CHAPTER 4. ANCIENTLY ENCLOSED LAND

Introduction

Enclosed land of all types forms the largest land use type within the Lake District National Park. Around 117,150 hectares of land, or just over 50% of the Park, is covered by some form of enclosure. Of this area, around 69,200 hectares can be considered to have been 'anciently enclosed', that is land enclosed prior to the late-eighteenth and nineteenth century planned enclosures. This is around 59% of all enclosed land, and 30% of the total area of the National Park. Thus it can be seen that, outside the areas of the extensive wastes and commons dominating the uplands, the rest of the Lake District National Park was an enclosed landscape by at least the seventeenth century and probably earlier. Planned enclosure, whether by Act of Parliament or private agreement, is dealt with separately in Chapter 5.

This picture of the farmed landscape as one of ancient enclosures is well-known and well-established. The area falls within what Oliver Rackham termed 'Ancient Countryside', which applied to much of upland England, the western regions, to the south east of England and parts of East Anglia. His description of Ancient Countryside, although generalised, is not unfamiliar to the landscape of the Lakeland valleys and rolling hills on the periphery of the central fells,

> "*The land of hamlets, of medieval farms in hollows of the hills, … of immense mileages of quiet minor roads, hollow-ways, and intricate footpaths …*"[1]

The origin and evolution of many of these field systems can be difficult to discern, and the impression is often given of a landscape little changed over time. Many are thought to date back at least to the late medieval period, but some may also be based on older, perhaps early medieval or even late prehistoric fields.[2] The evidence for such early origins is not obtainable through the HLC process, and would require detailed archaeological landscape research into earlier settlement patterns. Where there has been survey, earlier boundaries and field systems have been identified. During the survey of the Haweswater estate,[3] prehistoric field clearance cairnfields were recorded near Shap Blue Quarry, on the eastern boundary of the National Park, and the existing and former enclosures relating to Swindale Foot farm in Swindale east of Haweswater, were identified as medieval assarting with a farm established at its centre.[4] Further prehistoric field clearance cairns associated with relict field boundaries were also identified on Stockdale Moor.[5] The principal visible evidence for earlier field systems is limited to the discrete, although sometimes extensive, earthworks remains of boundaries and cairnfields to be found on the open moorland, but which generally do not seem to relate to existing field patterns. The quality of these earthworks is reflected in the large number of which are protected as scheduled ancient monuments.

[1] Williamson 2003, 1

[2] Rackham 1986, 161

[3] Belonging to North West Water, now United Utilities

[4] LUAU 1997a, 54, 56

[5] Quartermaine 1989

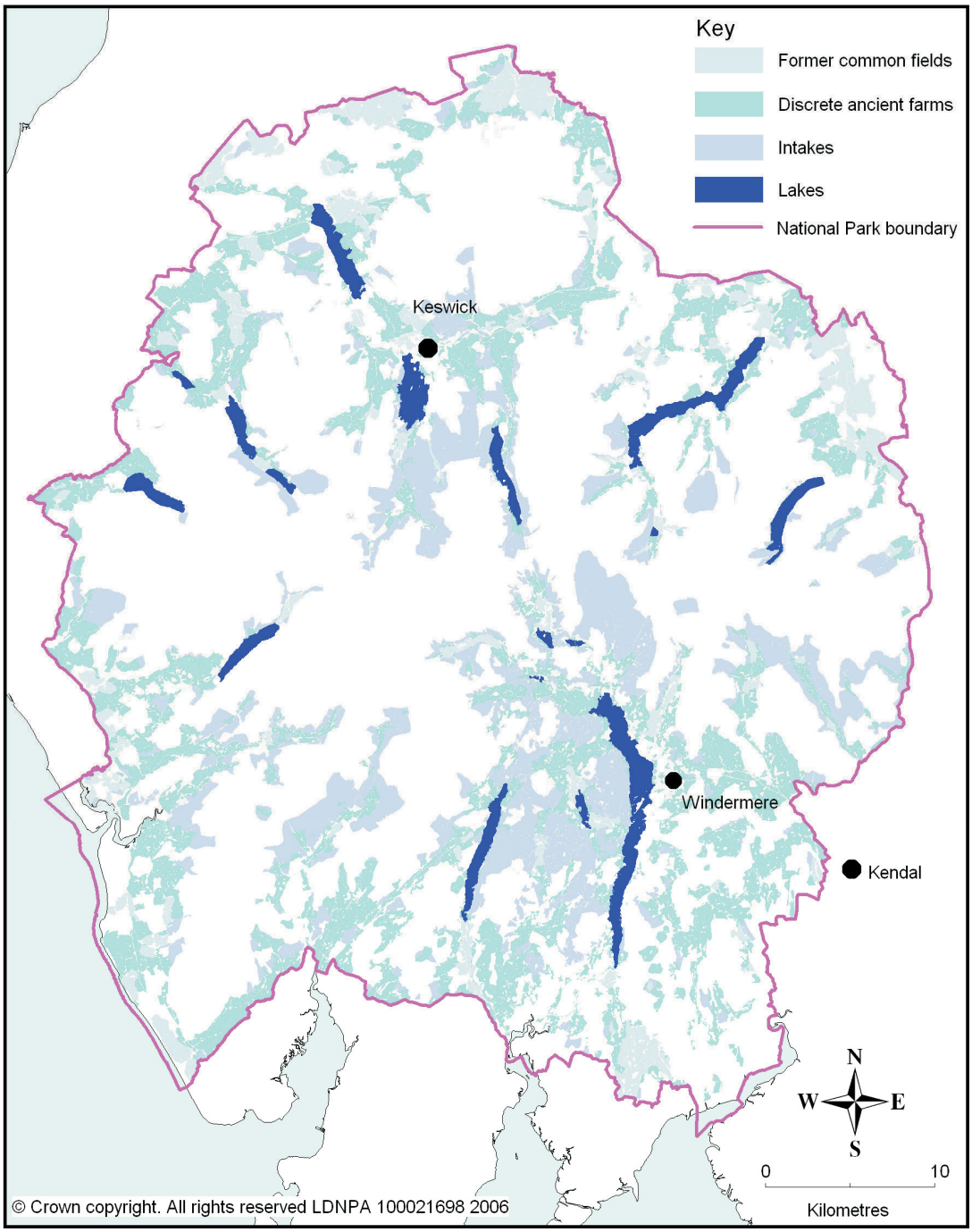

Figure 7: The distribution of ancient enclosure landscape types in the Lake District National Park

For the purposes of the HLC, existing areas of ancient enclosure were mapped according to a number of attributes, and levels of interpretation were applied, which attempted to define the likely origins and nature of the enclosed landscape. Broad date ranges, intended to provide a *terminus ante quem*, were attributed, and comparisons were made between the present-day field patterns and conditions with those on the first edition Ordnance Survey maps of *c* 1865. Ancient enclosures could not be divided into landscape types without examining them in relation to other features of the landscape. The origin and evolution of field patterns were assessed in relation to settlement pattern, roads, natural features such as, rivers and lakes and topography. Although also discussed separately, these attributes are considered here where they have helped shape existing field patterns. Overall, three main types of ancient enclosure were noted; discrete ancient farms, former common fields and intakes. In some areas, additional interpretation could be added from place-name and map evidence where enclosures had also served other functions. In particular, medieval deer parks and monastic precincts could sometimes be identified.

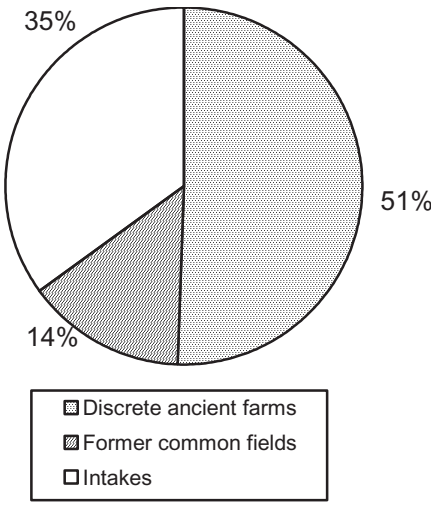

Figure 8: Proportion of anciently enclosed landscape types

Discrete Ancient Farms

Discrete ancient farms are the most common element of anciently enclosed land, covering 36,160 hectares, or 16% of the National Park, and comprising around 50% of all anciently enclosed land. They are typically farmsteads with their own set of easily identifiable enclosed fields, which would have been farmed individually either as freehold, or as copyhold or leasehold held off the manor. The fields usually form a sub-circular or irregular, cohesive unit centred on the farm buildings, and individual fields are often small and irregular or semi-regular in shape. The discrete ancient farm normally forms part of a dispersed settlement pattern, but they sometimes also occur in a mixed settlement pattern in association with nucleated settlements, usually towards the fringes of the agriculturally viable land.

Discrete ancient farms are found in all the lakeland valleys, commonly on the spring line along the valley sides. Outside the steep-sided valleys, discrete farms also occur on the more open, rolling landscapes on the edges of the moorlands and high fells. In these areas, the irregular fields can contrast strongly with the regimented lines of planned enclosure on the moors, and with the more regular layout of former common fields. A less-restricted topography sometimes allowed a more semi-regular field pattern with larger enclosures, for example on the western edge of the National Park, near Cleator Moor, where a series of individual farms lie between the fells and the River Ehen. A number of discrete ancient farms can be seen in the Lorton Valley, leading from Crummock Water northwards towards Cockermouth. Here, individual farms are situated along both sides of the valley, and towards the upper end of the valley, some of the farm names provide clues to the origins of the valley settlement. Half way along the valley, Scales Farm suggests that it originated as the

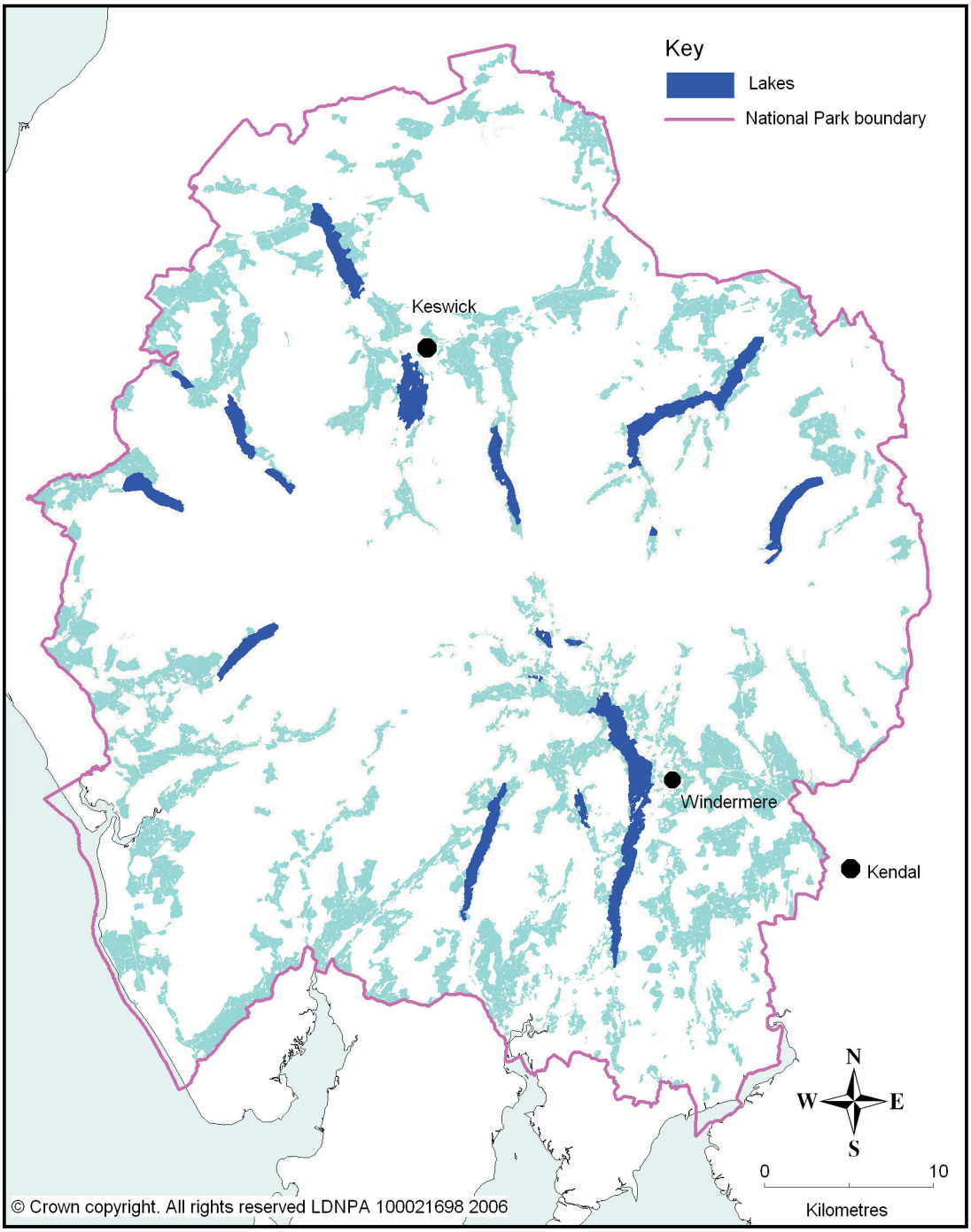

Figure 9: The distribution of discrete ancient farms in the Lake District National Park

summer pastures of a farm[6] on the lower-lying lands, whilst Brackenthwaite, Thackthwaite and Lanthwaite indicate farms established from enclosures from the waste. Here '*thwaite*', an Old Scandinavian word meaning clearing, is not intended to mean a clearing in woodland, but in land covered in vegetation used for thatching. '*Thack*' is an Old Norse word meaning thatch, and may in this case refer to bracken, heather, rush or reed.

[6] Old Norse word meaning a seasonally occupied hut; Cameron 1977, 77

Plate 10: A discrete ancient farm at Hallow Bank, Kentmere, now expanded into a number of houses and farms (© Egerton Lea Consultancy Ltd)

The origins of the discrete ancient farms date to before the late-eighteenth century, as many, if not most are shown on county-scale maps of the period.[7] In many cases, the farms probably date back to at least the late medieval period, although more accurate dating and the process of settlement origination would require detailed investigation of individual townships or manors. Within the HLC, mapping attributes allowed for a more detailed interpretation of settlement type, which included their likely origins. These included single ancient farms (here termed discrete ancient farms), ancient closes, assarts, demesne land, discrete individual squatter holdings and ring-fenced farm. In most areas, the map evidence did not allow such detailed levels of interpretation without the back-up of evidence from other documentary sources, and one or more interpretation could be ascribed to a particular holding. Consequently, the identifiable areas of discrete ancient farms originating as assarts, ring-fenced farms or other types were very small. Ring-fenced farms, for example, cover only 2,050 hectares across the whole of the National Park, whilst assarts cover 1,240 hectares and squatter settlement 95 hectares, which in total cover less than 1.5%.

The HLC mapping programme did not include the recording of boundary types, but ancient closes are now mostly either stone walls, hedges, or a mix of both. Many of the hedges have been planted on earthen or stone-fast banks, known as kests. It is difficult to date such boundaries, but it cannot be assumed that, even if the line of a boundary is ancient, that the nature of that boundary dates to the time of enclosure. Even those fields belonging to discrete ancient farms may not have had permanent boundaries, allowing them to be accessed for grazing by stock at certain times of year. Given the poor nature of much of the soil, communal stock grazing allowed the fields to be fertilized with much-needed manure. Many of the boundaries would have comprised earthen banks topped with 'dry hedges', that is vertical stakes interwoven with brushwood. These could be removed when necessary, but when in place would have had to be regularly maintained, and gaps filled to keep animals out at certain times of year. This process and the gathering the brushwood, known as haybote, and the maintenance of rights of way to bring the brushwood to

[7] Donald 1774; Jeffreys 1770; Yates 1786

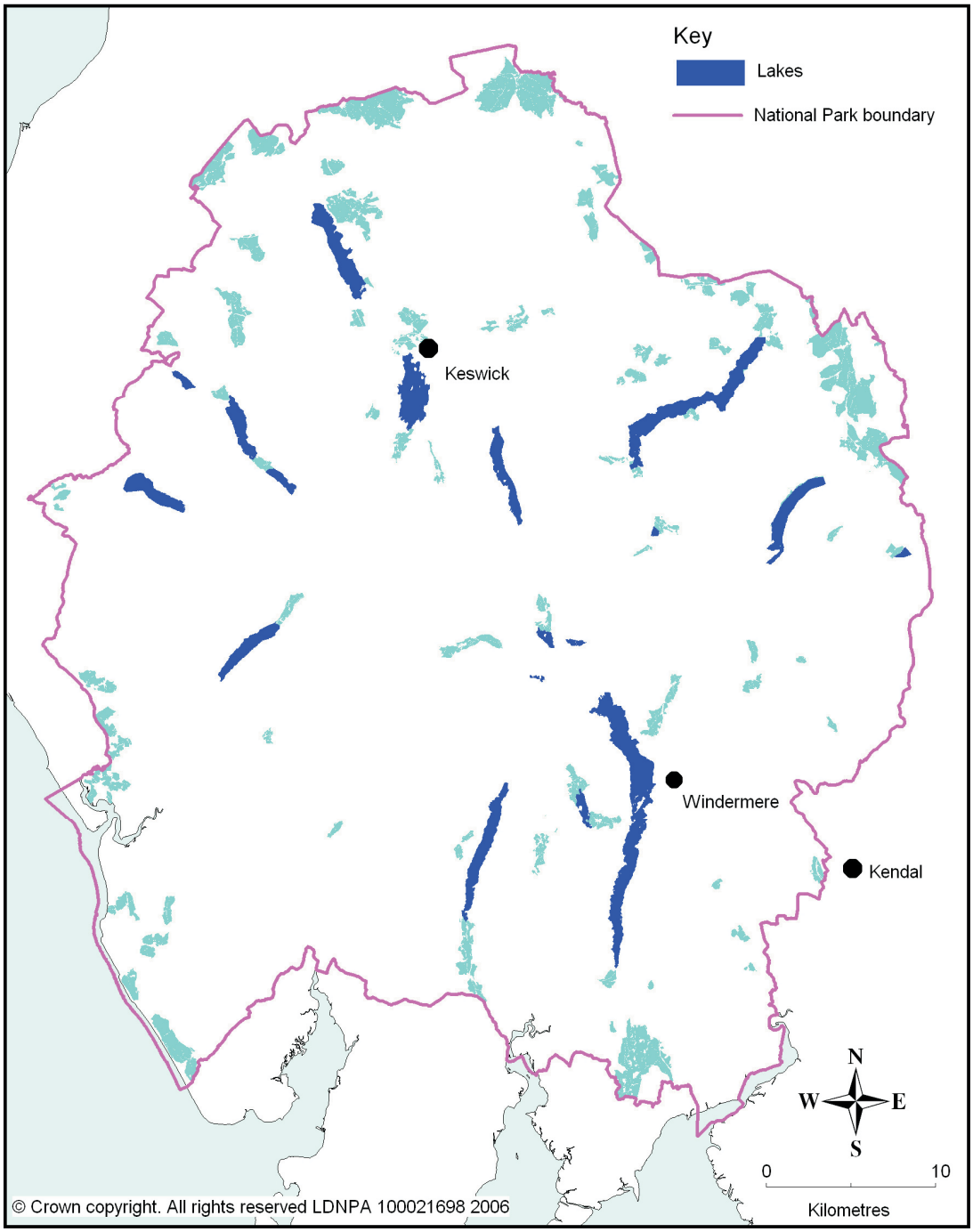

Figure 10: The distribution of former common fields in the Lake District National Park

the fields, was carefully controlled by manorial courts.[8] By the early post medieval period, there was a move to more permanent boundaries, as these were easier to maintain and make stock-proof.[9]

Former Common Fields

Ancient enclosures also include areas of former Common fields. Common field farming, whilst limited by the geology and topography of much of the National Park, was present across many of the townships and manors, including in narrow glaciated valleys of the high fells where it was contained within the ring garth, which separated the cultivated land from the common

[8] Winchester 2000, 62-3
[9] Winchester 2000, 65-6

wastes.[10] It provided farmers with shares in the arable fields and hay meadows, shared ploughing, and fertiliser from stock allowed to graze the fields following harvest or hay cutting. A feature of the common field system was the system of strictly controlled regulations, either through a manorial court or village assembly.[11] Areas of former common field were identified in the HLC mapping process primarily through field and boundary shape, where the boundaries of the regular or semi-regular shaped fields preserve the arataral (reversed-'S') curves of the former strips into which the fields were divided. Individual fields showing these attributes would not be enough on their own to indicate the presence of a former common field, but groups of such features, often sharing longer boundaries, and perhaps an identifiable block of fields representing the former extent of an common field, were evident in many cases. Although most individual fields with arataral boundaries may be the remains of former common fields, they may occasionally relate to cultivation within closes,[12] or fields improved and brought in from the waste by an individual farmer.

Plate 11: Great Langdale Valley, where the small, former common field survived into the nineteenth century, and was enclosure by Act of Parliament (© LDNPA)

In total, an area of 10,280 hectares, or 4.5% of the National Park, was identified as former common field, all of which had been anciently enclosed. There is little evidence, without carrying out more detailed research into individual townships or manors, of the processes involved in the enclosure of particular common fields, but the overall process was complete

[10] See below, the section on intakes
[11] Taylor 1987, 71 *et passim*
[12] Higham 2004, 65

largely before the large-scale planned enclosures of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The use of common fields would have provided a means of maximising the exploitation of the limited arable land. Their creation almost certainly took place in the medieval period, for example the Langdale ring garth was in existence by 1216,[13] indicating that the common fields were also extant, as the garth was used to protect crops from grazing stock.

The establishment of common fields was not necessarily a one-off process, however, and the establishment and reorganisation of common fields continued on into the post medieval period in many places, including in Cumberland.[14] Enclosure appears to have begun at an early date, and over half the area of former common field represents the enclosure of consolidated strips into blocks of land. It has been suggested that common fields were still in use, though dwindling, in the early nineteenth century,[15] though the evidence given, in the form of Wordsworth's description of common fields is unclear, and may represent a situation which had already largely ceased by his time. More recently, it has been established that most of the common fields across Cumbria had gone by the eighteenth century, enclosed piecemeal by agreement.[16] Only small areas of common field remained by the nineteenth century in Langdale and Kentmere, totalling 522 hectares, which were finally enclosed by parliamentary enclosure.[17] There are 4,658 hectares, or 45% of the total of former common field enclosures which were enclosed as fossilised strips, that is they were elongated fields with curving, parallel boundaries which partly preserved the former strips in the common fields. Although elements of fossilised strips can be seen in many of the former common fields, they are most evident on the fringes of the Lake District, for example in the areas bordering the lowlands of the Solway Plain. Here, the environment was more favourable to arable cultivation, and common fields were more extensive. In most cases, a process of consolidation and rationalisation of holdings in the former common field has led to the enclosure of blocks of strips, into more regular or semi-regular fields, with curving boundaries. Just over 7,000 hectares, or 68% of former common field was interpreted as former common field meadow land, either because of its location on wetter land in valley bottoms, or because it was marked as meadow. This makes up 45% of all recognisable meadow land, the rest being meadow closes.

Intakes

The areas of enclosed and cultivated land were separated from the unenclosed moorland and fell by a boundary known by a variety of names across Cumbria including the head-dyke, the ring garth, ring dyke, acre garth or acre dyke. It may have been one of the few permanent boundaries in the medieval period, and it marked the limit of enclosure and improvement, and separated it from the waste and common grazing land beyond. In some of the Lakeland valleys, the line of the head dyke can still be traced easily, for example in Wasdale and Langdale, but elsewhere its line has been obscured by a continuous process of progressively extending the cultivatable land. Intakes are enclosures of land taken from the unenclosed land beyond the ring garth. Known as intakes, later examples of these enclosures can appear little different in form from the Parliamentary or privately planned enclosures of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, but they tend to have been enclosed individually, or in small numbers, even when the

[13] See the Langdale case study
[14] Rackham 1986, 170
[15] Millward and Robinson 1970, 188-90
[16] Winchester 2000, 62
[17] See chapter on planned enclosure

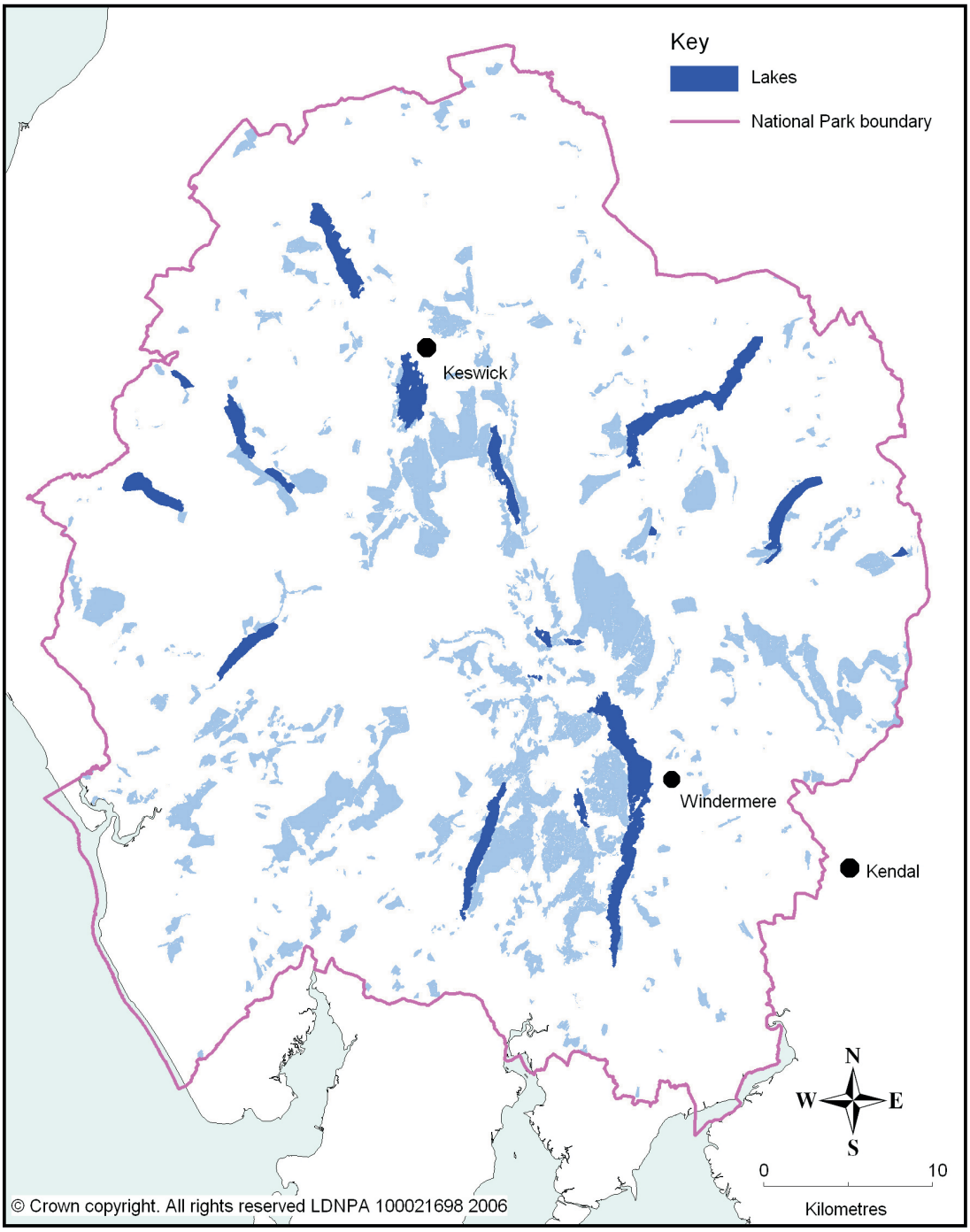

Figure 11: The distribution of intakes in the Lake District National Park

enclosure itself is extensive. They are also often clearly named as intakes on either or both the first edition and modern Ordnance Survey maps. Altogether, an area of almost 25,000 hectares, or 11% of the National Park, was enclosed as intakes within the National Park, located primarily on the lower fellsides but also on the moorlands in the southern half of the Lake District National Park.

The process of creating intakes began in the medieval period, often by individual tenants, who would have enclosed and improved small areas of the lower fellsides adjacent to their farms, in order to increase the size of their holdings. Enclosed fields close to their farms provided the tenants with secure areas of grazing for their stock. This was carried out on a small scale, and would have been done with the

Plate 12. Intakes on at Green Quarter in the Kentmere Valley. The enclosures are larger than the fields surrounding the farms, but are irregular in shape, reflecting the piecemeal and unplanned nature of their origins (© Egerton Lea Consultancy Ltd)

approval of the lord of the manor, who would have levied a fine through the manorial court – in effect a rent for the land enclosed.[18] This would have provided the manor with extra income without appreciably affecting the area of common grazing on the unenclosed land. In Langdale, survey work has identified extensive areas of sixteenth century intaking along the valley sides. These intakes created small and irregular enclosures which eventually obscured the original line of the ring garth.[19] Even well beyond the ring garth, intakes were made, as evidenced at Seathwaite where woodland was cleared in the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries, and the resultant clearing enclosed by a stone wall and fence.[20] Piecemeal enclosure of this nature went on intermittently throughout the post medieval period and although individual intakes were small, the overall result in some areas was a considerable quantity of extra land where common rights were extinguished and enclosed as individual holdings. Some manorial courts actually formulated agreements on the amount of land which could be enclosed. At Grasmere, for example, the rate was set at one acre for every 12d of rent paid, whilst in Troutbeck the amount related to common grazing rights, so that a tenant could enclose 2½ acres for every five cattlegates held, which resulted in the enclosure of around 100 acres by 1591[21] (see below). The extent of these piecemeal intakes can often be difficult to distinguish from the enclosures of discrete ancient farms, as they tend to be small in size, irregular or semi-regular in shape and adjacent to holdings. In some valleys, such as that of Troutbeck for example, the intakes form a continuous line of

[18] Winchester 2000, 69
[19] See the Langdale case study
[20] Wild *et al* 2001, 64-7

[21] Parsons 1993

Plate 13: Later intakes on the western side of the Kentmere valley © Egerton Lea Consultancy Ltd)

irregular enclosures above the head dyke.

A second form of intake was created though agreement by small groups of tenants. These were larger fellside enclosures, often regular or semi-regular in shape, and which were used as pasture, mainly for cattle. Although this type of intake was more common in the Central Pennines, where cattle and dairy farming was more widespread, particularly through the use of vaccaries or large-scale cattle ranches, it was also used in the Lake District. HLC identified a total of 2,633 hectares, or just over 1% of the National Park, as cow pastures, usually from place-names containing the words 'cow', 'bull', 'calf' or similar, though the true extent is probably much greater. Common rights within these enclosures were tightly regulated, each tenant involved having the right to graze a certain number of animals, known as the stint. The units making up a stint were generally known as cattlegates, so that one cattlegate gave the right to graze one horned beast. Cattlegates varied according to the animal involved, so that a horse might represent two cattlegates, whilst three young beasts might also make two cattlegates.[22] These pastures provided better grazing than the open fell, and confining stock to specific pastures allowed more controlled manuring, which continued to improve the grass sward. Beasts were kept out of the cow pastures in the Winter and Spring, allowing the grass to recover. At these times, they either grazed on the fell, on the small fields close to the farm or, once the arable or hay crop was taken, on the stubble of the common arable field. The process of creating cow pastures seems to date from the late medieval period, but continues throughout the post medieval period, and fits in with the process of creating private enclosures, where tenants could fold their own animals for grazing at other times, and increasing their individual control of animal movements and, in particular, the use of manure to fertilise and improve grazing quality.

A third type of intake was carried out by the lord of the manor, generally from the sixteenth century onwards. These were often large-scale intakes

[22] Winchester 2000, 71-2

for the purpose of creating private pastures, often as part of large stock farms run by the lord of the manor. These were often carried out without the agreement of tenants, who lost their access to graze animals and their common rights to the land. This happened both at Loweswater and Wasdale Head, where substantial areas of common grazing land was enclosed and removed from the tenants.[23] Although the areas of common were often extensive, these enclosures were usually large and would remove some of the better and more accessible areas of grazing land. Although they were often laid out with straight, or ruler-straight boundaries,

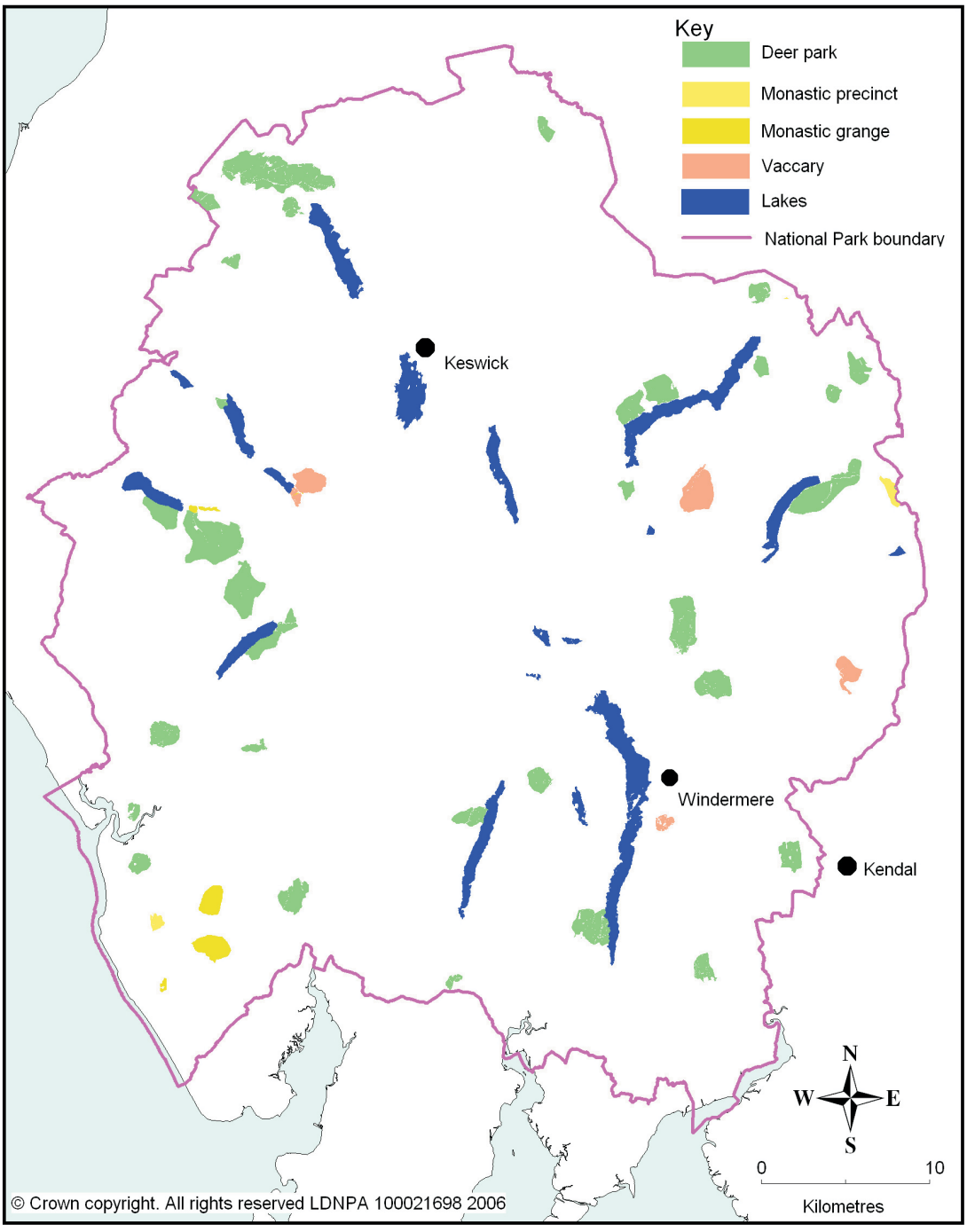

Figure 12: The distribution of monastic holdings, deer parks and vaccaries in the Lake District National Park

[23] Winchester 2000, 68

Plate 14: The upper end of Wetsleddale, which once formed part of the lands of Shap Abbey. The enclosure lying at the confluence of the two streams is recorded as a deer pound (© LDNPA)

they can be distinguished from areas of later planned enclosure by their often irregular, or semi-regular form, as opposed to the more 'mindless' layouts of Parliamentary enclosure, which often ignored topography completely.[24]

Monastic Precincts, Deer Parks, Granges and Vaccaries

Within the landscape of ancient enclosures, there are remnants of former land uses which are traceable through existing boundaries and from place-name evidence on modern and first edition Ordnance Survey maps. In particular, the boundaries of former deer parks and monastic precincts can be traced, and occasionally evidence for monastic granges survives in present-day field systems. Deer parks were the most easily identified from the mapping process, with a total of 31 recorded across the National Park. These range from Isel Park in the north, which covered over 900 hectares, to Low Park at Lowick Hall in the south, covering just over 40 hectares. Deer parks were enclosures used for the preservation of deer for hunting by the lord of the manor.[25] In Cumbria, many of the deer parks were established on the estates of the baronial overlords in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[26] Some were created within the extensive legal forests that extended over much of the Lake District fells, but some were enclosed on smaller estates. As well as hunting preserves for deer, the parks also provided a means of conserving woodland from the grazing of tenants' stock.[27] By the late medieval period, however, many of the deer parks had been divided and let to tenants, mostly for grazing, but in some cases also for the establishment of new holdings, and under HLC they have been classified as both deer parks and discrete ancient farms. At Loweswater, for example, the hamlets of High and Low Park probably evolved from the new holdings established following the leasing out of the park in the early fifteenth century.[28] Even when sub-divided and let to tenants in severalty, many of these former deer parks can still be

[24] Rackham 1986, 155-6

[25] Cantor 1982, 75
[26] Winchester 1987, 105
[27] Winchester 2000, 124
[28] Winchester 1987, 51

recognised by the original line of their outer boundary. In the case of deer parks on open moorland, they sometimes survive as distinct enclosures, such as Troutbeck Park. In effect, many of the deer park enclosures on the fell sides, having ceased to be used as hunting preserves, were used in the same way as intakes enclosed for the purposes of private grazing land.

There were three monastic foundations within the area of the National Park; Shap Abbey, Calder Abbey and Seaton Priory. Shap Abbey[29] was a Premonstratensian foundation, which moved to its site near Shap from its original location at Preston Patrick in 1199. It sits with the valley of the River Lowther, with the abbey buildings on the east bank, and its precinct stretching across the river and extending along the valley. The precinct is marked partly by the line of existing field boundaries, and partly by a system of earthen dykes, which also seems to be the remains of old enclosures within the precinct.[30] The Abbey precinct now forms part of a farm which sits beside the former Abbey buildings. Calder Abbey, founded as a Cistercian house in 1134,[31] also survives as a ruin in the grounds of a country house. The limits of its precinct are less distinct, although the land around the house became an ornamental park. Its lands appear to have been extensive within the parish of St Bridget Beckermet, and its core estate appears to have stretched from the coast to Cold Fell in the east.[32] This block of land, although cohesive, is not immediately apparent from modern map evidence, although the eastern end at Cold Fell is marked by a packhorse bridge called Monk's Bridge and a spring known as Friar's Well. Part of the boundary coincides with the parish boundary, which follows the Black Beck, but subsequent enclosure and division into different holdings has obscured the original extent of the estate. The extent of the third monastic holding is

Plate 15: Calder Abbey cloister © LDNPA)

[29] Scheduled ancient monument no 22495
[30] Scheduled ancient monument no 22497
[31] Scheduled ancient monument no Cu307; Lewis 1831, 38
[32] Winchester 1987, 152-8

easier to trace. Seaton Priory[33] was a small and poor foundation. It was a priory of Benedictine nuns, founded before 1354 and its precinct appears to have been preserved in a block of land defined by the A595 to the west, a track leading to Corney Hall to the north, and the Kinmont Beck and a tributary to the south and east. The fields within this block are slightly more regular and larger than the fields in the surrounding landscape. This suggests that they were enclosed at the same time, probably following the granting of the estate to Sir Henry Askew in 1542 following the Dissolution.[34] On the fells above the former priory is a large enclosure called Prior Park. This has been mapped as a possible grange, and may represent grazing land for the Priory. It possibly originated as a deer park, as suggested by the associated place-name Buckbarrow.

Monastic granges were much harder to distinguish through the HLC mapping process. Land was identified as former monastic granges at Black Combe, just south of Prior Park, and to the east of Ennerdale. In both cases these were probably areas of upland grazing for granges rather than farms. From the late medieval period, many granges were not farmed directly by the religious houses, but were leased out,[35] and so would have appear no different from any other tenanted farm. It is only rarely that former granges can be identified from maps alone with any certainty, such as Monk Foss Farm near Whitbeck south of Bootle, where not only the name indicates it origins as a grange, but also the presence of former fish ponds to the north of the farm.

Vaccaries too, are difficult to identify from modern map evidence, though they gave rise to some very characteristic landscape features and settlement forms. These are recognisable in the modern landscape in areas such as the Forest of Bowland, where their extensive estates and lack of later developments has helped to preserve their original field patterns.[36] The location of many vaccaries in the Lake District is known, and they were often sited at the head of a valley, where they could exploit the hay meadows on the valley floor, yet have easy access to fellside pastures.[37] Many were located within the legal forests, and were operated as demesne cattle farms by the feudal landlords, using the daleheads as hay meadows. Within the Lake District National Park there are a number of known examples, such as the daleheads above Buttermere, Ennerdale and Wastwater. The monastic houses, too, had vaccaries, for example Fountains Abbey has Stonethwaite in Borrowdale from at least 1302, whilst Furness Abbey had Brotherilkeld in Eskdale by 1292.[38] As with the monastic granges, in the later medieval period, many were let out to tenants, and are now indistinguishable from other discrete ancient farms.

The Attributes of Ancient Enclosure

The Cumbria HLC, unlike in some other counties,[39] did not measure enclosure size, although it did record their shape and possible origin, as well as the occurrence of boundary loss. Using the size ranges defined in the Lancashire HLC, however, it can be stated generally that most ancient enclosures within the National Park are small (less than four hectares) to medium (between four and 16 hectares) in size. Local research in Cumbria and elsewhere indicates that throughout the post-medieval period mean field sizes have increased, a process that accelerated in the later twentieth century.[40] Enclosure size is dictated at least in part by topography,

[33] Scheduled ancient monument no Cu300
[34] Lysons and Lysons 1816, 29
[35] Winchester 2000, 11
[36] R Newman 2006, 124-5
[37] Winchester 1987, 42-3
[38] Winchester 1987, 42
[39] For example Ede and Darlington 2002
[40] R Newman pers comm

with smaller fields clustered in the limited agricultural land in the valley bottoms of the high fells. Around the fringes of the park, where land is more rolling and less confined, fields tend to be medium-sized and more regular in shape. The establishment of field systems in these areas were less constrained by the physical land form, more agriculturally viable land was available, and fields could be laid out with less regard to ground conditions.

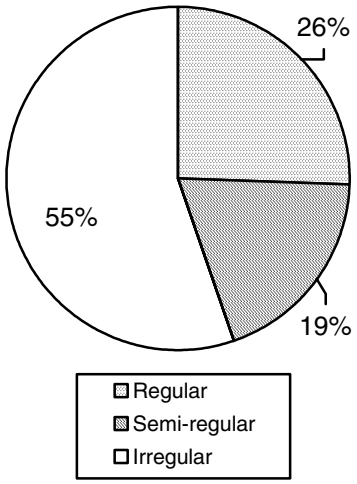

Figure 13: Comparison of types of ancient enclosure field shapes across the Lake District National Park. Well over half of all ancient enclosures are irregular, with concentrations in the valleys of the Central Fells

Field shape was classified into three types, and sub-divided according to boundary shapes. The first was rectangular, or sub-rectangular enclosures, the second was elongated enclosures (that is, fields with a length three times or greater than their width), and the third was irregularly shaped fields. Each was sub-divided according to boundary type, either wavy-edged, parallel and curving, straight, or ruler-straight. For the purposes of this report, the multiple variables are too complex to provide a meaningful picture of field morphology at the scale of the National Park, so they have been grouped into three broad types, as defined by Rackham,[41] regular, semi-regular and irregular. Broad grouping such as these have been used in other HLC programmes, for example Cheshire[42] and Lancashire,[43] as it allows an overview of field morphology at a large scale. The field types, listed below, are discussed where relevant under the sections on each ancient enclosure type.

- *Regular* implies some form of planning in its pattern, in which fields have been laid out according to a preconceived geometry. It includes the following HLC field attributes:
  - ❖ Rectangular or sub-rectangular enclosures with regular boundaries
  - ❖ Rectangular or sub-rectangular enclosures with ruler straight boundaries
  - ❖ Rectangular or sub-rectangular enclosures with ruler straight boundaries in a grid layout
  - ❖ Elongated enclosures with regular boundaries
  - ❖ Elongated enclosures with ruler straight boundaries
- *Semi-regular* implies that the geometry is more complex, or perhaps the layout is restricted by others factors such as topography. It includes the following HLC field attributes:
  - ❖ Rectangular or sub-rectangular enclosures with wavy-edged boundaries
  - ❖ Rectangular or sub-rectangular enclosures with parallel curving boundaries
  - ❖ Elongated enclosures with wavy-edged boundaries
  - ❖ Elongated enclosures with parallel curving boundaries
- *Irregular* assumes no attempt at geometry, resulting in an organic

[41] Rackham 1986, 155
[42] Cheshire County Council 2007
[43] Ede and Darlington 2002

system of field development. It includes the following HLC field attributes:

- ❖ Irregular enclosures with wavy-edged boundaries
- ❖ Irregular enclosures with regular boundaries
- ❖ Irregular enclosures with ruler-straight boundaries
- ❖ Irregular enclosures with regular and wavy-edged boundaries

The dominant field shape of the areas of ancient enclosure is irregular or semi-regular (see figure 9). The distribution pattern of irregular fields shows that they are concentrated in the steep-sided, narrow valleys of the Central Fells and the rock-dominated low fells of the southern Lake District. Conversely, the more regular fields are common on the northern and western sides of the National Park, where the topography is gentler, and there would have been fewer physical restrictions when field systems were established. These are also the areas where common field farming was more widespread, and this is reflected in a more regular field pattern, not just for former common fields, but also for discrete ancient farms. This distribution of different field shapes is more apparent when examined by each type of ancient enclosure. Intakes are largely dominated by irregular fields, which make up 70%, then semi-regular fields at 17%. This is clearly the result of both the topography, as most intakes were carried out on fell sides or rough moorland, and the piecemeal nature of the intaking process. The distribution of types of field shapes is much more even for discrete ancient farms. Although 50% of fields in discrete ancient farms are irregular; regular and semi-regular fields are evenly split. This probably reflects the widespread nature of this type of holding across both the Lakeland Fells and the more open country on the fringes of the Lake District. Only the former common fields are dominated

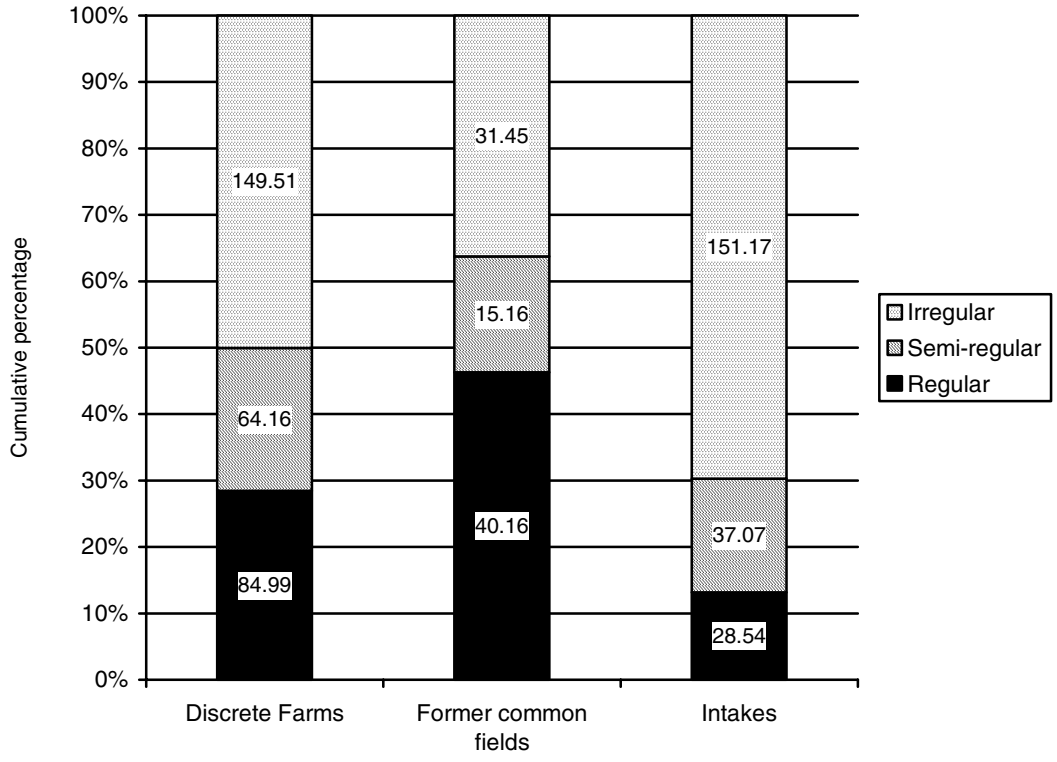

Figure 14: Field shapes of ancient enclosures according to enclosure type. The value of each category is given in hectares.

by regular field shapes, reflecting both the organised systems of furlongs and ploughlands necessary for common arable farming, and the fact that these fields tended to be laid out on the most favourable and relatively level land.

As well as field shape, a simple measure of boundary change was made during the mapping process, to try and assess rates of change from the Ordnance Survey first edition maps of the mid-nineteenth century. It not only looked at boundaries that had been removed, but also the construction of new boundaries to make new fields. Boundary change was divided into three categories;

1 little or no change
2 significant boundary change
3 new enclosure pattern
4 new enclosure pattern incorporating some existing boundaries
5 boundary change not relevant.

Category 5 was applied to enclosures which could still be mapped on modern maps, but which were no longer in use as agricultural land, for example where they were in use as caravan sites, or had been developed for a single dwelling. This formed only an insignificant percentage of the total area, and has been excluded from calculations. Categories 3 and 4 were also very small, and have been amalgamated. The following charts shows boundary change for each type of ancient enclosure, and the overall levels of boundary loss.

The figures recorded by the HLC for boundary loss or change seem to show relatively little change, at least from the mid-nineteenth century when the Ordnance Survey first edition map was published. In particular, intakes appear to have changed very little, with 86% unchanged or little changed from the mid-nineteenth century. Where change had taken place, it has tended to be piecemeal, rather than representing any major reorganisation of the field system. The largest area of alteration to intakes is to the north of Keswick, where later development, such as the expansion of the town and the construction of the bypass, has probably been the cause of some of the changes. The greatest change to boundaries, as might be expected, is to those areas of former common fields, as they lie in the areas of best available land and are most subject to modern agricultural improvement. This is also noticeable in the areas of discrete ancient farms on the periphery of the National Park, particularly to the north near Cockermouth and Keswick. This lack of change can be attributed to the largely marginal nature of much of the anciently enclosed farmland in the Lake District National Park. This is supported by the results from the Lancashire HLC, where there has been more change and development

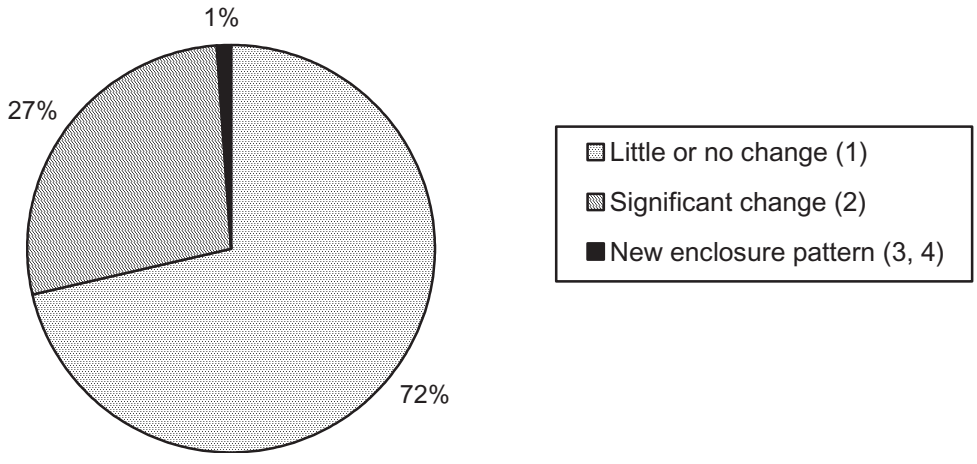

Figure 15: Average boundary change in all types of ancient enclosure

from the nineteenth century, where nearly 80% of the anciently enclosed land is considered to be mainly unchanged. It is in the modern enclosures on the drained mosslands of the Fylde and West Lancashire where the greatest change has occurred, with nearly 80% of enclosures greatly changed.[44]

The type of land surface recorded for most of the ancient enclosures was 'lowland enclosed'. This was based on information contained in the Phase 1 Habitat Survey. Although the Survey distinguished between improved pasture, unimproved pasture and arable, these were simplified for the purposes of the HLC. Land use comparisons were made with the first edition Ordnance Survey maps to show where surface type changes had occurred since the mid-nineteenth century. This inevitably limited the data available for comparison. In general, however, the vast majority of the Lake District National Park has an agricultural classification of 4 or 5, which means that land quality is either poor or very poor, and suitable for either grass crops (grade 4) or rough grazing (grades 4 and 5). Much of this relates to the large areas of fell and moorland, though many of the areas of ancient enclosure in the Lakeland valleys and the rolling hills of South Lakeland are also grade 4. This reflects the generally thin soils, poor drainage, adverse climate and steep slopes of the area. There are small areas of grade 3 land, on the west coast, on the southern edge of the Park in South Lakeland, around Bampton in the north east and on the north west fringes of the park on the lower lands near Cockermouth. Grade 3 land is considered moderate to good, with heavy clay soils suitable for improved grazing including dairy farming,[45] and these are the areas where former common fields were concentrated.

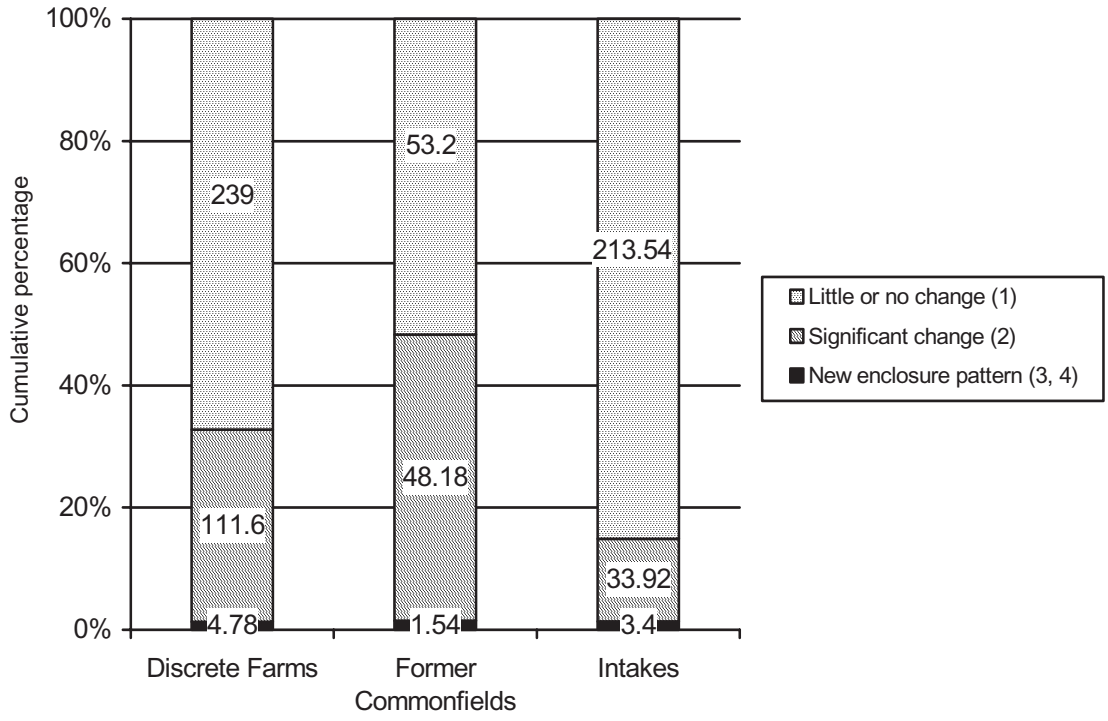

Figure 16: Boundary change in ancient enclosures according to enclosure type. The value of each category is given in hectares

[44] Ede and Darlington 2002, 92, 95

[45] Defra 2003; Defra 2006

The Landscape of Ancient Enclosures

The landscape of ancient enclosure within the Lake District National Park reflects an agrarian system that is fairly typical of the more marginal areas of the North West.[46] It is dominated by a dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and small hamlets, with a mixture of medium to high densities of settlement,[47] though not of population. This reflects the marginal nature of the land, and the concentration of settlement within the limited areas of viable agricultural land. Discrete ancient farms predominated across much of the National Park, surrounded by their own small enclosures, but most also having rights in the common arable fields. In the low lands on the fringes of the fells, better quality agricultural land was available, and individual holdings and the common fields tended to be larger and more regular in layout, indicating some degree of planning in the distribution of holdings within townships and manors. The same was probably true of the valleys in the Central Fells, although here holdings were smaller, and more irregular, and often distributed along the spring lines of the valleys, between the better agricultural land in the valley bottoms and the common grazing on the fellsides. Most of these farms pre-date the late eighteenth century, but it is not possible to say how many are of medieval origin. What is also difficult to ascertain from the HLC mapping is the degree of settlement expansion. Intakes outside the ring garth are usually evident, but new fields and farms within or just outside the ring garth cannot always be distinguished from older farms, and sometimes obscure the line of the ring garth. The presence of 'scale' place-names or clearance names, such as 'thwaite', are an indication of seasonal settlements becoming permanent or of settlement expansion into the waste.

The traditional model of common field farming, with two to three common fields established in the medieval period and cropped in rotation, is inappropriate for this area and, as in many other places in the North West, the picture is much more complex.[48] The limited amount of available agricultural land, the topography, and poor soils and drainage would always restrict the amount of arable cultivation. This meant that the upland farming economy was based on pastoralism, with arable restricted largely to a subsistence level, producing oats and barley.[49] One of the main aims of the farming regime was to produce enough fodder to support the stock. As well as grazing on the common wastes, the stock had access to the stubble on the common arable and meadow fields following harvest. The meadows provided a valuable source of hay which supplemented bracken as Winter feed. The meadows had to be conserved across the growing season to provide a crop of hay in the early Summer, and then grazing in the late Summer and early Autumn. The importance of stock rearing to the economy is reflected in the evolution of the enclosed landscape from the late medieval period onwards. Intakes provided individual farmers with extra land where they could fold animals at certain times of the year, giving them greater control over stock movement. Control over animal movements allowed farmers to manage the fertilisation of the fields through manuring, which helped land improvement. The growing areas of intakes resulted in a more sophisticated system of grazing regimes, combining common rights with individual holdings.

[46] Roberts and Wrathmell 2002, 158
[47] Roberts and Wrathmell 1998, 9
[48] Williamson 2003, 21-3
[49] Winchester 2000, 18

The development of this pastoral farming landscape was, in part, assisted by the nature of much of the landholding in the Lake District, in particular the rise of the 'statesmen' farmers. Large areas of land were held through customary tenure from the lord of the manor. This meant that tenants held their land through copyhold, which gave them security of tenure in exchange for various obligations. The obligations began as promises of service or a payment in kind, but became a fixed money rent.[50] By the sixteenth century, this sum was often a nominal one. In return, the tenants could transfer their holdings as they wished, and those inheriting the land took over the copyhold in return for a payment on entering into the agreement. In effect, the security of tenure was similar to that of a freeholder, and by the sixteenth century many of these tenants had formed a rural middle class of yeomen farmers, known as 'statesmen'. The move to establish permanent boundaries from the sixteenth century, and the early enclosure of the arable fields may be a reflection of this yeoman class, as well as a mark of the increasing sophistication of pastoral farming, where arable crops played a minor role, and the key objective was to control the fertility of the fields producing fodder for the animals.

The Changing Countryside

Enclosed farmland is one of the dominant, largely unchanged landscape types in the Lake District National Park and its contribution to the National Park's character, therefore, is significant. It was through farming that this landscape was created and through farming that this landscape type must be maintained. However farming is changing. The economic difficulties of farming have led to farms being amalgamated, with a consequent risk of character change

Plate 16: The gappy hedgerow in the foreground shows signs of having once been maintained using a traditional hedge laying technique, while the hedgerow in the middle distance appears to have been deliberately removed (© Archaeo-Environment Ltd)

in their associated field systems. Studies elsewhere in the country, however, have demonstrated that this process of increasing farm size is a long-term historical trend, and there is no reason to assume that modern amalgamations exist outside this trend.[51] In most cases, increasing farm size seems to be related to increasing field size, though this does not seem to be the case in the Lake District National Park. Farmhouses are being sold, often to second home owners. Until recently, cattle rearing has been in decline, but with the lifting of the European BSE export restrictions in May 2006, this situation will improve. Before the foot and mouth epidemic of

Plate 17: A well maintained hedgerow which shows signs of having been laid according to traditional management practice (© Archaeo-Environment Ltd)

[50] Winchester 1987, 62 Millward and Robinson 1970, 180

[51] Newman 2005, 210

2001, there was a high incidence of over-grazing because of high sheep stocking levels. Foot and mouth ended this trend, and subsequent changes to agricultural subsidies, favouring environmentally sensitive farming practices, are likely to prevent further over-grazing. The management implications of over-grazing are still not clearly understood and needs to be monitored. In recognition of the importance of farming to the landscape, the Lake District National Park Authority's Management Plan has a number of policies which seek to support the local farming economy and thus maintain the farming landscape.[52] Supporting the upland farming economy is also a key driver behind the initiative to inscribe the Lake District as a World Heritage Site. Changes in land management, if they are to maintain the character of enclosed land, need to ensure that the scale of enclosure and the form of boundary are maintained. This does not need to result in a fossilization of the field system, but a recognition that its attributes consist of small to medium enclosures with a locally distinctive boundary. Within this framework, minor shifts in boundaries are possible.

HLC concentrates on field shape and is unable to provide information on boundary condition without further database enhancement, but it is clear from fieldwork associated with the case studies (see Derwent Water) that hedgerows are not being adequately maintained in some areas of the Lake District National Park. An agricultural writer of the first century BC considered that hedgerows "…*cannot be destroyed, unless you want to dig it up by the roots. There is no doubt that after fire damage it grows again better than before*".[53] It perhaps required another 2000 years before the destructive powers of neglect were fully appreciated. The maintenance of such hedgerows must be a priority (but not by fire!) if this landscape type, and much of the character of the National Park, is to be maintained. Hedge laying (or coppicing) is essential to the long term survival of hedgerows. When used in conjunction with an appropriate trimming regime hedges can remain functional indefinitely. It also offers advantages over fencing beyond the contribution it makes towards landscape character. It offers better shelter for stock and cover for wildlife and game. The form of laying used to maintain hedgerows is a locally distinctive feature and this needs to be reflected in future management prescriptions. The typical Cumbrian style of hedge laying is the "hard-laying" technique which was used where fields alternated between arable and pasture. However "standard" hedge laying is more often

Plates 18 and 19: The deer park wall at Wharton just outside the Lake District National Park (top) has a quite different construction technique to 18-19th century enclosure walls with through stones (© Archaeo-Environment Ltd)

[52] LDNPA 2004, 13, 31
[53] Columella quoted in Rackham 1986, 184

Plate 20: Shard fencing, made of simple upright stone slabs (© LDNPA)

used in cattle grazing areas.[54] While new or newly laid hedgerows are being established, temporary fencing will have to be used, but this need not detract from the landscape character, providing that it is removed once the hedgerow is established. Replanting should take place along the original boundary or kest and the mix of species should reflect the local mixes, for example in Great Langdale hedges contain roughly 60% hawthorn and 10% blackthorn with the remaining percentage made up from holly, oak, hazel, alder, ash and bird cherry. This mixture appears to give a good density for stock proofing, while also allowing a good variety of standard trees to become established.[55] HLC could potentially be used to assess applications under the Hedgerow Regulations by providing an historic context and where possible dating evidence. It could also help land managers assess the contribution a hedgerow makes to landscape character, but this would require further enhancement with additional data on boundary composition.

The construction of drystone walls is also locally distinctive and management prescriptions should seek to maintain walls according to their local type, including the local source of stone. In many areas of the Lake District National Park a number of different stone wall types might be found reflecting a tradition of walling over many centuries. For example, in the Hawkshead, Coniston and Ambleside areas shards fences are used which consist of large over-lapping slates set upright in the ground. Their distribution relates to the availability of the large slab-like rock of the Coniston and Brathay Flags and tends to be used in areas of cattle grazing. Sheep are nimble enough to escape the shard walls. Frost and soil creep tends to push over shards to form gaps and they generally need more upkeep than dry-stone walls.[56] Later nineteenth century walls often have through-stones in their construction and will make use of stone that is partially dressed. Earlier walls may rely on rubble, often with large boulders in the foundations, and will not have through stones or stone caps. The design of repair areas or

Plates 21 and 22: Hog holes (top) and buttresses all contribute to historic character (© Archaeo-Environment Ltd)

[54] Durham County Council 2000 Technical Advice Sheet 1

[55] Lund and Southwell 2002, 60

[56] Lund and Southwell 2002, 47

new walls should seek to reflect the appropriate design and scale of existing walls. A number of the valleys in the central fells area of the Lake District have extant evidence of the ring garth which ran around the valley bottom and separated common land from waste. Maintenance work to field boundaries which may have formed part of the ring garth should be approved by the National Park (or if appropriate the National Trust) archaeologist.

The presence of wall furniture such as gate stoops, stiles, smoots and hog holes are an important part of the historic character of the field system and should be retained. The current Lake District National Park Authority project 'Miles Without Stiles' is leading to the removal of pinch stiles and to a consequent loss of historic character. The removal of these historic assets should be retained wherever possible.

Ancient enclosures often contain a variety of broadly contemporary historic features which may not currently be recorded on either the HLC database or the Historic Environment Record. Historic character is a combination of different, often quite small, historic features and until these are all recorded, it will not be possible to adequately monitor change. Hollow-ways, small clusters of ornamental trees, milk churn stands and finger posts often fall out of the data capture process for both HLC and the HER and this needs to be remedied before the real historic character can be managed. This would require considerable investment in time, but individual projects and desk top assessments or agri-environment surveys should all seek to enhance the existing records for specific areas so that a base line of what survives today can be the start of a longer process of informed management.

The Lake District National Park Management Plan already recognises the importance of distinctive character in individual places and the importance

Plate 23: HLC is not designed to capture the holloway, the ancient oak and the lynchets. In some cases lynchets will be captured by the HER, but not necessarily the ancient oak. The two data sets need to be combined so that a full assessment of historic character can be obtained and additional enhancement is required of both data sets in order to capture the full range of features which exist in ancient enclosures and which contribute towards historic character (© Archaeo-Environment Ltd)

of conserving field boundaries. By combining HLC with other databases including the HER and the Environmentally Sensitive Area Landscape Assessment,[57] more information on the character of the Lakes is now available to make informed decisions about appropriate management. HLC can be used as a framework for further research into this landscape type. Elsewhere in the country,[58] ancient enclosures often incorporate evidence of earlier enclosures, occasionally stretching as far back in time as prehistory. To what extent might the Lake District ancient enclosures have their origins in prehistory? Research can be conducted as part of wider research projects, or linear development proposals to underground services can be used to examine field boundaries from different areas in order to establish their origins.

Plate 24: The character of field patterns can be altered as boundaries are altered. Here, a former intake boundary survives only as a line of rubble, whilst a new fence marks the boundary of a larger, more regular field (© Egerton Lea Consultancy Ltd)

Shaping the Future: Recommendations

- Encourage the retention of smaller, irregular fields and the maintenance of the boundaries
- Encourage the retention of "field furniture" such as walls, hedges, ditches, gateposts, smoots, hog holes and stone stiles that contribute towards local distinctiveness.
- Proposals to alter field boundaries should be assessed against the need to preserve the overall field character and any landscape features within them. HLC will be used to assess applications under the Hedgerow Regulations.
- Where hedgerows still form the boundary of functioning fields they should be maintained using the appropriate laying technique. Hedgerows should be replanted on the existing kest, or hedge bank, wherever possible and the mix of species should reflect traditional mixes.
- Maintenance or changes to the ring garth in the valleys of the central fells should be approved by the National Park archaeologist.
- Further information and surveys are required to understand this HLC type, its origins and development. In particular assessments are needed to map earlier processes of land use from prehistoric times, and to enhance those landscape features currently outside the scope of HLC including farm buildings, earthwork and buried boundaries and historic routeways, the interrelationship of these elements. Future enhancement or land management surveys also need to capture data on small features such as stiles, milk churn stands, mounting blocks, bridges, ancient trees and small areas of ornamental planting. This information can then be used to enhance HLC, guide future management proposals and

[57] MAFF 1997
[58] Cornwall Archaeological Unit 1998, 60

appropriate conservation measures and to prioritise resources.

- Conserve and enhance parkland boundaries and key relict parkland features that provide time depth within the modern landscape. Former parkland features, whether functional (deer-leaps, icehouses, lodges), semi-natural (woodland shelterbelts, planted avenues, specimen trees, lakes) and/or ornamental (follies, eye-catchers), particularly where they add group value by association with one another and with former boundaries should be enhanced.
- Conserve the distinctive pattern of early enclosure of upland moor as typified by the presence of small irregular intakes, bounded by stone walling, outgangs, and isolated farmsteads or hamlets.
- Conserve vaccary landscapes including boundaries (both the vaccary extent where it survives and, more commonly, the 'infield' vaccary areas), buildings associated with the management of the vaccary and features associated with the movement of cattle both within (stock funnels) and outside of (droveways) the discrete vaccary area. Additional enhancement of HLC is required to ensure better coverage of vaccary distribution, possibly through a survey project.
- Conserve and enhance features associated with meadow grazing, in particular property divisions which reflect the different courses of river, marker stones and other boundary markers reflecting the division of grazing rights, and any evidence for water meadows. Areas of meadow grazing also correspond with areas of alluvial cover and may contain buried land surfaces of high archaeological potential, evidence for riverside activity (such as mills and leats), bridges and crossing points.
- Pasture has been the dominant land use throughout much of the Lake District, but many more fields were under plough in the past than there are today. Anciently enclosed fields should remain predominantly pasture, but in some areas of the National Park, arable use was more extensive, particularly in the common fields. In some areas a partial reversion to arable would not necessarily result in a detrimental change of character.
- Where a stone field boundary is redundant it may be acceptable to retain the footings and lower courses of stone, while the higher courses can be quarried to repair other walls. However each case should be assessed on its individual merits.