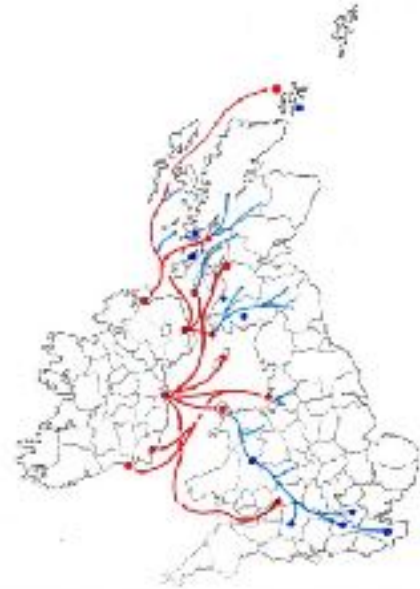




THE GOAT MEN OF SOUTH ARMAGH

The map is based upon my own research, and may not show the full extent of the way in which the goat men of South Armagh covered Britain in their annual incursions.





The photograph above was taken in 1897, and shows a herd of 33 Old Irish goats in Dorking, a market town in Surrey, this being immediately south of London. The goat men had their regular routes, and they sold milk as they journeyed, along with goats after they had kidded. The finale of their travels was to auction the last of their goats in a market square, and the photograph above may just depict this.

I have looked at the setting strategically, and it seems likely that the two men and a boy (one man at each end of the herd, and the boy in the middle) are in fact South Armagh goat men.

Looking at them, it is hard to imagine that they had spent their summer walking the lanes and country roads, driven this herd through market towns and villages, sleeping alongside hedges and under the stars.

As mentioned in my presentation:

- **'THE GOAT MEN OF SOUTH ARMAGH' BOUGHT STOCK IN MAYO/GALWAY**
- **WALKED 175 MILES FROM S. ARMAGH; 200 MILES BACK TO DOCKS; SAILED THROUGH THE HEBRIDES (WALKED NEARLY 400 MILES)**
- **THE IRISH TRAVELLING HERD IN SURREY = NEARLY 400 MILES ACROSS IRELAND AND BACK; 600 MILES ACROSS WALES/ENGLAND AND BACK = 1,000 MILES**

So, the men and boy in this invaluable photograph may well have walked around 700 miles when their picture was taken, and still had not less than 300 miles of walking in front of them before they reached home again.



Irish Travelling Herds that passed through Surrey, including Dorking, might end up in Kent, this being at the far end of England.

I have a record of one such travelling herd that was landed in Wales, then driven through Cardigan and onwards through southern England to Kent in the Autumn of 1891. There were 300 goats in all, these being controlled by 3 men, 3 boys and 5 dogs. I find it of special interest that the goat men of South Armagh would start their career as itinerant sellers of rags, scrap and goats as boys.