

DUDDON

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Summary Description

2.c.4 THE DUDDON VALLEY (DUNNERDALE)

DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT



The Duddon Valley, also known as Dunnerdale, starts in the high, central fells where it meets the valleys of Eskdale to the west and Langdale to the east, their high passes crossing the watersheds and descending to meet in the Duddon Valley before it runs south-west to an expansive estuary and the Irish Sea.

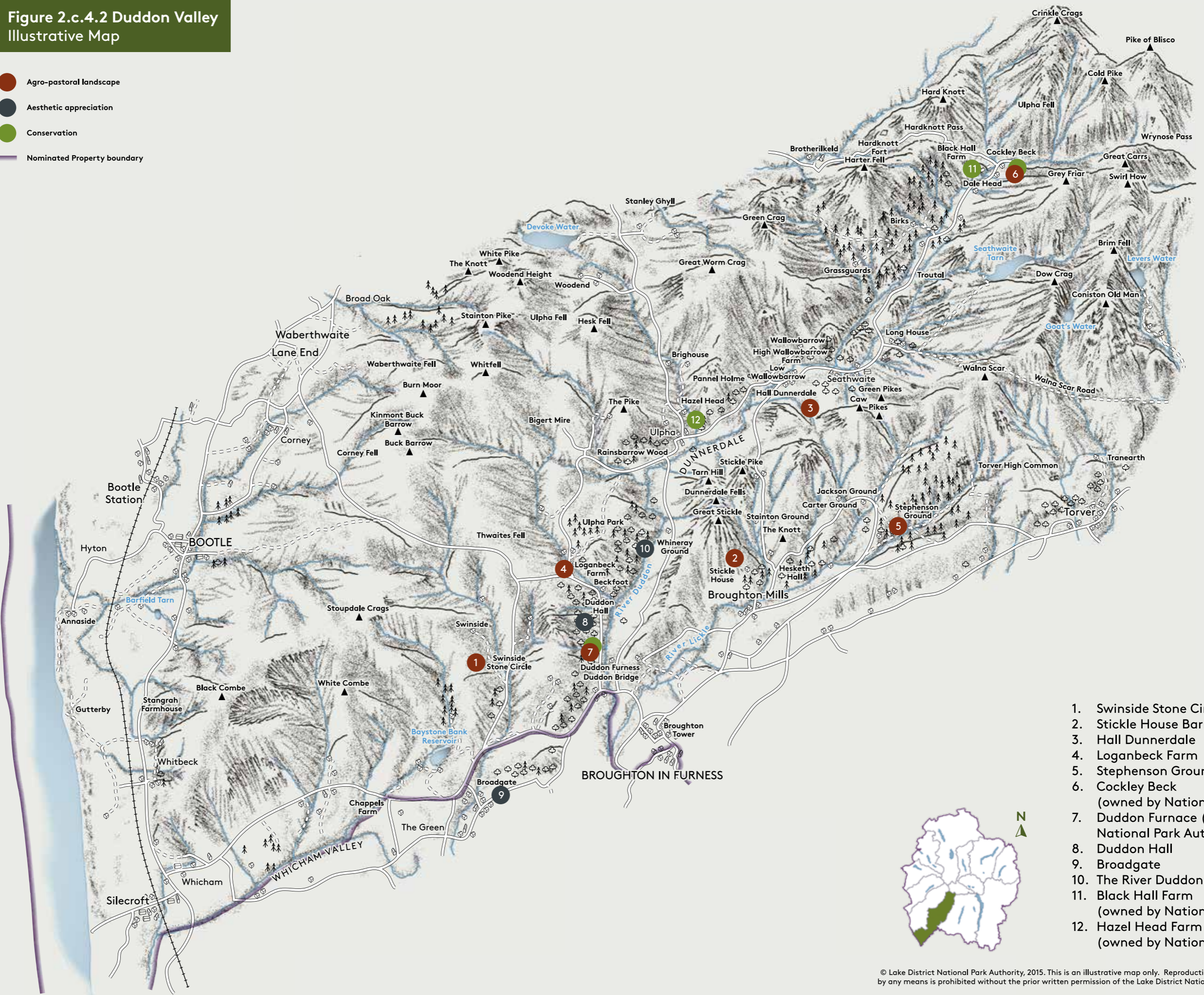
The northern section of the valley, the upper reaches of the River Duddon, is relatively narrow with an enclosed, intimate feel and a strong sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity as a result of the high fells, sparse road network and infrequent habitation. Further south, the west side of the valley is densely cloaked with conifers. The small, historic settlement of Seathwaite marks the beginning of a widening of the valley and a more extensive pattern of irregularly shaped fields enclosed by stone walls on the valley floor. Occasional narrowings of the valley persist, where the open fell runs down to the river, retaining the sense of wildness from higher up the valley. The Duddon Valley has one of the largest areas of woodland in the Lake District and the lower section of the valley is particularly well wooded. However there is relatively little evidence of designed landscape so apparent in neighbouring valleys. South of Duddon Bridge the river enters the flat pasture and tidal landscape of the estuary and runs to the coastal plain and the sea under the imposing bulk of the west face of Black Combe with the long sand and shingle beach running north-west to the farm settlement of Annaside and then continuing to Ravenglass.



FIGURE 2.c.4.1 A view of the top of the Duddon Valley

Figure 2.c.4.2 Duddon Valley Illustrative Map

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



1. Swinside Stone Circle
2. Stickle House Barn
3. Hall Dunnerdale
4. Loganbeck Farm
5. Stephenson Ground
6. Cockley Beck
(owned by National Trust)
7. Duddon Furnace (managed by National Park Authority)
8. Duddon Hall
9. Broadgate
10. The River Duddon
11. Black Hall Farm
(owned by National Trust)
12. Hazel Head Farm
(owned by National Trust)

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



NO. 1 FIGURE 2.c.4.3 Swinside Stone Circle



NO. 2 FIGURE 2.c.4.4 Stickle House Barn



NO. 3 FIGURE 2.c.4.5 Hall Dunnerdale



NO. 4 FIGURE 2.c.4.6 Loganbeck Farm



NO. 5 FIGURE 2.c.4.7 Stephenson Ground



NO. 6 FIGURE 2.c.4.8 Cockley Beck (owned by the National Trust)



NO. 7 FIGURE 2.c.4.9 Duddon Furnace (managed by National Park Authority)



NO. 8 FIGURE 2.c.4.10 Duddon Hall



NO. 9 FIGURE 2.c.4.11 Broadgate (villa)



NO. 10 FIGURE 2.c.4.12 The River Duddon



NO. 11 FIGURE 2.c.4.13 Black Hall Farm (owned by National Trust)



NO. 12 FIGURE 2.c.4.14 Hazel Head Farm (owned by National Trust)

The character of the farming landscape in the Duddon has been influenced by its topography; there are many small single farms, often at a relatively high level, created by improving fell land which generally comprises small stone-walled inbye fields, surrounded by open fell grazing. Many of the field walls here are of massive construction resulting from the need to clear the plentiful stone from the fields, but they are also varied in their form and include vertical slate walls.



FIGURE 2.c.4.15 The Duddon estuary with Black Combe in the distance

Today, there are 46 fell-going flocks in the Duddon valley area. There are 8,047 hectares of Registered Common Land in total in the Duddon valley area, around half the total area. The Walna Scar and Stoneside Shepherds' Meets have been meeting for over a hundred years. Broughton-in-Furness on the Duddon Estuary is one of the two locations for the main Herdwick sales of ewes and rams in September and October each year.

Unlike many of the other valleys in the Lake District, the settlement pattern in the Duddon valley does not extend to villages. Two small hamlets of a few houses each are located at Seathwaite and Ulpha, while the nearest large settlement is the planned village of Broughton-in-Furness, in Coniston Valley. The farm buildings in the Duddon valley, many of which date from the period of re-building in the 17th century, have a rugged character deriving from the use of the local volcanic rock and slate for walls and roofs. Many are finished in a weather-proof coating of limewash. The valley attracted no significant villa development except at its southern end, where Duddon Hall was built and outside the valley, Broadgate was designed to overlook the Duddon Estuary.

The geological, woodland and water resources of the Duddon valley provided a basis for industrial activity in the valley over several centuries, including slate quarrying, copper mining, iron smelting, peat extraction and potash making. Today there is little active industrial activity, but past industries have left their mark on the landscape and are also reflected in local place names such as Forge Wood and Furnace Wood.

The Duddon valley has been settled from at least as early as the Neolithic period, and the remains of one of the most impressive of the Lake District's many stone circles can be found at Swinside Farm, on the northern side of the Duddon estuary.

The traces of Bronze Age settlements and fields can be seen on the fells above the valley; indeed, 14 out of 20 nationally-important designated archaeological monuments relate to prehistoric settlements and farming in Duddon. A Roman road joining forts at Ambleside and Hardknott crosses the head of the valley at Cockley Beck and is now a nationally-important protected structure.

Norse influence can be identified through place-name evidence, but this can be the result of later nomenclature. There is little that can be said to be definitively Norse archaeology, although a number of shieling sites, and other structures at Smathwaite and Stephenson Ground could potentially be 10th to 12th century in date.

Settlement conforms to a dispersed pattern of hamlets and farmsteads (Birks, Black Hall and Dale Head, for example). Dunnerdale first appears in the Lancashire Pipe Rolls in 1160 when it seems to have been considered a hamlet of Kirby. Farms at Birks and Dale Head probably comprise the earliest settlement in the upper valley. There are numerous foundations of medieval longhouses on the upper slopes possibly dating from a period when the climate was warmer. Examples can be seen at Stephenson Ground and Crosbythwaite which has three medieval settlement sites and two shielings. The absence from almost all the longhouse sites of ridge and furrow implies that these longhouse dwellers were principally pastoralists growing only a small quantity of subsistence crops. Some of the longhouses were abandoned in the medieval period.

Beyond the longhouse sites, the Duddon Valley area contains relict field systems, but here there is ridge and furrow, walls and possible enclosures. Medieval inbye land which has survived via the patterns ossified in the later walled enclosures certainly appears to be widespread around Ulpha and Seathwaite, and at Cockley Beck. South of Ulpha, Ulpha Park with Low Park and Middle Park are suggestive of emparked land, possibly a deer park. Many of the farms, inbye fields and smaller, irregular intakes are likely to date to the late 13th century expansion which has been documented in Cumbria.



FIGURE 2.c.4.16 Swinside stone circle



FIGURE 2.c.4.17 Cockley Beck Farm, owned by the National Trust

Small scale enclosure of former open fields in the 16th-17th centuries does appear to have taken place in the Duddon Valley area in the fields around Hall Dunnerdale Farm, Silecroft, Whitbeck, Whineray Ground, and Whinfield Ground. However there is very little evidence of any contraction of settlement as is seen in other valleys at this time. Indeed, many of the earliest farmsteads have survived to the present day, although for the most part the buildings represent 16th century fabric or later. One notable exception to this

is Old Hall Farm which contains on site and in its fabric remains of a medieval fortified farmhouse which may well be late 15th century; this would be a relatively rare example in the Lake District of vernacular architecture surviving from the medieval period.

There are very large areas of intake enclosure on the fells which probably date to this period, around Cockley Beck and the upper valley, as well as around each of the other early settlement centres at Seathwaite, Hazel Head, Crosby Thwaite and Hall Dunnerdale Farm. These are generally very large parcels, sometimes forming herring-bone-like strips enclosing the lower slopes and incorporating becks as markers. There are no intake enclosures along the coastal strip between Silecroft and Waberthwaite. As the focus moved inland and upland the enthusiasm for intake enclosure increased dramatically, especially either side of Crosby Thwaite and on the lower slopes of Seathwaite Fell, perhaps a response to the growing market in sheep farming and the related textile industry. Above the River Ickle intake there are fewer enclosures, reflecting the harsher and steeper topography on that side of the Seathwaite Fells.

Past industrial activity in the valley relied on products from the local woods and this has influenced the structure of the ancient woodlands found in the valley to this day. Most were managed as oak coppice and provided wood for the local bobbin mills and charcoal for a forge and blast furnace at Duddon Bridge in the 16th and 17th centuries. Despite the range of industrial activity, which remained relatively small-scale (for example, Coleridge noted bracken burning to make potash in 1802), the Duddon Valley in the 19th century remained free of the types of development pressure that elsewhere in the Lake District led to mass protest and campaigning. Sheep farming continued to be the main land use, often by the same families since the 17th and 18th centuries. However, the farmland did undergo a series of agricultural improvements through enclosure and drainage in the 18th and 19th centuries. The threat to the beauty and significance of the Duddon Valley from commercial afforestation led, from the 1920s, to the purchase of farms by individuals and the National Trust concerned for the protection and maintenance of the traditional way of life and the farming landscape. The National Trust owns 2,433 hectares and also has an additional 668 hectares of leased land.

Seathwaite Tarn was developed as a drinking water reservoir for Barrow-in-Furness in 1907 and it is still in use today, but some steps have recently been taken to reduce

its impact on the landscape by removing some of its infrastructure. In the Duddon valley, United Utilities, the regional water company, has drained, re-landscaped and are returning the former Baystone Bank reservoir to a natural landscape.

As a result of the successes of the campaign against commercial forestry, the general scene in the Duddon Valley has not changed greatly since the 19th century when Coleridge described Duddon as 'O lovely lovely Vale!', Turner painted his Duddon Sands and Wordsworth wrote his acclaimed series of sonnets in his 'Notes to the River Duddon'. Some individual features which he described in the Duddon Sonnets have now disappeared, but the majority of Wordsworth's Duddon still survives including individual features such as the stepping stones just downstream from Seathwaite footbridge and St John's church at Ulpha.

QUALITIES

The Duddon Valley is similar to its neighbouring valleys on the western side of the Lake District in having a landscape character that is dominated by the attributes of agro-pastoral farming. The long, narrow valley has a very clear pattern, especially in its upper reaches, of inbye land on the valley bottom surrounded by intakes on the surrounding slopes.

There are many examples here of early farm buildings – in some cases with medieval origins – and distinctive stone walls, including shard fences. The Valley has a high number of fell-going flocks. Some of the most important Herdwick farms in the Lake District, including Turner Hall, are located here.



FIGURE 2.c.4.18 An aerial view of the narrow Duddon Valley, looking north east

The evidence for early land use is widespread. The Duddon is relatively unusual in having a high number of abandoned medieval farm sites on the higher slopes of the valley. Perhaps surprisingly this heavily agricultural valley was also the location for major industries in the past including a blast furnace in the 18th and 19th centuries and copper mines and slate quarries from the same period. Due to its relative remoteness and lack of a lake, the Duddon Valley was not on the usual itinerary for early seekers of Picturesque beauty in the Lake District and the valley contains no significant villas or designed landscapes. However, it was one of William Wordsworth's favourite valleys and a source of inspiration for some of his most famous poetry, the Duddon Sonnets.

The Duddon Valley did not feature in the 19th century conservation battles in the Lake District but did become the centre, along with Eskdale, of a major battle in the early 20th century over commercial afforestation. The success of the campaign to save the Herdwick hefts in the upper Duddon and the agreement with the Forestry Commission in 1936 to exclude the central Lake District from conifer afforestation was a major victory which has helped to preserve the landscape beauty of the Lake District up to the present. This was accompanied by the private purchase of key farms in the Duddon Valley in order to preserve the traditional agro-pastoral way of life. These were eventually gifted or sold to the National Trust which now owns and manages large parts of the Valley.

The Duddon Valley is strong a working agro-pastoral landscape which still retains the beauty which has inspired artists and writers and which has an important part in the history and continuation of the conservation of the Lake District.

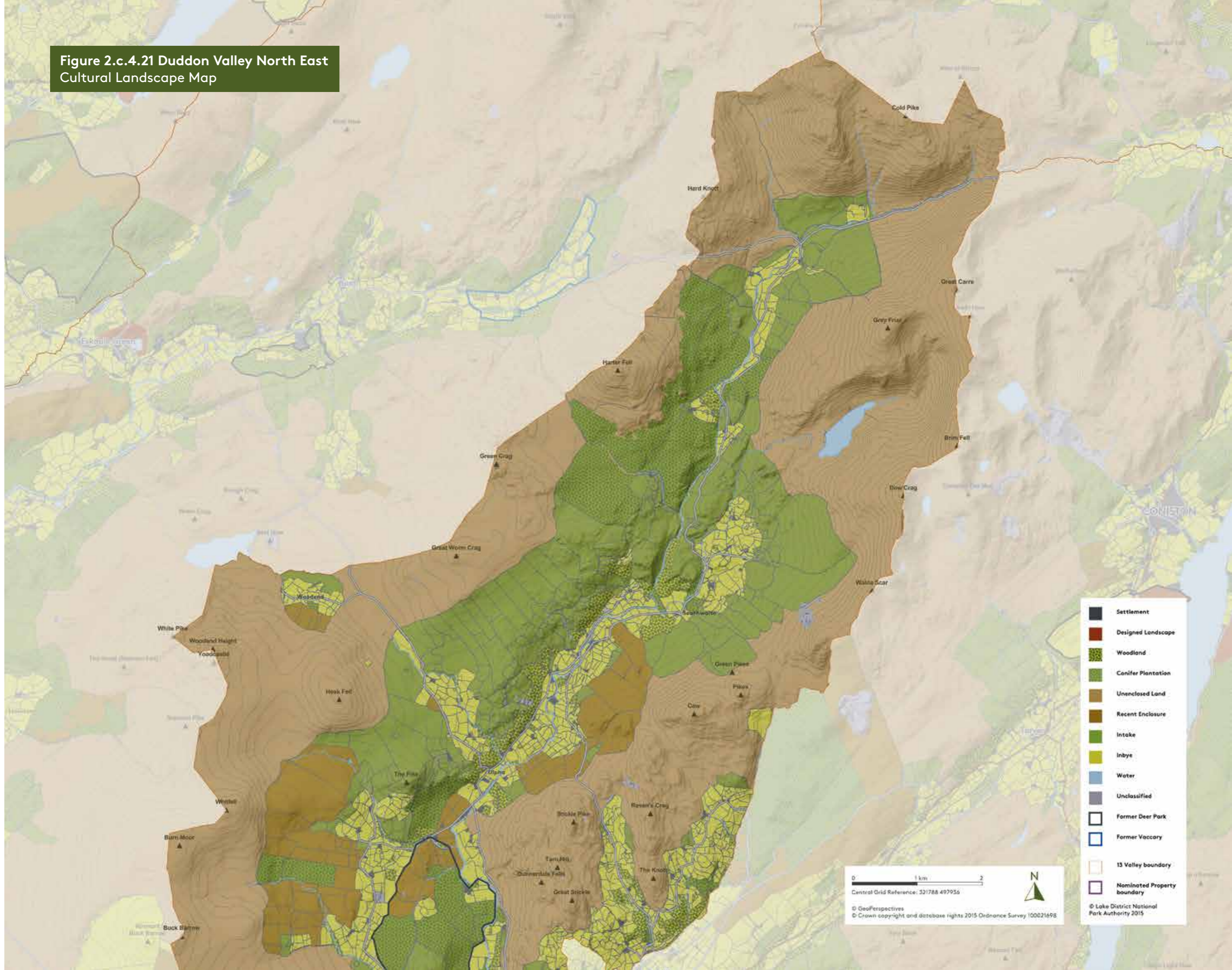


FIGURE 2.c.4.19 An aerial view of the disused Walna Scar slate quarry

FIGURE 2.c.4.20 The contribution of the Duddon Valley to the cultural landscape themes identified

DUDDON		
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	
	Rough Fell flocks	None
	Swaledale flocks	
	Common land	
	Shepherds' meets/shows and traditional sports	
	Woodland industries	
	Mining/Quarrying	
	Water-powered industry	
	Market towns	None
Discovery and appreciation of a rich cultural landscape	Viewing stations	None
	Villas	
	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	
	Opportunities for quiet enjoyment and spiritual refreshment	
Development of a model for protecting cultural landscape	Conservation movement	
	National Trust ownership (inalienable land)	
	National Trust covenanted land	
	Other Protective Trusts and ownership including National Park Authority	

Figure 2.c.4.21 Duddon Valley North East Cultural Landscape Map

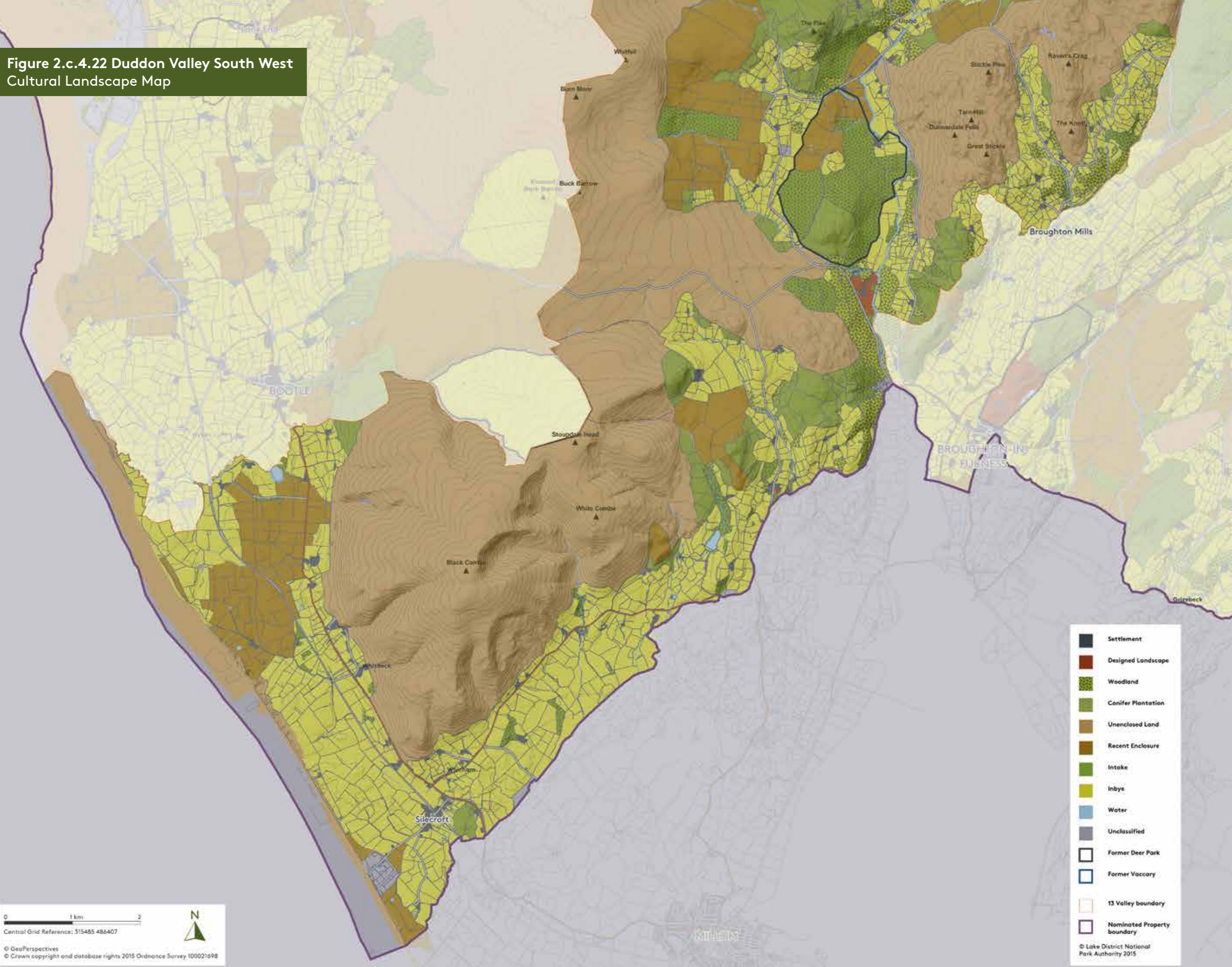


- Settlement
- Designed Landscape
- Woodland
- Conifer Plantation
- Unenclosed Land
- Recent Enclosure
- Intake
- Inbye
- Water
- Unclassified
- Former Deer Park
- Former Vaccary
- 13 Valley boundary
- Nominated Property boundary

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 Central Grid Reference: 321788 497935
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Figure 2.c.4.22 Duddon Valley South West Cultural Landscape Map



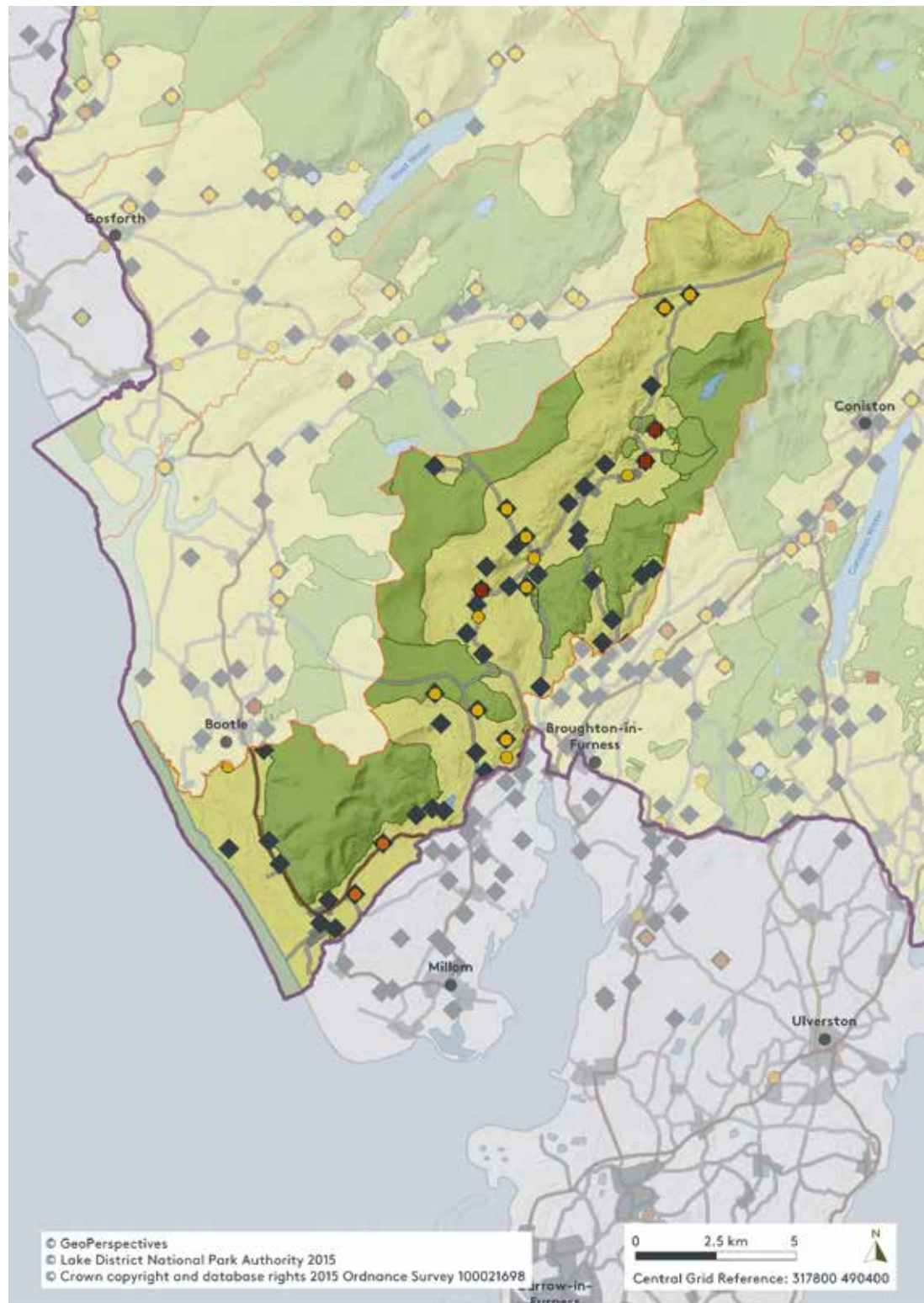
- Settlement
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0 1 km 2
 Central Grid Reference: 315485 486407
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← FOLD OUT MAP

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FIGURE 2.c.4.23 Shepherds' flocks and native sheep breeds in the Duddon 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.