

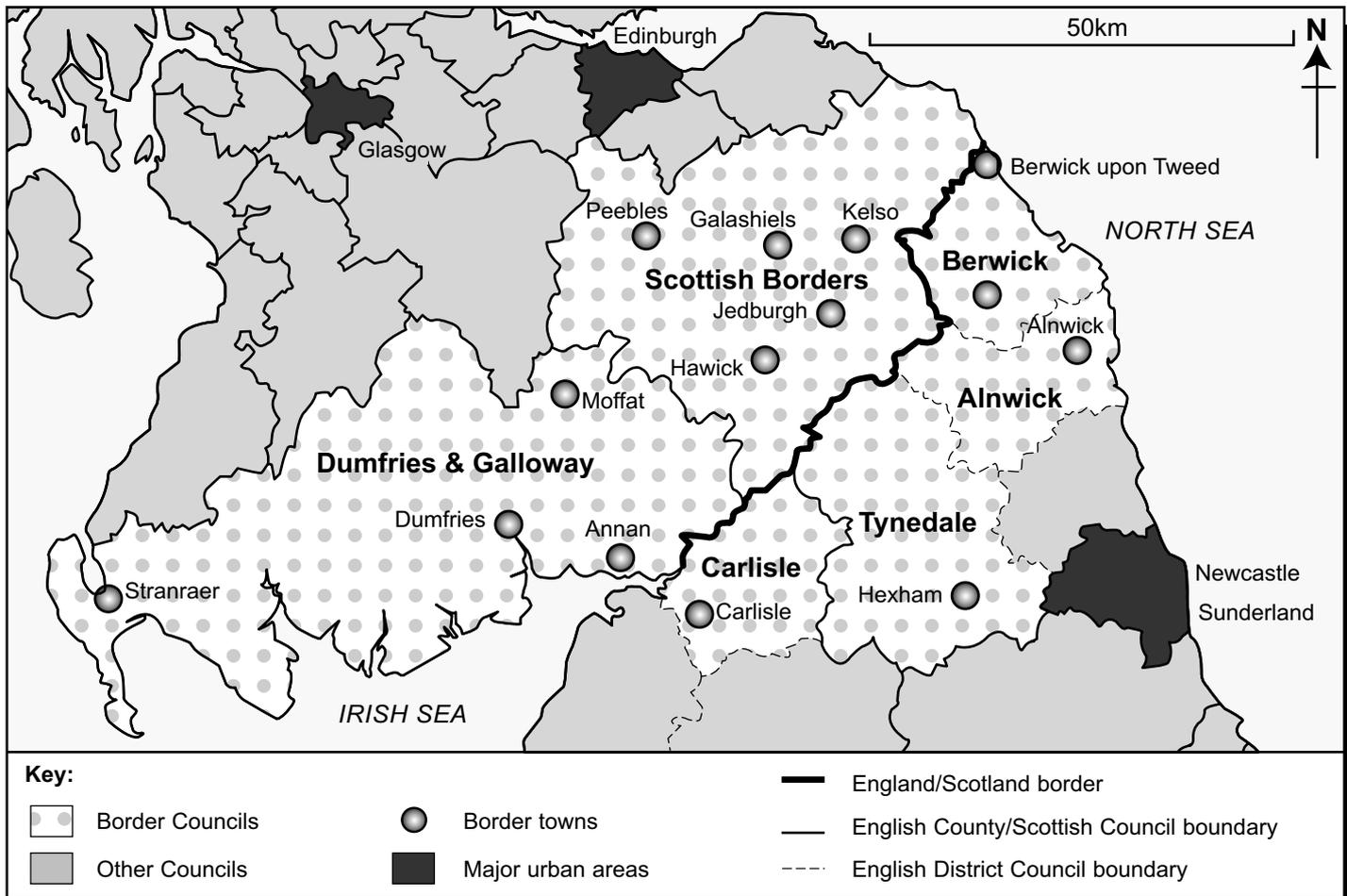


BYPASSED BORDERS

Introduction and location of the Borders

The Borders region straddles the boundary between England and Scotland. The Scottish Borders is the name of one of Scotland's Local Government areas, however the wider Borders area stretches west to encompass Dumfries and Galloway, and arguably south to take in the northern most areas of Northumberland and Cumbria in England. Four English district councils touch the England-Scotland border. *Fig. 1* illustrates the area this *Geo Factsheet* will investigate.

Fig. 1 The Borders.



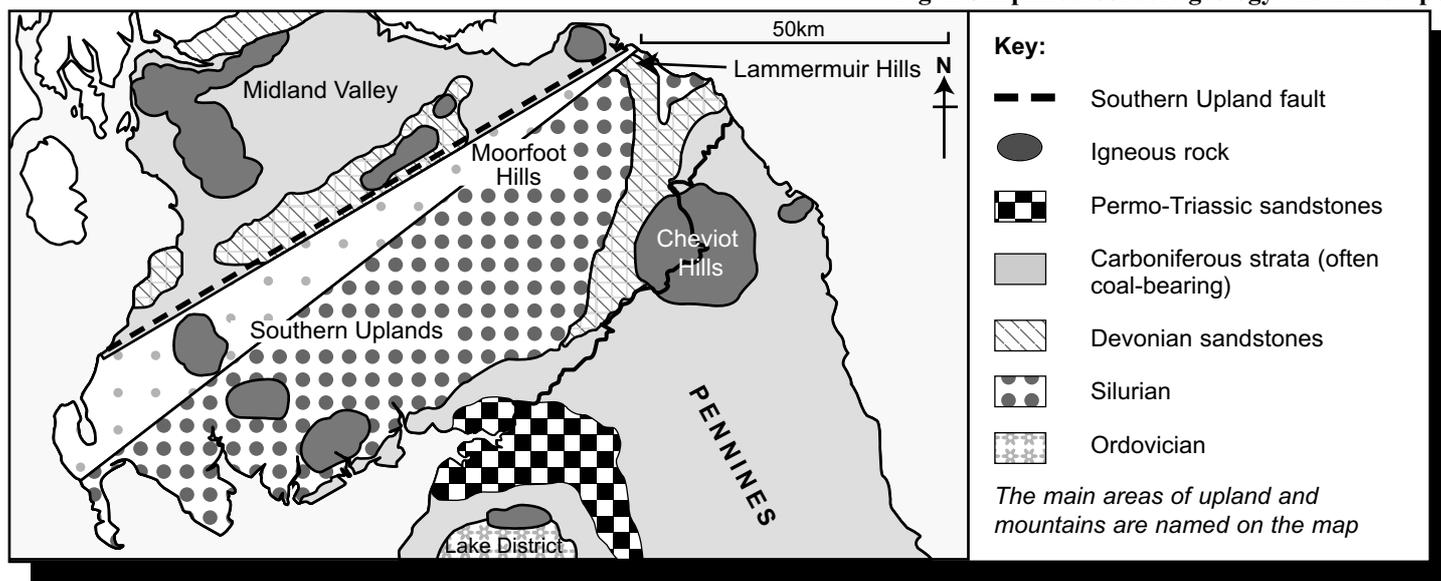
What makes this region different?

- Firstly it is a **remote rural area**. There are no very large towns, and no true cities (*see Fig. 1*). Carlisle in Cumbria is a cathedral city, with a population of only 70,000.
- Most areas have **low population densities and few services**, again characteristics of a remote rural area.
- In the UK about 1% of workers are employed in **agriculture, forestry and hunting**. In the Borders this rises to around 8% (ONS Social Trends 38 2001).
- Poor **transport connectivity**. In the East the A1 trunk road skirts the coastline, in the west the M6-M74 traverses the Borders between Carlisle and Glasgow. Road density is low, and speeds are slow.
- The east and west coast main **railway lines** cross the region north to south, but with few stops. The Scottish Borders council area has no mainline station at all, and no motorway. There is no major **airport** in the region.
- The area is **hilly**, but not mountainous. Soft, rolling moorland and isolated valleys characterise this **tranquil** region.
- Lastly, parts of the Borders have a sense of being not quite 'England' or 'Scotland', but a **transitional** region.

Factors influencing the character of the Borders

1. Geology and landscape

Fig. 2 Simplified borders geology and landscape.



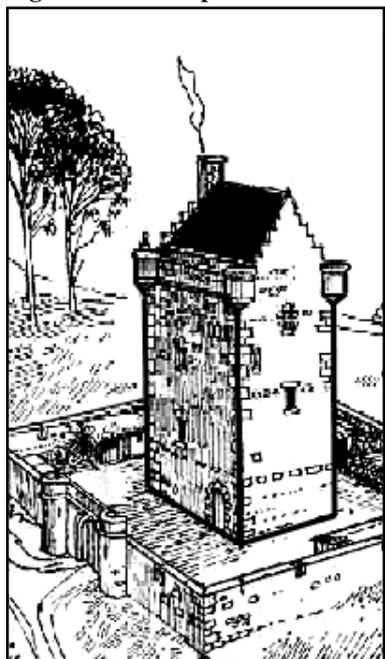
The unique geography of the Borders can be explained by the areas geology (Fig. 2). The northern edge of the Borders is the Southern Upland Fault. North of this is the midland valley of Scotland which contains coal bearing rocks. This is the location of Glasgow and Edinburgh. The Borders themselves consist of ancient volcanic and metamorphic rocks, with some sandstones and greywackes. South of the Borders, the coal bearing Carboniferous strata reappear in north Northumberland and Cumbria. Lacking access to coal, the Borders was largely bypassed by the industrial revolution and its fuel hungry factories.

The region was covered by a vast ice sheet on many occasions in the Quaternary period. This ice sheet was moving, and eroded the landscape into the rolling hills and crags seen today, but the 'awesome' glaciated landscape of the Scottish Highlands and the Lake District is absent.

2. Borders culture

To describe the history of the Borders as turbulent would be an understatement. For over 2000 years it has been repeatedly fought over and regularly changed hands. Berwick-upon-Tweed changed hands between England and Scotland 13 times between 1147 and 1482. The population of the area became used to building castles, fortified abbeys and defensive farmsteads. The landscape is still dotted with peel towers. These are small, fortified towers designed to survive a short siege (Fig. 3). From around 1300 to 1600, cattle raiding, robbery and border skirmishes were a way of life for the **border reivers** (reiver meaning 'raider').

Fig. 3 A Borders peel tower.



Key Concept: Borders

Borders are political, and often fail to match cultural geographies. The England-Scotland border could be said to 'split' a people with a unified past. The Basque people (SW France and NE Spain) live in two countries separated by an international border, and many international borders in Africa take no account of ethnicity or shared cultural geography.

Interestingly, in the Referendum for a Scottish Parliament in 1997, 72% of Scots voted for their own Parliament, but only 63% in the Scottish Borders and 61% in Dumfries and Galloway. Perhaps this tells us that this region 'feels' a little different about itself. This is backed up by some significant differences in culture in the Borders compared to Scotland as a whole. Think of Scotland, and bagpipes may well spring to mind. In this region, smaller **border pipes** are played, which are similar to **Northumbrian pipes** over the border. Scotland's most famous 'brand', whisky, is generally not produced in the region. The Scottish borders dialect tends to be rather soft sounding, and has similarities with the Northumbrian dialect.

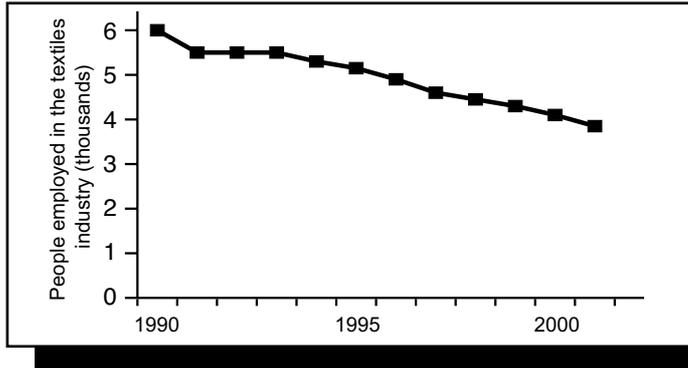
Are you a Border reiver?

It's possible your family's roots are in the Borders, if your surname is Armstrong, Chisholm or Moffat. A full list of Borders family names can be found at www.borderreivers.co.uk. Try investigating the geographical distribution of your surname using the UCL Surname Profiler at www.spatial-literacy.org/UCLnames/Surnames.aspx. You can use this with any surname, not just borders ones.

3. Economic development

Until the Union of Scotland and England in 1707 the borders area remained agricultural. The stability the Union brought, allowed the development of some industry. In the 18th Century farmers began to grow flax, to be spun into linen in Melrose. Later a woollen industry developed in Galashiels and Hawick, producing a cloth know as 'tweed'. Fishing became important in Eyemouth, Berwick, Annan and Kirkcudbright. Shipbuilding was important in Annan, but has now declined. Even in 1911, over 100 years after the industrial revolution began, over 50% of people in Dumfries, Galloway and the Scottish Borders were employed in agriculture.

Fig. 4 Change in Borders textile employment, 1991-2001.



Many of the key industries in the borders have been hit hard by changes in the global economy. Textiles were once a major employer, accounting for 50% of all manufacturing employment in the Scottish Borders in 1997. Foreign competition has caused the industry to decline, and it increasingly focuses on low volume, high quality, niche products. Fig. 4 illustrates the employment decline in the borders textile industry 1991-2001.

Agriculture has declined significantly across the Borders. Full time farm employment fell from 4500 workers in 1983 in Dumfries and Galloway, to 2700 in 2003. Rising production and fuel costs, the foot and mouth crisis of 2001-02, pressure from supermarkets to lower prices and unattractive working hours and conditions have all contributed to pressure on farming.

Case Study: Borders population structure and change

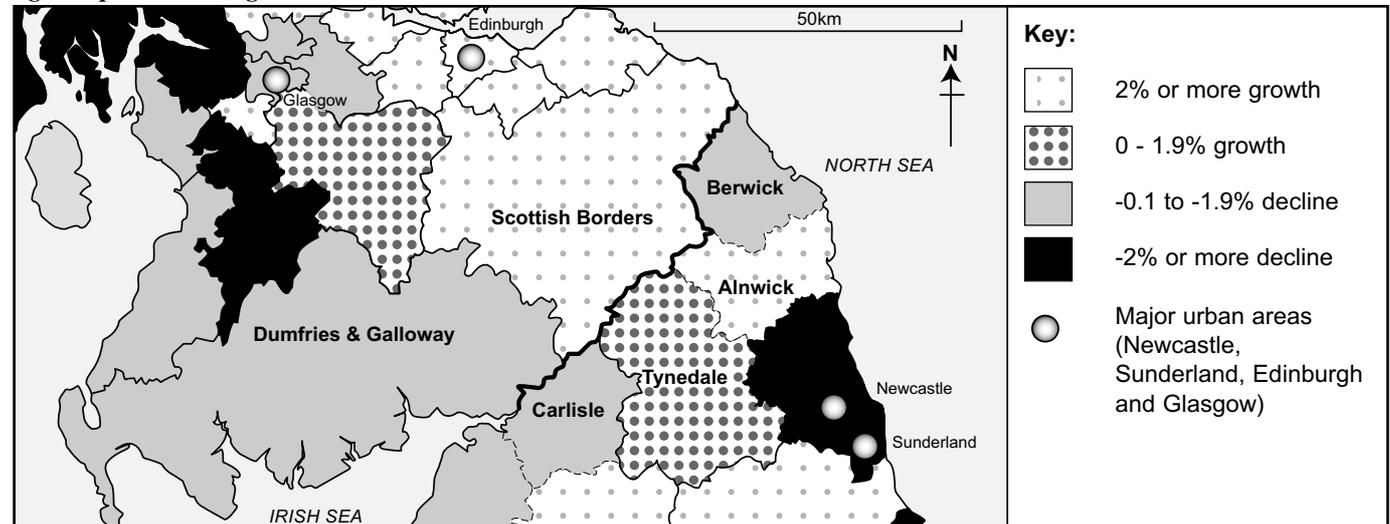
Perhaps the most significant feature of the borders is its population structure. In almost all locations it is rapidly ageing. In 2004, 19% of the Scottish Borders population was aged 65+; this is expected to rise to 23% by 2014 and 26% by 2024. In some ways the whole of Scotland is facing a population crisis.:

- The under 16 population is expected to fall by 15% by 2031
- The working age population is expected to fall by 7% by 2031
- The number of pensioners is expected to rise by 35% to 1.3 million by 2031
- The number of people over 75 is expected to rise by 75% by 2031

For some regions, like Dumfries and Galloway, this is likely to translate into a declining total population. Fig. 5 shows population change in the borders and surrounding areas between 1991 and 2001. Fig. 6 shows the population pyramid for Dumfries and Galloway, and the 'greying' nature of its population is clear. What this shows is a clear contrast in different areas:

1. Major urban areas, except Edinburgh, saw significant population decline. This results from continued counter-urbanisation from cities to more rural areas.
2. Areas of traditional industry, such as the coal mining areas of south east Northumberland, and the fishing and mining areas south west of Glasgow also declined, as **deindustrialisation** occurred.
3. **Accessible rural areas**, close to major cities, saw population growth. These are the destination areas for counter-urbanisers and **commuters**. The Scottish Borders south of Edinburgh and Tynedale / Alnwick north and west of Newcastle fit into this category.
4. **Remote rural areas** have seen continued **rural depopulation**. This is especially pronounced beyond the commuter and retirement belts around cities, in Berwick, Dumfries and Galloway and Carlisle.

Fig. 5 Population change in and around the borders 1991 - 2001.



In more accessible rural areas, such as the Scottish Borders, population will slowly rise. These rises are most likely to be in the older age categories, as people seek to retire to the countryside or choose to counter-urbanise after their children have left home. These population movements do little to reduce the dependency ratio and lack of young, skilled workforce.

Fig. 6 Population pyramid for Dumfries and Galloway, 2005.

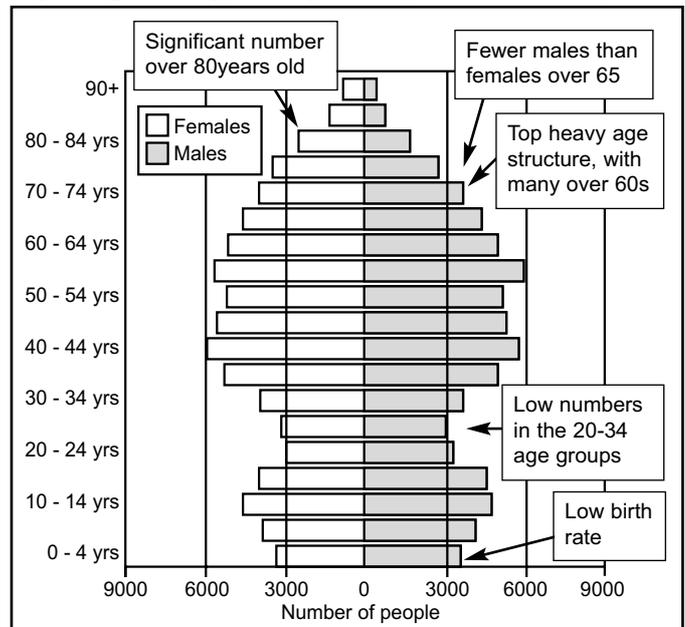


Table 1 Unemployment, employment and earnings in the borders.

	Employment rate	Unemployment rate	Weekly earnings (£)
UNITED KINGDOM	74.1	5.3	447.10
SCOTLAND	75.7	5.2	432.00
NEWCASTLE	65.6	8.2	405.80
Alnwick	76.4	4.9	356.40
Berwick-upon-Tweed	71.8	5.1	308.40
Tynedale	75.8	4.8	362.10
Allerdale	74.0	4.5	397.50
Carlisle	75.8	4.5	376.90
EDINBURGH	77.0	5.0	469.80
Dumfries & Galloway	79.6	4.4	392.50
Scottish Borders	79.2	3.9	354.10

Source: 2006 labour market data, ONS

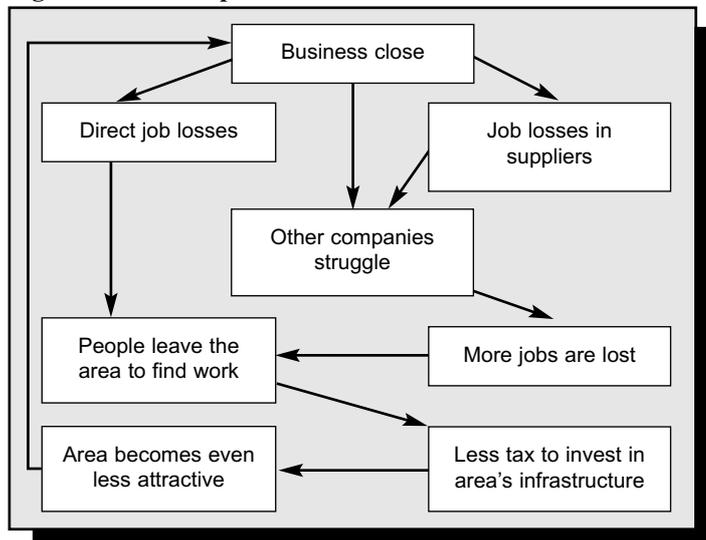
In many ways the borders economy is doing badly. Why is this? Unemployment in the area is not high, as *Table 1* shows, and the employment rate (% of the working age population who are employed) is generally higher than urban areas. This data hides some important processes. Low unemployment is a result of out-migration of the young, who would be most likely to be unemployed. Faced with a lack of jobs, the young become rural urban migrants. This has led to skills shortages, not unemployment. Notice too, that weekly earnings in some borders areas are £100-150 lower than earnings in nearby Newcastle and Edinburgh.

The borders shaky economy is a result of several factors:

- **SMALL MARKET:** The total borders population of 480,000 is smaller than that of Sheffield, but is spread over an area of 16,500 square kilometres. New business start ups would struggle to turn a profit.
- **ISOLATION:** Transport problems, lack of good road and rail links, deter new investment. To some extent the harsh climate of the area may deter people too.
- **LOW WAGES:** Poor pay deters skilled workers from moving to the area, and pushes the young and skilled toward the cities.
- **LACK OF YOUNG SKILLED WORKERS:** the ageing population, and history of 'traditional skill' industries such as textiles, means that new investors would struggle to find a workforce.

In part of the Borders, especially Dumfries and Galloway, Berwick and the south-west Scottish Borders, a demultiplier effect has taken hold. This is shown in *Fig. 7*.

Fig. 7 The demultiplier effect.



Without significant intervention to address this, rural depopulation and a declining economic base are likely to worsen. In 2004, Scottish Enterprise gave some stark warnings about the future of the Dumfries and Galloway economy by 2015:

- 9000 fewer working age people
- The economy will shrink by 11%
- 500 young people leave the region every year
- There will be 40% fewer 30-44 year olds
- A shortage of 5000 workers

Source: 5 year Strategy for Dumfries and Galloway 2003-2008, Scottish enterprise, 2003

The report also recognised that commuting by **counter-urbanisers** was not viable in the region, due to its isolation. This is also true of Berwick and parts of the Scottish Borders.

Changing Borders

Tourism saves the day?

It might be thought that, with its beautiful rolling landscapes, peace and tranquillity, tourism would have come to the rescue of the shaky borders economy. In Scotland, more people visit the Highlands and Western Isles than visit the borders. In other words they 'bypass' the borders for the awesome landscape of the north and west. The Borders is close to some key tourism honeypots, such as the Lake District and Edinburgh, but gets few visitors itself. The Scottish Borders Tourist Board slogan is 'Scotland's leading short break destination'. This reveals a key problem, that people tend to pay short visits to the area, and spend little. Northumberland styles itself as 'England's most tranquil county' and Dumfries and Galloway uses the slogan 'naturally inspiring'. All borders areas market themselves to the over 40 market segment, selling golf, walking, cycling and heritage. There are few 'blockbuster' visitor attractions in the area, although it is interesting how tantalisingly close many visitors get to the borders without actually visiting them. Major visitor attractions nearby are:

- Edinburgh Castle (1.1 million visitors)
- Gateshead Metrocentre (800,000)
- Glasgow Kelvingrove Art Gallery (950,000)
- Lake Windermere (1.3 million)

(2002 figures)

The answer is blowing in the wind

Wind is one resource the Borders does have. Wind power is undergoing a huge expansion in the region for a number of reasons.

- The hilly, open landscape has large wind generating capacity.
- The low population density minimises objections to wind farms.
- Areas of high power demand are nearby.
- Much of the area is not protected by National Park or other conservation status, so planning permission is possible.

The possibility of new jobs in a hi-tech, clean industry is a considerable carrot for an area suffering out-migration and a lack of jobs for the young. However wind power is not without costs. The number of jobs provided is low, and the impact on the landscape can be considerable. There are fears that a landscape of wind farms could deter tourism.

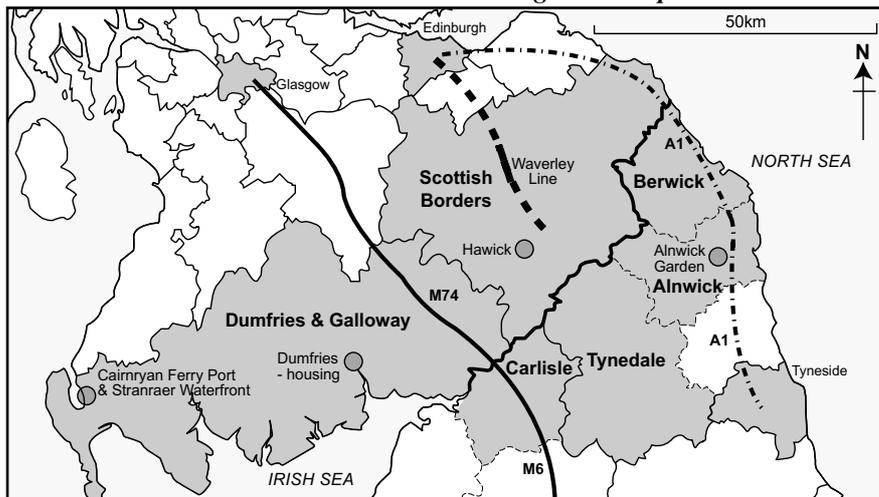
Wind turbines tend to divide opinion along 'like them' or 'loathe them' lines. Some local people fear that wind farms will get larger and larger at the expense of the traditional landscape. In 2007 Scottish Power was granted permission for a 71 turbine farm at Harestanes near Moffat – an investment of £200 million.

Case Study: Connecting the borders

The key issue for the Borders is to reverse out migration by getting 'connected', so businesses and tourists no longer 'bypass it'. This is easier said than done. The region's low population density and small economic base mean that justifying major investment by government or the EU is difficult. The Borders has been supported by European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Objective 2 finance in order to overcome its economic problems. EU investment is usually in the form of 'matched' funding - some finance for a development project comes from the EU, matched by other sources such as the UK Government or Scottish Enterprise.

For the period 2007-2013 EU regional funding has changed, partly due to the demands placed on the EU budget by the newly joined Eastern European states. However, finance is available for rural development. Table 2 outlines some completed, planned and called-for developments in the study area.

Fig. 8 Development in the borders.



Key Websites

- ESEP Ltd www.esep.co.uk has details of the 2007-13 EU regional development funding for Scotland, and the Europe website
- http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/atlas2007/fiche_index_en.htm allows you to examine EU regional funding, and UK allocations for 2007-13.

Table 2 Connecting the borders.

Project and location	Objectives	Status and funding
Alnwick Garden, Alnwick Castle Northumberland	A major new tourist attraction in the grounds of Alnwick Castle, made famous as a location for the 'Harry Potter' films. The garden, waterfall and tree-house will employ around 450 people by 2008 when fully completed.	Cost £42 million (£16 million in public money) but anticipated to attract £150 million in economic benefits over next 10 years.
A1 trunk road dualling in Northumberland and Scottish Borders	The main east coast north-south road link is single-lane for much of the route between Morpeth and Berwick. A long term campaign has been waged to upgrade the road to a dual carriageway, which may help economic development in the north east.	Last put on hold in 2006. the cost would be around £300 million.
M6 / M74 'Cumberland Gap'	Upgrading of the 6 mile dual carriageway 'gap' between Carlisle and the Scottish Border, to motorway status.	Construction began in 2006, at a cost of £175 million.
The Waverley Line between Edinburgh and Galashiels	This major project aims to reopen a disused railway line into the heart of the Scottish Borders by 2011. It would stimulate economic development and the property market, allowing commuters to live further out from Edinburgh. It is hoped the line will stimulate tourism growth.	Construction should begin in 2008. The cost is estimated at £175 million., mostly from the Scottish government.
Marchfield housing development in Dumfries	Construction of up to 920 new homes on a greenfield site. It represents a major expansion of Dumfries, and aims to expand housing provision to attract businesses.	Up to 10 years to complete from 2006. Private housebuilder.
Hawick Galalaw Business Park	20 modern business units ideal for small businesses, located close to the A7 trunk road. Providing vital infrastructure to encourage business start-ups and expansion.	Completed. Partly funded by ERDF.
Cairnryan ferry port and Stranraer waterfront	Stena Line is relocating its port facilities from Stranraer to nearby Cairnryan, to allow it to operate three rather than two daily sailings to Larne in Northern Ireland. The new ferry terminal could handle 2 million passengers per year. The vacated waterfront at Stranraer will be redeveloped.	Joint venture between Stena Line and P&O; investment of around £40 million. Some fears of local road congestion due to expansion.

Conclusions

The Borders have a long history of being a little different – fought over repeatedly and in some ways, not quite fully English or Scottish. The region has been bypassed; the industrial revolution had far less impact here than in other regions, and much of it remains rural and isolated. Whilst many rural areas of the UK have been transformed by tourism and count-urbanisation, many parts of the borders have been bypassed by these developments too. The region faces significant problems resulting from its ageing population structure, and the tendency of the young to leave. The future of the area lies in developing key attractions, and becoming better connected to the wider UK economy. These represent key challenges for a region with a low income, low tax take, and low population density.

Further research

More detail on the Borders region can be found on the local council websites of the region:

- www.scotborders.gov.uk
- www.dumgal.gov.uk
- www.northumberland.gov.uk
- www.cumbriacc.gov.uk
- Scottish Enterprise (www.scottish-enterprise.com) and the regional development agency OneNorthEast (www.onenortheast.co.uk) both have responsibility for economic development in the area.

Acknowledgements

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