

The tiny 'country' between England and Scotland

Standing firm against a determined breeze, I was surveying the scene from what marks the south-western end of the border between Scotland and England. Peacefully admiring nature at work, it was hard to believe that this seemingly *tranquil*, rural landscape was once at the edge of one of Britain's most lawless, and for a time, bloodiest regions: the area known as the *Debatable* Lands.

tranquil 平静的; 稳定的

debatable 有争议的

The line between Scotland and England was established with the Treaty of York in 1237. But when it was finalised, it seems that it drew a line through lands that were essentially *familial*, dividing some held territory in two.

familial 家族的; 遗传的

plunder 掠夺; 侵吞

Therefore, the Debatable Lands became the flashpoint of a rebellion of sorts, where powerful families *plundered* each other in both Scotland and England and neither government was committed to sorting it out.

The region became a no-go zone, a hazardous region frequented by the Border Reivers. And it essentially became Britain's fourth country, sitting alongside England, Wales and Scotland.

It wasn't until 1603 that the border areas became a real focus for the unifying *monarch*, King James VI & I, King of Scotland and the first Stuart King of England, following the Union of the Crowns.

monarch 君主; 帝王

Winding northwards up the A7, I struggled to get my head around how this small patch of land had *excelled* at such remarkable lawlessness with colourful characters and tales to boot, while, simultaneously, remaining so very under the radar.

excel 优于; 超越

And that's where the appeal in the Debatable Lands lies; the intrigue of this *unfathomable* period and the surrounding towns and villages of the Borderlands, whose natural landscapes remain — almost — as wild and *untamed* as in the days of the reivers.

unfathomable 深不可测的；无底的

fathomable 可测的；探的透的

untamed 未开发的；原生态的