pastures. (Note however that it did not give them the right to enclose any

part of the Pastures: mostly that did not happen until the middle of the next century, though it seems that much of Hallow Bank Quarter Pasture had been enclosed before 1836).

For individual farmers the impetus for purchasing their freeholds despite the cost probably came from perceiving opportunities in new ideas about breeding and the improvement of stock, and also in the developing droving trade which in turn was encouraged by the steady rise in population in England, particularly in London and some of the northern towns as the Industrial Revolution got under way. Even closer to home the growing woollen industry was needing cut brackens to provide lye for soap-making, and the iron industry was needing charcoal from coppice woods; both were products which might be produced in the Dale by farmers who could afford to acquire rights over more land.

During the later 18th century in a list of Enfranchisement Purchases 1748-1770, 12 men in Cragg Quarter are recorded as having bought their freeholds of 10 small farms from the Lord of the Manor and in Green Quarter 7 farmers had bought their freeholds of eight farms. Another 7 men (and possibly two more) in Hallow Bank Quarter bought their freeholds, apparently for 8 farms.¹⁰ Earlier John Chamley of Lickbarrow, Windermere purchased the freehold of Headlane (alias Newhousefold) in 1733 when he paid £40. 5s. (120 times the previous customary yearly rent of half a mark; i.e. 6s 8d.).¹¹ Many of these purchases concerned the purchase and amalgamation of smaller farms with their cattlegate rights as well as their enclosed lands. Probably the richer man paid for all the freeholds at the same time as part of the purchase. Thus by 1836 when detailed accounts appear in the Kendal Corn Rent schedules,¹² several farms were recording 20, 30 and even 40 cattlegates, figures well above the once-standard customary holding of 10 cattlegates.

The Kendal Corn Rent schedule in 1836¹³ provides a wealth of information, not only of the number of cattlegates on the Quarter pastures (there called “grasses”) per farm, but also of their grazing rights for sheep. These were primarily held on Fell Head but there were also unenclosed common grazings on (Kentmere) Pike and Dixon and Ireland Grassings which were held by the farms of Hallow Bank Quarter and some farms in Green Quarter. The schedule also records for which Quarter the farmers held those rights. These are shown on Tables 1-4 below. These

show how uneven the grazing rights had become, almost half having no cattlegates, and some holding very large numbers. The almost equal holdings described by Joseph Park as applying in the early 1700s have gone completely.

Tables of Kentmere Pastures 1836 (data from Kendal Corn Rent Schedule)

Table 1.

Holdings only in Green Quarter pasture and on Fell Head (in right of Green Q.)				
	In Green Q. pasture in Fell Head			
	grasses	acres	grasses	acres
Mardale Curacy	6	37	78	32
Henry Dowthwaite	4	24	-	
Chris. Gilpin	8	49	4	
Daniel Harrison	8	49	-	
John Martindale (1st farm)	8	49	-	
Roughill School	2	?	-	
Jas. Simpson	8	49	8	12
Chris Wilson)	12	74	16	
64a...)	4	24	4	1
Kentmere Park (Wrea Q.)		600	96	387

Two holdings in Green Quarter had rights on G.O. pasture Fell Head & Pike				
	No of grasses	acres	Fell Head	(acres)
Gawin Gilpin)	16	98	16	56
) and on Pike			4	16
John Wilson (incl. Pike)	20	123	16	?

Comments on the tables:

The information is mainly presented under the Quarter Pasture headings, Table 1 being the figures for Green Quarter, but to the holdings of Christopher Wilson in Green Quarter, I have added the figures for Wrea Quarter Pasture, now called Kentmere Park and wholly attached to the Hall, which he also held. Table 2 lists the holdings in Cragg Quarter except for those of John Dixon whose land and rights deserve special examination because they throw more light on the history of Wrea and Cragg Quarters:-

John Dixon held 3 farms in Cragg Quarter: Nook House, Grove House and the site of Tongue House for which he had “in his right of Cragg

Table 2

Holdings only in Cragg Quarter Pasture and on Fell Head (in right of Cragg)				
	grasses	acres	Fell Head	acres
John Braithwaite	35½	218		29
William Beethom			6½	?
William Chamley			22	88
John Cowperthwaite	4	21	4	16
Jas. Clementson	3½	21		
Firbank Curacy	8	49		
Jonathon Harrison	2	12		
Richard Harling	7½	46	8	32
Howgill Curacy			8	32
Thos. Jenkinson			14½	58
Mr. Long			8	32
John Mount	2	12		
John Martindale 2 nd farm	7½	46	8	32
Thos. Pattinson	12½	76	18	?

Quarter” a total of 9¼ grasses (58 acres) on Cragg Quarter Pasture. In addition, for each of these three farms he held in his right of Cragg Quarter, 6 grasses (24 acres) on Fell Head and Pike. He also held the site of Troudale House along with Garburn Grassing and this evidently gave him the use of 24 grasses (96 acres) on Fell Head and Pike; that is, the equivalent share of 3 farms and all these, significantly, were held right “in his right of Wrea Quarter” It was this information which led me to suggest earlier (and Note 6) that Troudale with Garburn Grassing had once been part of Wrea Quarter, and may represent the three tenements which Joseph Park in his testimony in 1760 said had been transferred from Wrea Quarter to Cragg Quarter. It seems likely that when Kentmere Hall was arranging its monopoly of Wrea Quarter pasture to make Kentmere Park, Garburn Grassing was transferred with the three tenements in order to provide them with the necessary pasturage.

John Dixon’s Will made a few years after the Kendal Corn Rent Act makes it clear that he had acquired some of his cattlegates separately from the farms which had originally held them; he had not had to purchase the farms in order to get the cattlegates.

By the time of the Corn Rent Survey in 1836 Hollowbank Quarter appears to have undergone at least a partial “Enclosure.” Many tenements which had had rights of grazing on Pike seem to have lost them to James Airey and John Dixon

from Hollowbank Quarter and John Wilson and Gawen Gilpin from Green Quarter and had received grazings on Fell Head in lieu. (See Table 3.) Instead of a Hollowbank Quarter Pasture we now see eight large “grassings”. Low and High Grassings were both held as part of Pout How tenement. Two grassings were named for and belonged with Brockstone and Steel End farms. These along with Ling Grassing were entirely in the hands of James Airey and he is described in somewhat ambiguous phrasing as having also:

“for his right on Fell Head and Pike:

for Hollowbank Quarter 36 grasses (145 acres),
for Green Quarter 16 grasses (64 acres)
and on Pike 5 grasses (20 acres)”.

Only the two Grassings called Dixon and Ireland remained as pasture held in shared usage by seven farmers of Hollowbank Quarter.

Table 3

Name	‘for his right in’	Grasses	Acres	
Dean Esq.	Hollowbank Q	1	?	in Dix. & Ireld.
James Gilpin	Hollowbank Q and	4 8	39	in Fell Head in Dix & Ireld
Robert Garnett	Hollowbank Q Pike And now lying together (added in pencil)	24 3½ 14	96 14	on Fell Head on Fell Head in Dix & Ireld “and 2 grasses for tups.”
Mich. Mattinson .	Hollowbank Q	2	8	on Fell Head
John Mattinson	Pike	1½	6	on Fell Head
Nether Wasdale Poor “ “ (Curacy) “ “ “	Hollowbank Q Pike And now lying together	4 ½ 6	? 2 29	on Fell Head on Fell Head in Dix & Ireld.
Miss Robinson “ “ “ “ (she had no farm or land)	Hollowbank Q	8 4 14	32 19 56	on Fell Head in Dix. & Ireld. in Dix & Ireld.
Staveley & Torver Curacy	Hollowbank Q Pike	6 ½	16 2	in Dix. & Ireld. in Dix. & Ireld.

The Kendal Corn Rent Schedule indicates that over 30 farmers in Kentmere had rights of grazing in the four Quarter Pastures of the township, but by 1850¹⁴ the common grazing on Green Quarter Pasture had gone, and full enclosure of Cragg Quarter was completed by 1862. The process sliced up the old Pastures into paddocks assigned to individual farms. The paddocks were bounded by long straight walls which had to be made according to detailed specifications in the Enclosure Act for both their construction and the time for their completion. This sometimes meant that smaller farmers could not take up land

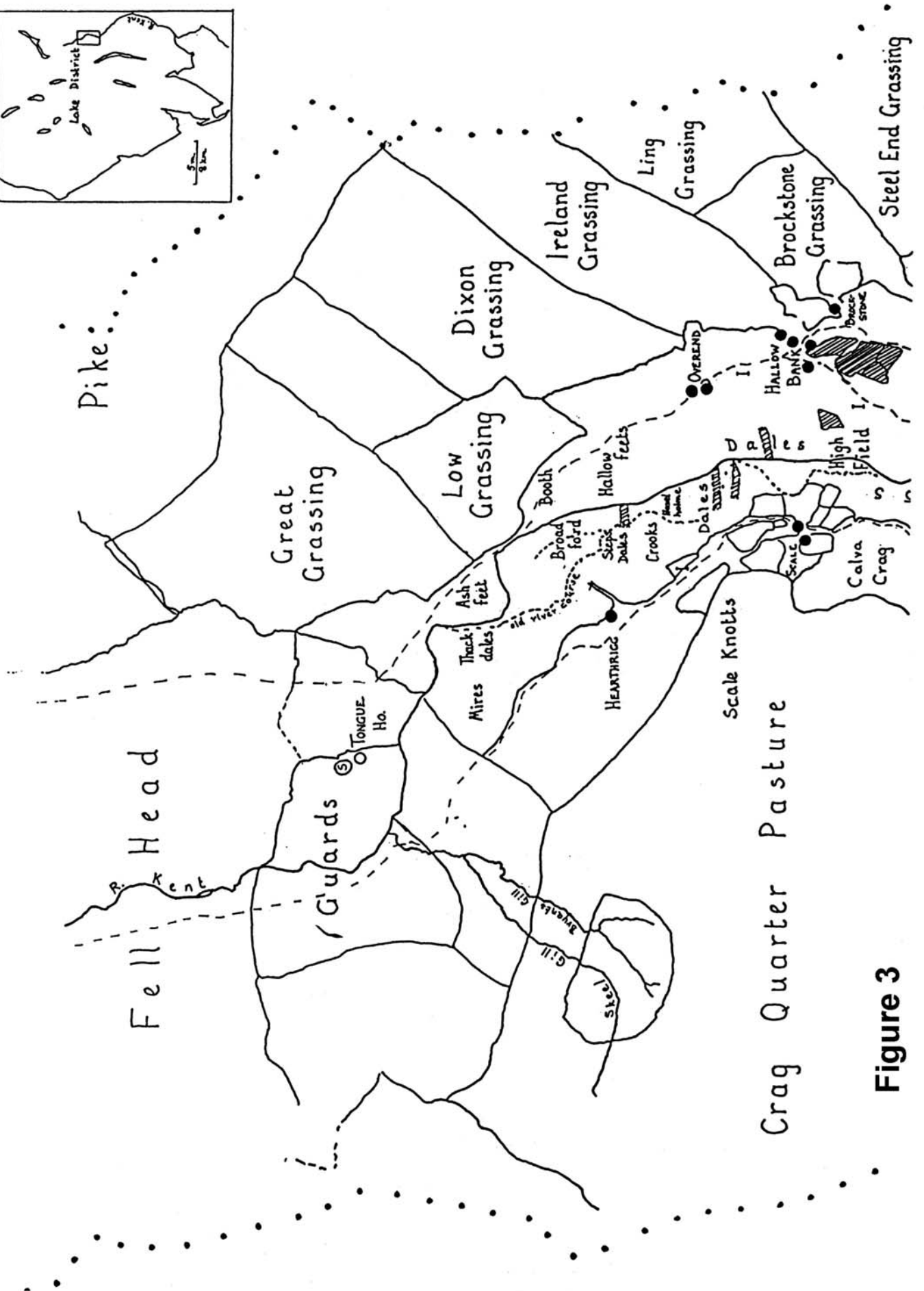
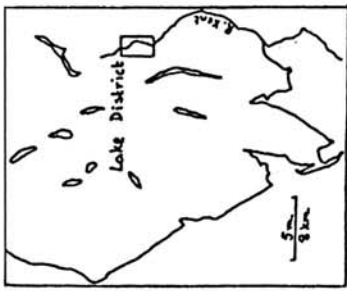


Figure 3

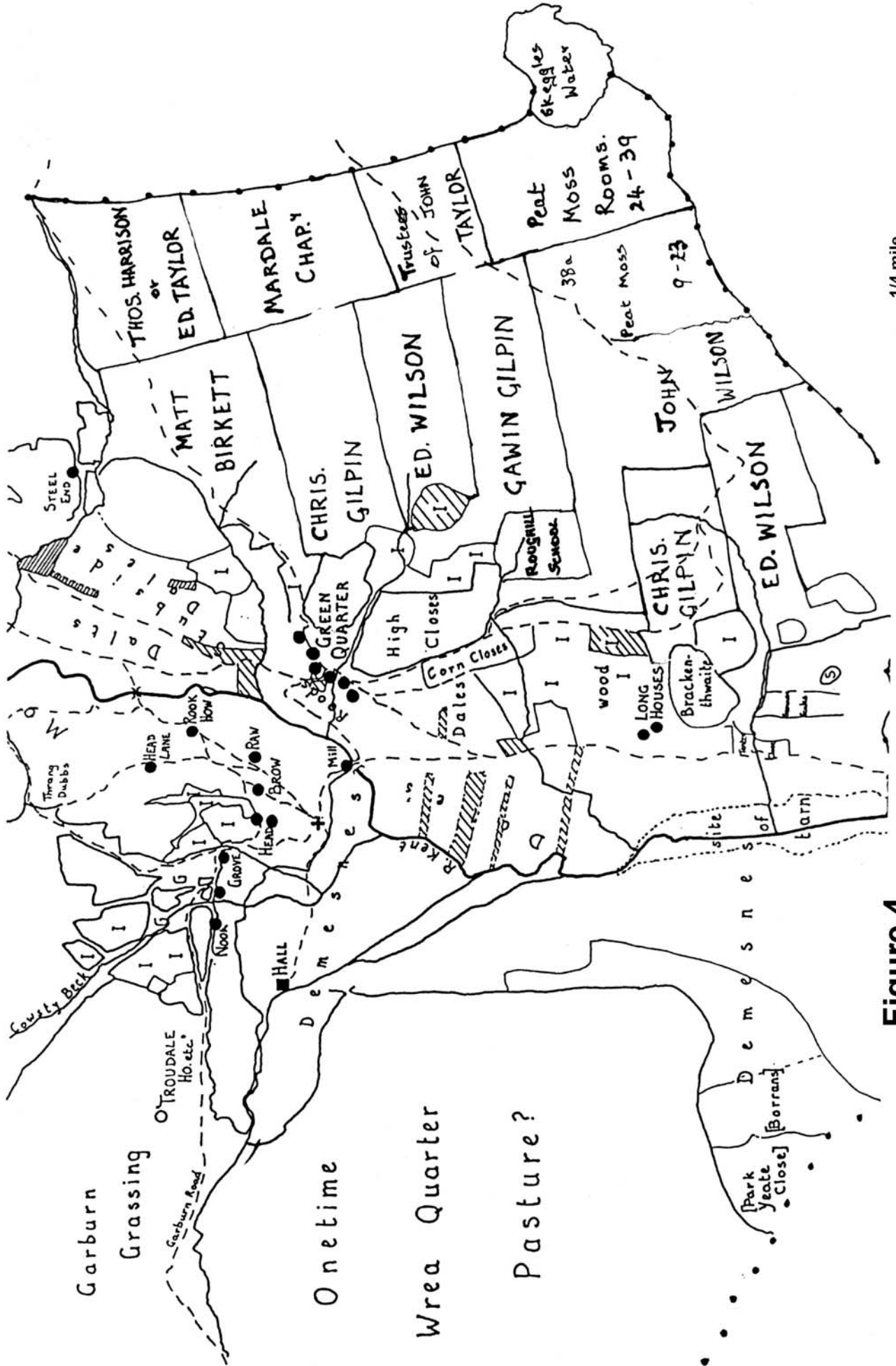


Figure 4

assigned to them because of the cost of walling it. In Cragg Quarter 10 farmers had rights in the Pasture in 1836 but only 4 by the completion of enclosure in 1862. A less drastic fall is indicated in corresponding figures for Green Quarter Pasture where 12 farmers had cattlegates in the Pasture in 1836 but by 1850 only 10 held land. (Fig. 4.)

One feature of the Green Quarter Pasture which had not entirely disappeared in 1850 was the right to turbarry, that is the right to cut peat for fuel. In individual deeds of the 18th century mention is made of “moss rooms” from which each household could cut their peats for cooking and heating and some records make clear that these rights were confined to a specified number of hearths in each house. Lurk House (which became part of Row tenement) had “a peat house (for storing the dried turves) and liberty to get peats in Highfield sufficient for one fire only” in 1796.¹³ The Enclosure Act for Green Quarter Pasture assigned to 14 persons some 30 “moss rooms” and laid down quite detailed instructions to ensure proper drainage of the peat beds after the season’s peats were cut.

There were other perquisites which had once been available to the inhabitants of Kentmere. During the 16th century four husbandmen of Kentmere (all of the Ayrey family) claimed the right to take *bullrushes, seaves, tode pyppes, reades and grass* (respectively for kindling, rushlights, scouring, thatch and basketry, and hay) from the edge of the mere, (C.R.O.(K) ST 26) and similar rights pertained on the Pastures. Many of the smaller tenements had the right to graze animals in the lanes and tracks leading up to the Pastures, and bracken for bedding or making potash, ling for thatching and smallwoods. This may have allowed some of the lesser tenants to maintain household and perhaps keep some stock or poultry. Those rights were probably reduced or even lost in the enclosure of the common pastures.

Many farmers undoubtedly pressed for and welcomed the opportunities that enclosure offered. Probably the wealthier ones and the landlords were the most enthusiastic, and perhaps also the most vocal. The voice of the smallholders was less likely to be heard, but a little ditty which was around in the 18th century (in several versions) survived and was published anonymously in the 19th century seems likely to have come from them:

*The Law will punish man or woman
Who steals a goose from off the Common;
But leaves the greater Felon loose
Who steals the Common from the goose.*

References and Notes.

1. Could this be a reference to the TROUDALE recorded in 1836? A Robert de TROUTHALE was among those in Kentmere who were listed as paying to the Lay Subsidy of 1332. W. Farrer, (1923) *Records of Kendale*, i. 309
2. From W Farrer (1923) *op. cit.*, 309
3. C. R.O. (K) WDX/216.
4. W Farrer (1923) *op.cit.*, i. 309.
5. J. F. Curwen *Records of Kendale* iii. 153.
6. Evidence in the last Will and Testament of John Dixon in 1841 suggests that a portion of the land of Wrea Quarter Pasture transferred to Cragg Quarter to provide common grazing for those three transferred tenements, and that the land in question is the area known later as Troudale and Garburn Grassing.
7. M. A. Atkin, (1994) ‘Land use and management in the upland demesne of the de Lacy Estate of Blackburnshire’, *Agricultural History Review* vol. 42, 1-19.
8. These may have been fighting dogs rather than herders. There is some argument today whether medieval dogs had yet been trained to be as clever as the modern sheepdog.
9. M. A. Atkin, (1990) ‘The medieval exploitation and development of Malham Moor’, *NOMINA* xiv 61-71.
10. C.R.O. (K) WD / PP.
11. C.R.O. (K) WDX/216.
12. C.R.O. (K) WQR/C9.
13. C.R.O. (K) WDS/216.
14. Green Quarter Enclosure C.R.O. (K) WQ /1/ 33