Tarn Hows, Coniston

3. CONISTON

—

Description, History and Development

3. THE CONISTON VALLEY

"...we shall next fix our eyes upon the vale of Coniston, running likewise from the sea, but not (as all the other valleys do) to the nave of the wheel, and therefore it may be not inaptly represented as a broken spoke sticking in the rim".

William Wordsworth, 'Guide to the Lakes' (1835)

3.1 DESCRIPTION

3.1.1 LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The Coniston Valley sits in the centre of the south part of the English Lake District. It runs south from its northern boundary with the valleys of Langdale and Grasmere, Rydal and Ambleside with the Duddon Valley to its west and Windermere to the east. The character of the valley is dominated by high, rugged fells including Coniston Old Man and Wetherlam in the west, the linear, glacial lake which is Coniston Water running north to south for the greater part of the length of the valley, and the extensive woodlands and forestry plantations on the low fells east of the lake.

The underlying geology of the north western part of Coniston Valley is the Borrowdale Volcanic Group which, following glacial carving, has produced the high and rugged fells. A sharp break in the geology of the area is indicated by the line of Coniston Limestone which runs from south-west to north-east, passing over Torver High Common and through the Yewdale Valley. South and east of this line the geology comprises softer slates and shales of the Silurian Era, which have weathered to create a lower, rolling landscape contrasting strongly with the volcanic landscape in the northern part of the valley.

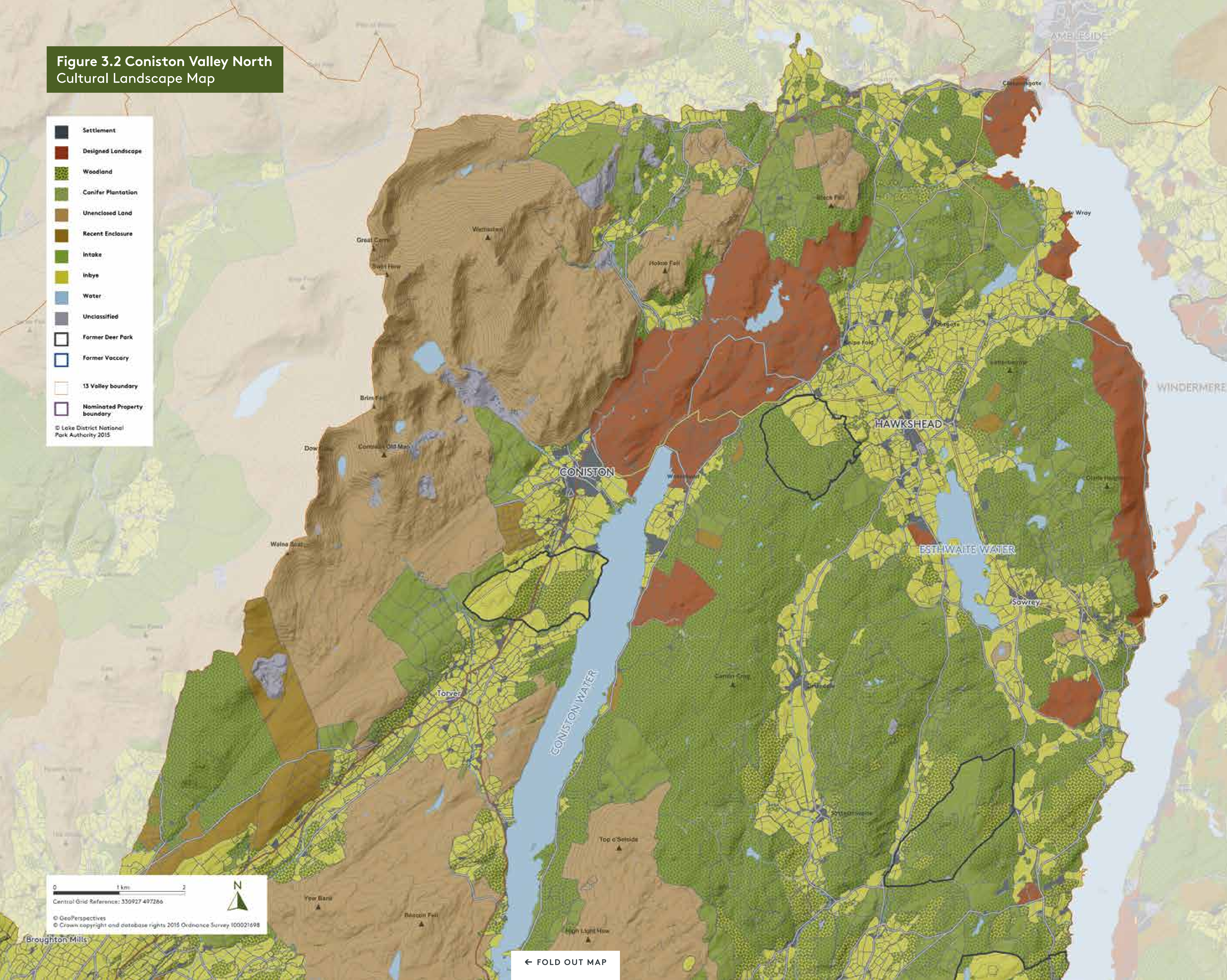
The legacy of extensive mining and quarrying on the fellsides (including a number of quarries still producing slate today), pastoral farming on lower ground, extensive woodlands supporting traditional woodland industries, intensive silviculture centred on Grizedale, and the large, bustling Victorian village of Coniston, combine to create a strong sense of a working landscape. The rugged, wild and remote natural beauty of the high fells is not diminished by past industries and the combination of a richly patterned agricultural landscape, the large lake, the patchwork of deciduous woodlands and forests and occasional parkland and designed landscape creates stunning scenery. See Figure 3.1 for an illustrative map of the valley. Also see Figures 3.2 and 3.3 for an overview of the cultural landscape of the Coniston Valley.

Figure 3.1 Coniston Valley
Illustrative Map

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

1. Broughton Tower
2. Yew Tree Farm (owned by National Trust)
3. Coniston Hall (owned by National Trust)
4. Hawkshead Old Hall and Courthouse (owned by National Trust)
5. Coniston Copper Mines
6. Low Wood Gunpowder Works
7. Monk Coniston and Tarn Hows (owned by National Trust)
8. Wray Castle (owned by National Trust)
9. Claife Station (owned by National Trust)
10. Belmount (owned by National Trust)
11. Brantwood (owned by The Brantwood Trust)
12. Beatrix Potter's house at Hill Top (owned by National Trust)

Figure 3.2 Coniston Valley North
Cultural Landscape Map



← FOLD OUT MAP

Figure 3.3 Coniston Valley South
Cultural Landscape Map

FIGURE 3.4 The contribution of the Coniston Valley to the cultural landscape themes identified

CONISTON		
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	
	Swaledale flocks	
	Common land	
	Shepherds' meets/shows and traditional sports	
	Woodland industries	
	Mining/Quarrying	
	Water-powered industry	
	Market towns	
Discovery and appreciation of a rich cultural landscape	Viewing stations	
	Villas	
	Designed landscape	
	Early tourist infrastructure	
	Residences and burial places of significant writers and poets	
	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	

← FOLD OUT MAP

FIGURE 3.5 View of Hawkshead and the church of St Michael and All Saints. The view includes a fine example of a shard fence constructed from interlocking vertical slates.

FIGURE 3.6 The Coniston Fells in winter, with Lowick in the foreground

FIGURE 3.7 Coniston village on the far side of Coniston Water, nestled beneath Coniston Old Man. Slate quarrying is visible on the slopes above the village.

THE INHERITED LANDSCAPE'S CHARACTER

The Coniston Valley is very different to the northern and western Lake District valleys in its composition and in how its landscape and scenery change as the rivers make their journey to the sea. Typically a Lakeland river valley begins in the wild and remote high fells before more gentle topography and increasing human influence combine to produce a 'softer', more managed landscape. Here in Coniston the valley runs north-south but the most obvious differences in landscape character are a west-east split with high, rugged fells including the Coniston Old Man and Wetherlam on the west side of the valley and heavily forested low fell to the east extending across to the west shore of Windermere for almost its entire length. Human influence is readily apparent throughout the valley. Outside the high fell and forests the valley is relatively densely settled.

Recreation contributes much to the character of the valley with the Coniston fells being popular with walkers and climbers. Grizedale Forest is a recreation hub for cycling, all kinds of family activities and the arts, and there is a range of water-based activities on Coniston Water, the third largest lake in the Lake District. There are many centres for outdoor activities in the Coniston Valley area including the Youth Hostel Association's three hostels in the Coniston Valley area at Hawkshead (Esthwaite Lodge), Coniston Holly How, and Coniston Copper Mines. There are Holiday Fellowship holiday centre at Monk Coniston Hall; Water Park Lakeland Adventure Centre; Low Bank Ground run by the Brathay Trust for Wigan Council; Thurston Outdoor Education Centre, owned and operated by South Tyneside Council; The University of Birmingham's Raymond Priestley Centre; and the Kepplewray Centre, at Broughton-in-Furness.

Despite, or perhaps even because of, former mine and quarry workings, the Coniston fells have all the attributes of wild, remote high fell. Mine and quarry waste add to the rugged character of the natural crags, outcrops and screes to create a coarse-textured, 'rough' appearance to the landscape. The clutter of spoil tips, adits, shafts and decaying mining machinery give parts of the landscape a haunting feeling of abandonment.

To the east of Coniston Water the extensive woodlands and forestry plantations comprise some of the most densely wooded areas of England and can only really be appreciated from elevated viewpoints. The forest on the low fells hides an uneven

FIGURE 3.8 Conifer plantations alongside stands of native woodland in Grizedale Forest, on the eastern side of Coniston Water

topography with frequent rocky outcrops. The forest has the capacity to absorb high numbers of visitors on the dense network of footpaths, bridleways and tracks used as mountain bike trails emanating from the visitor centre at Grizedale. To the south of the coniferous forestry the low fells are a patchwork of pasture and deciduous woodland which creates a sense of enclosure and intimacy except on the higher ridges where fine panoramic views can be had.

In the more gentle terrain to the south of the main forest the rural road network negotiating this undulating topography and servicing the scattered farms and small settlements is a challenge to all but the very local. To the west of Coniston Water and the River Crake, south of the Coniston Fells, the landscape is similar low fell topography and altitude (generally <300 metres) to the east but has historically been clear of woodland and forestation; it is mostly common grazing with extensive patches of bracken and gorse and rocky outcrops, with a distinctive character.

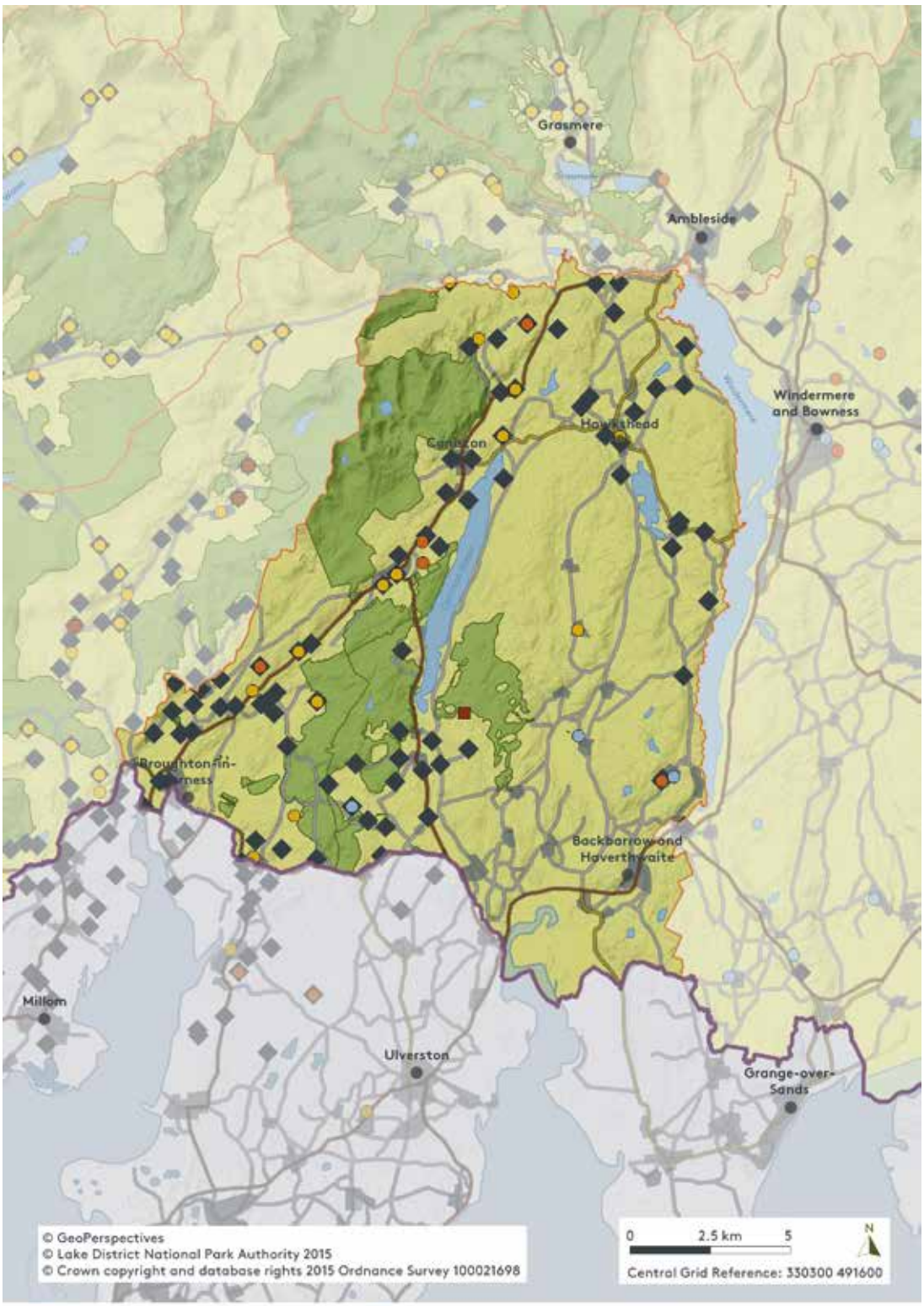
Even though Coniston is a working landscape, it retains a natural beauty as intense as any part of the English Lake District. There is designed landscape in parts but not on the same scale as some other parts of the region, and the slightly untamed nature of the landscape is always apparent.

3.1.2 FARMING TODAY – THE AGRO-PASTORAL LANDSCAPE

The medieval origins of the agricultural landscape in the Coniston Valley can be seen in the survival of single ancient farms with their small irregular fields at the head of the lake, around the village of Coniston, and along the adjoining Woodland Valley to the south-west. Unlike the valleys that lie deeper in the heart of the Lake District fells, Coniston does not appear to have had a stone-walled ring garth in the medieval period, separating a common field in the valley bottom land from the grazed fellsides. However, the remains of a former common or town field can be identified on the lake shore in the area between Coniston and Coniston Hall, which performed the same function as commonly-farmed, arable fields. The town field was probably established by the end of the 13th century, together with a deer park around Coniston Hall, the course of which can still be traced on the ground.

Areas of intake can be seen on the slopes approaching Torver High Common in the west while more extensive areas of former intake, around the ancient farms of Lawson Park and Low Parkamoor, on the east side of the valley, are now obscured by conifer plantation. The higher ground on the flanks of Coniston Old Man comprises open fell grazing and this extends down to the lake shore at Torver Back Common.

FIGURE 3.9 Shepherds' flocks and native sheep breeds in the Coniston Valley



WORKING FARMS AND FLOCKS

The long tradition of sheep farming continues today. There are 77 farms with fell-going flocks in the Coniston Valley area. There are 14 Herdwick flocks, four Rough Fell flocks and five Swaledale flocks, registered with the relevant Sheep Breeders' Associations. There are four National Trust landlord flocks in the Coniston Valley: Tilberthwaite, High Yewdale, Coniston Hall and Hoathwaite ('Lakeland Shepherds' Guide' 2005).

There are about 4,150 hectares of Registered Common Land in the Coniston Valley, around five per cent of its total area, and most of the open fell. The main areas of Common Land are west of Coniston Water, including the eastern part of Duddon, Seathwaite, Torver and Coniston Common, Blawith Common, Woodland Fell, Torver Low Common, Torver Back Common, and part of Lowick High Common. Bethecar Moor is the only Common Land to the east of Coniston Water.

CONTINUING FARMING CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

The Walna Scar Shepherds' Meets are in July and November. The summer Meet is on the Friday nearest 21 July alternately at the Blacksmiths Arms, Broughton Mills, Newfield Hotel, Seathwaite and Church House Torver. The Shepherds' Meet and Show are at the same place in July and on the first Saturday in November. These Meets are for the District of Seathwaite, Torver, Dunnerdale, Broughton, Woodland and Coniston. The Whitehaven News reported that the Centenary Celebration of Walna Scar Shepherds' Meet was held at The Church House Inn, Torver in November 2008, which included the showing of Herdwick and Swaledale Sheep, followed by an evening singing competition in a packed Church House Inn. It was noted how similar the event remains to the first show 100 years ago.

The Lakeland Country Fair takes place every year at Torver in August and the Coniston Country Fair is held at Coniston Hall every July. These are both typical Lake District shows with Herdwick sheep-showing classes, shows for terriers, beagles, foxhounds and lurchers, Cumberland & Westmorland Wrestling, Fell Races, traditional Cumbrian walking stick show, and local crafts and food.

The Hawkshead Show is also held in August and includes a large variety of sheep classes, including Herdwick and Rough Fell, horse showing, horse carriage and horse jumping classes, arts and crafts and a hound trail.

Broughton-in-Furness at the south west of the Coniston Valley area, 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. The other is Cockermouth, just outside the north west boundary of the National Park.

FARMSTEADS

The farm buildings and walls in the Coniston Valley present the solid stone character familiar from other valleys, making use of the local Silurian slate and green slate for roofing material. Shard fences are common in this area, for example around Broughton Mills.

On the northern edge of the valley is a group of good examples of typical 17th and early 18th century farm buildings belonging to the National Trust. Their farms in Yewdale, north of Coniston, are one of the best surviving groups of early vernacular farm buildings.

TABLE 3.1 Key Farmhouses in the Coniston Valley

CONISTON HALL

One of the best surviving examples of manor house in the Lake District. Built in the 16th century, the domestic wing was added c. 1580. The hall became ruinous by 1770 due to the re-location of the Fleming family to Rydal. The NE wing was demolished and part of the hall was converted to a large bank barn. The hall displays a fine series of rounded chimneys in Lake District style, tapering and on square bases. The Coniston Hall Estate was acquired by the National Trust in 1971.

DATE 16th – 18th century
OWNERSHIP National Trust
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 330447 496347

YEW TREE FARM

The rear part of the house is cruck-framed dating from the mid to late 17th century. The front part of the house was added in 1743 by George and Agnes Walker. The front parlour was furnished in 1934 by Beatrix Potter as a tea room. The range of late 17th and early 18th century barns and cow house has one of the finest examples of a 'spinning gallery' in Cumbria.

DATE 17th – 20th century
OWNERSHIP National Trust
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 331939 499838

LOW HALL GARTH

Low Hall Garth is an L-shape series of buildings comprising a house, barn and two cottages. Built in the late 17th/early 18th centuries.

DATE 17th – 18th century
OWNERSHIP National Trust
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 330956 502880

ABBOT PARK FARMHOUSE

Late 17th/early 18th century house. Roughcast stone with slate roof.

DATE 17th – 18th century
OWNERSHIP Private
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 331286 488094

BRIDGE END

Bridge End is a classic small Lake District late 17th/early 18th century design of house and barn under one long roof.

DATE 17th – 18th century
OWNERSHIP National Trust
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 330109 502921

HIGH YEWDALE

High Yewdale is a cluster of two houses, various barns and other farm buildings. The farmhouse has 17th century origins with late 18th century additions.

DATE 17th – 18th century
OWNERSHIP National Trust
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 331489 499740

LOW YEWDALE

Low Yewdale consists of two farmhouses, two barns and a cottage. The former farmhouse is of 17th or early 18th century origins.

DATE 17th – 18th century
OWNERSHIP National Trust
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 331172 499115

LOW TILBERTHWAITE

Low Tilberthwaite Cottage, near Coniston is a small 17th century farmhouse with an 18th century in-line outbuilding with a well-known 'spinning gallery'.

DATE 17th – 18th century
OWNERSHIP National Trust
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 330868 501098

PARKAMOOR FARM

Parkamoor Farm in 1570 consisted of "one old mansion house, and one olde barne covered with brackens, wherin Christopher Jackson, the third, ther now dwelleth". This presumably was replaced soon after, in the 17/18th century by the current building. This is almost certainly the site of a medieval farm. Archaeological survey has identified remains of a longhouse at the adjacent High Parkamoor farm and other building platforms survive at Low Parkamoor.

DATE 16th – 19th century
OWNERSHIP National Trust
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 330700 492638

HIGH ARNSIDE

High Arnside farmhouse is a remarkably intact traditional Cumbria dwelling built in 1697 to a typical of the area around Coniston and Hawkshead. Contains spice cupboard with inscription "HER 1697".

DATE 17th century
OWNERSHIP National Trust
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 333233 501704

HOATHWAITE FARM

Hoathwaite Farm is an extremely grand two and a half storey, 17th century farmhouse of importance for its unusual and distinctive form and wealth of woodwork and other dateable features.

DATE 17th century
OWNERSHIP National Trust
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 329596 494922

LOW ARNSIDE

Low Arnside is good example of early 18th century date farmstead with house and barn. Gifted to the National Trust by Beatrix Potter.

DATE 18th century
OWNERSHIP National Trust
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 333359 501904

HIGH GROUND FARM, HOATHWAITE

While the majority of buildings at High Ground farm date from the 19th century, the farmhouse and cruck barn appear to date from an earlier period, probably the 18th century.

DATE 18th – 19th century
OWNERSHIP National Trust
PROTECTION Not listed
GRID REFERENCE 329163 495261

HAWES FARM

Farmhouse and outbuildings, mid to late 18th century in roughcast stone with slate roof. Interior has 18th century fireplace with corbelled lintel and cast iron range.

DATE 18th century
OWNERSHIP National Trust
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 321361 490671

LUMBHOLME

Lumbholme at Broughton Mills, late 17th or 18th century farmstead with later alterations and additions.

DATE 17th – 18th century
OWNERSHIP Private
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 321889 490355

TOWN END FARMHOUSE AND OUTBUILDINGS

Ruined house and outbuilding. Probably 17th century with later outbuilding. This presumably marked the limit of either Torver township to the NE or perhaps Troughton to the SW.

DATE 17th century
OWNERSHIP Private
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 333748 492263

HIGH BETHECAR

Farmhouse with attached barn and outbuilding. Fireplace key stone inscribed: "JCA/1756".

DATE 18th century
OWNERSHIP Private
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 330347 489780

BANK END, TORVER

House and barn of early 18th century date. Its position adjacent to Town End and Lords Wood suggest an earlier foundation date than its 18th century appearance.

DATE 18th century
OWNERSHIP Private
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 326512 492832

TROUGHTON HALL

Troughton Hall is mentioned in documents form the mid-16th century The core of the surviving buildings are probably 17th century while the present farmhouse building may represent 19th century remodelling.

DATE 16th – 19th century
OWNERSHIP Private
PROTECTION Not listed
GRID REFERENCE 325633 491918

HIGH HALL GARTH

High Hall Garth, 17th century farmhouse and barn, with 19th century additions.

DATE 17th – 19th century
OWNERSHIP National Trust
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 330857 502802

3.1.3 INDUSTRY

The Coniston area has been a hive of industrial production from at least the medieval period. Woodland industries, water-powered industries, copper mining, iron and copper smelting, and quarrying have all left their mark on the landscape or are demonstrated by surviving buildings. Slate quarrying continues to the present day.

The Coniston Valley has probably the highest concentration of evidence for charcoal burning, potash production, bark peeling and other woodland industries in the Lake District. This is particularly so in the Rusland Valley and on the east side of Coniston Water, Roudsea Wood, and Graythwaite woods. Such industries were strongly dependent on woodland management techniques (timber production, coppicing and standards) and their associated charcoal burning, leading to woodlands becoming a significant feature across large areas of the central and western low fells.

The River Leven which flows out of Windermere had a number of significant water-powered industries along its course, including Backbarrow ironworks and Low Wood gunpowder works. The 'Dolly Blue' mill, manufacturing the blue pigment ultramarine, used in the textile industry was also powered by the River Leven at Backbarrow. It occupied what is now the Whitewater Hotel.

Bobbin manufacture was another water powered local speciality. There is evidence that the Lakeland mills alone produced about half of the requirements of the textile mills of Great Britain in the mid-19th century. Stott Park Bobbin Mill is the best surviving example of the bobbin manufacturing industry in the United Kingdom. It is a well preserved working mill, which now operates as a museum and visitor attraction. Other examples include Penny Bridge which was one of the largest in the area along with Stott Park and many others on the River Crake and on the watercourses in the Rusland and Hawkshead areas, such as Nibthwaite Mill.

The Coniston Valley area has a very high concentration of remains of medieval bloomeries (iron smelting sites) which can be found dotted around the shores of Coniston Water, and in the area between Coniston Water and Windermere. Recent archaeological investigation has included the excavation of a water powered bloomery at Blelham Tarn. The later iron industry has also left its mark: some of the workers' housing that survives is amongst the earliest in the country. Substantial remains, either ruinous or converted in whole or part, exist at Backbarrow and Nibthwaite, Cunsey, Low Wood and Penny Bridge. Backbarrow Furnace is the most extensive site and had the longest working use.

FIGURE 3.10 Remains of the copper mill at Penny Rigg, Tilberthwaite, along with waste heaps from later slate quarrying

The Borrowdale Volcanic Series includes important mineralisations that have led to the significant mining and quarrying activity in the Coniston Valley area. Extensive mining for copper took place in the Coniston Fells from the 16th century or earlier, and very significant archaeological remains can be seen at Coniston Copper Mines and around Wetherlam. The mine and remains of processing buildings at Penny Rigg are particularly impressive. The other significant areas of copper mining were at Red Dell Head, Dry Cove Bottom, Tilberthwaite, and Greenburn. The Tilberthwaite and Greenburn copper mines remain a relatively well-preserved, extensive and impressive mining landscape containing the remains of a wide range of upstanding and buried mining features dating from the 17th to the 20th centuries. These include levels, shafts, trials, water management systems for powering machinery, ore transport systems, processing buildings, and spoil heaps.

The slate industry was also very important and huge slate quarries, including underground 'closeheads' can be seen. The principal quarries are found at Tilberthwaite and Hodge Close in Little Langdale (Cathedral Quarry) with other significant workings at Penny Rigg, in the Coniston Copper mines valley, at Brandy Crag, at Bursting Stone on the flanks of Coniston Old Man, and at Broughton Moor. The last three quarries are still working.

A narrow band of Coniston Limestone runs from the south west to the north east through the Coniston area, along which is a series of late 18th century limekilns. Lime was an important ingredient, not just to improve recently enclosed land for farming but also to construct or maintain the building stock of the valley which was generally being renewed at this time. Examples are at Broughton Mills, High Pike Haw, and a well preserved example at Yewdale.

The gunpowder works of the Coniston Valley area contributed to Furness and Westmoreland's supply of the greater part of the United Kingdom's needs for gunpowder from the late 18th to the early 20th century. Low Wood is the best preserved 19th century gunpowder works in northern England.

In 1869, the Lakeside and Haverthwaite railway was designed to carry coal to the Windermere steamers, iron ore to Backbarrow and sulphur and saltpetre for the Black Beck and Low Wood gunpowder works. Today it is a popular tourist train journey.

3.1.4 SETTLEMENTS

The Coniston Valley area contains a number of historical settlements rich in architectural buildings in addition to the vernacular farm built heritage. The key settlements are Coniston, Hawkshead and Broughton-in-Furness along with Near and Far Sawrey. The main hamlets are Torver with others along the course of the river Crake, including High Nibthwaite, Blawith, Water Yeat, Spark Bridge, Lowick, Greenodd and Penny Bridge.

Many of these settlements include stone-built cottages, often in terraces, built to house local industrial workers.

CONISTON

FIGURE 3.11 Coniston Hall, displaying massive, cylindrical chimneys typical of large Lake District houses of the Statesmen period (late 16th/early 17th centuries). The house was later converted to a bank barn and the entrance ramp can be seen in the centre of the building.

Coniston, still very much a working village, grew simultaneously to serve the farming, copper mining and slate quarrying communities. It then expanded as a tourist destination in the Victorian era thanks in part to the opening of a branch of the Furness Railway in 1859. This is reflected in the mix of building styles from vernacular to 'High Victorian'. The fells, the village and the lake are inextricably linked visually, historically, and economically through past industries and present-day tourism. The village sits comfortably in the landscape and, viewed from the east shore of Coniston Water around Brantwood, the combination of lake, village and fell scenery is magnificent.

Coniston Hall is one of the few substantial manor houses in the central Lake District and the only one owned by the National Trust. It was the seat of the Le Fleming family from 1250, but the present building dates from around 1580 and is built on the site of an earlier hall. It is one of the most noted buildings in the Lake District, with its distinctive tall, rounded chimneys. The bank barn to the north west of the Hall, dating from 1688, is one of the earliest examples in the Lake District and there is another classic bank barn of 19th century date south west of the hall.

TORVER

A small village some three miles from Coniston, at the junction of roads from Coniston, Lowick and Broughton. Torver contains some traditional farmsteads, but the main character of the village dates from the arrival of the railway in 1859, which led to the development of local slate quarries and various woodland crafts and industries. A railway station and goods yard became the centre of village near the road junction along with a terrace of houses. St Luke's church of 1884 was designed by the famous Lancaster architects, Paley and Austin.

HAWKSHEAD

Hawkshead is a small town of outstanding historic character, with an historic core that is largely untouched by 20th century development. It has a tangle of narrow streets, squares, yards and alleys (ginnels) that thread between a closely packed jumble of houses, inns, shops, outhouses and civic buildings. Many buildings are of exceptional historic and/or architectural character; 42 are nationally important Listed Buildings, ranging in date from medieval to late 19th century, including the 12th century church, the Grammar School (founded 1588) and the Town Hall (1790).

Hawkshead's origins are as the administrative centre for the northern estates of Furness Abbey. Hawkshead Courthouse, north of the town, dates from the 13th century and is one of the oldest secular buildings in the Lake District. Hawkshead's major industry from the 16th century was the woollen industry and this would have provided the motivation to convert surrounding arable land to pasture and additional grazing of the fells. The town's architectural interest owes much to the Sandys family in the 16th century who made significant investment in the town's public buildings including the rebuilding of St Michael and All Saints Church. This very large parish church sits in a commanding position on a small hill overlooking the town and the Esthwaite Valley. Sandys also founded Hawkshead Grammar School in 1588, later attended by the young William Wordsworth. Many of the buildings in the town centre today were built from the late 17th to late 18th century as the market grew in importance; one notable example is the fine town hall built in 1790.

FIGURE 3.12 Hawkshead Grammar School, attended by the young William Wordsworth

NEAR AND FAR SAWREY

Near Sawrey and Far Sawrey are two small, separate villages on the historical route between Hawkshead and Kendal, between Esthwaite Water and Windermere. Both have many buildings of architectural quality. The buildings predominantly date from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries and include good examples of the vernacular tradition, together with buildings in the Arts and Crafts and the Vernacular Revival styles. Some large Victorian and Edwardian buildings show the spread of tourism from Bowness. Near Sawrey is closely associated with Beatrix Potter who lived at Hill Top and the village provided the settings for a number of her illustrated stories. The early hamlets comprised a number of scattered farmsteads. The arrival of the railway to Windermere

in 1847 led to the development of many large houses and villas. Much of Near Sawrey village and surrounding farmland is owned by the National Trust.

BROUGHTON-IN-FURNESS

Broughton-in-Furness on the south-western edge of the Coniston Valley area, close to the Duddon estuary, is a prime example of a planned Georgian town square built in the 1760s at the behest of John Gilpin Sawrey, then Lord of the Manor and resident of Broughton Tower. The town contains many good examples of 18th century provincial dwellings, notably Broughton House and houses around The Square and many Victorian residential and commercial buildings from the post-railway era. St Mary's Church and churchyard, located almost out of sight of the town, has Norman origins and possibly some Saxon fabric. Broughton Tower up above the town to the north east was originally a 14th century pele tower which the Gilpin Sawreys rebuilt in 1744. It was further altered in the Gothic style in the late 18th century and is now set within fine landscaped grounds with ha-ha, and designed historic parkland.

BROUGHTON MILLS

A small hamlet set within quiet, hidden countryside at the bridging point over the River Lickle. In the past Broughton Mills was important for water-powered industries and including corn mills, a saw mill, a limekiln and potash kilns. The village inn, the Blacksmith's Arms, is a focal point in this small village and the centre of social activity during the annual Walna Scar Shepherds' Meet. Other significant buildings include Lumbholme, a fine example of three-storey 17th century former farmhouse.

SPARK BRIDGE

Spark Bridge is named after the early 17th century iron smelting works which was located here. The settlement grew up near the bridge over the River Crake. In 1848 the ironworks was converted into an important bobbin mill, producing a wide variety of woodturning products. A terrace of workers' housing is located nearby. Spark Bridge also had a woollen mill.

HAVERTHWAITE

Originally a farming community with a group of 18th century buildings along the road to Holker and Cartmel, Haverthwaite is located at an important bridging point over the River Leven. At Low Wood, on the south side of the river, opposite Haverthwaite, Isaac Wilkinson and his son John had an iron smelting furnace from 1748 until 1782. In 1799 this was converted into a gunpowder works, and its clock tower erected in 1849 is an icon of the Lake District's gunpowder industry. Low Wood also includes a unique, small industrial settlement of 18th century workers' houses including some converted from buildings of the former iron works.

BACKBARROW

Backbarrow is an industrial settlement with its origins in the medieval period, and is a key bridging point over River Leven which drains from the southern end of Windermere.

The river provided ample water power for corn, fulling and paper mills in Backbarrow. The short section of river here had the greatest concentration of water-powered industries in the southern Lake District. The famous Backbarrow iron works operated from 1711 until 1966. The iron master Isaac Wilkinson lived in the village at Bare Syke (1740) with his more well-known son, John. Backbarrow cotton mill later became the Ultramarine Works, producing chemical for laundry use from 1890 until 1981. This has now been converted to tourist accommodation.

There are good examples of cotton spinners' terraced housing at Low and High Row. The Ulverston to Lakeside Railway formed the vital transport link for the industries and helped to develop tourism in the area by connecting with the Lake Windermere Steamers. Today, the Lakeside and Haverthwaite Railway is one of the main tourist attractions in the southern Lakes.

Elsewhere in the Coniston Valley the following buildings are important 16th and 17th century houses. Lowick Hall, dating from the Elizabethan period with a later wing of 1746, is a key higher status building in the south of the area. Ashlack Hall's south and west wings are 16th century in date, and its north and east wings are 17th century. Waterside House, near Newby Bridge was probably built between 1650-60 with an extension dated 1675. Graythwaite Old Hall is 16th or 17th century with an east wing dating to around 1710.

Typical 17th or 18th century houses include The Cragg at Colthouse which was built by William Satterthwaite in 1695, a notable local Quaker. A Friends' burial ground is nearby. Bull Close, Bull Close Cottage and Barn End at Skelwith, are three houses originating in the late 17th century. Roger Ground House, Hawkshead is probably 18th century in date, with a 17th century wing to the rear.

3.1.5 PICTURESQUE BUILDINGS AND LANDSCAPE

Coniston was not one of the most important destinations for early visitors in search of the Picturesque due to the lack of easy access in the 18th century. But it was visited by the guidebook writer Thomas West, who identified a series of viewing stations around Coniston Water. These still exist, are mostly publicly-accessible, and the views from them largely survive. The Station at Claife, the only viewing station on which a major structure was erected, is just within the eastern boundary of the Valley, on the shore of Windermere. For convenience, it has been described in chapter 2, 2.1.6.

3.1.6 VILLAS AND ORNAMENTAL LANDSCAPING

The Coniston landscape was the subject of major modifications designed to increase its Picturesque beauty. One of the most popular visitor destinations today is Tarn Hows, just to the north of Coniston Water, a spectacularly beautiful lake created by damming three smaller natural tarns, and surrounded by ornamental tree planting. Several villas, including Brantwood, later the home of John Ruskin, were constructed or developed around Coniston Water and on the Western shore of Windermere.

MONK CONISTON AND TARN HOWS

The Monk Coniston Estate is an important late 18th and 19th century designed landscape which has retained many of its original elements of design and natural beauty. It was developed from the late 18th century onwards during the ownership of two wealthy and influential families.

The first of these was the Knott family, who made their fortune from iron smelting in the Lake District and Scotland. During their ownership (1769 – 1835), there were major extensions to the hall building, extensive tree planting and development of the pleasure grounds around the hall.

In 1835 the Estate was sold to James Garth Marshall. The Marshall family wealth came from the flax spinning industry in Leeds. Marshall bought more land to extend the Estate and was responsible for the creation of Tarn Hows; a celebrated combination of artificial lakes surrounded by broadleaf and conifer woodlands. He undertook further tree planting, particularly of exotic conifers, around the hall and across the Estate.

In 1926 when the Marshall family fortunes declined, the house and gardens were sold to John Perry Bradshaw. The rest of the Estate, including all farmland and Tarn Hows, was purchased by Beatrix Potter in 1930. She immediately sold half at cost price to the National Trust, who bought the land with a generous donation by Sir Samuel Scott of Windermere. The remainder was passed on to the National Trust after Beatrix Potter's death in 1943. In 1945 the National Trust purchased the hall and gardens, re-uniting the Estate once more.

Since 1945, Monk Coniston Hall has been leased by the National Trust to the Holiday Fellowship (now HF Holidays), and the hall and grounds have been closed to the general public. The hall itself remains in private tenancy, although since September 2007 a new public access route through part of the grounds and gardens is open, reconnecting Tarn Hows with the home of its creator.

Tarn Hows is a designed landscape, influenced by the Picturesque tradition, and is one of the most celebrated and visited areas in the Lake District. Centred on a single tarn created from three smaller, natural tarns, its character is defined by ornamental planting of non-native conifers including larch.

BRANTWOOD

Perhaps the most famous resident of Coniston during the 19th century was the poet, artist and philosopher John Ruskin. He bought the Brantwood Estate on the eastern shore of Coniston in 1871 and set about improving the property in line with his views on aesthetics and husbandry of the land. The appearance of the Brantwood property, now maintained by the Brantwood Trust, is much as it was during Ruskin's time there. Ruskin is buried in St Andrews churchyard in Coniston along with members of the Collingwood family. Ruskin's grave is a Celtic-style cross designed by W. G. Collingwood and carved by a local craftsman from Tilberthwaite Stone set on a rock from Elterwater. The Brantwood Estate faces spectacular views of Coniston Old Man. The views, which are substantially unaltered from Ruskin's day, were one of the primary reasons for his choice of Brantwood as a home. Numerous drawings on view to the public in the house reveal how little of this scene has changed.

FIGURE 3.13 The view of Coniston Water, the village of Coniston and Coniston OId Man from Ruskin's home at Brantwood. The steam ship Gondola can be seen on the lake.

The Brantwood Estate today comprises 101 hectares, rising from the lakeshore to open fell-top. The Estate is divided into roughly 36 hectares of ancient semi-natural woodland; 32 hectares of moorland; 20 hectares of pasture; and 5 hectares of gardens enclosing the buildings. This land use and the traditional management of each of the areas are consistent with those practised on the estate in Ruskin's own day. The Estate is, in all relevant senses, a continuing survival of the environment which Ruskin knew, shaped, drew and wrote about.

Ruskin made many significant interventions in the Estate which can still be seen and understood. They can be broadly divided into three categories: 1) practical landscaping or land-management projects which are nonetheless unique; 2) experimental interventions with a philosophical or demonstrative purpose; 3) garden design and layout with an allegorical meaning.

1) PRACTICAL LANDSCAPING AND LAND-MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

The most significant and historically interesting of these projects was the development of a system of terraces and reservoirs to control the rapid flows of water on the steep estate and restrict the loss of nutrients in the soil. The purpose was to demonstrate a method to create areas suitable for growing crops, herbs, fruit and flowers in a mountain environment. Most of the principal areas of terracing and cultivation still survive, or have been restored to active management. The largest and most important of these is the Moorland Garden. Three reservoirs, one of considerable aesthetic and design complexity, retain their functionality in the water course engineered by Ruskin, which connects the terraced areas. It also embodies a feature that allows a cascade to be run to order outside the front door of the house. The system still furnishes Brantwood with its drinking water.

2) EXPERIMENTAL INTERVENTIONS

Ruskin used Brantwood as a place to explore and demonstrate ways in which projects could be carried out which would better the lives of ordinary working people in mountainous rural areas. Using the skills of local quarrymen and miners, he tunnelled into the hillside to create a community ice-house. Ice was harvested from the lake in winter and made available to households in the area throughout the year. In the Professor's Garden, a plot was created which was indicative of the average small-holding of a working family. In this area a series of planting experiments was undertaken to prove and demonstrate optimum planting regimes for the successful balanced cultivation of health-giving produce for nutrition and recreation.

3) GARDEN DESIGN

As an artist and writer, Ruskin sought, in the shaping of his gardens, to develop a physical statement of underlying belief. The broad concept of the Brantwood Estate was that it represented a paradise garden where man and nature were in harmony. His Secretary, W. G. Collingwood, referred to it as his 'paradise of terraces'. Although this utopian dream was never fully realised, the extensive landscaping which Ruskin did carry out can all be read as part of the same coherent scheme. One feature in particular represents a dramatic and substantial artistic work in the land – the allegorical 'Zig Zaggy' garden. This feature represents the terraces of the Purgatorial Mount in Dante's 'Divine Comedy' and was designed as the main entrance to the estate.

Ruskin's way of writing was to use the direct experience of his physical works and the local environment to illuminate his ideas. Almost all the things Ruskin carried out on the Brantwood Estate and a great deal of its natural features made their way into his writings. In addition, Ruskin's later life was documented in detail by those around him. It is a unique facet of Brantwood that so many surviving aspects of Ruskin's life there can be encountered by visitors who have previously read, or go on to read, about them in his own writings or the writings of others about Ruskin, and in the ideas which his lifestyle and philosophy generated.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the house itself. Brantwood is an 18th century cottage which Ruskin purchased in 1872. The house was enlarged in a series of works until 1905, since when no changes have been made. All of the additions to Brantwood made by Ruskin and his cousin, Joan Severn, retained the earlier features of the building, so that the changes and their purposes can be read. Ruskin's most iconic and significant features were the famous turret, the dining room with its seven-arched window (the seven lanterns of which conform to the seven lamps which he believed guided the creative spirit), the lodge house, and the coach house.

WRAY CASTLE

The Wray Castle Estate is predominantly the work of one man, James Dawson, over a 40-year period during the mid-19th century. Subsequent changes have been few, and for the most part there has been little impact on his original vision. For this reason the estate is a rare and fascinating document of fashion and taste in the mid-19th century. The striking design and scale of execution of Wray Castle, using exposed local slate, together with its bold siting in the heart of one of Victorian Lakeland's classic views, makes it truly significant.

The Dawson vision for the Estate includes many of the typical features of a Victorian Estate, including a walled garden, fern house, estate church, exotic plantings, boathouses and estate farms. But of particular note is the fine example of a model farm at Low Wray which includes the particularly impressive stable block.

Wray Castle also has important literary and artistic links, the most significant being with William Wordsworth. The design of the house and gardens appear to have been greatly influenced by Wordsworthian ideals and as such, it is a fascinating snapshot of taste and fashion in the 1840s.

TABLE 3.2 Key villas in the Coniston Valley

BELMOUNT

A large Georgian house, built in 1774 for the Reverend Reginald Braithwaite, vicar of Hawkshead for 38 years. Beatrix Potter bought the house and estate in 1937 and it was given to the National Trust in 1944 by William Heelis. It now offers accommodation.

DATE 18th century
OWNERSHIP National Trust
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 335200 499302

BRANTWOOD

The Brantwood Estate, its gardens, buildings and contents represent a significant and well-preserved survival of the Lakeland home of John Ruskin. Situated on the quiet eastern shore of Coniston Water, with spectacular views of Coniston Old Man which were one of the primary reasons for Ruskin's choice of Brantwood as a home. Numerous drawings in the collection, and on view to the public in the house, reveal how little of this scene has changed. Also later home to William Linton, wood engraver and revolutionary socialist and his wife, the novelist Eliza Lynn; the poet Gerald Massey; and the water colourist Arthur Severn and his family.

DATE 18th – 19th century
OWNERSHIP The Brantwood Trust
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 331258 495854

BRATHAY HALL

Georgian country house built by George Law, the son of an Attorney who was involved in Backbarrow ironworks. On Law's death, in the West Indies in 1802, the house passed to his son Henry and in 1804 he in turn rented it to John Harden, a gentleman with connections in Edinburgh and Dublin. It has a fine prospect down Windermere, framed by trees and parkland to the water's edge. The place-names Brathay Garth and Pull Garth Wood suggest that it occupied land enclosed far earlier.

DATE 18th century
OWNERSHIP Brathay Trust
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 336657 503108

MONK CONISTON

18th century house with 19th century additions along with pinetum and grounds. Owned by the Marshall family in the 19th century, bought by Beatrix Potter and later acquired by the National Trust.

DATE 18th – 19th century
OWNERSHIP National Trust
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 331829 498320

BROUGHTON TOWER AND DESIGNED LANDSCAPE

The tower was extensively altered and enlarged into a country house, particularly during the 18th and 19th century. Its extensive grounds and parkland were landscaped as described in the Broughton Conservation Area plan. Plantation Woodland and parts of the designed landscape are shown on 1st Edn of 1851.

DATE 14th century pele tower, extended to south mid to late 18th century, wings added 1882-3, 20th century additions
OWNERSHIP Private
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 321397 487917

ESTHWAITE LODGE

Located south of Hawkshead on the west side of Esthwaite Water, and built in 1819-21 for Thomas Alcock Beck, author of 'Annales Furnesienses' (1844), by the architect George Webster. The grounds were especially laid out with easy gradients for Beck's invalid chair which he was confined to for much of his life, due to a spinal complaint.

DATE 19th century
OWNERSHIP YHA
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 335444 496702

FINSTHWAITE HOUSE

A late 17th century or early 18th century with alterations and front range around 1790. Along with the house are a walled pleasure garden, a kitchen garden and stables. Pennington Lodge Tower on nearby Water Side Knott was built in 1799 by James King of Finsthwaite House to honour the English naval victories over France, Spain and Holland.

DATE 17th – 18th century
OWNERSHIP Private
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 336384 487164

GRAYTHWAITE NEW HALL

16th or 17th century house with later alterations; rear wings of c. 1810 and c. 1920; extension to south, 1890, probably by R. Knill Freeman. Major re-facing in 1840 gave the hall the appearance of a Victorian Gothic-style manor house. It has been in the Sandys family for 500 years, whose family members include Edwyn Sandys who was Archbishop of York from 1576-88. The grounds consist of five hectares of gardens laid out by Thomas Mawson from 1889-99, his first major commission. The Dutch garden, rose garden, yew hedges and terraces show the Arts and Crafts style of the time. An arboretum contains some fine trees. Dan Gibson, Mawson's architect, designed the sundials and wrought iron gates. The Graythwaite woods were a favourite walking spot for Wordsworth and were the setting for Beatrix Potter's, 'The Fairy Caravan'.

DATE 16th – 19th century
OWNERSHIP Private
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 337052 491264

RUSLAND HALL

A late 17th or early 18th century house with additions of 1850. It was built by the Rawlinson family who also owned nearby Graythwaite Old Hall. The landscaped gardens have vistas down the Rusland valley with many specimen trees and shrubs.

DATE 17th – 19th century
OWNERSHIP Private
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 333951 488807

WRAY CASTLE

Wray Castle is a Victorian castellated mansion built for Dr James Dawson, a surgeon of Liverpool in 1840-47; the architect was J. J. Lightfoot. Dawson was a relative of Hardwicke Rawnsley, who became vicar of Wray Church. Beatrix Potter spent a summer holiday at Wray Castle when she was sixteen in 1882 and met Rawnsley, which was to lead to a life-long friendship. Was for a time a college of marine electronics but has now been taken back in hand by the National Trust.

DATE 19th century
OWNERSHIP National Trust
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 337497 501014

BIGLAND HALL

Bigland Hall is a late 16th and 17th century house, remodelled and extended in 1809.

DATE 16th – 17th and 19th century
OWNERSHIP Private
PROTECTION Listed
GRID REFERENCE 335466 483146

3.2 HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

3.2.1 ARCHAEOLOGY AND EARLY SETTLEMENT

Extensive remains of prehistoric activity can be seen on the low fells around Coniston Water. Burial cairns and small stone circles are scattered across the Torver Commons, below Coniston Old Man, and the Blawith Fells, together with small burnt mounds dating from the Bronze Age at Torver Low Common. The Bronze Age clearance cairns and field systems on Blawith and Torver Low Commons are some of the earliest remains associated with farming in the valley.

In the early 20th century there was speculation that some of the iron bloomeries and mining at Coniston Copper mines may go back to the Roman period but in fact there is no evidence at all for Roman activity in the Coniston Valley.

3.2.2 THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CURRENT SETTLEMENT PATTERN

Evidence for early medieval settlement comes from the place-names in the area, many of which have origins in the Norse settlement of the late 10th century. Coniston Water itself was referred to as 'Turstiniwatra' in a document of 1160 then 'Thorstainewater' in 1196 and 'Thurston's Water' in the 13th century. The personal name 'Thorstaine' is Norse in origin. It was known as 'Thurstonmere' until as recently as 1800 when it took its name from the nearby settlement of Coniston. 'Coningeston' (Coniston) first appears in a document of 1160 and translates as 'the King's tun'. This may indicate that the area once formed an important part of a pre-Conquest Estate (pre-11th century).

The landscape is likely to have been predominately wooded at the time of the arrival of Norse settlers on the west coast of Cumbria from the 10th century. A handful of settlements, such as Hoathwaite Farm, was probably established in clearances on the valley bottom. The place-name element 'thwaite' is Norse for a clearing in a wood and can be found at Esthwaite ('clearing in the ash trees)', Loanthwaite and Cowperthwaite. However, not all examples are directly representative of Norse activity as the use of the 'thwaite' suffix continued until at least the 13th century.

Other local place-names that derive from Norse include Wray meaning 'nook', Claife meaning 'cliff', and Latterbarrow meaning 'hill where the animals lie' (Ekwall, E. 1922). Other place-names appear to combine Norse toponyms with personal names. These include Harrowslack meaning 'the slopes belonging to Harrald'; Tock How – hill or 'how' belonging to 'Toki' or 'Tocca', and Hawkshead or 'Hawkesete' combining the Norse for farm with the name 'Houkr'.

A series of small enclosed field systems and associated outgangs can be identified in the pattern of farms and fields between High Wray and Tock How. These enclosures, of between 10 and 12 acres, appear to have been separate at one time and utilised the well-drained land on the gentle slopes south of Blelham Tarn. The existence of these fields at the heart of a swathe of enclosed fields suggests that they are likely to have been among the first areas to be enclosed. Similar early enclosures may also exist at Low Wray, Hawkshead Fields, High Loanthwaite and to the east of High Wray, among others. It is possible that these field systems were created during the period of Norse colonisation before the foundation of Furness Abbey in 1127.

A Norse 'Thing' in the form of a rectilinear terraced mound at Fell Foot in Little Langdale probably indicates an early settlement and a society with likely Scandinavian heritage. Although the mound itself is in the Langdale Valley area much of the associated settlement lies inside the Coniston Valley.

3.2.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FARMING LANDSCAPE

The majority of the agricultural landscape in the Coniston Valley has its origins in the medieval period and is characterised by single ancient farms with their small irregular fields around the head of the lake, around the village of Coniston and along the adjoining

Woodland Valley to the south west. There is no documentary evidence for a stone-walled ring garth in Coniston in the medieval period, dividing a common field in the valley bottom from the grazed fellsides. However, the remains of a former common or town field can be identified on the lake shore, in the area between Coniston and Coniston Hall, which performed the same function, as commonly farmed, arable fields. The town field was probably established by the end of the 13th century, together with a deer park around Coniston Hall.

Early settlement in this valley area included monastic use of the Furness Fells, between Coniston and Windermere and along the Crake Valley, from the 12th century. The abbots of Furness Abbey were granted almost all of the land in High and Low Furness in 1127, and by 1196 were undisputed landholders in the area. The monks had numerous interests including hunting and pasturage for cattle and sheep. Their iron mining interests in Furness were documented by at least 1292. The process of smelting their raw mined ore required a ready source of charcoal fuel and, in 1339, they were granted entitlement to empark and enclose woodland in High and Low Furness. The earliest examples of this process were the three parks created on the eastern side of Coniston Water, at Water Park, Parkamoor and Lawson Park. It was here that bloomeries were established, probably one in each park, and the surrounding enclosed, managed coppice woodland would have provided their fuel. The rest of the enclosure would be farmed as a 'herdwick' or sheep pasture. The remains of bloomer slag heaps can still be found in these Parks. The use of charcoal, however, meant that the extent of surrounding woodland was severely reduced, especially as the tenants of the abbot had the right to take timber for house building and wood sufficient for their daily needs. As a consequence, deforestation was likely to have been significant east of Coniston Water by 1300, but the monks were able to capitalise on their holdings by using the enclosed parks as pasture for cattle and sheep once the woodland was exhausted. In order to extend the useful life of the woodland, the monks also employed the traditional practice of coppicing, but the first mention of this form of forest management in this area only dates to 1512.

The medieval landscape west of Coniston was quite different. The Abbey utilised the previously uncultivated uplands by establishing a number of remote farms to develop sheep farming and from it a trade in wool. It also set up a number of granges the closest of which was in Hawkshead. As with the majority of parish churches in Cumbria, the church in Coniston appears to have been established by the 11th century, serving the Church Coniston parish west of Coniston. There also appear to have been a small number of lay manors – Broughton, Torver and Coniston itself – with origins in the 12th century or perhaps earlier. Earl Tostig held 'Borch' as part of his lordship of Hougun in 1066 at the time of the Conquest which was assessed as six plough-lands and it is possible that Broughton preserves this name. The later manor of Broughton seems to have been in the Fells, held by the Lancaster family as a member (part) of their barony of Ulverston. Broughton probably became attached to the Lancaster family after the partition of Furness Fells about 1160, with William de Lancaster choosing the western moiety, which would include Broughton and Dunnerdale. Much of the inbye land west of Coniston, between Broughton and Torver, seems to have been the result of manorial enclosure in the 12th and 13th century; with isolated farmsteads and small hamlets planted within recently cleared woodland.

In the uplands on both sides of Coniston Water there are numerous place-names including the 'scale' element, such as The Scale, Scale Head and Scale Ivy Intake. The appearance of these Norse-derived 'shieling' place-names may suggest that the areas of good upland pasture had been regularly exploited to provide summer grazing for the lowland cattle perhaps as early as the 12th century.

Manorial enclosure seems to be reflected around Blelham Tarn, outside the monastic lands at the north end of Coniston on the western shore of Windermere. However, there are no documentary references to a common field in this area, nor is it suggested by the pattern of existing boundaries or by place-name evidence. It is possible that the farms within the broad swathe of lowland pastureland may have relied upon their surrounding fields for their arable and meadowland.

At each of the settlements and townships, the surviving field pattern reflects different evolutionary patterns. Heathwaite appears to be an isolated colony farm in the uplands using ground arranged on terraces alongside the lane through the farm – as opposed to an open-field village settlement. This probably dates from the late 12th or 13th century.

The name Lowick Green and Garth Row suggest an early origin with a ring garth. The name first appears as 'Lofwick', in 1202. It is divided into two main portions, Upper and Lower, with Lowick Common in the centre. This would be a good candidate for manorial settlement in the 12th century, given that Lowick Hall is located on the west of this layout. It seems to have been granted to Conishead Priory before 1517.

Subberthwaite was a hamlet of Ulverston in 1349, appearing first as 'Sulbithwayt' in 1346. Other hamlets in the area included "Tottlebank in the upper valley and High and Low Stennerley and Gawthwaite in the lower part". The family name of Stannerley derives from a local settlement, appearing as 'Staynerlith' in 1246 and later in the 13th and 14th centuries. The family and estate disappeared from records after the 14th century, perhaps merged into Subberthwaite.

The majority of available land on the valley bottom is likely to have been enclosed by tenant farmers prior to the surrender of Furness Abbey at the Dissolution in 1537, with the majority of better land enclosed by the 14th or early 15th century. The disasters of the 14th century had left a reduced population who were able to expand outwards to create larger holdings on the enclosed land. The 15th century saw a growth in the rural population and a revival of the agricultural economy. Any new enclosure during the late 15th and early 16th centuries is likely to have been piecemeal and small scale.

Furness Abbey appears to have attempted further to restrict the growth in illegal enclosure in the early years of the 16th century. This is suggested by two agreements made between Furness Abbey and their tenants regarding new enclosure, the first in 1509 and the second in 1532. These agreements allowed an additional 1½ acres of land (for use as arable) to be enclosed from the pasture for every 6s. 8d, of yearly rent paid on existing holdings. Clearly this was an attempt to control further intaking by existing tenants, rather than a restriction on new farms. The preamble to the agreement refers to the fact that the tenants in the Furness Fells had "enclosed common of pasture more largely than they ought to do".

The enclosure of the upland fells by the monks for their new granges seems to have been responsible for the growth of settlements in and around Rusland, Sawrey and more generally between Coniston Water and Windermere, and east of the Crake. The 12th and 13th centuries appear to have been a period of sustained population growth throughout High Furness. It is likely that many of the farms and hamlets that are scattered throughout the Hawkshead and Claife estate were established at this time. Farms that predated the foundation of the Abbey may have become monastic tenants, retaining their holdings and paying rent or a levy to the Abbot. It has been suggested that the numerous 'ground' farm names that surround Hawkshead were created under patronage of the Abbey as early as the 13th century, even if their modern names were coined in later centuries. It is unlikely that many farms were established after 1509 as a result of the restrictions on new enclosure on monastic land imposed by the Abbey.

Hawkshead itself probably originated as a grange settlement belonging to Furness Abbey. A chapel at Hawkshead was included in an agreement between Furness and Conishead c. 1200 so the settlement certainly predates this; but the church of St Michael is no earlier than the end of the 15th century. 'Hawkesete' combining the Norse 'saetr' (shieling) with the personal name 'Houkr', suggests an early seasonal settlement was developed as a permanent grange by the monks. It is unclear when the common field at Hawkshead was established, although it may have had an association with the arrival of lay brothers from Furness Abbey and the establishment of the grange. The only documentary reference to the common field appears in a lease of 1513 between the Abbey and one Thomas Doweling, for a 'parcel' or one tenth of the common field. The common field system at Hawkshead appears to have spread from Fieldhead to the north of Hawkshead village, and south to Esthwaite Lodge. Within this area a number of fossilised boundaries can be seen marking the edges of the long narrow strips running from east to west, marked either by hedgerows or shards fences. Shard fences are common to the south of Hawkshead village and may have been set up during the later subdivision of the common field.

Furness Abbey administered the grange through bailiwicks, later sometimes called manors. The former parsonage (now Glebe House) behind St Michaels Church is in the centre of a separate holding, presumably separate glebe lands. Although monastic granges were maintained by lay brothers this perhaps gave a superior position to the abbey's bailiff.

A group of strip fields from medieval farming practices survive at Lowick Bridge. Conishead Priory certainly had mills and land in Lowick, and this is a reminder that the picture of manorial enclosure to the west of the Crake and monastic enclosure to the east probably oversimplifies historical reality. It is known from contemporary sources that Peter de Lowick gave the Priory canons a rent from lands at Lowick, and William de Towers gave land by Stainton Beck, extending from the Crake as far as the road to Routand Beck. John Penny in 1517 paid the canons £2 6s. 8d. as a fine on taking over the tenement in Lowick previously rented by his father. The Conishead rental of 1536 shows that Rowland Pennington had a mill on the Crake at a rent of 36s. 8d., and William Holme a fulling mill, etc., at 10s. rent. Conishead Priory also owned Hoathwaite farm and settlement here was first documented in the early 13th century. Other secular ownerships are recorded at 'Cuningeston' which was referred to in a 13th century document recording a grant of land

FIGURE 3.14 Low Parkamoor, on the east side of Coniston Water. A former grange farm of Furness Abbey.

from Gilbert Reinfrid to Gilbert Bernulf in return for military service and obligations. The document outlined the ownership as an area bounded clockwise by Torver, Little Arrow, Goat's Water, Leverswater, Yewdale Beck and Coniston Water, which included land on the valley bottom as well as parts of Coniston Old Man and the Coniston Fells. This land at Coniston, along with other lands in Urswick, Claughton and Carnforth were granted soon after by John, son of Adam of Urswick (a likely descendant of Gilbert) to Richard le Fleming on his marriage to his sister, Elizabeth.

Parkamoor may have been a grange farm in the enclosed monastic woodland between Coniston and Windermere. At Low Parkamoor there are building platforms south of the main farm group and at High Parkamoor there are the foundations of a range of farm buildings upslope from the main farm. The latter range of buildings is a longhouse sub-divided into domestic and agricultural buildings and has a well-defined hood wall for drainage on the east end. This may reflect the original form for most of these smaller satellite grange settlements.

Other abbey hamlets and farms include Finsthwaite, Haverthwaite, Rolesland (Rusland), Bouth and Neburthwayt (Nibthwaite) which are first referred to in a document of 1336. Nibthwaite was probably founded as a grange with arable within it. Colton was first referred to in 1202. The parish was originally part of the chapelry of Hawkshead, and was probably being settled by the abbey of Furness around 1200.

The majority of pastureland between the villages of Near Sawrey and Far Sawrey is also likely to have been enclosed before the 14th century. At the time of the Abbey's surrender in 1537, 21 tenants were recorded at Near Sawrey, with an additional 12 at Far Sawrey. A monastic survey recorded that the average size of the tenanted holdings in Sawrey was seven acres and that the farm belonging to John Braithwaite of Briers was only six acres. The existence of an area of good arable land between the villages of Near Sawrey and Far Sawrey may suggest that this area was held in common, with a number of farms clustered on the edge. Access to parts of this block of enclosed fields was clearly important, with Cuckoo Brow Lane and Stones Lane running along the edge of the fields, while the present road between the villages passes along the southern edge.

The farm at Hawkshead Field, just north of Esthwaite Water, is set apart west of Esthwaite Water among the pattern of 'ground' farms and 'intake' enclosures. The pattern of landholding around this farm is also likely to have developed in the 13th century at the time of so called 'pioneering enclosure'. Land belonging to Hawkshead Field Farm abuts the edge of the common field that utilised the arable lands surrounding Esthwaite water. This may suggest that the foundation of Hawkshead Field Farm preceded the creation of a communal system of agriculture for Hawkshead. The first documentary reference to the farm appears in 1601 and a cruck framed building of either late 16th or early 17th century still stands. It is a rare surviving example for the Lake District and its separation from the common field may reflect a superior status such as held by a bailiff.

Part of Coniston Valley was also used for deer parks, both by Furness Abbey and by private landlords. This tradition extended from medieval times to the 17th century, although the nature of hunting and the animals stocked went through a number of changes in that time. Low Dale Park is a relatively late creation apparently enclosed for deer about 1516 by Abbot Banke of Furness. The outline of the park is mostly preserved in field walls and the alignment of footpaths.

Coniston Hall Deer Park was already established when John le Fleming, son of Richard, acquired the "right of forest, chase, park ...and of their beasts and fowls" over John de Lancaster's land in Coniston. The undated grant refers to both "deer and great deer" which suggests it was stocked with both red and fallow deer. The date when it was initially stocked with deer is unknown, but it must have been before the grant which was made sometime between 1297 and 1307. It was still stocked with deer as late as 1690 and let to a tenant farmer. It is not known when the road running through the deer park divided the woodland into two parts, but during the 19th century the woodlands were subdivided and managed as coppice woods, and continued to be worked until about 1950. The boundary wall for the medieval deer park is quite distinctive and can be followed along the southern and western edges of the park. The northern boundary has been lost due to the development of settlement and communications in this area.

There are scant references to Broughton Park in historical sources, but in 1552 the Earl of Derby complained that various persons had been hunting in Broughton Park near Hangman's Oak and had killed three deer; therefore it is clear that the park was already in existence. The deer park was probably not created out of former monastic land given Broughton's antiquity and the 14th century date for the adjacent tower. Its original extent seems to have been larger than Broughton East Park now; the eastern half seems to have been split into intakes subsequently.

The 16th and 17th centuries were a period of considerable change in agricultural practices and building investment brought about by changing tenurial relationships. In 1537, a survey of the east Coniston area was carried out by the King's Commissioners, which recorded the uses of the monastic lands and their values. This found the value of 'sheepcotes' and 'herdwicks' (sheep pastures) in Waterside Park, Lawson Park and Parkamoor to be 46s. and 8d. each. The certificate of revenues also listed some of the other woodland industries carried out at the time, including the manufacture of various wooden goods, such as cartwheels and kegs, and the manufacture of charcoal. The abbots were found to be "accustomed to have a smythey and sometime two or three for the making of yron to thuse of their monastery". The scale of this exploitation was such that, within the three parks, the Commissioners found little timber of any value, although there were still sufficient small oaks and other species. Indeed in 1565, a royal edict suppressed the bloomeries at the request of the High Furness tenants, illustrating the concern over woodland use. What remained was annexed to the Duchy of Lancaster, and let by the Commissioners to William Sandys and John Sawrey to maintain their three iron smithies. The men speculated by renting the woods and parks together with others in High Furness for £20 in order to provide raw materials for the local iron industry.

A later survey was undertaken of the three Coniston parks on 12th August 1570, by John Braddill Esquire, surveyor of the woods of the Duchy of Lancaster Special Commissions.

It described the state of the woodland in each park, and in particular it mentioned that in 'Parkeamore' William Sandys, the late Receiver of Furness, 18 years previously (1552) had cut down 50 acres of woodland and made it into charcoal for "certain yrne smithies". Parkamoor Farm at the time consisted of "one old mansion house, and one olde barne covered with brackens, wherin Christopher Jackson, the hird, ther now dwelleth".

There were farms at Parkamoor that were separate from the herdwick (sheep pastures) and it was those that were disposed of in 1613 by property speculators on behalf of James I, who subsequently sold them on to the sitting tenants when the speculators disposed of Furness Abbey's land in High Furness. In 1614 there were two sub-divided tenements at Parkamoor held by the sons of Christopher Satterthwaite, the original tenant, and one of the houses was newly erected at this time at Cocket How (probably High Parkamoor). Previous to 1614, several Satterthwaite families had been living at Parkamoor, but these holdings were parts of the High and Low Parkamoor farmsteads. It seems that post-Dissolution (1536-42) the Parkamoor landholdings were eventually sub-divided into Low and High farms, with the extant farmhouses having elements of surviving 17th and 18th century architectural design.

Division of the former monastic parkland as intakes associated with isolated farms and hamlets is most marked at Claife Heights. There is a large group of intakes which are centred on Rusland Cross; the group includes High Dale Park, the land between Satterthwaite and Graythwaite, extending south to Rusland Heights, taking in Hulleter Little Pastures and parts of Bethecar Moor. Some enclosure of woodland compartments along the eastern edge of Claife Heights took place prior to enclosure during the late-16th and 17th centuries. A number of enclosed woodlands are depicted on the pre-enclosure map of 1795. The majority of these compartments cluster around the farms at Belle Grange (Sandbeds) and Harrowslack and are likely to have been annexed to enclose an area of woodland for the exclusive use of the local farm.

It is unknown when the first land was enclosed on what came to be known as Claife Commons. Furness Abbey had been granted royal licence from Edward III in 1338 to create new parks in Claife although no references to actual parks in Claife appear in the monastic records. Most of the enclosures on the common have 'intake' place-names, including Waterson Intake, Moss Intake and Old Intake. The earliest documentary reference to a possible intake on the commons appears in the Royal Grant of High Wray that details the forfeiture of the estate and later execution of Thomas Lancaster in 1674. The list of property includes the 12 arable acres around the farm and peat cuttings, but also lists the "arandest rigge" and "two other acres" that may have referred to the enclosed land set apart from the farm situated on the commons. More useful is a conveyance from 1733 that lists Katy Plain (now Katy Intake Plantation) and Moss Intake among the holdings of High Wray Farm. These areas are again listed in a deed of 1771 that also notes that Wilson's Knott had been acquired from Fold Farm in Near Sawrey. Moss Intake and Wilson's Knott continue to descend with High Wray and are listed on the 1841 conveyance deed to James Dawson.

North west of Torver there seems to have been a rapid extension of fell enclosure onto Torver High Common, at Matthew Tranearth and Fleming Tranearth, with names like New Intake. The Tranearth place-name seems to indicate a division extending up the fell in a line from individual farms on the valley floor, perhaps fossilising earlier customary

stints. In 1639 two tenants from Little Arrow Farm in Torver were fined for setting up new hedges on the common at Little Moss without permission. Records for judgements made at Hawkshead Courthouse to settle disputes regarding the commons exist from the 16th century. These include a person brought before the court for keeping swine on the commons beyond the 'stint', which is likely to refer to a particular parcel of the common. Such was the enthusiasm for intaking at this time, that the intake land north of Blelham Tarn represented a doubling in size of the enclosed land.

A new term was being used to describe parcels of land from the 1660s. 'Scrow' parcels were distinguished from the open fell, and their location beyond and abutting the pattern of intake fields, indicates that they certainly post-date the development of the intakes that were enclosed to bring large areas of marginal land on the edge of the commons into private ownership. These large rectangular compartments retained their 'scrow' names into the 19th century. They were sometimes referred to as 'cow grasses' suggesting that they were predominantly used as private pasturing for stock, although others have links with peat mosses and may have also have functioned as enclosed areas of private peat extracting ground.

From the late 18th century onwards the pattern of land holding in the Hawkshead and Claife area fundamentally changed. This period saw the pattern of small lowland farms that had existed being reworked resulting in fewer larger farms. Increased prosperity in farming (particularly cattle rearing) and the southern Lakeland industries (spinning and weaving) was initially evident in houses and farmhouses in the area, and then in the development (from the mid-18th century onwards) of overwintering buildings for cattle and the building of multifunctional barns that are characteristic of the area. The amalgamation of farm holdings quickened after 1800, partly as a response to the enclosure of Claife Commons and the struggle for farms to remain economical, but also as a result of the declining rural population.

In the early 18th century, there appeared to be one, and possibly two, further farmhouses/tenements in occupation at Parkamoor, which were additional to the main farms. In the 18th century the two main farms at Parkamoor were held by the Bayliffe and Coupland families and there is evidence that both Low and High Parkamoor farms were still in use as separate entities in 1829. There is, however, no evidence that High Parkamoor farmhouse was occupied after 1842.

The parliamentary enclosures in the Coniston Valley area cover a wide date range, from the enclosure of Finsthwaite Height and Colton in 1771 to the latest enclosure of Satterthwaite High and Low Commons and Penington Heights in 1894. Limekilns were constructed along the band of Coniston Limestone in order to exploit the lime to reduce the acidity of the recently enclosed fields.

The growth of prosperity in agriculture and industry were captured by Thomas West in his 1778 'Guide to the Lakes'. On Broughton-in-Furness, he noted that "This place is so much improved by the late lord and the inhabitants that it has the appearance of a new town". He continued "The principal commodities are woollen yarn spun by the country people and brought to the market... the annual return on this article is upwards of £4,000 per annum. Blue slate is another important article, of which 2,000 ton is exported per annum. Sheep, short wool, and black cattle of the longhorned kind are the produce of this district".

In 1818 the 'Greenwood Map' depicted the eastern shore of Coniston as almost entirely wooded apart from west of the lakeside road and two discrete pastures west of Dales Wood and Rigg Wood. Woodlands had recovered from their pitiful state in the late 16th century and were back in active commercial production. Woodland coppicing and the iron industry go hand-in-hand and the coppice woodlands of the Coniston Valley area probably reached their peak in the 18th and 19th centuries when the iron furnaces were at full blast. Thomas Pennant in 1770 wrote about the Crake valley, saying about the woods that:

> **"...thick coppices, or brush woods of various sorts of trees, many of them planted expressly for the use of the furnaces and bloomeries... the owners cut them down in equal portions, in the rotation of sixteen years, and raise regular revenues out of them; and often superior to the rent of their land... The furnaces for these last 60 years have brought a great deal of wealth into the country".**

By 1803 the Gentleman's Magazine reported that the proprietors of Colton in High Furness had "...ceased to breed sheep"; the cultivation of coppices proving more profitable.

Holly was valued for sheep fodder in High Furness and was so cultivated that Thomas West commented that "large tracts of land are so covered with holly trees as to have the appearance of a forest". Soon after West wrote the Gentleman's Magazine reported in 1803 that the holly had been cut down for local bird-lime manufacture or for pattern-cutting for calico manufacture in Carlisle.

Other woodland products included 40 tons of hazelnuts from Broughton-in-Furness in one year in the early 19th century. Alder was in great demand for the quality of its charcoal, used in the manufacture of blasting powder. It may be that the abundance of these trees was one of the reasons for the location of Low Wood gunpowder works. In the mid-19th century bundles of coppiced wood were sent from Sunny Bank Mill at Torver for use as fenders in the Liverpool docks. Broughton-in-Furness also became the centre of the swill (oak basket) making industry.

By 1850 there were 21 tanneries in the High Furness area including the Rusland tannery, next to Rusland Hall, creating a high demand for peeled oak bark. The author Arthur Ransome was later to describe an 'igloo' – a bark peeler's hut – in his 'Winter Holiday' of 1933. The original model for this can still be seen in Rigg Wood on the east side of Coniston.

The 19th century also saw an escalation of traditional milling industries into a larger industrialised process. Bobbin manufacture was a water-powered local speciality and there is evidence that the Lake District mills alone produced about half of the requirements of the textile mills of Great Britain in the mid-19th century. Stott Park and Penny Bridge were the largest in the area, but there were many others on the River Crake and others on the watercourses in the Rusland and Hawkshead areas, such as Nibthwaite Mill, converted from the previous iron forge in 1840, Thurs Gill, near Hawkshead, converted from a Flax Mill and Cunsey Mill, now a saw mill. In 1857, Spark Bridge Bobbin Mill had 60 hands producing 1,800 gross (a gross = 144; therefore 259,200) of thread bobbins weekly. It continued to operate until the 1970s.

FIGURE 3.15 Stott Park Bobbin Mill. A purpose-built mill which operated from 1835 until 1971. In 1974 it was bought by the Department of the Environment in order to safeguard it from demolition or conversion and it is now run by English Heritage as a museum.

The Coniston Valley area is also very important for the later iron industry. The first blast furnaces in the area were at Backbarrow, near Newby Bridge and Cunsey, on the shore of Windermere in 1711/12. The blast furnace at Nibthwaite on the River Crake was established in 1735. Some of the workers' housing that survives is amongst the earliest in the country. Other blast furnaces were established at Low Wood in 1747 and Penny Bridge in 1748. Cunsey furnace closed in 1750, Nibthwaite in about 1755, although a forge ran until 1840, Penny Bridge in 1780 and Low Wood in 1785. All these blast furnaces were located to enable the essential use of water-power for the blast bellows and other purposes. Substantial remains, either ruinous or converted in whole or part, exist at Backbarrow and Nibthwaite, and of storage buildings only at Cunsey, Lowwood and Penny Bridge. Backbarrow Furnace is the most extensive site and had the longest life. Backbarrow Furnace operated until 1966, switching from charcoal to coke as late as 1920. This led to a decline in coppice management of the adjacent woodlands.

With the growth of heavy industry after the middle of the 19th century the area suffered depopulation, as did other similar rural areas, with a drift to the developing towns of Millom and Barrow, boom towns of the 1860s. Between 1861 and 1870 Broughton Parish lost almost a third of its population (400 people out of 1,300). As large iron works developed in Millom and Barrow, the small out-dated Duddon Furnace ceased operating in 1867. Broughton continued to evolve slowly with Victorian houses, villas, pubs and banks. St Mary's Church was enlarged in 1874 and a new tower was added in 1900. A Wesleyan Chapel was built in 1875. The school which had been rebuilt in 1864 was enlarged in 1886 and 1894. In the 1880s, it was the secondary products of the Furness coppice woodlands – hoops, baskets, brush handles and wooden shafts for farm tools – which formed the chief trade of Broughton. Indeed, Broughton became a centre for making swill baskets (strong durable baskets traditionally made in the southern Lake District by weaving thin strips of coppiced oak wood around a hazel rim).

Copper mining had been active around Coniston since at least the 16th century with smelting at Penny Rigg, and mining continued into the early 20th century. The total labour force in and around the mines at its peak was at least 600. Water power was fundamental to the operation and as many as 13 waterwheels were used in and around the site around 1850. Before 1859 when the Coniston Railway opened, the ore was carted to the lake at Coniston Hall, shipped to Nibthwaite Quay and then carted again to Greenodd and Kirkby quay to be transported by train or ship. In 1860 a railway extension opened to Copper House for the mines.

The slate industry at Torver High Common and Eddy Scale Quarry amongst others, peaked in the 18th and 19th centuries. In 1778 Thomas West commented "The most considerable slate quarries in the Kingdom are in the Coniston Fells". In the early 19th

century quarry men could earn between three and five shillings a day which was remarkably high compared with an agricultural wage. In the 1830s the total output for the whole of Furness and Coniston was probably in excess of 20,000 tons per year and over 100 men were employed in the Coniston area alone. Slate was carried by pack-horse to Waterhead from where it was shipped by barges to the foot of the lake.

In 1859 the railway arrived at Coniston and provided a boost for the mining and quarrying industries. The Rigge and Atkinson families dominated the Coniston quarries in the 18th century, but the Mandall Slate Company Limited and The Coniston Slate Company were both formed in the 1840s and the Mandalls continued until the 1960s.

Quarrying and mining created a demand for gunpowder and the gunpowder works of the Coniston Valley area contributed to Furness and Westmoreland's supply of the greater part of the United Kingdom's needs for gunpowder from the late 18th to the early 20th century. A key constituent of gunpowder was charcoal, which was in plentiful supply from the area's coppice woodlands. Juniper in particular was used at the Low Wood gunpowder works which was established in 1799. The nearby Black Beck works, near Bouth, started in 1860. Water power was essential and Low Wood was on the east bank of the River Leven. Production ended shortly after the First World War and Low Wood is the best preserved 19th century gunpowder works in northern England.

The Coniston Railway linked Coniston to Broughton-in-Furness from 1859 to 1962. Originally built for transport of copper ore and slate, it also became a transport route for tourists. The Lakeside and Haverthwaite railway was opened in 1869 to carry coal to the Windermere steamers, iron ore to Backbarrow and sulphur and saltpetre for the Black Beck and Low Wood gunpowder works. The freight from the area included pig iron, gunpowder, pit props, ultramarine 'blue' powder, wooden bobbins and livestock.

3.2.4 DISCOVERY AND APPRECIATION OF A RICH CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

EARLY TOURISM

The Coniston Railway was opened in 1859 and quickly led to an influx of tourists. From the outset the railway company was aware of its potential for tourism and in an attempt to attract more tourists to use the line, the railway company commissioned the building of the Steam Yacht Gondola to provide trips on the lake. It was launched on 30th November 1859 and began to run a regular service the following June. Gondola was 84 feet (26 metres) long and was registered to carry 200 passengers. The Illustrated London News of 7 July 1860 reported after her maiden voyage that the first class saloon was "beautifully finished in walnut wood and cushioned and decorated after the style of the royal carriages of our railways". It continued:

> "The vessel... is a perfected combination of the Venetian gondola and the English steam yacht – having the elegance, comfort and speed of the latter, and the graceful lightness and quiet gliding motion of the former. It may be said to

> be the most elegant little steam vessel yet designed, and is especially suitable for pleasure excursions on lake or river".

In time Gondola formed part of what came to be known as the Great Circle itinerary, introduced to boost flagging revenues by Sir Alfred Aslet, Ramsden's successor at the Furness Railway. The nickname presumably intended to echo the Grand Tour, which still only the wealthiest could possibly afford. Lancashire's increasingly prosperous middle classes could take a paddle steamer from Fleetwood to Barrow and thence by rail to Lakeside on Windermere. A steam vessel up the length of Windermere provided the link to Waterhead, from where a coach and four horses brought travellers to the delights of Coniston Water. Gondola would return them in fitting style to the southern end of the lake, before continuing by road and rail to Barrow and so by paddle steamer back to Fleetwood. All this was at a cost of ten shillings and sixpence first class, seven shillings and sixpence second class – considerable sums at the time. This gives a good indication of just how much the better-off Victorians now valued their leisure. Gondola was decommissioned in 1936; its engine was removed and sold in 1944, and she was then used as a houseboat before being sunk in 1963-64. She was re-floated and acquired by the National Trust in 1978 and was restored and re-launched in 1980. The Gondola plies the lake once again, owned and operated by the National Trust.

3.2.5 PICTURESQUE BUILDINGS AND LANDSCAPE

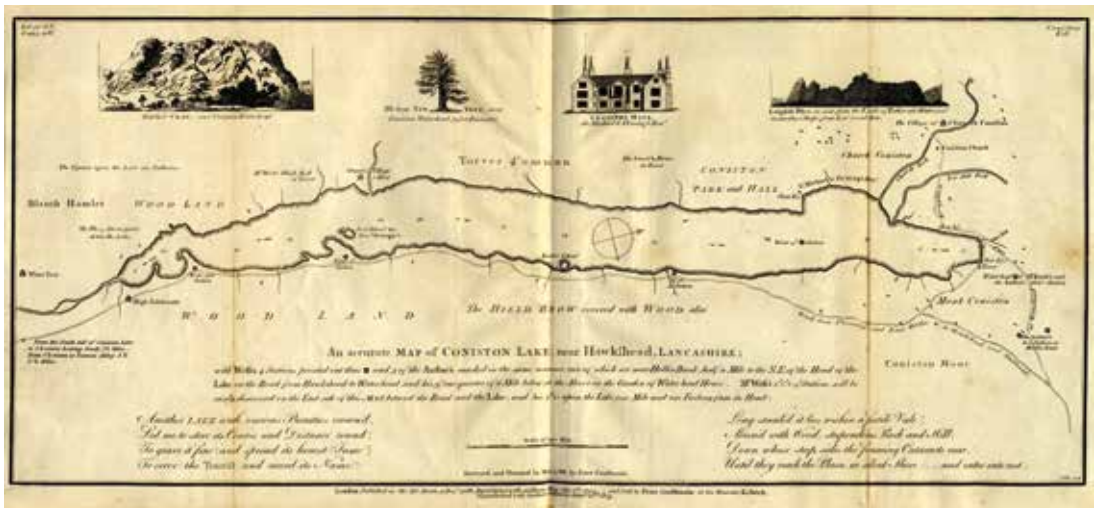


FIGURE 3.16 Peter Crosthwaite's map of Coniston Water, published in 1788

While Coniston had become a favourite destination for tourists from the second half of the 19th century, it had been made popular amongst a select group of wealthier artists, poets and authors from the 18th century. Thomas West described the views of the lake from a series of four viewing stations around the lake and one description on the lake: Station I – Water Park, High Nibthwaite; Station II – High Peel Near (Peel Ness); Station III – Beck Leven Foot: Station IV – mid-lake, east of Coniston Hall/Lands Point; Station V – High Guards, Coniston; Station VI (Crosthwaite's) – South of Hollin Bank Farm, Coniston. He described the view from a boat positioned in the lake, opposite Coniston Hall (Station IV) as follows:

> "Looking towards the mountains, the lake spreads itself into a noble expanse of transparent water and bursts into a bay on each side, bordered with verdant meadows and inclosed with a variety of grounds, rising in an exceedingly bold manner. The objects are beautifully diversified amongst themselves, and contrasted by the finest exhibition of rural elegance (cultivation and pasturage, waving woods and sloping inclosures, adorned by nature and improved by art) under the bold sides of stupendous mountains, whose airy summits the elevated eye cannot now reach, and which almost deny access to human kind".
>
> Thomas West, 'A Guide to the Lakes' (1778)

Pursuit of the Picturesque aesthetic also extended to landscape design, with extensive modifications to the Monk Coniston estate from the mid-18th century. The estate was owned by the Knott family from 1769 to 1835, whose wealth was based on iron smelting in the Lake District and Scotland. During this period a major programme of tree planting took place along with development of the pleasure grounds around Monk Coniston Hall, including a walled garden and gazebo. The Waterhead Estate, as it was then known as, was sold to James Garth Marshall, son of John Marshall of Hallsteads, Ullswater, in 1835. As with most other Marshall family property acquisitions, Wordsworth advised the Marshalls on the purchase. Over the following decade James Garth Marshall acquired further land and property in the area, including the Yewdale valley, Tarn Hows, Tilberthwaite, Oxen Fell and Stang End. After an Enclosure Act of 1862, James Garth gained full possession of the land around what is now Tarn Hows. He embarked on a series of landscape improvements expanding the conifer plantations around what were then Low, Middle and High Tarns and constructing a dam at Low Tarn that created the larger lake that is there today. Tarn Hows has since become one of the most popular attractions in the Lake District. James Garth also undertook further tree planting, including exotic conifers, on the Waterhead Estate, which he renamed to Monk Coniston. One intriguing small feature is the "eye catcher", north east of Shepherd Bridge, Coniston. The structure is built of stone with the datestone 'JGM 1855' and includes small turrets with arrow slits and a central arch.

Other designed landscapes to reflect the Picturesque aesthetic were laid out around villas, country houses and extended historic buildings such as Coniston Hall, Broughton East Park and Esthwaite Lodge. Grizedale Old Hall was replaced by Grizedale New Hall, designed to appreciate fine views of the Grizedale valley. Neither the Old nor the New Hall are extant and a third hall, built 1905, was demolished 1957. Some elements remain; the walls and stairs of the massive garden terrace and the close with its gates can still be seen today. The grounds around Wray Castle were designed to appreciate spectacular views across Windermere and include a number of specimen trees. William Wordsworth planted a mulberry tree there in 1845 and it remains. Watbarrow Wood is the wooded bank between the Castle and the lake, and has several pleasant paths leading through it to the water's edge.

3.2.6 ROMANTIC SITES, BUILDINGS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Coniston was visited by many of the Romantic poets and artists and there is a wealth of poetic description of buildings and features that survive in the landscape today.

Coleridge visited during his walking tour of 1802 and was captivated by the lake – "an admirable junction of awful and pleasing Simplicity" – and Coniston Hall with its "four Round Chimneys, two cloathed so warmly cap a pie with ivy". He stayed at the Black Bull Inn in Coniston, which was also frequented by Thomas De Quincey in 1805 and 1806. It was here that De Quincey wrote his essay on 'The Constituents of Happiness'.

Wordsworth attended Hawkshead Grammar School from 1779 to 1787. He lodged at Ann Tyson's Cottage in the village from 1779-1783. In 1783 he moved with the Tysons to Colthouse, probably Greenend Cottage or a house nearby which no longer stands. He attended St Michaels Church on most Sundays. Wordsworth wrote his first poems whilst a pupil at the school, including 'The Vale of Esthwaite' (1787), "a long poem running upon my own adventures and the scenery of the country in which I was brought up" and thus a forerunner of 'The Prelude'.

Wordsworth wrote of a picnic in 1783 with his school friends. He floated in a boat under

> "...the shade of a magnificent row of sycamores, which then extended their branches from the shore of the promontory upon which stands the ancient, and at that time, the more picturesque Hall of Coniston."

A year later in the summer of 1784, when Wordsworth was fourteen, he was walking along the road near Outgate on his way between Hawkshead and Ambleside he was struck by the beauty of an oak tree. As he said in old age:

> "The moment was important in my poetical history; for I date from it my consciousness of the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by poets of any age or country, so far as I was acquainted with them: and I made a resolution to supply in some degree the deficiency".

North of the Coniston Water, in Yewdale, is Raven Crag, a probable location for Wordsworth's boyhood escapade, vividly recounted in Book I of 'The Prelude', when he attempts to steal ravens' eggs and becomes 'crag-fast':

> "While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
> With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
> Blow through my ear! The sky seemed not a sky
> Of earth – and with what motion moved the clouds!"

Other aspects of the Coniston Valley feature in many of Wordsworth's poems. In 'The Waggoner' he describes the local slate quarries under Coniston Old Man:

> "I love to mark the quarry's moving trains,
> Dwarf panniered steeds, and men, and numerous wains:
> How busy all the enormous hive within,
> While Echo dallies with its various din!"

In Book VIII of 'The Prelude' Wordsworth recalls fondly the shores of the lake, with their

> "...gentle airs,
> Birds, running streams, and hills so beautiful
> On golden evenings, while the charcoal pile
> Breathed up its smoke".

OTHER ARTISTS AND NOTABLE RESIDENTS

The poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson and his bride stayed at Tent Lodge on the north east shore of Coniston on their honeymoon in 1850 where he composed 'The Princess' during his stay. Visitors included Matthew Arnold, Thomas Carlyle and Edward Lear. The Tennysons returned in 1857 and on this occasion, Charles Dodgson ('Lewis Carrol', the author of 'Alice in Wonderland' and other novels) was amongst the visitors.

One of the most famous residents of Coniston during the 19th century was the poet, artist and philosopher John Ruskin. Ruskin bought the Brantwood Estate on the eastern shore of Coniston in 1871 and set about improving the 18th century property in line with his views on aesthetics and husbandry of the land.

John Ruskin died on 20 January 1900. Ruskin's friend, confidant, and first biographer, W. G. Collingwood, organised an influential Ruskin Memorial Exhibition, held in the main Assembly Room in Coniston Mechanics' Institute over the summer of 1900; it was visited by over 10,000 people. The proceeds paid for the construction of a new museum – The Ruskin Museum – dedicated to his memory and celebrating the local cultural and literary heritage. This was opened on 31 August 1901 by Canon H. D. Rawnsley. The museum has extensive displays on the history of Coniston, the geology, archaeology, mining of the area and local crafts. It also presents Ruskin's life and activities. There are displays of his personal belongings, including his paintbox, his set of musical stones and billhooks used for coppicing. A selection of his sketchbooks and paintings is displayed along with some of his collection of minerals, as well as examples of the local craft of 'Ruskin lace' he encouraged.

Because Ruskin's possessions were left to his cousin, most of them remained at his home at Brantwood until a series of dispersal sales in 1931. The largest part was purchased at that time by John Howard Whitehouse, who also purchased Brantwood. Accordingly, a great many items have had a continuous presence within the house. Since 1996 all the collection, with the exception of the manuscripts and works on paper, has been united in the building where it is displayed as openly as possible, in its original location. Brantwood offers visitors a detailed and authentic encounter with the environment and possessions of one of the world's great writers and thinkers.

Lanehead, on the west side of the lake and now an outdoor pursuits centre, is built on the site of the Halfpenny Alehouse where J. M. W. Turner is said to have stayed in

1797, sketching in preparation for his first Royal Academy exhibit, 'Morning Among the Coniston Fells', now one of the best known paintings of the Lake District (see Volume 1, Figure 2.a.8). Lanehead was also home to the Collingwood family.

Later literary associations with Coniston also include the series of famous children's books by Arthur Ransome (1884 – 1967) beginning with 'Swallows and Amazons' (published in 1929). Ransome's family regularly holidayed at Laurel House, High Nibthwaite, then a farm, from his early childhood until 1897. Ransome was carried up to the top of Coniston Old Man as a baby by his father and his early education was in Windermere. Ransome became a close friend with W. G. Collingwood, Ruskin's Secretary, and between 1903 and 1913 he was a frequent visitor to their house, Lanehead, on the east shore of Coniston Water, just north of Brantwood. This is where Ransome took up sailing. The 'Swallows and Amazons' series was inspired by Ransome's experiences in the Coniston Valley and many characters and places around Coniston Water, Yewdale, Tilberthwaite and the Coniston Fells feature in the series. Perhaps best known is Peel Island on Coniston Water, 'Wildcat Island' in 'Swallows and Amazons'. The Gondola was the inspiration for Captain Flint's houseboat in 'Swallows and Amazons'. As a small child Ransome was allowed by the captain to steer the vessel. In Coniston's Ruskin Museum there is a black and white post card of Gondola that Ransome sent to his illustrator, with changes to the outline in ink to show how he wanted the houseboat to look. Ransome's home from 1940-45 was The Heald, a mile south of Brantwood and from 1948-50 Lowick Hall. He is buried in the churchyard at Rusland.

The Near Sawrey and Hawkshead area is the area most associated with the author, artist and conservationist Beatrix Potter (Heelis). Many of the settings for her books are recognisably in these settlements and the surrounding countryside. In Near Sawrey, the large Victorian house, Ees Wyke, is where Beatrix Potter stayed with her parents,

FIGURE 3.17 Illustration by Beatrix Potter of the Tower Bank Arms in Near Sawrey, from 'The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck'. The National Trust now owns this property and it still operates as an inn. ©Frederick Warne & Co. 2015.

FIGURE 3.18 Beatrix Potter outside Hill Top (dated 1907-08)

who rented the house in the summer of 1896, 1900 and 1902. The key site is Hill Top, Near Sawrey. She bought the 17th century farmhouse and land in 1905 with royalties from her books supplemented by a legacy. It was never her permanent home, but she spent long stays there, writing most of her books there from 'The Tale of Mr Jeremy Fisher' (1906) onwards. It is the key setting for books such as 'The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck' (1908) and 'The Tale of Samuel Whiskers' (1908). Many of the familiar Coniston landscapes and landmarks feature in her books such as the Hilltop bee boles and Moss Eccles Tarn. She also captured images of dying industries such as the painting of a charcoal burners' hut in 'The Tale of Jemima Puddleduck'. Potter continued to return to Hill Top to write after she had moved to Castle Cottage in 1913. She continued to live at Castle Cottage until she died in 1943. The Beatrix Potter Gallery in Hawkshead occupies the former offices of William Heelis, Beatrix Potter's solicitor husband.

The Coniston Valley area continues to inspire artistic activity, one of the most well-known being the Grizedale Arts organisation based at Lawson Park Farm, in Grizedale Forest, established in the late 1970s.

MOUNTAINEERING AND CLIMBING

The Fell and Rock Climbing Club of the English Lake District, often shortened to 'The Fell & Rock' or FRCC, is the premier rock-climbing and mountaineering club in the Lake District. The idea of founding a climbing club was first proposed by John Wilson Robinson about 1887, when the sport of rock climbing was being pioneered in England. Robinson climbed with Walter Parry Haskett Smith, generally acknowledged as the father of rock climbing in Great Britain. In 1885, Robinson introduced the use of the alpine rope on the Lakeland crags. The FRCC dates from a meeting held at tea-time on 11 November 1906, at the Sun Hotel, Coniston, after a day on Dow Crags, often described as the Opening Meet, though the first formal Meet was held at the Wastwater Hotel on 30 March 1907. The impetus came from Edward Scantlebury; his friends A. Craig and C. Grayson, who had spent the day with him on Dow Crags, and one other, were the founder members of this new climbing club. After some debate, ('The Coniston Climbers' was considered too localised, but the 'Lake District Climbing Club' excluded fell walkers), they decided that its name would be 'The Fell and Rock Climbing Club', as this "so well expressed their objects, viz:- the encouragement of Fell Rambling & Rock Climbing & as we intended that the club should be for the Lake District only – we added to the title the words 'of the English Lake District'". The Sun Hotel became the venue for the FRCC's Annual Dinner. The FRCC has published the definitive series of climbing guides to the Lakes since 1922.

Coniston's tradition for climbing was continued with the formation of the Coniston Tigers in 1931, a group of climbing friends from Barrow and South Cumbria. In 1932 they bought a former garage at Coniston Hall Farm and converted it into a very basic hut, only the second such base in the Lake District at the time.

3.2.7 EARLY CONSERVATION – THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL FOR PROTECTING LANDSCAPES

Coniston Valley has a number of heritage assets connected to the early conservation movement. Wray Castle was a key location for the meeting of significant characters in the Lake District's conservation story. Dr James Dawson, who built it, was a relative of Hardwicke Rawnsley, who became vicar of Wray Church in 1878. Beatrix Potter spent a summer holiday at Wray Castle in 1882 when she was sixteen and met Canon Rawnsley, which was to lead to a life-long friendship and a close association with the National Trust of which Rawnsley was one of the founders.

Many of the farms that Beatrix Potter acquired were 'lower ground' farms around Hawkshead, near her first purchase and home of many years at Hill Top, Near Sawrey. These included High and Low Tockhow, High Wray, Castle, Hole House and Hill Top farms. Other properties in the Heelis Bequest to the National Trust (properties left by Beatrix Potter to her husband William Heelis and passed on the National Trust) included Heelis Solicitors in Hawkshead, the Belmount mansion, nine cottages in Near Sawrey and the Tower Bank Estate. More recently the National Trust purchased the Tower Bank Arms at Near Sawrey, adjacent to Hill Top.

The National Trust acquired large extensive holdings in the Coniston Valley. As well as the large estate acquired from Beatrix Potter, the Trust acquired the larger properties of Parkamoor in 1968 and Coniston Hall in 1971, as well as many smaller properties. Today, the National Trust own 3,587 hectares of land of which 3,547 hectares are inalienable. They also have an additional 39 hectares of leased land and 532 hectares of covenanted land.

The Lake District National Park Authority manages large areas of Common Land in the Coniston Valley, namely Torver High, Torver Low and Torver Back Commons (845 hectares) and Blawith Common (654 hectares). The Authority entered into a 99-year lease of the Torver Commons from the Crown Estates in 1966 in order to provide public access and recreation. Blawith Common was purchased in 1970 from Broughton Estates Limited in order to provide a public access area and to control recreational use of the Common.

Coniston has featured in recent conservation battles over access to the fells and recreational use of the lake. In the late 1950s the bed of Coniston Water had been bought by a private individual concerned for the future development of the lake and later conveyed to the Rawdon-Smith Trust. This is now administered by Coniston Parish Council. Clause 3 of the Trust Deeds stated that the purpose of the Trust was to be "to preserve the Trust property in perpetuity under local control for the purpose of affording to the public facilities for recreation." Whether this recreation was tranquil or noisy has been the focus of many subsequent legal battles. When the lake bed was purchased, Coniston, together with Ullswater and Windermere, had been used for power boat speed record attempts from the early 20th century. Donald Campbell set seven speed records between 1955 and 1964 in his boat Bluebird K7 but was tragically killed on the lake in a further attempt in 1967. The remains of Bluebird K7 have been recovered and are being restored with a view to permanent display in the Ruskin Museum in

Coniston. In 1962 an appeal against planning consent for use of land and buildings at Ruskin Pier for the hire of motor boats was dismissed. The Planning Inspector said "There is however a need to for some lakes to be reserved for those who value solitude, quietness, and a study of nature in unspoilt surroundings and Coniston Water can still in the main provide such conditions". In 1978 local by-laws were introduced by the Lake District Special Planning Board (now the National Park Authority) in order to control the use of power boats and water skiing on Coniston, but the delicate balance between power based recreation and tranquillity ensures that there is still a place for speed. The tradition of power boat record attempts continues on Coniston on an annual basis with the Coniston Power Boat Records Week.

The route from Coniston over to Seathwaite in the Duddon Valley is known as the Walna Scar Road and it too has been, and continues to be, the subject of conservation battles. It was originally used as a stock route and to access local quarries. But in the 20th century it was the subject of disagreement over its recreational use. Walkers, cyclists and horses all use the route. Increasing and unmanaged motorbike and four-wheel drive use has been blamed for erosion of the surface of the route. Opponents pointed out that such routes were not designed for motorised vehicles. Supporters argued that they were just carrying out their legal right according to its highway status. Various measures have been tried and tested, including voluntary restrictions, codes of conduct for users and legal orders restricting motorised traffic, all with mixed results. Since 2006 a legal battle has continued over the status of the route and most recently it has been determined that it is a route for non-motorised traffic.

In 2005 there was a public controversy over the National Trust's proposal for the future of High Yewdale Farm, which involved splitting the land between neighbouring tenants when its then tenants retired. Many people felt that this was a betrayal of Beatrix Potter's motive in acquiring the farm. Views ranged around the economic, social and environmental implications of this proposal. The proposed split up of the land went through, but it sharply illustrated the range of approaches as to how Lake District farming should be structured in the future, and the potential impacts of different arrangements on cultural heritage, the cultural landscape, local social structures, economies and the environment.

3.3 CONTRIBUTION TO THE ENGLISH LAKE DISTRICT'S OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

QUALITIES

The attributes demonstrating the contribution of this valley to the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the English Lake District as a whole are listed in Figure 3.4.

The landscape beauty of the Coniston Valley is based in large measure on the dominance of the agro-pastoral use of the landscape against the backdrop of relatively extensive

woodland around the lake and a high mountain backdrop to the west. The valley has good evidence for the development of the agro-pastoral system, with areas of the typical Lake District field pattern of inbye and intake, but also has areas of more open fields around Coniston, based on an early 'town field', probably dating from the 13th century, and around the village of Hawkshead. Agro-pastoral farming is very important here, with a large number of fell-going flocks and a number of important Herdwick farms. There are many important early farm buildings including the Coniston Hall and Yew Tree Farm, with its iconic 'spinning gallery'. The small market town of Broughton-in-Furness is the location for the most import Herdwick market in the Lake District.

Evidence for early land use is extensive with numerous archaeological remains of prehistoric settlement, agriculture and ritual monuments. In the past Coniston was one of the most important valleys in the Lake District for industry, including mining and quarrying, iron smelting and woodland industries. Coniston Copper Mine, a large Scheduled Monument, has extensive remains of extraction and processing dating from the 16th to the early 20th centuries. Slate quarrying was also a major industry and a small number of slate quarries are still working in the Valley. The River Leven, at the southern end of the Coniston Valley, provided power for blast furnaces, a gunpowder works and various other water-powered industries between the 17th and 20th centuries.

In addition to Broughton, other larger settlements in the Coniston Valley include Hawkshead, which gained a market charter in the 17th century and has a range of buildings dating from the medieval period to the 19th century. Coniston itself is also likely to have early origins but its character displays the influence of the local industries of mining and quarrying.

The Coniston Valley is rich in attributes relating to the theme of aesthetic inspiration. It was not one of the most important destinations for early visitors in search of the Picturesque due to the lack of easy access in the 18th century, but it was visited by the guidebook writer Thomas West, who identified a series of viewing stations around Coniston Water, while Claife, the only one with a major structure erected, is just within the eastern boundary of the Valley, but on the shore of Windermere. However, the Coniston landscape was the subject of major modifications designed to increase its Picturesque beauty, such as the damming of Tarn Hows, to create a spectacularly beautiful lake surrounded by ornamental tree planting. A number of villas were constructed or developed around Coniston Water and on the western shore of Windermere.

In later periods the Coniston Valley came to have much greater prominence as a source of artistic inspiration. William Wordsworth was a pupil at the grammar school in Hawkshead and his recollections of the valley and its residents feature strongly in important poems including 'The Prelude'. J. M. W. Turner created one of his key oil paintings here ('Morning among the Coniston Fells') and in the later 19th century John Ruskin took up residence at Brantwood. Coniston was also the inspiration for much of the landscape which featured in Beatrix Potter's books and the famous 'Swallows and Amazons' childrens' adventure stories of Arthur Ransome.

The Coniston Valley came to have a very high significance for conservation in the early 20th century, because Beatrix Potter, living at Near Sawrey, made extensive purchases

of farms and estates in the area, including Monk Coniston and Tarn Hows, in order to protect them. These were eventually passed to the National Trust which now owns and manages large areas of the northern part of the valley including key farms and farm buildings, villas and designed landscapes. The Coniston Valley thus displays a full repertoire of attributes across the three themes of Outstanding Universal Value.

FIGURE 3.19 Modified sheep fold at Tilberthwaite by the landscape artist Andy Goldsworthy