

HAWESWATER

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Summary Description

2.c.12 HAWESWATER VALLEY



“...and not far beyond to the south-east...
lie the vale and lake of Haweswater...”

W. Wordsworth, ‘Guide to the Lakes’ (1835)

DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Following Thirlmere, Haweswater was the second major impoundment of water in an English Lake District valley and the farming communities within it and raised similar objections. The valley was flooded in 1935 and the resulting reservoir is the easternmost of all the lakes set in the midst of the Shap Fells, remote, often featureless grass-covered hills with a strong sense of tranquillity.

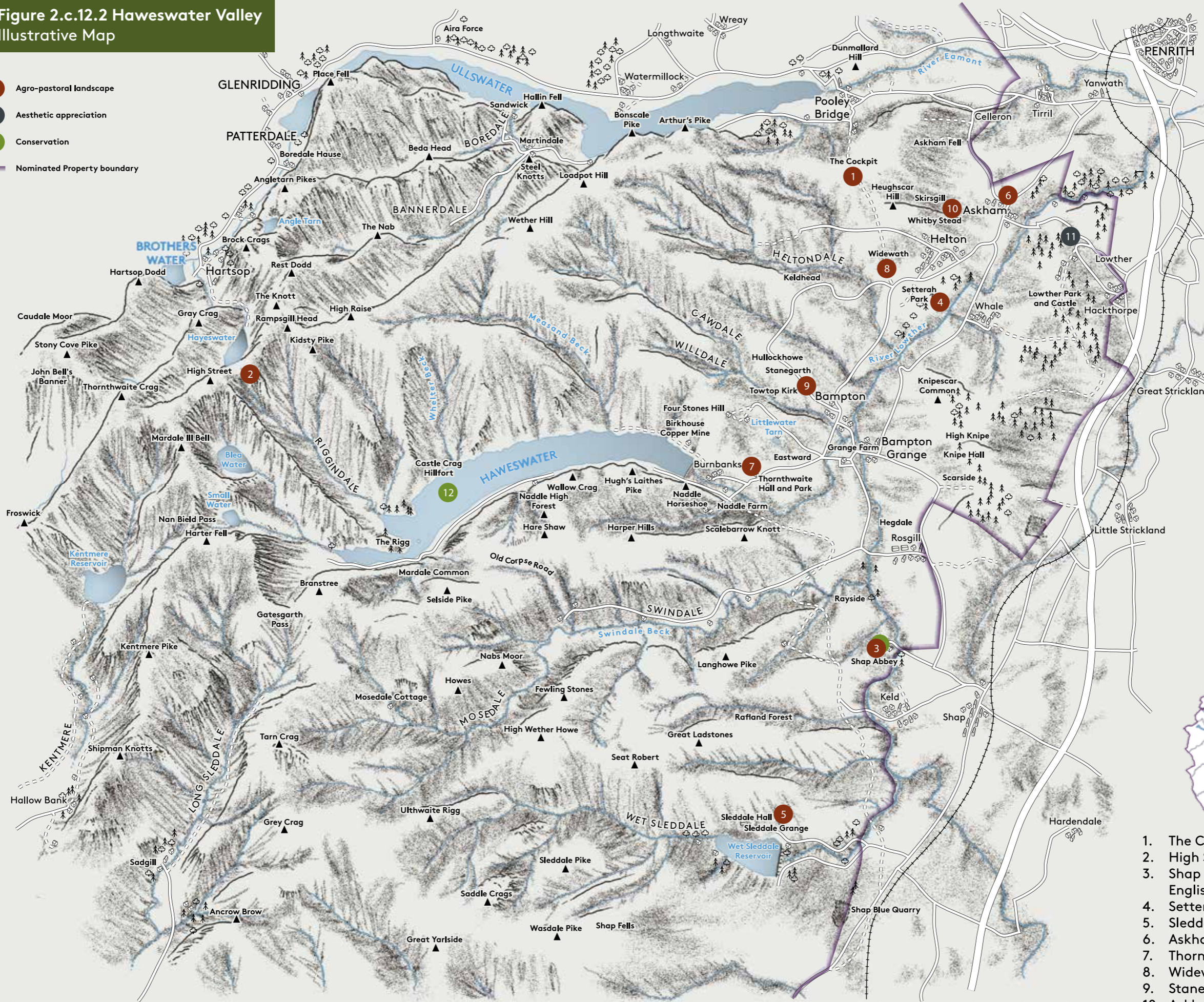
Haweswater is a long, curving body of water running south west to north east. It is a relatively constant width along the majority of its length and occupies the entire valley floor resulting in the steep valley sides plunging almost directly into the water, particularly on the south side. There are no farms or inbye grazing for the entire length of the reservoir which lends a sense of wildness to the upper part of the valley. This and the adjacent valleys of Swindale and Wetsleddale run out into the broad, gentle, limestone Lowther Valley with limestone scars and outcrops contrasting with the smooth, green pasture and striking pattern of enclosure of irregularly shaped fields bounded by limestone walls. The extensive designed parkland of the Lowther Estate and the ruined Lowther Castle are notable landscape features and the distinct settlements along the valley including Rosgill, Bampton Grange, Bampton, Helton and Askham are fine examples of historic farming settlements.



FIGURE 2.c.12.1 A view of the reservoir at Haweswater

Figure 2.c.12.2 Haweswater Valley Illustrative Map

- Agro-pastoral landscape
- Aesthetic appreciation
- Conservation
- Nominated Property boundary



1. The Cockpit stone circle
2. High Street Roman Road
3. Shap Abbey (managed by English Heritage)
4. Setterah Park
5. Sleddale Hall
6. Askham Hall
7. Thornthwaite Hall
8. Widewath Farm
9. Stanegarth Farm
10. Askham village
11. Lowther Castle
12. Haweswater

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EXAMPLES OF KEY ATTRIBUTES: As shown on the Haweswater illustrative map



NO. 1 FIGURE 2.c.12.3 The Cockpit stone circle



NO. 2 FIGURE 2.c.12.4 High Street Roman Road



NO. 3 FIGURE 2.c.12.5 Shap Abbey (managed by English Heritage)



NO. 4 FIGURE 2.c.12.6 Setterah Park (medieval moat)



NO. 5 FIGURE 2.c.12.7 Sleddale Hall



NO. 6 NO. 1 FIGURE 2.c.12.8 Askham Hall



NO. 7 FIGURE 2.c.12.9 Thornthwaite Hall



NO. 8 FIGURE 2.c.12.10 Widewath Farm



NO. 9 FIGURE 2.c.12.11 Stanegarth Farm



NO. 10 FIGURE 2.c.12.12 Askham village



NO. 11 FIGURE 2.c.12.13 Lowther Castle



NO. 12 FIGURE 2.c.12.14 Haweswater



FIGURE 2.c.12.15 Helton, surrounded by former medieval stripfields

The inundation of water in the valley resulted in the loss of the small hamlet of Mardale with its church and renowned Dun Bull Inn. The Inn was famous for its autumnal shepherds' meet at which stray sheep were brought from the surrounding fells to be given back to their owners. Up until 1830 the meet had been held at Racecourse Hill, on High Street, where in addition to the claiming of stray sheep there was a horse race and other local sports such as wrestling. Since 1936 the meet has been held just outside the valley, at St Patrick's Well Hotel, Bampton.

Although the extent of agricultural land has been reduced, the valley area as a whole is still the location for 34 farms with fell-going flocks located along the eastern edge of the high fells. Two-thirds of the valley area is owned by United Utilities and many of the fell edge farms are tenanted from the Company. Around 45 per cent of the total area is



FIGURE 2.c.12.16 The High Street ridge and the route of the Roman Road

Registered Common Land. There are no large settlements in the Haweswater Valley. The main settlements are Askham, Lowther, Helton, Bampton, Bampton Grange, Burnbanks and Rosgill. A number of 16th and 17th century farm buildings survive suggesting a period of rebuilding and investment at that time, possibly as a result of post-Dissolution (post 1541) land sales and improved tenurial conditions.

There are a few remains of industry in the valley that pre-date the creation of the reservoir. These include the small, 19th century Birkhouse copper mine on the north side of Haweswater and the remains of charcoal burning platforms in Guerness Wood on the south side of the valley. There are also remains of a slate quarry at Mosedale. The Shap Blue andesite quarry sits on the boundary at the south-east corner of the valley area. However it is the water industry that dominates the valleys of Haweswater and Wet Sleddale with their two reservoirs.

There are no Picturesque buildings or villas in the Haweswater valley area. There are, however, a number of country houses with designed landscapes most notably Askham Hall (in Askham) and Lowther Castle, both with medieval origins but going through significant phases of alteration and adaptation in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Both designed landscapes are Registered Parks and Gardens and include nationally-important listed buildings.

Despite the flooding of the valley, there have been some positive impacts arising from the growing conservation movement: minimising the amount of planned forestry, improving the design of the reservoir infrastructure and the replacement Haweswater Hotel, landscaping and enhanced access to the open common land in the valley once the reservoir was constructed. More recent plans to create an additional road into the valley to service boating on the lake have been resisted. The prominent skyline of Knipe Scar has also been protected from quarrying through negotiation between landowners, developers and conservation groups including parish councils and the Friends of the Lake District.



FIGURE 2.c.12.17 The skyline of Knipe Scar, which has been protected from quarrying

United Utilities, the private water company, is assisted in its management of the estate by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). In recent years, United Utilities has introduced the Sustainable Catchment Management Programme through which it is investing its funds, alongside national agri-environment scheme funds, into land management changes to improve raw water quality. The RSPB has taken on the tenancy of two working upland farms in the Haweswater catchment and is integrating upland sheep farming into land management to benefit wildlife and water quality.

On the higher areas of ground, there is a good survival of archaeological remains with a particular emphasis on prehistoric hilltop cairns. Some evidence of early settlement has also survived including Castle Crag hillfort and a prehistoric complex at Askham Fell. Settlements of the Romano British period are also well represented at Haweswater, High House, Cragside Wood and at Skirsgill and a Roman Road runs along High Street to the west.

Early medieval settlement remains are more elusive. There are early medieval sculptural stones at Lowther Church. Pollen samples from Littlewater suggest large-scale clearance and the introduction of hemp and flax in late 6th/early 7th century AD, but otherwise there is a reliance on place-name evidence to suggest some influence from Norse and Anglo-Saxon communities. The 'early Christian enclosure' at Towtop Kirk may have enclosed a sanctified area in the 6th to 8th centuries and may have also contained a chapel or hermitage. Carhullan has likely early medieval heritage and its place-name offers a tantalising possibility that it contains the surviving British word for fortification (Caer).



FIGURE 2.c.12.18 Packhorse Bridge at the Premonstratensian abbey at Shap, founded in 1199 AD and closed at the Dissolution in 1540 AD

Land ownership of the valley in the medieval period was largely divided between Shap Abbey, the manor of Askham and the Lowther family. Shap Abbey was a monastery of the Premonstratensian order founded in 1190. The monks bred sheep on the surrounding fells and the high quality of wool from Shap is recorded in an Italian wool buyer's list of 1315. The manor of Askham was acquired in 1280 by Sir Thomas de Helbeck passing into the hands of the Swynburn family and then the de Sandfords. Askham Hall originated as a pele tower, probably in the 14th century. William de Louthere was recorded in the 1184 Pipe Rolls of Westmorland and the medieval Lowther Hall probably originated as a motte and

bailey before 1287. As well as being responsible for the village of Lowther, the estate still contains evidence of lynchets, a deserted medieval village and a deer park.

Although much of the former inbye land in the valley is now beneath the reservoir, some small areas of walled intakes survive, together with a large walled cow pasture which encloses part of the southern valley side in Riggindale. The ancient field system in the adjacent small valley of Swindale is intact and includes a core of inbye fields and walled intakes reaching up the fellside; there are no straight boundaries resulting from planned or parliamentary enclosure here but there are some of the best examples of hay meadows surviving in the Lake District. Naddle Forest, on the rugged slopes above the Haweswater dam, is an important example of ancient relict broad leaved forest.

In Wet Sleddale, the reservoir has obscured a portion of the valley bottom land; however the upper valley contains the well preserved remains of small medieval fields with ridge

and furrow cultivation together with a substantial stone-walled deer pound which has medieval origins. In addition, the northern valley side is divided into walled enclosures of recent date which overlie a medieval pattern of agricultural terraces associated with the site of the monastic grange of Sleddale.

Much of the useful land had already been enclosed in the medieval period, so post-medieval enclosure largely consisted of small intakes and consolidation of existing field systems. It was also at this time that the large estates carried out works to their houses to improve their views and in the case of Lowther Hall a parkland was set out and a new village built to replace an older one demolished in order to improve the view from the hall.

The 18th century saw the remodelling of the existing landscaped parkland around Lowther Castle and Askham Hall. J. M. W. Turner painted Lowther castle and the grounds in 1809 and Jan De Wint painted the same scene c. 1835. Haweswater was not a valley that featured strongly in early tourism or the Picturesque experience of the Lake District; West described it as a 'sweet but unfrequented lake'. The approach to the valley from the east was considered to be picturesque, and the lower part 'most pleasantly elegant'.



FIGURE 2.c.12.19 The ruin of Lowther Castle surrounded by formal parkland

Wordsworth and Coleridge stayed at Bampton, the village at the foot of Haweswater, in early November 1799 at the beginning of their walking tour. Haweswater was then known as Mardale, and both men walked along the shore of the old lake and over the passes into Longsleddale and then Kentmere. This tour and the tales they heard on it were to provide the inspiration and backdrop to Wordsworth's 'The Brothers' and 'Resolution and Independence'.

Low Whelter (now beneath the waters of the Haweswater reservoir) was the first of many purchases by John Marshall in 1811 with a view to protecting the landscape and better controlling the woodland. Marshall had become a close friend of Wordsworth and Haweswater had a particular appeal for Wordsworth. He wrote in his 1810 Guide, "From Pooley Bridge, at the foot of the lake (Ullswater), Haweswater may be conveniently visited. Haweswater is a lesser Ullswater, with this advantage, that it remains undefiled by the intrusion of bad taste".

The 1919 Haweswater Act under gave the Manchester Corporation powers to acquire the lake in Mardale and the large surrounding catchment area for a major reservoir and allowed for similar work in the adjacent small valleys of Swindale and Wet Sleddale. In the event, only Wet Sleddale was dammed, in 1966. The residents and farmers of Mardale were moved out and their building stock demolished. The Dun Bull Inn was demolished and replaced by the present day Haweswater Hotel in 1937 with extensive views across the lake. In consultation with the Friends of the Lake District, it was built in an Art Deco style, but also reused many of the dressed stone from demolished buildings and walls. The Friends also took an active role in minimising further damage to the valley throughout the 20th century.

Figure 2.c.12.20 Haweswater Valley Cultural Landscape Map

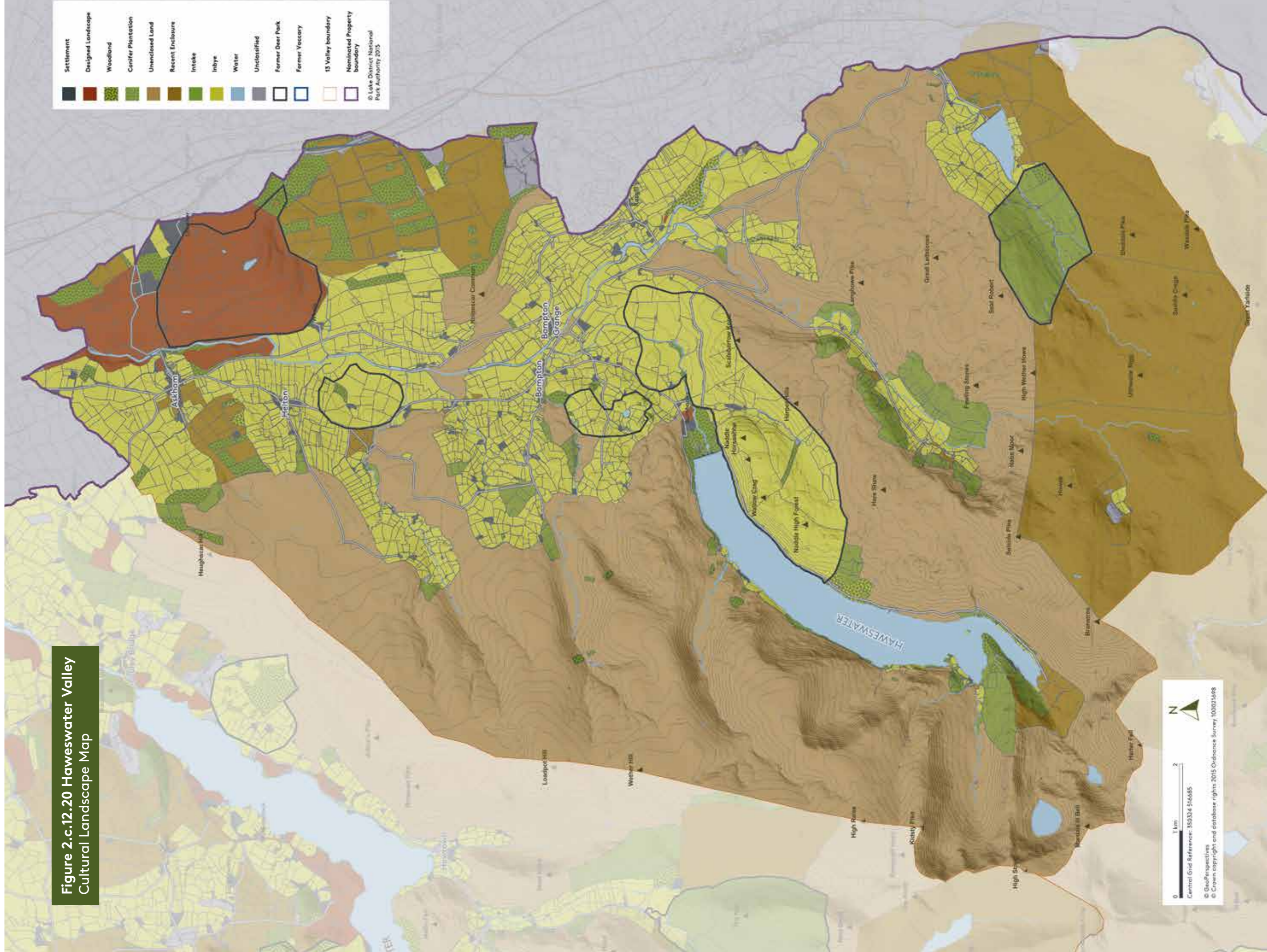


FIGURE 2.c.12.21 The contribution of the Haweswater Valley to the cultural landscape themes identified









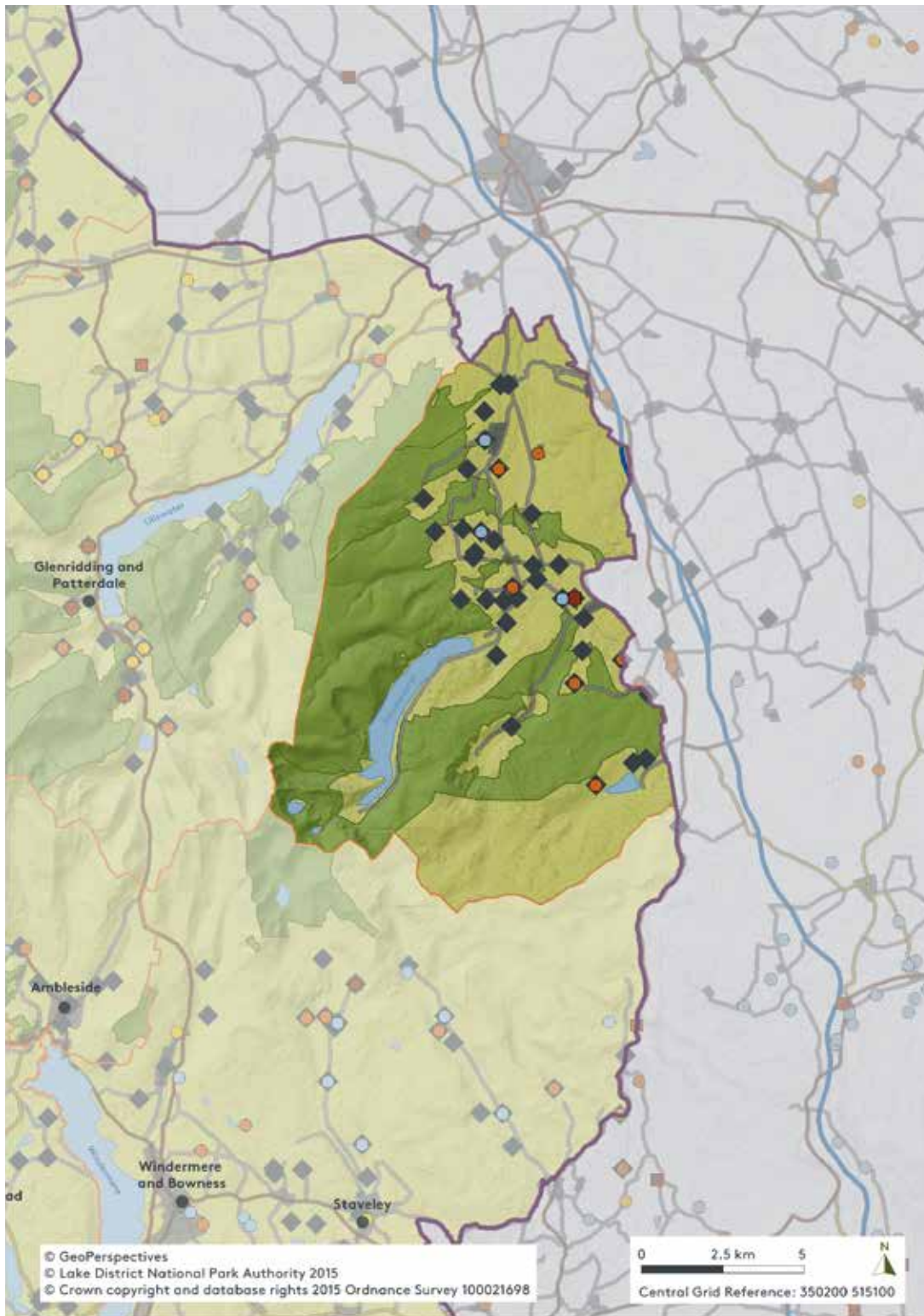
| HAWESWATER | | |
|---|---|---|
| THEME | COMPONENTS OF ATTRIBUTES | SIGNIFICANCE |
| Continuity of traditional agro-pastoralism and local industry in a spectacular mountain landscape | Extraordinary beauty and harmony |  |
| | Evidence of pre-medieval settlement and agriculture |  |
| | Distinctive early field system |  |
| | Medieval buildings (e.g. churches, pele towers and early farmhouses) |  |
| | 16th/17th century farmhouses |  |
| | Herdwick flocks | None |
| | Rough Fell flocks |  |
| | Swaledale flocks |  |
| | Common land |  |
| | Shepherds' meets/shows and traditional sports |  |
| | Woodland industries |  |
| | Mining/Quarrying |  |
| | Water-powered industry | None |
| | Market towns | None |
| Discovery and appreciation of a rich cultural landscape | Viewing stations | None |
| | Villas | None |
| | Designed landscape |  |
| | Early tourist infrastructure | None |
| | Residences and burial places of significant writers and poets | None |
| | Key literary associations with landscape |  |
| | Key artistic associations with landscape |  |
| | Key associations with climbing and the outdoor movement | None |
| | Opportunities for quiet enjoyment and spiritual refreshment |  |
| Development of a model for protecting cultural landscape | Conservation movement |  |
| | National Trust ownership (inalienable land) | None |
| | National Trust covenanted land | None |
| | Other Protective Trusts and ownership including National Park Authority |  |

FIGURE 2.c.12.22 Shepherds' flocks and native sheep breeds in the Haweswater Valley



- Nominated Property boundary
 Valley boundary
 Registered Common Land
- ◆ Fell-going Flocks
- Flocks registered with Breed Associations:
- Herdwick
 ● Rough Fell
● Swaledale
■ Multiple Breeds

Registered Common Land © Natural England 2015. Attribute data for Fell-going flocks: Lakeland Shepherds' Guide 2005. Attribute data for flocks: Herdwick Sheep Breeders Association 2014, Rough Fell and Swaledale Sheep Breeders' Associations 2013.

QUALITIES

Although much of the agro-pastoral landscape around the two original lakes in Mardale has been lost beneath the Haweswater reservoir, the remainder of the present day landscape in the Valley displays very strong agro-pastoral continuity from earlier periods. The extensive areas of open land around the villages of Helton and Askham are overlain by fields which clearly show development from medieval strips and this is complemented by the patterns of inbye and intake fields in the more restricted sub-valleys of Heltondale, Swindale and Wet Sleddale. The arrangements of house plots in Askham and Helton also show strong continuity with the original medieval pattern. There are many examples here of early farm buildings dating from the 16th century, with later 17th to 19th century additions and re-building. Swaledale sheep are the principal breed in the Haweswater Valley. All the extensive upland grazing is Common Land.

There is widespread evidence of early land use in this valley, from prehistory to the post-medieval period. Askham Fell is the location for an important group of Neolithic and Bronze Age ritual monuments and the western boundary of the valley follows the course of the High Street Roman Road. Early medieval activity is demonstrated by the Norse remains at Lowther and the pollen record for extensive agriculture in the late 6th/early 7th centuries. However, it is the medieval period which is best represented with the remains of the monastery at Shap, early defended sites at Askham and Lowther and extensive remains of medieval agriculture around Shap Abbey and in Wet Sleddale. With the exception of the later water industry, there has been little industrial activity in Haweswater, with limited evidence for mining, quarrying and charcoal burning.

Haweswater's remoter location to the east of the more popular valleys in the Lake District for early Picturesque tourists left it relatively unvisited and no villas were constructed here to take advantage of the lake views. The valley was visited by Wordsworth and Coleridge, featuring in some of Wordsworth's poetry, and artists including J. M. W. Turner were occasionally attracted to the area. However, Haweswater was not a major inspiration for artists and writers of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The landscape beauty of the valley was recognised by John Marshall in the early 19th century and he purchased land in the Mardale Valley. This early purchase of land for conservation purposes was not followed elsewhere in the valley and Haweswater is unique amongst the other Lake District valleys in having no National Trust ownership. The construction of the Haweswater and Wet Sleddale reservoirs did not attract the same level of opposition as Thirlmere, but the loss of scenic and cultural landscape in this valley formed an important backdrop to successful campaigns against similar proposals in other parts of the Lake District in the later 20th century.

The Haweswater Valley is very rich in attributes which demonstrate the continuity of agro-pastoral farming, the first theme of Outstanding Universal Value. It is particularly important for the remains of medieval agriculture and settlement and in demonstrating the long development of the farming landscape. It has rather fewer attributes which demonstrate the themes of aesthetic inspiration and development of the early conservation movement.