



Ennerdale looking west to the coast of the Irish Sea



# 7. ENNERDALE

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Description, History and Development

# 7. THE ENNERDALE VALLEY

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“Next comes in view Ennerdale, with its lake of bold and somewhat savage shores”.

William Wordsworth, ‘Guide to the Lakes’ (1835)

## 7.1 DESCRIPTION

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### 7.1.1 LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

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Ennerdale is the most westerly of all the English Lake District valleys orientated east-west from the high central fells to the rolling hills and moorland plateaux of West Cumbria and the coastal plain leading to the Irish Sea. Though much modified by human activity in the form of forestry, water extraction and farming, it is the large scale natural features of the valley that impose themselves and create an overriding sense of isolation, wildness and tranquillity.

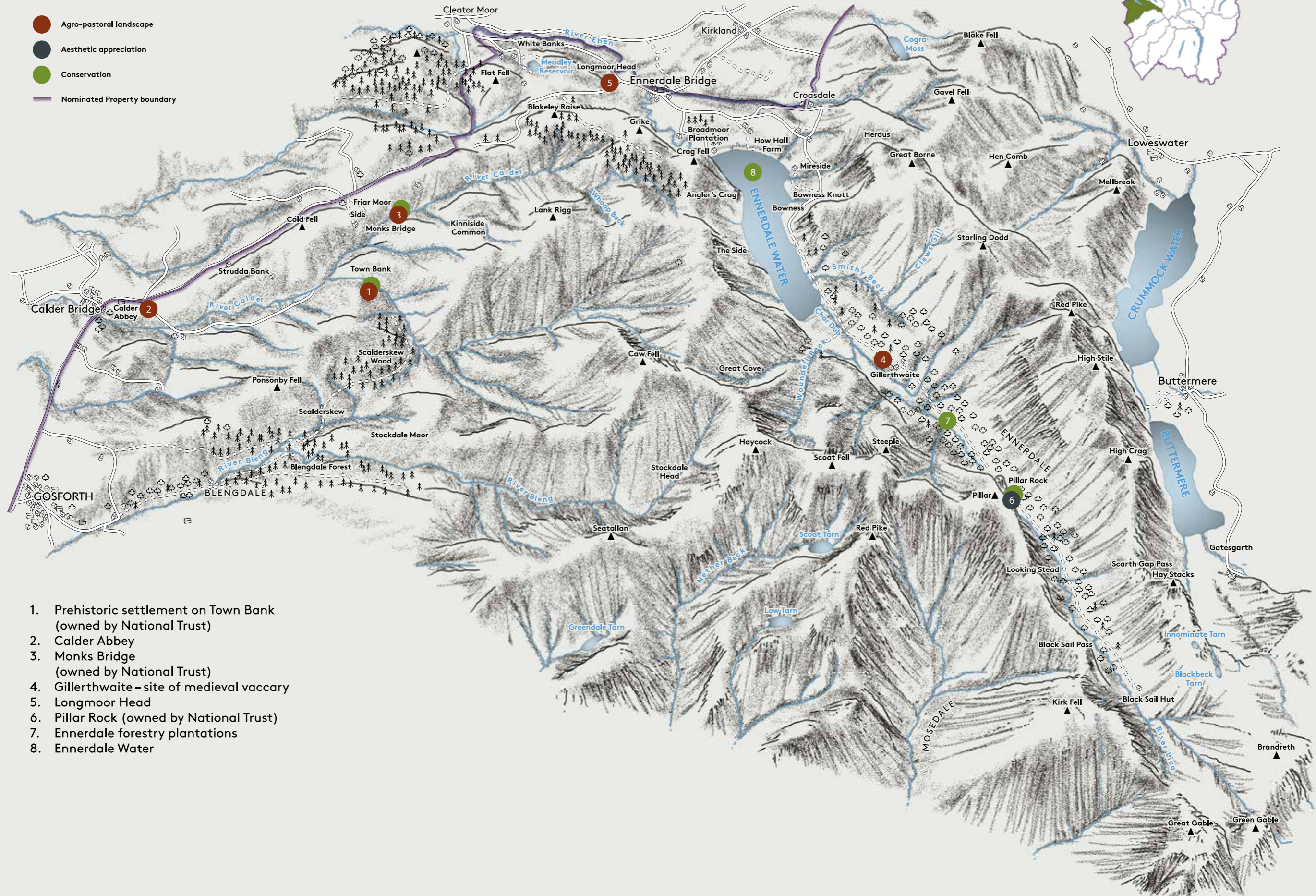
The atmosphere and character of Ennerdale is apparent even before entering the valley. From the coastal plain and farmland to the west, the steep fells of Herdus to the north and Crag Fell to the south, appear to guard the entrance and provide a warning that you are about to enter an exceptional and unique landscape. The head of the valley is crossed by one of the major Lakeland mountain routes, approaching from Wasdale over Black Sail Pass and continuing on to Buttermere over Scarth Gap. The land from just east of Ennerdale Bridge eastwards up the valley is almost wholly owned by only three landowners. In 2003 these three landowners, the Forestry Commission, the National Trust, and United Utilities, formed the Wild Ennerdale Partnership to deliver a vision ‘to allow the evolution of Ennerdale as a wild valley for the benefit of people, relying more on natural processes to shape its landscape and ecology’. It remains to be seen where this low intervention management takes the valley but it will surely secure the continued future of Ennerdale as a valley with a unique character.

The sense of isolation in the valley is reinforced by the fact that this is the only major Lake District Valley with no public road along it. East of the foot of the lake beyond the enclosed pasture there are no buildings along the south shoreline and beyond the Forestry Commission car park at Bowness on the north shore, the end of the public road, the private track serves only to access a field studies centre and a youth hostel at

**Figure 7.1 Ennerdale Valley Illustrative Map**

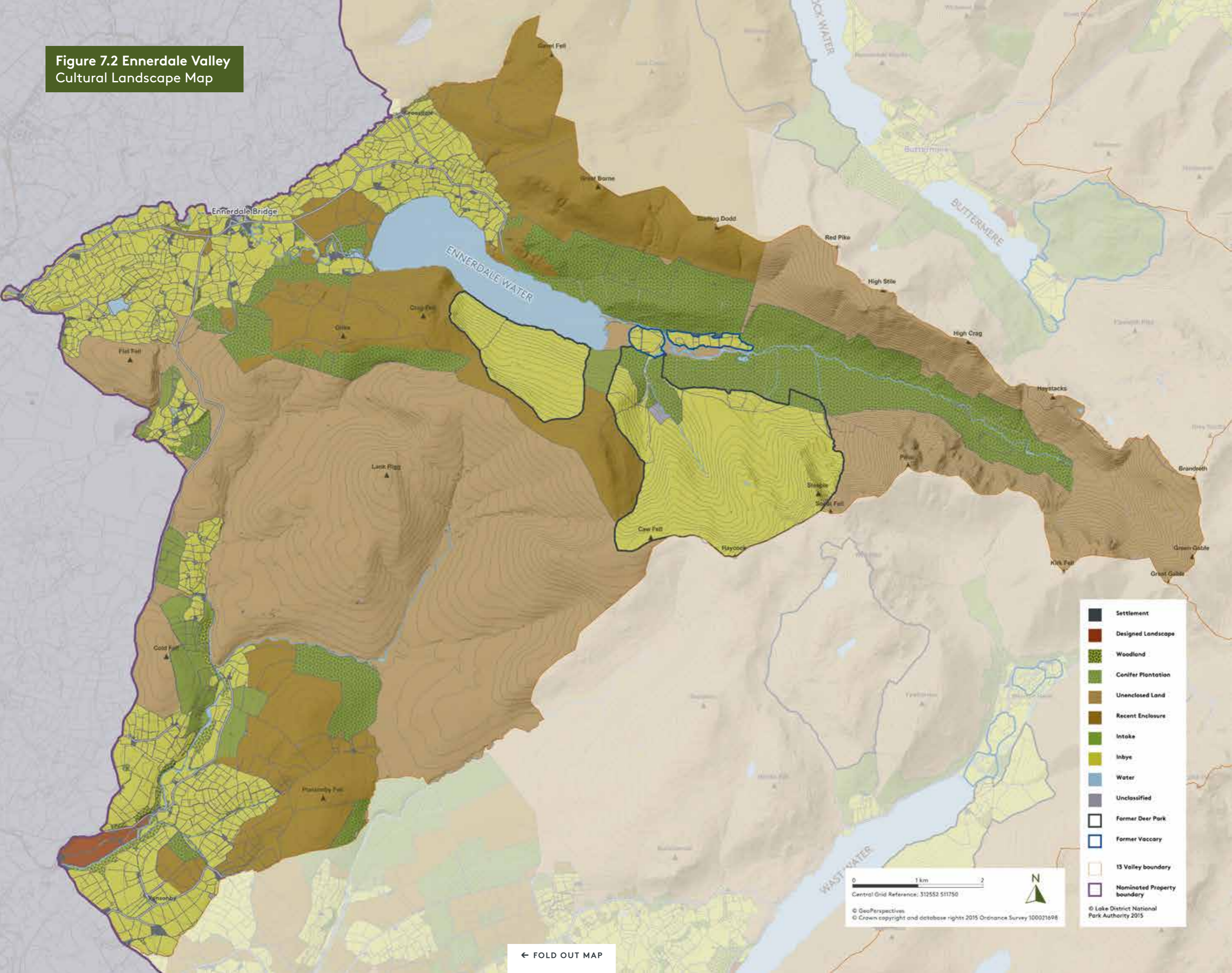


- Agro-pastoral landscape
- Aesthetic appreciation
- Conservation
- Nominated Property boundary



1. Prehistoric settlement on Town Bank (owned by National Trust)
2. Calder Abbey
3. Monks Bridge (owned by National Trust)
4. Gillerthwaite – site of medieval vaccary
5. Longmoor Head
6. Pillar Rock (owned by National Trust)
7. Ennerdale forestry plantations
8. Ennerdale Water

Figure 7.2 Ennerdale Valley Cultural Landscape Map
















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

0 1 km 2  
 Central Grid Reference: S12552 S11750  
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← FOLD OUT MAP

FIGURE 7.3 The contribution of the Ennerdale Valley to the cultural landscape themes identified

ENNERDALE		
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	None
	Herdwick flocks	
	Rough Fell flocks	None
	Swaledale flocks	
	Common land	
	Shepherds' meets/shows and traditional sports	
	Woodland industries	
	Mining/Quarrying	
	Water-powered industry	None
Market towns	None	
Discovery and appreciation of a rich cultural landscape	Viewing stations	None
	Villas	None
	Designed landscape	
	Early tourist infrastructure	None
	Residences and burial places of significant writers and poets	None
	Key literary associations with landscape	
	Key artistic associations with landscape	
	Key associations with climbing and the outdoor movement	
	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	None



**FIGURE 7.4** Aerial view of Ennerdale from the west, with the village of Ennerdale Bridge in the foreground, Crag Fell on the right shore of Ennerdale Water and Bowness Knott on the left

Low and High Gillerthwaite. Beyond that the only structure is Black Sail Youth Hostel accessible only by 4x4 vehicle, bicycle or on foot.

The geology underlying the valley and surrounding fells comprises volcanic rocks of the Borrowdale Series at the head of the valley, granite in the central portion, and Skiddaw slates in the lower valley. Ennerdale Water, the lake occupying the central and lower parts of Ennerdale, was formed through glacial action and other remnants of this process include a fine series of rounded moraines at the head of the valley, at Black Sail. See Figure 7.1 for an illustrative map of the valley. Also see Figure 7.2 for an overview of the cultural landscape of the Ennerdale valley.

### 7.1.2 THE INHERITED LANDSCAPE'S CHARACTER

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**FIGURE 7.5** Ennerdale from the east, with the River Liza and forestry plantations in the valley bottom and Ennerdale Water and the Irish Sea coast in the distance

The head of the valley is framed by some of the Lake District's highest summits including Green Gable, Great Gable, Pillar, Kirk Fell and Steeple, composed of the hard, erosion-resistant Borrowdale Volcanic group of rocks presenting a rocky, craggy face to the valley and providing a strong sense of enclosure. The valley is relatively narrow at its head with rough grazing on the steep open fells where clear of crags, outcrops and screes. Lower down the valley slopes, large scale, mature conifer forests dominate the landscape. Continuing harvesting has created a diversity of dense conifers, areas

of clear-fell, conifer re-planting, natural regeneration and further west some areas of ancient oak woodland. This evokes an ongoing sense of change in the valley, enhanced by the strong visual presence of the mobile, high energy River Liza. Ennerdale Water, known as Broad Water until the late 18th century, is a large glacial lake which has been deepened by a dam at its west end. It is one of the smaller lakes in the Lake District, with a maximum width of 1.5 kilometres and a length of 3.9 kilometres. It is also relatively shallow, but nonetheless has a resident population of Arctic Char. West of the lake the valley suddenly opens out to a landscape of rolling pastoral farmland with a rich network of hedgerows and trees with a much gentler feel and including the village of Ennerdale Bridge. The river from the lake westwards is the River Ehen.

### 7.1.3 FARMING TODAY – THE AGRO-PASTORAL LANDSCAPE

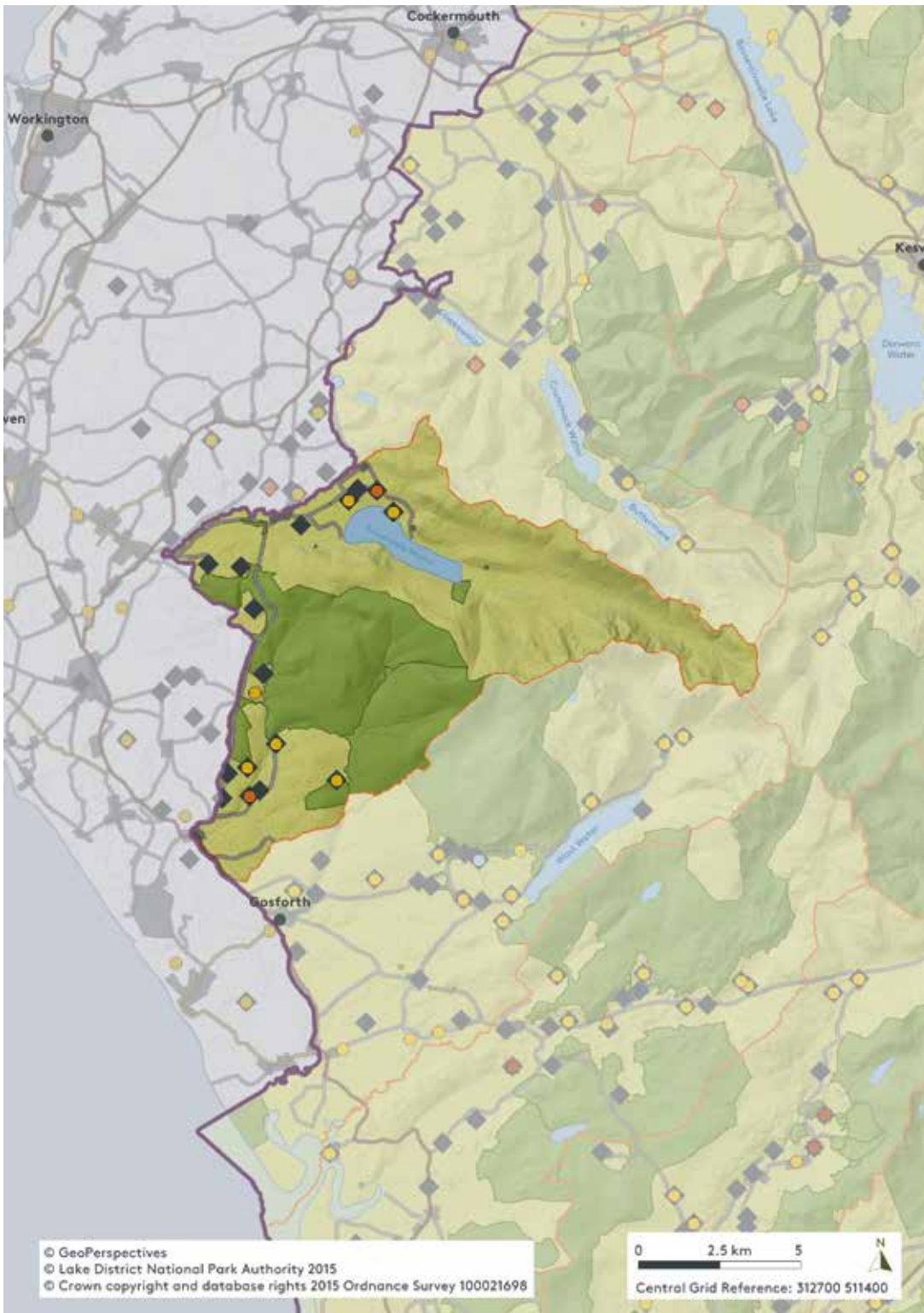
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The agricultural field pattern of the valley is a typical Lake District one with inbye, intake and open fell grazing patterns but now obscured largely by conifers. The inbye areas in the valley bottom, by Gillerthwaite, are still intact.

Evidence of medieval open fields can still be found in the wider Ennerdale Valley, often as fossilised strip fields in the landscape. At Croasdale ('Crossdale' on Ordnance Survey First and Second Series Maps), a very small amount of arable is shown on historic maps as strips, and some of these survive in modern boundaries. Croasdale is first mentioned in the 'Assizes of 1279'; its name perhaps references a now-lost sculptural cross, or a reference to its position at a cross-roads. At Calder Bridge and Ponsonby there are open field-systems on the south side of the River Calder. The place-name 'Scales' to the north-east of this area (Low Prior Scales and High Prior Scales) may indicate transhumant pastoralism, but the arable may perhaps be part of a larger scheme associated with the Calder Abbey community. Another possible former open field system can be seen at Strudda Bank and at Ennerdale Bridge where there are quite wide strips which might relate to the Ennerdale referred to in c.1135 and which remained in lay hands uneventfully until the 16th century. Ridge-and-furrow survives at Woundell Beck where it post-dates the cairnfield, but it is associated with a bank that forms part of the putative vaccary enclosure and its reverse-S shape form and wide turning circle suggest a medieval date.

On the south-west slopes of Herdus are the relict remains of a field system which was not shown on the Ordnance Survey first edition map (1867), it was evidently abandoned at a much earlier date. This represents an example of the parcelling of the land on the lower slopes, up to the most extreme and unusable terrain, where an horizontal wall was built running along the base of the Herdus crags with walls running down slope creating a series of land parcels along the valley slopes. The tumbled dry stone walls are in places aligned with the boundaries of the adjacent enclosed land to the west, and they appear to represent a now abandoned element of intake associated with the former Hollins Farm. The relationships with the present-day field system indicate that these remains reflect the contraction, and ultimate closure, of Hollins Farm, which exploited the marginal and exposed lands at the foot of Herdus. Because of the relationship with Hollins Farm it is evident that the field system was abandoned in the post-medieval period, but it is entirely possible that it had its origin in the medieval period.

FIGURE 7.6 Shepherds' flocks and native sheep breeds in the Ennerdale Valley



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0 2.5 km 5  
 Central Grid Reference: 312700 511400

  Nominated Property boundary    
   Valley boundary    
   Registered Common Land

◆ Fell-going Flocks  
 Flocks registered with Breed Associations:  
● Herdwick   
 ● Rough Fell   
 ● Swaledale   
 ● Multiple Breeds

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

## WORKING FARMS AND FLOCKS

Until the sale of the valley to the Forestry Commission, Ennerdale had an important place in the tradition of Herdwick livestock in the Lake District, but 2,000 Herdwick sheep had to be removed from Gillerthwaite and Ennerdale Dale when the valley was forested.

Despite this afforestation in the 20th century, there are still 16 farms with fell-going flocks in the Ennerdale Valley area. There are seven Herdwick flocks and two Swaledale flocks registered with the relevant Sheep Breeders' Associations. There are no registered Rough Fell flocks. There is one National Trust landlord's flock listed in the 'Lakeland Shepherds' Guide' (2005) for the Ennerdale area.

There are about 3,346 hectares of Registered Common Land in the valley area, around 31 per cent of the total valley area. The areas of Common Land are concentrated on the south side of Ennerdale Valley, the two main blocks being Kinniside Common and Stockdale Moor, along with Cold Fell and Ponsonby Fell. The other small areas of Common are Longmoor near Ennerdale Bridge and Watering Beck, Bowness Knot Parish Quarry, Bowness Quarry and Latter Barrow Parish Quarry either side of Ennerdale Water.


## CONTINUING FARMING CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

The annual Ennerdale Show is held in the last week of August at The Leaps, Kirkland, west of Ennerdale Water. It is a traditional Lakeland Show including showing of sheep, horses, dogs and poultry, vintage machinery, hound trailing, children's sports, fell racing, Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling, industrial and produce marquee and local food and drink. It was started in 1895 by a group of Ennerdale businessmen and farms as a way of supporting the village school. The first year it was a flower show and picnic followed by a summer ball. In 1900 it was expanded to include produce and a Herdwick sheep show, reviving the sheep fairs earlier in the 19th century. Beatrix Potter was President of the Show in 1934.

## FARMSTEADS

There are a few farm buildings of 16-17th century date in origin suggesting that this was a period of investment in farms, probably arising from post Dissolution land sales and enhanced rights of tenure.

**TABLE 7.1** Key farm houses in the Ennerdale Valley

	<p><b>HIGH GILLERTHWAITE</b></p> <p>Post-medieval farmhouses, which are set into the line of the primary valley bottom enclosure, and their history would appear to be closely linked to that of the intake. Mentioned from the sixteenth century onwards, but possibly rebuilt.</p> <p><b>DATE</b> 16th century and later  <b>OWNERSHIP</b> Youth Hostel Association  <b>PROTECTION</b> Not listed  <b>GRID REFERENCE</b> 314238 514100</p>
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**BOWNESS**

House, probably late 17th century/early 18th century. Later additions and alterations. Crucks boxed in to either side of inglenook fireplace in front room south; a cruck frame is rare in the Lake District.

**DATE** 17th – 18th century

**OWNERSHIP** Private

**PROTECTION** Listed

**GRID REFERENCE** 310786 515529

**LONGMOOR HEAD**

House, dated 1686, with initials J.J., on door lintel. Stable added to north end, early 19th century additions to rear. Later alterations. At the eastern end of a possible former common field, this may have originated as a steward's holding.

**DATE** 17th century

**OWNERSHIP** Private

**PROTECTION** Listed

**GRID REFERENCE** 306375 515696

**HOW HALL FARM**

Located at the west end of Ennerdale, and originally built in 1566. Re-built in the early 19th century, only fragments of the earlier building survive.

**DATE** 16th – 19th century

**OWNERSHIP** National Trust

**PROTECTION** Not listed

**GRID REFERENCE** 309009 516361

## 7.1.4 INDUSTRY

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Apart from limited slate quarrying at Bowness Knot and Latterbarrow, the principal industrial activity in Ennerdale has been the mining and smelting of iron ore from medieval times. Although this resulted in hushing and extensive adits being constructed into the hillsides with large spoil tips, this has left little visible impact on the landscape, largely due to the tree cover. Since 1864 Ennerdale Water has been used as a water supply for West Cumbria, but compared to Thirlmere and Haweswater the impact on the valley of the water industry is relatively minor.

## 7.1.5 SETTLEMENTS

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The pattern of settlement and land use in Ennerdale stands in stark contrast to the majority of large valleys in the Lake District, as it has relatively little settlement; Ennerdale Bridge is the only village in the valley area. The blanket of commercial conifer forest which was established by the Forestry Commission from the 1920s has also served to obscure the remains of any earlier settlements, although there was a sizeable medieval community to the east of High Gillerthwaite Farm, comprising 12 medieval longhouses.

### 7.1.6 PICTURESQUE BUILDINGS AND LANDSCAPE

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There are no buildings, villas or ornamental landscapes associated with the early Picturesque movement in Ennerdale although the mansion at Calder Abbey, built over the south range of the monastery, is of this period. It was added to in the 19th and early 20th centuries and is surrounded by lightly landscaped grounds, now in agricultural use, which incorporate further monastic features along with a ha-ha.

## 7.2 HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

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### 7.2.1 ARCHAEOLOGY AND EARLY SETTLEMENT

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**FIGURE 7.7** Prehistoric hut circle on Town Bank. Partly reconstructed after excavation in 1956.

In parts of Ennerdale forest cover has obscured evidence of prehistoric activity, but where remains are known, they survive well. There is a prehistoric cairnfield on the banks of the River Liza and there is a particular concentration of evidence of settlement, burial and farming on Stockdale Moor and Town Bank, suggesting arable farming, possibly as early as the Bronze Age. Cairns and hut circles can also be found at the junction of River Calder and Whoap Beck; all are

protected through scheduling as nationally important monuments. There is also some evidence for Romano-British settlement in Ennerdale with farmsteads at Low Gillerthwaite and at Tongue How, Town Bank. These are also protected as scheduled monuments.

### 7.2.2 THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CURRENT SETTLEMENT PATTERN

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Some of the place-names, including the name of the valley itself and the rivers which flow through it have Norse origins and it is likely that Norse immigrants settled here in the later 10th century. There are stone footings of rudimentary structures high up on the southern slopes of Ennerdale, at Great Cove, which may represent the remains of summer shielings of this period, used as part of a system of transhumance.

### 7.2.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FARMING LANDSCAPE

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There is little documentation relating to medieval Ennerdale. However references to 'Avanderdale' may equate to Ennerdale in which case a portion of the manor was



**FIGURE 7.8** The remains of the church tower at Calder Abbey

Furness Abbey. It became a Cistercian Abbey in 1147; and the surviving ruins date from this second foundation, with later additions. The Gatehouse to the west is probably 14th century with later additions. Other remains include a monk's oven and a water leat to the east of the main buildings. The Abbey itself was deliberately made ruinous after the Dissolution by its new lay owner Sir Thomas Leigh.



**FIGURE 7.9** Monks' Bridge

Said to be medieval, the bridge's surviving fabric is probably 17th or 18th century. It is a Grade II Listed Building and also a Scheduled Ancient Monument, Described in the scheduling as a "good and relatively rare surviving example of a simple single span packhorse bridge, a type common in the region during the medieval and early post-medieval periods, with the arch high enough above the water level to protect the bridge from rapidly rising flood waters which are a characteristic of rivers draining the Lakeland fells."

granted "in pure and perpetual alms, free from every earthly service" by Ranulph, son of William le Meschin, to the Churches of St Mary of York and St Bees in c. 1135. Nothing more is known of the manor until the early 14th century, apart from confirmations of this grant in the time of Richard I (1189-99) and in 1308 by Edward II. The lack of other papers relating to Ennerdale in the cartulary of the mother house, St Mary of York, may indicate that, to all intents and purposes, it was effectively in lay hands before the 16th century.

It is surprising that monastic interests were so few given the presence of Calder Abbey in the far south-west of the valley. The Savignac Abbey first founded on land granted by Ranulph de Meschines II in 1134, was promptly destroyed by Scots invaders, and re-founded in 1137 by

The monks were not rich or prolific in public life, and at the Dissolution in the 16th century only possessed the rectories of Cleator, Gilcrux, and of St. John and St. Bridgid, Beckermeth. A late 13th century suit shows that the monastery owned "3 carucates of land in Gilcrux, a carucate in Dearham, an oxgang in Millom, 10 acres in Irton and 2 oxgangs in Bootle". Nonetheless their memory is recorded in the name Friar Moor at Kinniside, and at Monks' Bridge over the River Calder (a scheduled monument).

The establishment of new communities, through forest clearance (assarting) and fell enclosure, were at their height in upland Cumbria in the late 13th century. One hundred and sixty acres were enclosed in just six years between 1293-9 around the borough of Cockermouth. One 'riddings' field-name (Old English ryding, meaning 'clearing in woodland') is recorded on the tithe map between Mireside and Hollins and there are two water riddings names (drained wasteland) west of Mireside. The earliest formal enclosures of land were the two valley bottom enclosures, separated by the Char Dub, which are comparable to the ring garths found in most valleys and typically date from at least the 12th/13th centuries.

The population of Ennerdale appears to have been low prior to the 14th century; in 1322 and 1334 the figures were 26 and 31 respectively. However the population seems to have grown considerably; this is perhaps skewed by the invasions at that earlier time. A muster roll of 1534-5 listed the names of 40 men, from 20 families, of military age in the manor.

The earliest documented settlement in the valley dates from the 14th century, with a record of a vaccary (dairy farm) at Gillerthwaite in 1322, just beyond the head of the lake and another of 1334 possibly at Woundell Beck. These vaccaries belonged to John de Multon, last lord of the whole of the Barony of Egremont. The Inquisition Post Mortem of 1334 gives some insight into the 14th century landscape, although it is probably safe to assume that the forest had been cleared for their creation some time before 1322.

The 1334 document includes the following:

**"...and there are at Enerdale (sic), which is within the Free Chase of Coupeland fell 31 tenants at will, who hold various places (loca) and pay per year £6 4/6d at the terms of Michaelmas and Easter equally. And there is a certain render (reditus) called Dalemale [payment for right of pasture, literally 'valley money'] coming from the said tenants 29/- per year at the Feast of St James for the whole year. And there is a certain place called Braythemire [now Broadmoor plantation] in the hands of the said tenants, and they pay per year for the same 13/4d at the said Feast of St James for the whole year. And there is there a certain place called Head of Ennerdale (Capud de Eynerdale) in the hands of the said tenants at will, and they pay per year £4 at the said Feast of St James for the whole year. And there are two vaccaries (vacarie) where the lord used to have his own stock (staurum suum proprum) and they are worth per year 60/-"**

**Translation by Professor Angus Winchester, Lancaster University**

The archaeological record demonstrates that there was a sizeable medieval community to the east of High Gillerthwaite Farm and significantly beyond the eastern valley bottom enclosure. This comprises a scatter of up to 12 rectangular longhouses, each with an associated stock pound, which extend in a broad band up the northern side of the valley, the lowest being a pair just above the flood plain of the River Liza and extending up to

a group of five at a height of 120 metres above the valley floor. While this would imply a very sizeable community it is possible that the structures were not all contemporary. Their rectangular nature, and their unenclosed character, suggests an early or high medieval date. Some of the longhouses are directly associated with cultivation terraces or plots, whilst some have apparently a pastoral association. One of the best contenders for one of the vaccaries is the very large two-celled stock enclosure, which is an enormous 54 metres x 50 metres in size and has decayed banks that are even now up to 1.1 metres in height and could have accommodated many cattle. Attached to the eastern side of the stock enclosure is a further rectangular longhouse. Although two dairy farms were documented in the early 14th century, this does not necessarily indicate that these were either then or subsequently the sole settlements within the head of the valley. The fact that there is clear evidence of mixed farming practice within this community may suggest that it was either at the outset a community providing meat for the lord of the manor (vaccaries) and for a small local tenanted population or that the range of farmsteads reflects the development of a community practicing both mixed and pastoral farming. Although vaccaries are well known from documentary sources, they are very poorly attested in the archaeological record, and thus the presence of physical remains potentially corresponding to such a medieval cattle farm is of considerable archaeological importance.

While some of the settlements were associated with small cultivation terraces, none of them were associated with any boundaries or fields as such, which clearly distinguishes them from the post-medieval farms of High Gillerthwaite and Gillerthwaite, which were associated with the valley bottom enclosure. The relationship of the medieval settlement to this valley bottom enclosure is significant; the fact that the primary medieval settlement area was wholly outside the principal valley bottom enclosure indicates that this enclosure post-dated the medieval settlement, and that there was no apparent continuity of settlement. While it is possible that there were early settlement remains within the extent of the valley bottom enclosure, that have been subsequently destroyed by land improvement, it is clear that the majority of the earlier settlement remains were substantially distant from the valley bottom enclosure. This could either indicate that they were created independently or that the later intake specifically avoided the land of the early settlement. The layout of the settlement evidence also suggests potentially that there were territorial issues restricting its growth. These territorial restrictions may have been the vaccaries around which peasant farming had to develop.

The medieval landowners, as well as establishing the vaccaries within their holdings, would have also sold summer grazing rights on the fells to the peasant communities. It is this summer grazing pattern of stock movement, or transhumance, which was expanded to allow peasant settlement in the uplands of the forests during the population growth of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries (Winchester 2000), but may have occurred in earlier periods. The high valley sides meant that these areas were still too remote for local pasture and they became used for transhumant pasture through the establishment of shielings at Great Cove and Revelin Crag. That at Great Cove consists of a main group of nine ruined stone buildings of varying size and condition, two partially extant stretches of dry-stone walling, a stone-capped well or spring, and the remains of a substantial, slightly outlying, building to the south-east of the main group. The location and topography of the site, may indicate that these were the shielings

for the medieval settlement at Gillerthwaite. The comparative position of the two sites shows the route down Deep Gill leads directly to Gillerthwaite and its valley bottom enclosure. Such circumstantial evidence may indicate a contemporary relationship.

The upper reaches of Ennerdale, beyond Ennerdale Water, appear to have remained relatively unenclosed throughout the medieval period. An exception to this is The Side, on the southern slopes of the valley, a large stone walled enclosure which functioned as a deer park. Although the Park is likely to pre-date 1568, it was described in a parliamentary survey of 1650 as "All that Parke or parcell of Fell ground commonly called or known by the name Ennerdale Parke alias the Fence, fenced partlie with an old wall, and partlie with ye water called ye Broadwater."

During the medieval period the mineral potential of the valley was realised and resulted in the increasingly intensive extraction of the fell sides. In some places hushing (the deliberate washing away of topsoil to reveal buried mineral veins) was used, notably on the north side of Herdus, but in other places, such as the south side of the valley, extensive adits were excavated into the hill side and spoil heaps proliferated. At Smithy Beck there is evidence of a possible miners' settlement or a seasonal sheiling. The ceramic evidence from the domestic hearths suggests some degree of occupation from the late 14th century through to the early post-medieval period, but the houses here are spatially and typologically distinct from the other settlements within the valley. Firstly the houses were substantially larger than their counterparts at Gillerthwaite East, but they were also in a very much better condition, suggesting a more recent abandonment date. The houses, for the most part, had a characteristic form, being enclosed or 'double-walled' longhouses, and are a type which is relatively rare both within a regional context and nationally. They are protected through scheduling.

Evidence on the ground suggests that at some stage in the later medieval or post-medieval period the agricultural settlement in the valley bottom was rationalised with the establishment of the two valley bottom enclosures and the two surviving Gillerthwaite farms. By this stage the Woundell Beck settlement had already been abandoned, allowing the intake to develop over it, but the Gillerthwaite settlements appear to still have been in use as the new intake was laid out to avoid them. Remarkably, this intake was subject to very little development and expansion in the course of its subsequent life.

The post-medieval period saw, in common with all other upland areas, the increasingly intensive pastoral exploitation of the valley sides. The numbers of stock shelters and bields are testament to the increasing numbers of sheep on the fell, which inevitably had a considerable impact upon the vegetation, preventing the proliferation of heather moors.

These changes in the landscape and farming practices in the 16th to 17th centuries elsewhere appear to have been the result of the confiscation of any monastic-owned land, but there is little evidence of this in the area; the name Friar Moor, next to Side (= 'saetr') at Kinniside, might refer to a post-Dissolution intake on the fellside, or perhaps this is an undocumented vaccary settled post-Dissolution. It is possible that the land around How Hall was originally an unnamed monastic possession, given that How Hall was soon in the hands of a family connected with Dr Swynburn and thus Henry VIII.

A short string of farms curving around the north-west shore of Ennerdale may have been established in the mid-16th century, perhaps on former shieling sites belonging to the manor of Crossdale. Calder Abbey was acquired by Sir Thomas Leigh after the Dissolution and he partially demolished the buildings including removing its roof. A painting by Matthias Read in Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, shows the property c. 1730 when it was purchased by John Tiffin; this painting shows the original form of the south range now incorporated in the house. The house was probably then mid-16th century; it is now a Grade I Listed Building. A new frontage to the west end of this range was added in the late 18th century, during which time the property was associated with the notable Senhouse family. The visible remains of the monastic buildings are mainly to be found in the cellar, the rest of the house remodelled to a very high standard in the Arts and Craft style. The buildings are set in a parkland setting.

In the case of Ennerdale, confiscation of the lands of Henry Grey, father of Lady Jane Grey, in 1554 by Mary I, may have had a greater impact. Ennerdale Manor remained in Crown hands until 1822 after this confiscation. A note, undated but – from the handwriting – apparently from the late 16th century, informs the addressee of the inadvisability of purchasing the Manor. It seems therefore that it may have been offered for sale – either publicly or direct to Lord Leconfield, Lord of the Barony of Egremont who owned neighbouring Kinniside – although no other record of this has been found.

Shifting tenurial relationships also seem to have been a factor in the reorganisation of the farm land. On 14 November 1560, Elizabeth I appointed commissioners to survey her lands in Ennerdale, with instructions to induce the tenants to accept leases for 40 years, instead of the tenant right system in current use. The tenants, however, refused, claiming that they had never heard the name 'lease' before the manor came into Crown hands. Their petition stated that they would be encouraged in their duty of bearing arms at the border if the Court confirmed the former Custom, and at their own cost they would "inclose their grounds severally w'th quycksetts..." A 'quickset' was a planted hedge, usually of hawthorn. The Queen upheld the tenant right, but leased the tenements for 21 years to John Senhouse Croftfoot in 1563. However, he defaulted the terms of the lease by selling his title to John Lamplugh, who refused to "stand to the order of the Court touching the tenant right in the said manor" and was committed to Navy service. A fresh survey was ordered on 12 February 1567/8, and on 3 April 1568 the 12 'Ancientest and Sagest Tennants' declared the customs of the manor, among which were entitlement "to great timber for fire houses and barns, to harrowboote and ploughboote" (the right to timber for building, or repairing farm implements), that there were no demesne lands (possibly meaning no arable demesne lands) in the manor, and "that from time out of memory... their ancestors had always had within the forest certain agistments or common of pasture called Dalemale". The Queen accepted the Customs, and the tenants the conditions, and paid two years' rent as a gressum (fine) on 10 May 1568.

Many of the forest areas, previously maintained as private hunting grounds, were abandoned. This was largely as a result of clearance and colonisation by peasant farmers and small freeholders, but also as a result of the establishment of fellside pastures (hay meadows) and vaccaries by the feudal lords. As the communities encroached into the lower lands of the forest, so the upper lands were adopted by the same communities as upland pasture. The more remote areas were adopted for seasonal grazing, and saw

the establishment of shielings. Some of these shielings were the upland grazing for the freeholders and leased from the lord of the manor, while others, such as the Lords Seat, near Wythop, meaning Lord's Saetr (shieling), reflect summer grazing under the direct control of the lord of the manor. The impact of this encroachment was such that by the 16th century, the term 'forest' was applied in a restricted sense only to demesne pastures in the uppermost reaches of the valley. Copeland Forest, for example, had almost vanished by 1578, the northern part being by then a 'free chase' called the Forest of Gatesgarth, and the former hunting rights being restricted to upper Ennerdale.

There is abundant documentary evidence for post-medieval mineral extraction, particularly on the south side of the valley, which was both extensive and enduring. For example a survey of 1560 for the Crown mentions a small tenement called Sinderhill, and this is the earliest documentary evidence for a bloomery in the manor. Given the extensive physical remains, and the documentary evidence, of extraction and processing from the medieval through to the later post-medieval period, this must be one of the more important aspects of Ennerdale's heritage.

It was not until the 1870s that Ennerdale was enclosed, with the pattern of large, ruler-straight enclosures, bounded with iron posts and wire, which are typical of that late period. Each farm was allocated areas of fell which were fenced against each other and to the parish boundary on the watershed. The enclosure map is dated 1865 (with approval of the Commissioners signed 1871) and shows the parcelling of the fells around Ennerdale Water, and north and south of the River Liza. These enclosures were presumably implemented over the years following 1871, and are certainly shown on the 1899 second edition OS 6": 1 mile maps. For the most part they comprise a series of regular rectangular plots defined by straight walls which extend up the steep sides of the valley to the township boundary. In addition, a more irregular boundary was established on the southern side of the valley, above and to the south of the Side, following the natural ridge line. This was one of the last major acts of enclosure to take place in England.

Changes between the OS first edition (1867) and second edition (1899) map the development of the field system which was concentrated around the two farms, at Gillinthaite, principally recording the construction of new buildings. At Low Gillerthaite a new outbuilding was constructed on the southern side of the farmyard, the farm field was further divided, and a walled trackway was constructed along the southern side of the northern valley bottom enclosure wall. At High Gillerthaite there was little change before the construction of two large buildings to the west of the farmhouse and an associated elongated enclosure wall.

Ennerdale had an important place in the tradition of Herdwick livestock in the Lake District. In the West Cumberland News in 1942 it was written that the flock of the Ponsonby family at White Banks, Kinniside had been in the hands of the present owner and his predecessors since 1773. Ennerdale was a stronghold with about one sixth of all tups (rams) registered from the valley. At the time of enclosure in the 1870s Lord Lonsdale, the lord of the manor, received the dalehead ("Ennerdale Dale") and established a Herdwick flock there, building a bothy for his shepherds at Black Sail. In the early 20th century Gillerthaite was one of the three or four most important sources of Herdwick tups for the whole of the Lake District.

Throughout the 19th century, an annual sheep fair was held at Ennerdale Bridge on the second Tuesday in September. In addition, Gillerthwaite farm held its own annual sale of 'draft sheep from the coves' which it held by the side of Ennerdale Water, at Bowness.

In 1848 when the West Cumberland Fell Dales Show, organised for hiring and selling tups, was held in Ennerdale, Thomas Rowlandson wrote an account of it in the Journal of the Agricultural Society of England. In it he stated that "not less than two hundred specimens of the genuine breed changed hands". Clipping days were important social and economic events in the annual calendar and the Whitehaven News reported clipping at Gillerthwaite for many years. In the 20 July 1899 issue it was reported that clipping was a three day event involving 24 clippers from Ennerdale, Wasdale and Lorton and another eight men as catchers, fleecers and smitters. It was also reported that 16 women, 11 of them unmarried, provided food and other refreshment. There was singing and dancing in the evenings. On the final day the event ended with a wrestling competition.

The Fell Dales Show held in Eskdale in September required the walking of tups from Ennerdale, in particular Gillerthwaite, already joined by those from Buttermere, over Black Sail Pass into Wasdale Head. There they met up with the Borrowdale and Wasdale tups and stayed for the night. The next day they walked over Burnmoor to the Woolpack Inn, Eskdale where the Fell Dales Show was held to let and hire tups to keep the bloodlines fresh.

#### **7.2.4 DISCOVERY AND APPRECIATION OF A RICH CULTURAL LANDSCAPE**

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##### **EARLY TOURISM**

The location of the Ennerdale Valley on the less accessible western side of the Lake District, resulted in little interest from early cultural tourists in the 18th century.

It was at Pillar rock in Ennerdale that true rock-climbing began. Jonathan Otley's 1823 Guide described the Pillar Stone as 'unclimbable'. A local shepherd, John Atkinson took up the challenge and climbed it in 1824. From then on, an increasing number of visitors climbed the rock. In 1850 the Swiss C. A. Baumgartner established what is known as the 'Old Wall Route'. The tricky 'North climb' was achieved by W. Haskett-Smith in 1890.

#### **7.2.5 ROMANTIC SITES, BUILDINGS AND ASSOCIATIONS**

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Ennerdale informs the narrative of Wordsworth's poem 'The Brothers', written in 1800. He used Ennerdale as it was in 1799-1800, before its last phase of enclosure and subsequent afforestation, to demonstrate the time-depth of the pastoral system in Lake District valleys. There are different versions of the origins of the poem but they are all based around the time that Wordsworth and Coleridge were in the valley in 1799 when they were told the story of a John or Jerome Bowman who had died after breaking his leg near Scalehow Force and another story of a man who broke his neck by falling off a

crag whilst sleepwalking at Proud Knot. The Bowmans were a local family from Mireside Farm, Ennerdale and there is a Bowman family grave in the churchyard in Ennerdale. This, and other documents, provides evidence of the family from at least 1757 to 1894. Wordsworth used the Bowman family as his inspiration for the Ewebank family in 'The Brothers'. The Bowman family of Ennerdale were of particular interest to Wordsworth because of his awareness of, and interest in the challenges facing Lake District's hill farmers.

In 'The Brothers' he famously begins by pointing to the gulf between picturesque-obsessed tourists and the valley farmers:

**"Perched on the forehead of a jutting crag,  
Pencil in hand and book upon the knee,  
Will look and scribble, scribble on and look,  
Until a man might travel twelve stout miles,  
Or reap an acre of his neighbour's corn."**

**William Wordsworth, 'The Brothers' (1800)**

The poem, through the story of a returning local man who, for a while, remains a 'stranger' and through a conversation with the Priest of Ennerdale, opens a window into the culture of this family which has been making and maintaining this place for at least five generations, since approximately 1650. This is a community in which the struggles of sustaining life in the valleys and hills had their tragic outcomes:

**"-and old Walter,  
They left to him the family heart, and land  
With other burthens than the crop it bore.  
Year after year the old man still kept up  
A cheerful mind,- and buffeted with bond,  
Interest, and mortgages; at last he sank  
And went into his grave before his time"**

After Walter died,

**"the estate and house were sold"**

**"...and all their sheep  
'A pretty flock, and which, for aught I know,  
Had clothed the Ewbanks for a thousand years:-  
Well – all was gone, and they were destitute..."**

There is also, in this poem, a distinctive reference to The Pillar where, as part of the narrative, a young shepherd died while sleepwalking.

When Coleridge and Wordsworth toured the Lake District in 1799, Coleridge remarked upon Ennerdale and its island and then, later, Wordsworth echoed his friend's note in his Guide including another echo of Milton's Paradise Lost XI.835:

“In the bosom of the lakes Ennerdale and Devockwater is a single rock, which, owing to its neighbourhood to the sea, is-

“The haunt of cormorants and sea-mews’ clang”

a music well suited to the stern and wild character of the several scenes!”

## 7.2.6 EARLY CONSERVATION – THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL FOR PROTECTING LANDSCAPES

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That Ennerdale is today without a railway line is a result of opposition to such a proposal which came forward in 1883, for a mineral line to the head of Ennerdale Water to serve iron-ore mining operations. This was opposed strongly by Canon Rawnsley and the Lake District Defence Society, which he had founded partly in response to this threat, and they published an ironic poem entitled ‘Poetical Lamentation on the Insufficiency of Steam Locomotion in the Lake District’, in the Pall Mall Gazette in 1883:

“Wake, England, wake! ‘tis now the hour  
To sweep away this black disgrace –  
The want of locomotive power  
In so enjoyable a place.

Nature has done her part, and why  
Is mightier man in his to fail?  
I want to hear the porter’s cry,  
‘Change here for Ennerdale!”

In July 1883, responding to concerted opposition from Canon Rawnsley and the Lake District Defence Society, Parliament agreed that a select committee should investigate the impact of the proposed railway on the scenic landscape of Ennerdale. This set an important precedent, following the Thirlmere case, that the general environmental implications of such developments should be taken into account. The railway bill was then withdrawn as the promoters realised it would not pass this test. On 22 July 1883 The Spectator reported on the defeated railway bill that “All lovers of English Lakeland and all believers in the need of keeping the few Dales left to us inviolate for the rest and pleasure of weary England will owe a debt of lasting gratitude to the Select Committee appointed on the motion of Mr. Stafford Howard to inquire and report “whether the proposed Ennerdale Railway will interfere with the enjoyment of the public who annually visit the Lake District, by injuriously affecting the scenery in the neighbourhood, or otherwise,” for the report against that railway which it adopted. Ennerdale is the most impressive of our Cambrian Valleys for simple and austere grandeur”.

This was an important success for the Lake District Defence Society which ultimately became the Friends of the Lake District.

Another major development was the use of Ennerdale Water as a water supply for West Cumbria from 1864. This was to lead to additional infrastructure works throughout the 20th century which would bring the North West Water Authority into conflict with conservationists.

The depression in the 1920s and 30s resulted in many farms being let and stimulated a large amount of movement between farms across the Lake District of families hoping to better themselves. For example, just in the township of Kinniside in the early 1930s one family moved to Borrowdale, whilst other families moved into the township from Corney and Eskdale. Of the 130 farms in the inaugural Herdwick flock book of 1920 only six families are still breeding Herdwicks on the same farms, one of which are the Rawlings of Hollins, Ennerdale.

It was against this harsh economic climate that the Forestry Commission acquired 5,000 acres in the Ennerdale Valley in 1925, including Dale Head, from Lord Lonsdale. Consequently, the next major episode of enclosure occurred as part of the afforestation of the valley. This entailed enclosure of large packets of fellside and valley bottom for forestry, and where possible the parliamentary enclosure boundaries were used. However it also proved necessary to construct extensive lengths of new boundary, particularly at the head of the valley where there had previously been no parliamentary intake.

Planting began in Ennerdale in March 1925 and further land acquisitions and planting continued throughout the 20th century with the final acquisition of land around Clews Gill in 1978. By the end of 1933 the Commission had planted one and a quarter million larch and five million Sitka or Norway spruce in Ennerdale and on the Thornthwaite estate near Keswick. The impact of the afforestation on Ennerdale from the 1920s was used to argue the case against further large-scale afforestation in Eskdale and the Duddon valley because of the adverse effects here on landscape, access, farming and the local economy. Ultimately, the planting here and elsewhere in the Lake District led to the 1936 agreement between the Forestry Commission, the newly formed Friends of the Lake District and the Council for the Protection of Rural England. This included the exclusion of forestry from a small area at the head of Ennerdale, at Black Sail. The Forestry Commission also transferred around 1,400 hectares of non-plantable high land around Ennerdale, including The Pillar, to the National Trust.

Towards the end of the 20th century the Forestry Commission, nationally, started to widen its remit culminating in 1998 with the publication of the England Forestry Strategy. This saw the focus of forest management shift from timber production (linked to falling market prices and competition from Europe) towards rural development, economic regeneration, recreation, access and tourism, conservation and the environment. This approach has been adapted to create the Wild Ennerdale Project, a partnership approach by the three major landowners in Ennerdale – the Forestry Commission, National Trust and United Utilities PLC – with support from Natural England and the National Park Authority. The vision of the partnership is “to allow the evolution of Ennerdale as a wild valley for the benefit of people, relying more on natural processes to shape its landscape and ecology”.

The Wild Ennerdale management plan aims to:

- Control Sitka spruce to ensure that this species does not dominate the future forest.
- Reduce the impact of mechanised forestry operations in the valley.
- Prioritise the felling of areas viewed to be visually detracting within the landscape.
- Not restock recent clear-fells.
- Plant native broadleaves and Juniper as seed trees in the eastern valley to give natural processes the opportunity to develop woodland away from becoming dominated by spruce.
- Allow natural woodland encroachment beyond the present forest boundary to soften stark contrast between forest and open fell.
- Continue to control sheep grazing on The Side to encourage natural regeneration east and west of the current woodland.
- Introduce cattle into the forest to restore a natural disturbance process.
- As timber operations reduce, identify where sections of the forest track network could be allowed to revert to vegetated tracks under natural processes.
- Look to thin areas of maturing forest to provide more open habitats for future herbivore grazing.
- Allow small scale timber operations to provide for local need e.g. woodfuel for the Youth Hostel Association and Field Centre.

This is a unique example in Lake District cultural landscape management, using low level interventions to enable natural processes greater freedom to function. Ennerdale is also a unique Lake District valley in terms of its preceding 80 years of afforestation that enables this form of management to begin a new chapter in the development of Ennerdale.



FIGURE 7.10 Aerial view of the conifer plantations on the northern side of the Ennerdale valley

The 20th century also saw the expansion of the provision of water from the valley for the urban areas of Manchester. In 1902 a shallow weir was added to maintain the water levels. After 1945 Lancashire and Cumberland County Council carried out a review of future water demand and supply and a proposal was made to raise the level of Ennerdale Water by five feet to provide for the takeover by Courtaulds of the Royal Ordnance Factory at Sellafield. It was approved at a public inquiry, but the scheme was dropped as Courtaulds never relocated. In 1960 the lake level was raised by 4.5 feet to extract an extra six million gallons a day. In 1978 the North West Water Authority applied for permission to take additional water supplies from Ennerdale for the nuclear industry at Windscale. This would have necessitated a further raising of the lake level. British Nuclear Fuels Limited at the same time had a plan to extract water from Wastwater in Wasdale.

Many amenity groups, representing anglers, walkers, rock-climbers, farmers and conservationists, opposed both proposals. The Inspector after the public inquiry reported to the Secretary of State that both schemes were unacceptable on environmental grounds. The Ennerdale project would have required major re-working of the northern shore "completely out of keeping with such a scene" and at Wastwater the inspector shared the objectors concerns about a draw-down rim. The projects were not even necessary as enough water could be sourced from the River Derwent. The Secretary of State rejected both proposals in December 1981 and by 2022 Ennerdale will no longer be used as a source of water.

The threats to the valley had encouraged the National Trust to acquire extensive estates which they continue to manage. The National Trust owns 4,162 hectares of land, all of which is inalienable. It also has an additional 801 hectares of leased land and 1 hectare of covenanted land. This includes the Dale Head land in the main valley on leasehold from the Forestry Commission and fell and farms around Ennerdale Water. Mireside Farm, bought by Lake District Farm Estates in 1941 to resist proposals to raise the lake levels, was gifted to the National Trust in 1976 when the company ceased operating. The National Trust also owns large areas of common on Kinniside Common and Stockdale Moor.



FIGURE 7.11 Black Sail Youth Hostel at the head of Ennerdale, which has recently been refurbished

The sense of wilderness continues to attract visitors. Haystacks between Ennerdale and Buttermere is famous for being Alfred Wainwright's favourite fell and where his ashes were scattered near the shores of Innominate Tarn. The Youth Hostels at Gillerthwaite and Black Sail are as important as they are famous for being remote 'wilderness' hostels. Black Sail is the former bothy of Lord Lonsdale's Ennerdale Dale shepherd and is only accessible on foot or bike.

### 7.3 CONTRIBUTION TO THE ENGLISH LAKE DISTRICT'S OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

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The Ennerdale Valley as defined here is predominantly rural, with no major settlements despite its proximity to the busier west coast of Cumbria.

The tradition of agro-pastoral agricultural in the Ennerdale Valley is strong and there are good examples of early farm buildings dating from the 17th century. A large part of the valley comprises upland grazing for the farms with fell-going flocks, of which five are registered Herdwick flocks. The western end of the valley displays a pattern of piecemeal enclosure from former common fields while the valley of the River Liza still retains the valley-bottom inbye land which, before afforestation, was surrounded by stone-walled intakes on the valley slopes. There are also areas of fell that were enclosed by Act of Parliament in the late 19th century. The annual Ennerdale show is one of the important events of the year for Herdwick breeders.

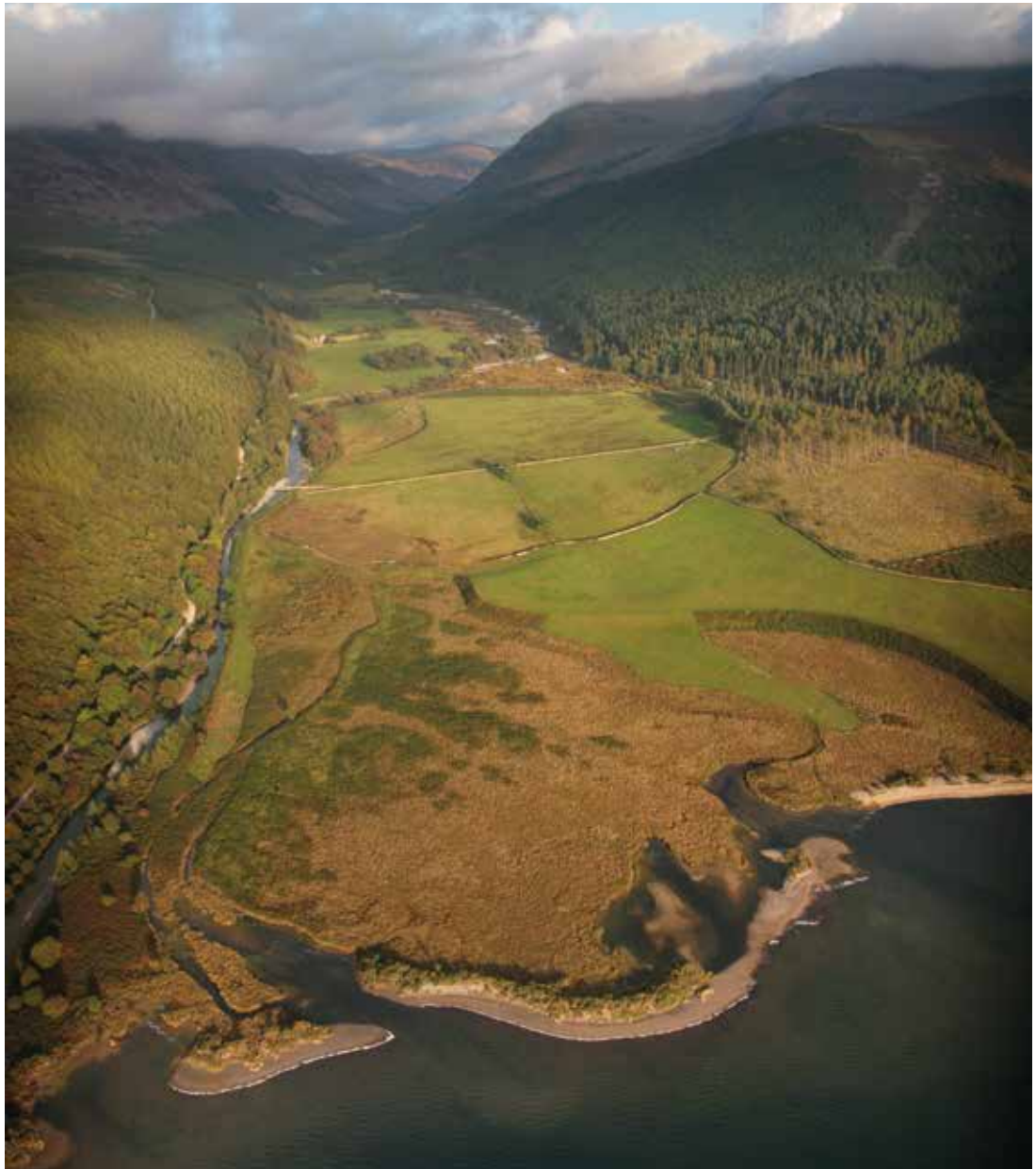
Ennerdale is very rich in evidence for early land use from prehistory until the post medieval period. The land to the south of Ennerdale Water contains some of the best preserved and extensive remains of Bronze and Iron Age settlements and field systems in the English Lake District, and there are also many examples of early and later medieval shielings. The location of the medieval vaccary at Gillerthwaite can be detected in the survival of enclosures and buildings foundations adjacent to the more recent farm buildings and substantial remains of Calder Abbey survive, partly beneath a later 18th century mansion. The Valley was also the location for iron mining and smelting in the medieval and early post-medieval periods, and the remains of bloomeries and huts likely to have been used by miners survive around Ennerdale Water.

Although it possesses a lake with a spectacular mountain backdrop, Ennerdale was not included in the usual itinerary of Picturesque sights in the Lake District in the 18th century. Difficult access to the Valley, which is the furthest west in the English Lake District, was most likely a disincentive to early visitors. No villas were built here to take advantage of the lakeside locations. However, Ennerdale was visited by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge and provided inspiration for Wordsworth's poem 'The Brothers', whose subject matter included the long continuity of agro-pastoral farming in the area.

Ennerdale played an important role in the development of the early conservation movement in the English Lake District. It was the setting for protests in 1883, led by

Canon Rawnsley, against the construction of a railway alongside the River Liza. This incident led Rawnsley to found the Lake District Defence Society. In the early 20th century the afforestation by the Forestry Commission of the fell slopes surrounding the River Liza, and the loss of significant Herdwick hefts belonging to the farms at Gillerthwaite, led directly to the successful campaign by the newly-formed Friends of the Lake District to prevent further afforestation in the central Lake District. A large part of the Valley area is now owned and managed by the National Trust (the National Trust owns 4,162 hectares of land of which 4,160 hectares is inalienable). Ennerdale continues to play an important part in the development of conservation practice in the Lake District through the Wild Ennerdale project.

Ennerdale thus has very strong evidence for the themes of Outstanding Universal Value agro-pastoral agriculture and the early conservation movement.



**FIGURE 7.12** Aerial view of Ennerdale from the west showing the general area of the medieval vaccary at Gillerthwaite. Despite the afforestation of the 1920s the inbye fields still survive.