'Frequent Flitting': Geographical Mobility and Social Structure in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Greenlaw

RAB HOUSTON

From the late eighteenth century onwards writers on British agriculture frequently remarked on the habitual, apparently senseless mobility of farm labour. Concerned commentators were keen to point out that it was 'an evil of great magnitude that your agricultural people should be a moving population' (Gilly 1842: 7; Duncan 1919). Frequent moving, or 'flitting' as it was called in northern England and Scotland, was seen as inconvenient to the employer and was also felt to deprive labour of 'the benefits of those patriarchal attachments which unite landlord and tenant, employer and servant, neighbour' (Gilly 1842: 8). The religious and moral education of children would be interrupted. Contemporaries had their own ideas about the reasons for this movement, but this paper offers some suggestions about the possible motivations of mobile agricultural workers. While the basic characteristics of geographical mobility in pre-industrial Britain are well established, there have been few attempts to assess the complexity of local and regional variations related to differing social and economic structures which existed even within a predominantly agricultural framework (Clark 1979; Devine 1979a; Schofield 1970; Tranter 1974). Finally this article sets out to add to the work of Gray (1973) and Carter (1976) by assessing the social *meaning* of mobility in specific socio-economic contexts.

These issues are considered here in a study of the parish of Greenlaw in Berwickshire made possible by the survival of a unique listing from the mid-nineteenth century (SRO CH2/183/5; Flinn 1977: 467, 470-2). Among the Church of Scotland records for the parish there survives a set of nominal lists of all those who came into or removed from the parish at the two terms of Whitsunday and Martinmas for the three years from Whitsunday 1839 to Whitsunday 1842. There are 680 names: 385 incomers, 295 outgoers. Marital status, occupation, age (for those entering the parish), number of children, birthplace and/or the parish whence the people came or to which they were going, former landlord or master, destination and sometimes length of residence in previous parish are noted. Information is fairly consistently recorded, though details are better for those entering the parish than for those leaving it. Where it can be checked with the 1841 census, the information in the listing is generally accurate. It is also clear from comparison of the lists with those kept by the

United Associate Congregation[1] (SRO CH3/503/1) that the compiler of the former tried to include *all* movers and not simply Church of Scotland members.

The economy of Greenlaw in the mid-nineteenth century was based on highly developed and efficient agriculture. Improved arable agriculture was supplemented by the increasing production of cattle on enclosed farms from the late eighteenth century onwards, rents being high on the basis of strong regional and national demand for grain and livestock (*SA* XIV: 501-14; *NSA* II: 40-9; Gray 1973: 123). The population of the parish rose steadily from the 1750s and of the 302 families there in 1831, 84 were employed mainly in agriculture and 87 chiefly in 'trade, manufactures or handicraft', though this was not an area with any great centres of industrial employment of the type which existed notably in the western Lowlands (*NSA* II: 44; Gray, 1973: 151). The total population in 1841 was 1355. Employment chances were very good overall, with high wages for both servants and artisans—indeed among the best in Scotland in the 1840s (Levitt and Smout 1979: 162, 165-7; *NSA* II: 45; Devine 1979b: 56-7; Gray 1973: 102-3). Southern Berwickshire as a whole was a prosperous area, its social stability explained at least in part by an unusually high standard of living (Levitt and Smout 1979: 78, 264-5). The *Statistical Account* speaks of 'the increasing comforts of the people' while the presence in Greenlaw of 1000 acres of common pasture open to all would have further raised real living standards by allowing stock to be kept to supplement income (*NSA* II: 44).

Nevertheless social and economic changes had taken place during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The trend towards fewer and larger farms worked by hired labour which had been taking place from at least the eighteenth century meant that the traditional opportunities for servants and cottars ultimately to attain the status of tenant farmers were very much circumscribed (Dodgshon 1983). This change is clearly illustrated when we compare the social and occupational structure in the late seventeenth century with that of the mid-nineteenth century.[2] The 1695 poll tax schedule for the parish shows that there were some fifty-eight tenant farmers, sixty cottars or sub-tenants, twenty-four hinds, seventeen herds and 161 servants (SRO GD86/770). At the time of the 1851 census there were twenty-two farmers, six farm stewards, four shepherds, 121 male agricultural labourers and forty-five male farm servants. Social and economic polarisation among the agricultural strata of society was more developed here than elsewhere in Scotland (Gray 1976: 86).

Low levels of emigration and high wages, both characteristic of the area, were associated in part with opportunities for employment in rural domestic industry (Gray 1983: 113; Dodgshon 1983: 55-7). Some of the people displaced by agricultural changes which involved an increase in size and a decrease in the number of farms could be absorbed by the wide range of textile-making which David Loch remarked upon in his late eighteenth-century tour of the trading towns and villages of Scotland—nearby Kelso, Duns, Melrose and Selkirk for example (Dodgshon 1983: 55). Especially at the Whitsunday and Martinmas fairs of Roxburghshire in the early

1830s 'linen cloth and shoes are exposed for sale in quantity and numbers. The cloth is woven by what are called household weavers, who inhabit the small villages or single cottages on farms' (*Anon.* 1834-5: 385-6). In the early nineteenth century there were sixty weavers, most of whom lived in the town of Greenlaw (Gibson 1905: 215). Indeed the Southern Uplands and the south-east of Scotland were seen by contemporaries as having solved the problems of social change rather well. The wealth of the area along with low unemployment meant for example that poor relief in Greenlaw was generous and well-organised (Levitt and Smout 1979: 180). Low emigration may have been due less to the distance from expanding industrial towns as Gray suggests (Gray 1983: 113) than to local employment opportunities. Devine believes that the social stability of Lowland Scotland in the early nineteenth century was due to the constant employment opportunities for those who stayed in agriculture and the many chances for those who left.

Those suffering from the effects of improvements in agriculture were not forced to leave the region as happened in the south-west of Scotland. Instead they were generally assimilated into the expanding ranks of landless labour. The type of agricultural labour required in south-east Scotland differed from that in other important farming regions such as the north-east Lowlands, though it did resemble that of Northumberland very closely. Improved agriculture and the continuation of the custom of long hiring was associated with the use of married servants living in tied accommodation and of servants living in the farmer's household (Gray 1973: 158-60; Devine 1978: 334-5; Anon. 1834-5: 380-5). Hiring markets for servants were established in Berwickshire in 1834 at a time when the institution of living-in servants in husbandry was becoming extinct in southern and eastern England (Kussmaul 1981: 120-34; *NSA* II: 46). The nature of agricultural techniques and a shortage of labour, thanks to the availability of industrial employments, meant that long-hiring persisted into the late nineteenth century (Gray 1983: 109). By 1800 married servants in husbandry (hinds) living and eating in their own houses had largely superseded live-in single servants.[3] (Littlejohn 1963: 51-5). Hinds were hired by the year in March or at Whitsunday, paid in cash and kind, accommodation and pasture or a garden, in return for their labour and that of their families (Goldie 1970: 1-10; *Anon.* 1834-5: 384). Married servants were firmly tied to the farm during their hiring by the need of accommodation, food and wages. Single servants worked on a half or whole year basis for food, lodging and a small cash wage. They were usually hired at Martinmas, but also at Whitsunday (Table I). Of all movements recorded in the listing of population turnover in Greenlaw at Whitsunday, 38 per cent were by married people, 62 per cent single; at Martinmas the figures are 4 per cent and 96 per cent.

Landless day-labourers were relatively uncommon in south-east Scotland in comparison with the southern and eastern counties of England, and their wages and continuity of employment were appreciably better (Devine 1978: 337; Levitt and Smout 1979: 78). They might also be used for short-term investment projects such as

TABLE I

Movement at Whitsunday and Martinmas: number of married and single workers.

	Whitsunday		*Martinmas*	
Date	*Mar.*	*Single*	*Mar.*	*Single*
1839	37	71	3	73
1840	48	69	—	65
1841	36	59	5	58
1842	55	84	—	—
	176	283	8	196

drainage or ditching (*Farmers' Magazine* XX: 103; Somerville 1848: 78). The replies to enquiries included in the *Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law* show that more than 60 per cent of parishes in south-east Scotland expressed a preference for married servants or cottagers—a high proportion, which contrasts strongly with that of the Forth basin (Levitt and Smout 1979: 83, 91, 96; Goldie 1970: 7–10). Hinds, servants and day labourers were recruited overwhelmingly from the same region whereas in the Lothians more immigrant Highland and Irish workers were used in agriculture (Goldie 1970: 10; *Farmers' Magazine* XVIII: 476).

In the 1841 census those working in agriculture are classed only as farmers or as agricultural workers, but in the other listings more specific occupational terms are used: hinds, herds, married labourers and servants, single labourers and servants. It would appear that distinctions in occupational designations are meaningful and consistent. If we compare the designations of forty-one fathers involved in agricultural labouring who registered baptisms in the period 1839–42 with those who appear in the movement listing we find a complex picture. Of five herds in the baptismal registers, two can be identified in the movement listing and are both given the same designation in the different sources. Eleven of the nineteen hinds who had children baptised appear in the listing, but only five are described in the same way: the other six are called servants or labourers. All three stewards who registered baptisms appear in the list, but only one is described as such. Eight labourers of the fourteen who registered baptisms under that appellation appear in the lists, all with the same title. Incidentally, all these men are called agricultural labourers in the 1841 census.[4] These are the main occupations we encounter in the listings. What patterns of geographical mobility were characteristic of such people?

The most obvious point we can make is that most movement was short distance. Of moves into Greenlaw, 60 per cent involved journeys of less than ten miles compared with 69 per cent of outward moves. Most movement was back and forth between Greenlaw and the prosperous area of the Merse to the south and east of the parish. Greenlaw was located on the mail road from Coldstream to Edinburgh and had contacts with the capital and the Lothians, especially through the great grain market of Dalkeith. One Penicuik brewer was able to find customers for his products in early

nineteenth-century Greenlaw (Donnachie 1979: 122). There was however little recorded movement to and from the Lothians, nor is there any evidence of a drift of population overseas or to the towns, apart from the growing textile centres in the Borders. There was presumably some leakage to the towns of the Central Lowlands from the area, but all we can say is that people did not move directly from Greenlaw to, say, Edinburgh. Table II confirms the conventional picture of fairly frequent turnover of single servants. Among those whose length of stay in the parish of previous residence is known, 37 per cent of single males had stayed only six months, 70 per cent less than five years. These figures understate the frequency of turnover of employment since workers might move around within a parish before moving over its boundary. The picture for single women is much the same, though more stayed for longer than five years: 34 per cent instead of 24 per cent. Hinds, shepherds and married male labourers are appreciably less mobile.

TABLE II

Length of stay in parish of last residence

Length of Stay	*Hinds/ Herds*	*Married Male Labourers.*	*Single Men*	*Single Women*
½ year	—	—	31	32
1 year	3	14	16	7
2 years	3	6	10	12
3 years	4	5	5	3
4 years	3	8	2	5
5 years and over	8	22	20	30
Unknown	1	3	2	3
	22	58	86	92

The ages of 198 male movers are known, and 174 female. Comparison of the ages of movers in the listings with the age-structure of the population of Berwickshire as a whole in 1841 confirms another well-known feature of agricultural mobility patterns: movement was specific to certain stages in the life cycle. Women in particular were disproportionately drawn from the 15-24 age-group: 80 per cent of all movers compared to 35 per cent of the total female population (Table III). For men the same propensity to move in certain age-groups is clear, but persisting into the 25-34 cohort. This is probably a product of the preponderance of married labourers in this age-group since we know that mobility is often correlated with hired labour (Table IV). In the older age-groups the proportions of movers is closer to the age-distribution of the population at large. Mobility was then more common among certain age-groups.

TABLE III

Age-structure of movers compared with that of the Berwickshire population as a whole (1841 Census)[5]

Age Group	*% Total Movers*		*% Total Population*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
10—17	24	24	38	35
18—19	15	23	12	10
20—24	15	36	9	11
25—34	20	8	13	14
35—44	8	6	10	11
45—54	11	—	8	8
55 +	8	3	10	11

TABLE IV

Age-structure of 198 male movers in occupational groups

Age Group	*Hinds & Herds*	*Married Labourers*	*Single Servants*	*Others*
10—14	—	—	13	—
15—17	—	—	33	1
18—19	1	—	27	1
20—24	3	5	18	3
25—34	8	22	4	6
35—44	10	4	—	2
45—54	9	10	1	2
55 +	3	11	—	1

The results derived from the listing can be compared with those from testimonials recorded at Greenlaw between 1834 and 1843 (SRO CH2 183/2). Testimonials, certificates of good behaviour, were issued by the minister and kirk session of a parish to those wishing to move elsewhere, and were designed to show that the individual or family mentioned was free from church censure and had lived peaceably with their neighbours. These certificates were not a mere formality and could be essential to those wishing to stay in a parish for any length of time (Houston 1981: 276-92; Gibson 1905: 103-7). As recorded in Kirk Session registers, testimonials give usable information on the sex and marital status of the mover(s), the parish issuing the certificate and date of departure. Unfortunately the blank columns on the first page of the Greenlaw record show that the intention to record when parishioners left was not fulfilled. Testimonials and movement-listing are not directly comparable since the former covers only those in the established church and usually only refers to one move. They do not record mobility as frequently nor, it seems, as accurately as do the listings. Over the three years ninety-three testimonials were received from other parishes on behalf of entrants to Greenlaw. Of these people fifty can be identified in

the movement-listing, though there are some discrepancies in the time of moving or in the parish from which the person moved. In sixteen cases the parish is different, though usually an adjacent parish is named. With such frequent movement it is possible that testimonials did not keep up with actual residence. Testimonials also appear to understate the numbers married: twenty-six men are listed as married, but additional sources show eight others to have been married. Despite these shortcomings in the testimonials, some simple analyses can be carried out which show that both sets of documents provide evidence of a fundamentally similar phenomenon.

Movement recorded in testimonials was essentially of short distance. Of all movers, 74 per cent travelled less than 10 miles, 95 per cent less than twenty miles. Table V shows that the average distances moved are much the same for both single people and families, though the latter did move slightly shorter distances.

TABLE V

Average distances (in miles) moved by those presenting testimonials at Greenlaw, Berwickshire, 1834-43

Type of mover	*Number*	*Average Mileage*	*% from Contiguous Parishes*
Single male	71	8.4	32
Single female	81	8.2	30
Families	66	7.0	38
	218		

In all cases the average distance, judged from the main nucleated settlement in the south of the parish, relates to geographically contiguous parishes. Table V also shows the proportions of mobile people who came into Greenlaw from contiguous parishes. Most movers from contiguous parishes came from Fogo, Eccles, Duns, Gordon or Westruther. This profile is close to that shown in the mobility-listing where 30 per cent of moves into Greenlaw came from contiguous parishes and 36 per cent of movements out. Finally we can look at whether more men than women entered Greenlaw with a testimonial, and at whether movement took place more among individuals than among groups. Roughly one third of movers were single males while a similar proportion were unmarried women; the remainder are groups of varying kinds, almost exclusively husbands and wives without recorded children. Families were more likely to move in either May or June—near Whitsunday—than were single people, and indeed 88 per cent of all recorded departure dates were in May, June or July. Only 5 per cent occurred in November, during which month the other main holiday of the year, Martinmas, fell. Testimonial evidence confirms the picture of short-distance mobility.

Further comparisons are possible, and by integrating sources a fuller picture of mobility can be gained. This part of Scotland saw growing religious diversity from 1782 onwards and by the period we are studying there were several religious denominations (Gibson 1905: 180-98). From 1825 to 1853 a roll was kept of all members of the United Associate Congregation who took communion (SRO CH3/503/1). The date of joining the congregation is recorded, and there is a note of departures by death, mobility or change of religious allegiance. As this congregation was drawn from a wider area than the parish itself many of these church members did not actually live in Greenlaw. Of the 215 members of the congregation who joined in the years 1839-42, eighty-one can be identified as living outside the parish, of whom fifty-six are recorded in the listing of mobility. As in the listing and the testimonials, the main movement occurs after the Whitsunday term, with a smaller peak in November.

By linking information from the listings with details provided in the 1841 census and with other sources, information can be recovered about the movements of 520 single and married labourers, servants and hinds or herds. These men and women made a total of 801 moves over the three year period. Single persons account for 72 per cent of moves, married men for 28 per cent, though accompanying families would swell the actual volume of movement. The movement-listing does not provide direct information on mobility within the parish, and the small number of moves which can be worked out by comparing census and listing probably amount to only a small proportion of all those which took place inside Greenlaw's boundaries. There is however some evidence of retracing of steps over well-worn paths. Four single women for example can be traced returning to the same parish after working for a short period in another parish.

Mobility structures shown in the listings fit in well not only with testimonial and other evidence, but with comments by contemporary observers in both south-east Scotland and north-east England. Gilly (1842: 6-7) believed that 'among the hinds there are not many to be found who were born in the parish where they are at present employed', while at Norham in Northumberland only seventeen of 174 hinds' cottages had the same occupants for more than ten years; eighty-three had changed occupants in the previous two years, 145 in the last seven. Despite institutional differences, including the fact that movement was easier in Scotland because the Poor Law there did not insist on formal settlement, a combination of agricultural methods, employment practice and geographical mobility made for a considerable identity of experience between labourers in north-east England and south-east Scotland (Devine 1978: 344). This suggests the existence of a sort of cultural zone which transcended national boundaries and which to some extent marked out these areas from the rest of Britain (Levitt and Smout 1979: 71). Work habits and wages were quite different in the Berwickshire Merse compared with the Lothians. Alexander Somerville commented that 'the Scotch system of working and hiring on the one side [of the

Tweed] and the English system on the other are almost identical', while 'the style of working, and many of the domestic customs and social habits are as different as if the Merse and Lothian were separated by mountains measuring hundreds of miles' (1848: 105). Both husbandry and labour organisation were 'nearly alike', on the other hand, in Berwickshire, Roxburgh and northern Northumberland (Anon. 1834-5: 379).

Those who commented despairingly on the mobility of farm labour seemed at a loss to find a satisfactory explanation for the movement. The minister of Hutton in Berwickshire claimed in the 1790s that

> There is no other kind of emigration but that which takes place at Whitsunday, when there is a removal of many hinds, herds and cottagers into neighbouring parishes; those places are, at the same time, filled up with others of the same description, who are activated by an unaccountable desire to change their habitation, though they seldom ameliorate their situation (*SA* IV: 199).

Walter White believed that Northumberland farm labourers were 'migratory and obstinate to maintain their rights; and will spend twenty shillings in moving miles away to a new place for a difference of ten shillings in the year's wages' (Macdonald 1974: 499). Nevertheless, observers were not slow to proffer solutions to this undesirable, apparently irrational movement: most had the moral improvement of the lower orders in mind. Gilly argued strongly that improving the standard of housing of the hinds would make them less mobile, since this seemed to be the only respect in which their standard of living was unsatisfactory (Gilly 1842: 10, 15-16, 42). The reality of motivation was however a good deal more complex, encompassing a range of differences between employers and places of employment perceived by mobile labour (Kussmaul 1981: 55-67).

For unmarried servants, more experience and thus enhanced status and wages could be hoped for from a move.[6] Alexander Somerville, an early nineteenth-century working-class autobiographer from the region, was 'elevated to hold the plough' at fourteen (1848: 42-50). For older single servants the search for a marriage partner could be one incentive. Another might be to seek a more congenial employer, since at the time of hiring both farmer and servant could assess each other both on the basis of their reputation and on-the-spot judgement (Devine 1978: 344; Carter 1976: 111-12). Bargaining over hours, holidays or payments could sway individual decisions about whether to employ or be employed (Littlejohn 1963: 53). While personal assessment of employment conditions was probably the most important factor, desire to be close to kin or friends may also have exerted an influence. There seem to have been few emotional attachments to any particular parish however, and kinship ties were of much less importance than they were in contemporary Welsh or Irish rural communities (Littlejohn 1963: 5-11). Because of the relative labour shortage in south-east Scotland and the prevalence of mixed agriculture there, farmers preferred the long hiring system and this favoured the bargaining position of servants with regard to security of employment, wages and conditions. Some commentators believed

that recent social and economic changes had increased unhappiness and mobility among farm workers (Ettrick Shepherd 1831-2). For these, 'district after district being thrown into large farms, which has placed such a distance between servants and masters, that in fact they have no communication whatever, and very little interest in common . . . it is a state of absolute slavery, with only one amelioration, namely the liberty, at each term, of selling themselves to the highest bidder' (Ettrick Shepherd 1831-2: 263). The end result was 'a moping, sullen, melancholy man, flitting from one master to another in hopes to find heart's ease and contentment,—but he finds it not' (Ettrick Shepherd 1831-2: 259). Movement did not mean that people escaped the jurisdiction of the Kirk Session since testimonials were designed to keep the mobile elements of the population under the control of the church's moral discipline.

For married servants motivations were similar, but there were more factors to be taken into account. A Legerwood farmer of the second half of the nineteenth century described the position of shepherds:

> Shepherds' wages were usually on the 'share' principle. He had so many sheep of the same kind as his master, i.e., ewes and hoggets, and for them he received their 'keep', the lambs, wool, etc. being sold along with the masters, though there were exceptions to this. In the earlier days this 'sheep wage' was almost universal. . . . In practice it meant that the shepherd was himself a stock holder and a man of some means . . . as all farms and farmers are not alike, it was more difficult for the shepherd to leave, and at the same time secure another place equally suitable (Gibb 1927: 56).

Higher wages were not necessarily associated with movement, and when, as in 1817 for example, product prices were high, farmers may have been inclined to replace hinds with single servants (*Farmers' Magazine* XVIII: 228; but contrast XXIII: 105). In this situation hinds who stayed with the same master remained on the same wages while those who moved actually got less. Variations in the standards of living offered and in conditions of employment seems to have encouraged the mobility of farm labour. In addition the chances of employment for children which would help augment the family budget could prompt a move since despite the fact that women's agricultural wages in this region were well up on the national mean in 1843, demand for child labour was lower than average (Levitt and Smout 1979: 98-9; Gray 1973: 159-60). Employment was secure for the household head and his wife; but for the rest of the family it was not so certain, and movement could open up possibilities. It also appears that the proximity of the hinds' dwellings to amenities such as transport routes, church or school may have been important incentives in a situation where major considerations like employment were catered for almost by default. In his *Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland*, Sir John Sinclair produced many examples which suggest a strong desire among the common people of the Borders to educate their children (1826: Appendix pp. 19-22). At Yetholm for instance 'Parents will submit to considerable privations rather than not send their children to school' (*op. cit.*: Appendix p. 21). Since the location of the parish school in relation to

geographical obstacles could significantly influence access to education, hinds may have moved at least partly with this fact in mind. Changes in the settlement pattern or in the availability of teachers could mean that a school might be set up in one hamlet and disappear from another (Gibson 1905: 224). Eighty-four per cent of children aged four to fourteen years were at school at the time of the 1851 census in the main settlement of Greenlaw, but only 63 per cent in the rest of the parish.

When seeking the reasons for mobility, it is interesting to note that, despite the small number of moves recorded, some farms had greater rates of labour turnover than others. Table VI shows the range of experience on farms which show more than ten moves during the period. At the time of the 1841 census there were 187 workers on the farms in the parish, the 609 movements into and out of these farms which can be detected from the listings representing an average of 3.3 moves per farm over the three and a half years. Table VI shows that there is no obvious difference between turnover rates on different farms which can be related to their valuation, nor to the

TABLE VI

Rates of movement into and out of Greenlaw Farms 1839-42

Farm	*Valuation (£ Sterling)* 1817	1855	*Workers in 1841*	*Moves In and Out*	*Moves per Worker*
Bedsheil	355	330	7	39	5.6
Eastfield	268	426	13	68	5.2
East Howlaws	591	432	7	35	5.0
Lowrig	119	301	10	50	5.0
Haliburton	469	600	11	41	3.7
Crumrig	165	230	8	29	3.6
West Howlaws	394	420	6	21	3.5
Greenlawdean	195	315	8	27	3.4
Lambden	591	830	20	67	3.4
Rowieston	393	360	6	19	3.2
Elwartlaw	125	330	10	28	2.8
Old Greenlaw	285	406	8	22	2.8
Gordonbank	153	238	10	26	2.6
Slegden	146	331	7	17	2.4
Whitside	89	272	8	17	2.1
Castlemilk	—	220	9	18	2.0
Angelraw	212	275	7	12	1.7

number of workers they employed as recorded in the 1841 census (SRO E106/6/6; VR92/1; GRO Census 1841). Nor were the farms with above average turnover rates located in any particular part of the parish, being found in the north and west as well as in the more heavily settled southern area. Seven of the eight which have a greater than average rate are located on the border of the parish, suggesting that since we know much less about internal movement within Greenlaw the apparent differences may simply be an artefact of the documents since they record only movements into and out of the parish. Yet one could also speculate that some farmers were better employers than others and might have been able to retain workers for longer periods.

Mobility was not therefore senseless, but was probably part of a logical attempt by farm workers to improve the quality of life in this region. They may actually have enjoyed moving around as a way of meeting new people and expanding their range of work experience. Yet there is no escaping the fact that the net effect on the social and economic status of the movers was negligible. Movement had its rewards but the ultimate hope of acquiring land was not likely to be one of them. Upward social mobility from hired servant to small tenant farmer or into the growing towns was not a common feature of the life-cycle of servants and labourers in the south-east of Scotland as it was in the north-east Lowlands at this time (Gray 1976: 86, 101; Carter 1976: 119). In the north-east, few families were headed by landless labourers and most people had at least some land. The bulk of the rural populations were farmers of some sort. Usually an individual born into a landholding family would work as a servant in husbandry, then as an outdoor labourer before taking on a small-holding of his own. The area was characterised by 'a nearly universal holding of land' (Gray 1976: 101). 'The prevailing ideology would be that of the smallholder rather than of the landless employee.' If we glance back to Table IV we can see indications that workers moved from being single servants and labourers to being married versions of both, and to being hinds and shepherds. Although this is not a systematic analysis of social mobility it does fit in with other evidence about limited opportunities for betterment.

Agricultural labour was overwhelmingly hired labour in Berwickshire. Patterns of mobility reflect this and are symptomatic of 'frustration movement, voluntary geographic movement without social mobility' in an area with plenty of opportunities for employment but few for social advancement (Eriksson and Rogers 1973: 79). Gilly believed that if labourers stayed longer in the same place 'they might have made friends and patrons, and have attained to a degree above their present condition,' yet the only meaningful option was to become foreman of a farm (1842: 9). There were few opportunities for the ultimate experience of landholding as could be expected in the north-east Lowlands of Scotland (Munro 1977: 188-9, 192).

We can conclude with some speculative comparisons which may nevertheless help to broaden the debate on geographical mobility. Firstly, there are some potentially fascinating points of comparison with the social structures found in east central

Sweden during the nineteenth century by Eriksson and Rogers (1978): in Sweden (also in Prussia) in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, higher product prices in agriculture stimulated trends towards the proletarianisation of labour, as it did in south-east Scotland; and for the Swedish rural proletariat or *statare*, who like Scottish hinds were paid yearly in cash and kind, mobility became an integral part of an existence which offered few opportunities for social advancement. Unlike Sweden, or Prussia, however, where the tenant farmers and small owners were displaced by great estates, in south-east Scotland it was a case of the smaller tenants and sub-tenants being displaced by larger leasehold farms. There were some owner-occupiers but the bulk of the land was owned by the Baronet of Marchmont and had been for many years: the Baronet owned two thirds of the land in Greenlaw, and this estate was worked by tenants; there were also around eighty small landowners or 'feuers' although some of these were shopkeepers and tradesmen (who owned their buildings and a small plot of land) rather than owner-occupier farmers. In spite of the differences, there is enough similarity between the situation in estate-dominated parts of central Sweden and that in south-east Scotland to repay further analysis of the implications of comparison. Scotland is often loosely compared with Scandinavia, but not much systematic comparison of specific aspects of society has actually been done: it would be helpful to compare mobility structures in Scotland with those in the rest of Europe as well as those in other areas of Britain (Gaunt 1977: 192-207).

Secondly, this pattern of movement—short range, frequent, and specific to certain young adult age groups—appears to have a pedigree dating from the early seventeenth century at the latest (Houston 1981: 293-346). Indeed geographical mobility was an integral part of Scottish demographic development, among servants and apprentices for example, at least from the end of the medieval period. Particular developments in agriculture in south-east Scotland and north-east England shaped the precise form of movement, but clearly did not initiate it. There are also similarities between different areas of Britain as well as continuity over time. A similar pattern of movement certainly existed elsewhere in the country during the nineteenth century—but this does not mean that there were not significant, if apparently minor, differences, in view of the substantial diversity of social and economic structures (Levitt and Smout 1979). Alexander Somerville, who was experienced in working both in the south-east and in the Lothians, believed that in the early nineteenth century hinds in Berwickshire were much more frequently mobile than their Lothian counterparts (1848: 54). Berwickshire men stayed only a year or two before moving, while Lothian hinds might last through the whole of their employer's nineteen-year lease. How exactly was this connected with the social and economic status of hired labour in the two regions? In the present state of research we cannot tell whether there was less movement of the sort we have outlined above in contemporary north-east Scotland, or indeed in Berwickshire in earlier periods as some observers believed (Ettrick Shepherd 1831-2). Conceivably, short-term shifts in overall employment

opportunities, related to agricultural product prices, might encourage longer or shorter moves within a broadly similar framework. Now that the structures of geographical mobility are known to be fairly uniform over much of north-western Europe, there is a much greater need to examine variations in the social and economic context of movement. We can however suggest that the experience of movement and the attitudes towards it were different in south-east Scotland from that in the north-east Lowlands in the mid-nineteenth century. The concluding paragraph offers some suggestions about the importance of attitudes towards mobility.

How can we assess the importance of mobility for individual and society? The economic development of the south-east of Scotland may have been aided by dissemination of useful information on improved agricultural methods spread by mobile specialist labour, though this is by no means certain (Macdonald 1979: 33-7; Kussmaul 1981: 68-9; Eriksson and Rogers 1978: 177-8). Movement certainly took place in an agricultural context, and the sort of mobility discussed in this paper is essentially 'circular', comprising compensatory streams of migration the net effect of which was slight. Servants and hinds could move if they were unhappy with conditions (Carter 1976: 111). Geographical mobility represented an assertion of individual freedom, though those who stayed in agricultural employments were still dependent on farmers as a social group: as Gray remarks of this area, 'The structure of land rights coupled with the forms of employment offered to agricultural labourers welded a strong instrument for excluding unwanted members from any share in local society' (Gray 1983: 108). Landlords had a firm grip on employment opportunities and on ultimate access to the land. This made the movements of hired labour in the south east qualitatively different from mobility in the north-east Lowlands, or even the south west, of Scotland, where there was considerable opportunity for acquiring land. In the south east the chance of landholding was much rarer for most of the population: when people here moved they knew that they would remain as hired labour. Occupational and status continuity over the life-cycle and between generations was therefore greater. Despite the implication in the comments on the detrimental effects of movement on the reciprocal benefits of paternalistic relationships on the farms, workers remained fundamentally under the control of their employers as a group, whereas in the north-east Lowlands of Scotland they had more freedom of action[7] (Devine 1978; Snell 1981; Eriksson and Rogers 1978: 31; Carter 1976; Gray 1976).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am extremely grateful for the help provided by Mrs Ailsa Maxwell in the statistical analysis and interpretation of the Greenlaw listings.

NOTES

1 In 1839 the congregation of the Greenlaw Synod of the Original Burgher Church joined the Church of Scotland, leaving the UAC as the only seceding church in the parish until the Disruption in 1843.
2 In 1836, when a list of the heads of households in the parish was compiled in connection with the communion, there were one landowner, fourteen farmers, no subtenants, four herds, seventeen hinds and twenty-two labourers (SRO CH2/183/1). While this communion listing illustrates developments in the social structure of Greenlaw, it does not of course cover the whole population.
3 Seasonal employment patterns and trends in labour demand and wages associated with agricultural product prices are dealt with in the detailed quarterly reports of the *Farmers' Magazine* of 1808-25. For example XXVI (1825): 237, 361; XVIII (1817): 101, 228, 358, 476; XX (1819): 103, 231, 358, 491.
4 The baptism registers for Greenlaw are well kept at this time, and give the full names of both parents, the father's occupation and usual residence (GRO OPR 743).
5 This excludes Ayton, Coldingham, Duns, Eccles and Lauder. There were 9,499 males in the remaining parishes and 10,246 females.
6 See Johnston (1920: 59) for a list of servant tasks and maximum wages prescribed by Dumfries Justices of the Peace in 1750.
7 Gaunt (1979: 88-90) discusses differences in social psychology in different ecological and institutional contexts within eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Sweden. In south-east Scotland for example there is no evidence of forms of protest such as the Bothy Ballads through which farm servants in the north-east could express their discontent with an unpopular employer (Munro 1977).

REFERENCES

Manuscripts

G.R.O. General Register Office, Edinburgh:
OPR743 Greenlaw Old Parochial Register. Census 1841, 1851

S.R.O. Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh:
CH2/183/1,2,5 Greenlaw Kirk Session Records.
CH3/503/1 United Associate Congregation Communion Roll, Greenlaw, 1825-53.
E106/6/6 Valuation Roll, 1817.
GD86/770 Greenlaw Poll Tax, 1695.
VR92/1 Valuation Roll, 1855.

Printed Works

ANON. 1834-5 'On the Hiring Markets in the Counties of Northumberland, Berwick, and Roxburgh', *Quarterly Journal of Agriculture* 5: 379-86.

CARTER, I. 1976 'Class and Culture among Farm Servants in the North-East, 1840-1914', in *Social Class in Scotland, Past and Present*, ed. A. A. Maclaren. Edinburgh. Pp. 105-27.

CLARK, P. 1979 'Migration in England during the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries'. *Past & Present* 83: 57-90.

DEVINE, T. M. 1978 'Social Stability and Agrarian Change in the Eastern Lowlands of Scotland, 1810-1840'. *Social History* 3: 331-46.

1979a 'Temporary Migration and the Scottish Highlands in the Nineteenth Century'. *Economic History Review* (2nd series) 32: 344-59.

1979b 'The Demand for Agricultural Labour in East Lothian after the Napoleonic Wars'. *Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists' Society* 16: 49-61.

DODGSHON, R. A.

1983 'Agricultural Change and its Social Consequences in the Southern Uplands of Scotland, 1600-1780', in *Ireland and Scotland, 1600-1850*, edd. T. M. Devine and D. Dickson. Edinburgh. Pp. 46-59.

DONNACHIE, I.

1979 *A History of the Brewing Industry in Scotland*. Edinburgh.

DUNCAN, J. F.

1919 'Scottish Farm Labour'. *Scottish Journal of Agriculture* 11: 498-507.

ERIKSSON, I. AND ROGERS, J.

1973 'Mobility in an Agrarian Community: Practical and Methodological Considerations', in *Aristocrats, Farmers, Proletarians*, ed. K. Agren and others. Uppsala. Pp. 60-87.

1978 *Rural Labour and Population Change*. Uppsala.

ETTRICK SHEPHERD

1831-2 'On the Changes in the Habits, Amusements, and Condition of the Scottish Peasantry'. *Quarterly Journal of Agriculture* 3: 256-63.

FARMERS' MAGAZINE

1800-25 *The Farmers' Magazine*. Edinburgh.

FLINN, M.

1977 *Scottish Population History*. Cambridge.

GAUNT, D

1977 'Pre-Industrial Economy and Population Structure: The Elements of Variance in Early Modern Sweden'. *Scandinavian Journal of History* 2: 183-210.

1979 'Natural Resources—Population—Local Society: The Case of Pre-Industrial Sweden', in *Time, Space and Man*, edd. J. Sundin and E. Soderlund. Stockholm. Pp. 81-92.

GIBB, R. S.

1927 *A Farmers' Fifty Years in Lauderdale*. London.

GIBSON, R.

1905 *An Old Berwickshire Town*. Edinburgh.

GILLY, W. S.

1842 *The Peasantry of the Border*. Facsimile edition, Edinburgh 1973.

GOLDIE, M. E.

1970 *The Standard of Living of the Scottish Farm Labourer in Selected Areas at the Time of the First Two Statistical Accounts, 1790-1845*. MSc thesis (typescript), in Edinburgh University Library.

GRAY, M.

1973 'Scottish Emigration: The Social Impact of Agricultural Change in the Rural Lowlands, 1775-1875'. *Perspectives in American History* 7: 95-174.

1976 'North-East Agriculture and the Labour Force, 1790-1875', in *Social Class in Scotland, Past and Present*, ed. A. A. Maclaren, Edinburgh. Pp. 86-104.

GRAY, M.

1983 'Migration in the Rural Lowlands of Scotland, 1750-1850', in *Ireland and Scotland, 1600-1850*, edd. T. M. Devine and D. Dickson. Edinburgh. Pp. 104-17.

HOUSTON, G.

1965 'Farm Labour in Scotland, 1800-1850'. *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History* 11: 10-12.

HOUSTON, R. A.

1981 *Aspects of Society in Scotland and North-East England, c1550-c1750: Social Structure, Literacy, and Geographical Mobility*. PhD thesis (typescript), in Cambridge University Library.

JOHNSTON, T.
1920 *The History of the Working Classes in Scotland.* Glasgow.

KUSSMAUL, A.
1981 *Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England.* Cambridge.

LEVITT, I. AND SMOUT, C.
1979 *The State of the Working Class in Scotland in 1843.* Edinburgh.

LITTLEJOHN, J.
1963 *Westrigg. The Sociology of a Cheviot Parish.* London.

LOCKHART, D. G.
1980 'Sources for Studies of Migration to Estate Villages in North-East Scotland, 1750-1850'. *The Local Historian* 14: 35-43.

MACDONALD, S.
1974 *The Development of Agriculture and the Diffusion of Agricultural Innovation in Northumberland, 1750-1850.* PhD thesis (typescript), in Newcastle University Library.
1979 'The Diffusion of Knowledge among Northumberland Farmers, 1780-1815'. *Agricultural History Review* 27: 30-9.

MUNRO, R.
1977 'The Bothy Ballads: The Social Context and Meaning of the Farm Servants' Songs of North-Eastern Scotland'. *History Workshop Journal* 4: 184-93.

NSA
1845 *The New Statistical Account of Scotland.* Vol. II. Edinburgh.

SA
1791-9 *The Statistical Account of Scotland,* ed. Sir John Sinclair. 21 vols. Edinburgh.

SCHOFIELD, R. S.
1970 'Age Specific Mobility in an Eighteenth Century Rural English Parish'. *Annales de Demographie Historique*: 261-74.

SINCLAIR, J.
1826 *Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland,* pt. II. London.

SNELL, K. D. M.
1981 'Agricultural Seasonal Unemployment, the Standard of Living, and Women's Work in the South and East, 1690-1860'. *Economic History Review* 34: 407-37.

SOMERVILLE, A.
1848 *Autobiography of a Working Man.* London.

TRANTER, N.
1974 'The Reverend Andrew Urquhart and the Social Structure of Portpatrick in 1832'. *Scottish Studies* 18: 39-62.