# CHAPTER 5. PLANNED ENCLOSURE

## Introduction

Planned enclosure is one of the most easily recognisable landscape types mapped by the HLC. The processes behind planned enclosure are well understood and have been studied in some detail, both in the uplands[1] and in the lowland mosses.[2] A significant proportion of the enclosed landscape of the Lake District was enclosed in this way, resulting in fields laid out according to a preconceived geometry usually by a professional surveyor. Because the resultant field patterns often ignore topography or pre-existing boundary patterns planned enclosures sometimes have been termed 'mindless' systems.[3] For the purposes of mapping in the HLC programme, planned enclosures were recorded where they demonstrated physical evidence of systematic enclosure, with the laying out of regular plots, even when the bounds of newly enclosed areas were irregular where they met anciently enclosed land. In total, an area of around 48,000 hectares of land within the National Park was enclosed under planned systems, comprising 41% of all enclosed land.

The process of planned enclosures affected both lowland and upland areas across the country. Although in some areas of the country it was used for the large-scale enclosure of commonfield arable fields,[4] by far the greater part was made up of the enclosure of the common wastes. This was the case particularly in the north of England where large areas of the moorlands were transformed[5] and within the area of the Lake District National Park planned enclosure was almost entirely made up of former common waste. Given the dominance of moorland and fell within the National Park, inevitably most planned enclosure took place in the uplands, though there were areas of lowland moss on the periphery of the National Park which were also enclosed at this time. Although forming only a small proportion of common waste within the National Park, the lowland mosses were an important resource, used for grazing and as a source of fuel and thatch. Turbary rights, or the cutting of peat for fuel, was an important common right wherever peat was available, but was a particular feature of the lowland mosses. The continued demand for peat was reflected in the parcels of land allotted by the enclosure process, leading in places to the formation of a distinctive enclosure pattern of long narrow strips. The drainage and enclosure of lowland mosses was a continual, piecemeal process from the Middle Ages, reaching a peak in the nineteenth century, when the enclosure of many mosses was completed.

## The Background to Planned Enclosure

The act of enclosing areas of common waste had been on going from the medieval period, albeit on a piecemeal basis. In the common arable fields of the Lake District National Park this process was almost complete by the mid-eighteenth century, and enclosure on the moorlands and fells had increased the area of enclosed land by over 50% by the same period.[6] The enclosure of land involved two main elements; the extinguishing of common rights from an area of land, and the demarcating of that land by a physical boundary, but the difference

[1] Whyte 2003
[2] Hodgkinson *et al* 2000
[3] Rackham 1986, 155-6, who defines mindless field systems as being laid out without any regard to terrain
[4] Yelling 1977
[5] Taylor 1987, 141

[6] See the chapter on anciently enclosed land, in particular the section on intakes

between the planned enclosures of the mid-eighteenth century onwards, and the piecemeal enclosure and intakes which had gone before, was the scale and the manner in which it was carried out. Previously, enclosure had been undertaken through agreement between an individual, or a small group of individuals, and the manor court. The agreement would be recorded as a fine or rent for the land in the manorial court roll, but the area enclosed would not necessarily be strictly defined or described. With planned enclosure, written agreements were drawn up, and allotments of land made to individuals.

Some enclosure by private agreement can also be considered to be planned enclosure, where it was carried out on a large enough scale to warrant the services of a surveyor as reflected in the resultant straight-sided and regular field pattern. Thus a category of privately planned enclosure was included in the HLC mapping process. Such general enclosure by agreement can be difficult to determine as documentary evidence is often fragmentary or unreliable, and can refer to different types of enclosure,[7] such as intaking. The limited range of documentary sources available to the HLC mapping process made the process of recording privately planned enclosure more difficult. Thus, privately planned enclosure could be recognised for only a small proportion of all planned enclosures, comprising 3,295 hectares, or 7%, of planned enclosure in the uplands. Much of this lay in the former mosses around Greenodd, Lindale and the low coastal mosses around Whitbeck south of Bootle. The largest single area of privately planned enclosure was on the northern edge of the Park, including the enclosure of the park land for Isel Hall, but also the lowland mosses within the area of Isel Old Park. In this instance, the planned enclosures had clearly been carried out on a large area of demesne land, a former deer park, by the landowner, and thus did not need the agreement of tenants. The origins of the remaining areas of planned enclosures, covering 14% of the total, could not be determined from the available map evidence, and was thus categorised as planned enclosure of uncertain origin.[8] Much of this planned enclosure of unknown type is now under modern forestry plantation, for example around Meathop and Lindale, and Nether Wasdale, or in the former county of Cumberland. The largest single area of unknown planned enclosure was around the Shap Fells, where there are large areas of known former parliamentary enclosures, interspersed with areas of planned enclosure not covered by parliamentary enclosure awards. Although categorised as unknown, it could be assumed that the areas of unknown planned enclosure were actually enclosed privately.

It was normal for planned enclosure to be carried out under the supervision of groups of local men with no direct interest in the land, but who were meant to act impartially. Where enclosure was carried out by Act of Parliament, these arbiters became known as commissioners.[9] The most common form of planned enclosure was by act of Parliament, comprising just under 36,000 hectares, or 79%, of all planned enclosures in the National Park. In the eighteenth century, landowners who wished to enclose common land had to petition Parliament for a private act. This was

[7] Yelling 1977, 16-17

[8] Information was based on Professor Ian Whyte's research, which covered Westmorland and Lancashire-over-Sands. Areas of unknown planned enclosure in those counties, therefore, are likely to have been privately enclosed. In Cumberland, there was less readily available information in secondary sources, thus unknown types of planned enclosure could be either parliamentary or privately planned.

[9] Whyte 2003, 9

expensive and time-consuming, so in 1801 a General Enclosure Act was passed which provided standard clauses which could be used by landowners when drawing up private acts. Most planned enclosure took place after the passing of this act, but it was not until 1836 that an act was passed which allowed enclosure to take place without a private act of Parliament, as long as two-thirds of the proprietors[10] were in agreement. This act only covered open field arable, however, and it was not until 1840 that the act was extended to include common waste. This was followed, in 1845, by the establishment of a standing committee for enclosure in London, who appointed local commissioners or valuers to undertake the work.[11]

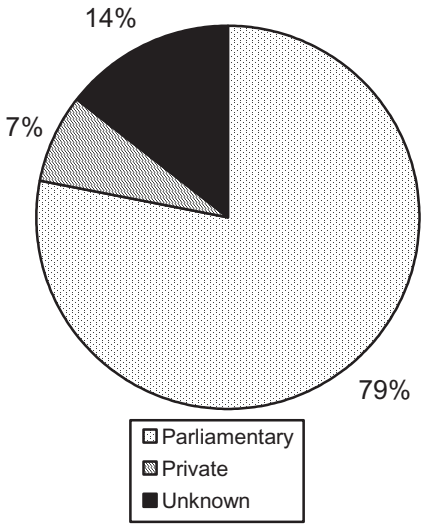


*Figure 17: Planned enclosure by type in the Lake District National Park*

Within the HLC programme, the dating of planned enclosures was very broad. Although exact dates are available for most Parliamentary enclosures, by far the largest category of planned enclosure, it was not possible to examine individual awards as part of the project. Within the Lake District National Park, two thirds of planned enclosures had taken place by the mid-nineteenth century, from evidence contained in the Ordnance Survey maps of the 1860s, with small areas having been enclosed by the late eighteenth century. Amongst the earliest areas of planned enclosures was part of Blindcrake, where the demesne land belonging to Isel Hall, including the former medieval deer park, had been enclosed in the eighteenth century. As the area was demesne land, it was the subject of a private agreement, and the HLC mapping process indicates that areas enclosed by private agreement tended to be enclosed slightly earlier. Three quarters of private agreements had been carried out by the mid-nineteenth century with over 20% undertaken in the eighteenth century. This trend might be expected, as the later parliamentary acts removed the need for private agreements. A few significant areas were not enclosed until the later nineteenth century, that is enclosures were not extant on the first edition Ordnance Survey maps, but are depicted on the second edition Ordnance Survey maps of *c* 1900. Apart from small areas in South Lakeland and near Gosforth on the west coast, later enclosure was confined to a large area covering the Shap Fells and westward to High Street, a large block of land between Ennerdale and Loweswater, and a smaller area on the northern edge of the Lake District National Park at Threlkeld.

It has been argued that whilst there was organised resistance to the process of enclosure elsewhere in the country, this was largely absent in Cumbria.[12] Indeed, documentary evidence indicates that there was an increasing interest in enclosing the commons from the mid-eighteenth century, and that interest often came from customary tenants rather than landowners.[13] The process of enclosure was aided by the small population and large areas of available

[10] by value of property
[11] Whyte 2003, 16-17
[12] Searle 1995
[13] Whyte 2003, 18

upland grazing land, which would have limited competition for land.[14] The nature of landholding in the county was also a factor, as well as Cumbria's involvement in the national livestock markets and the resulting pressures on the commons and wastes through overstocking and overgrazing. Many of those with ownership rights to the common wastes were customary tenants, some of whom were the yeoman farmers known as statesmen,[15] most, however were small peasant farmers. The absolute rights which came with customary tenancies limited the opportunities available to the lords of the manors to capitalise on the national livestock markets.[16] It was essential, therefore, to free the wastes from the tightly regulated system of common rights, and this was done in conjunction with the enfranchisement of the customary tenants, who acquired the freehold of their tenements. As well as providing the former tenants with the freehold of their properties, it also allowed them to acquire shares of the newly enclosed land, and removed the problems of overgrazing. To be able to carry this through, the lords of the manor had to have the consensus of the majority of their tenants in order to extinguish the customary tenancies and to replace them with freeholds.

The process of planned enclosure was part of the long evolution of agricultural improvements, in crops, land drainage and livestock breeding, which had become widespread by the late eighteenth century.[17] By the mid-eighteenth century most of the viable cultivatable agricultural land in the north west of England had already been improved and enclosed, so this next stage of enclosure was concentrated on the most marginal land which was largely used for extensive grazing. As a result, the usual aim was to produce better quality pasture, rather than increasing the areas of arable land. In certain times, however, for example during the Napoleonic Wars when the demand for grain increased greatly, even poor quality land was improved and brought into cultivation.[18] After a few years these areas tended to revert back to pasture, as the land was too poor to sustain an arable regime, and when

*Plate 25: Improved pasture land within parliamentary enclosures near Crook (© Egerton Lea Consultancy Ltd)*

[14] Millward and Robinson 1970, 194
[15] Millward and Robinson 1970, 180
[16] Searle 1995, 249
[17] Taylor 1987, 139
[18] Taylor 1987, 143; Whyte 2003, 26

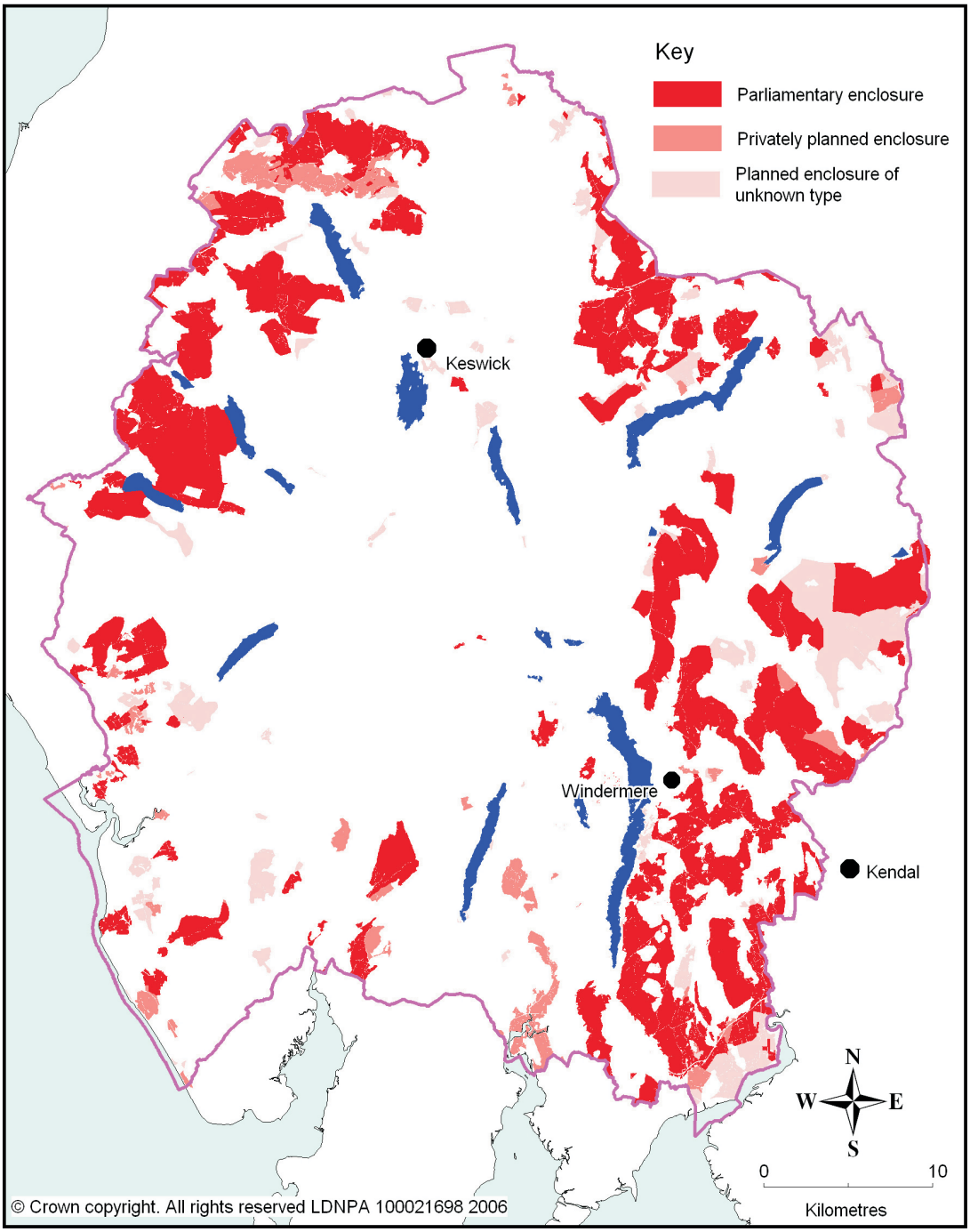


*Figure 18: The distribution of planned enclosures in the Lake District National Park*

demand fell they became uneconomic. Traces of cultivation can often still be seen in these fields, in the form of ridge and furrow. This differs from the more traditional form of ridge and furrow, in that it is usually narrower, only a few centimetres high, and in straight lines. Improvement of the newly enclosed fields was achieved through the clearance and burning of moorland, liming, ploughing and reseeding with grass. In more poorly drained areas, under drainage was installed. At first this was by the construction of stone- and brushwood-filled drains, which were then covered in soil, but with the introduction of cheap, mass-produced ceramic goods in the mid nineteenth century, better drainage was achieved by the installation of pipes.[19] Drainage of this

[19] Taylor 1987, 149-50

kind can be traced in improved fields, where the arrangement of drains often leaves a characteristic herring-bone pattern, either as marks in the grass, as shallow earthwork or by the lines of rushes where drainage has failed.

## The Attributes of Planned Enclosure

### Distribution

The vast majority of land subject to planned enclosure in the Lake District National Park was upland. Out of a total area of 47,950 hectares of planned enclosures within the National Park, just over 44,000 hectares, or 92% can be considered upland, that is it lay outside the Lakeland valleys, the better agricultural land and the lowland mosses on the fringes of the National Park. This includes not only the fells and higher moors, but also the low rolling commons with poor soils and numerous rocky outcrops in the south east of the Park between Kendal and Coniston. The remaining 8% of planned enclosures lay either within the areas of cultivatable land or in common waste on wetland.

A very small proportion of planned enclosure was of either open field or common meadow, covering 1,195 hectares. Most open fields had been fully enclosed in a piecemeal manner, through the consolidation of strips into blocks of land, usually demarcated by hedges. This had been a continuing process since the medieval period, carried out through private agreements between tenants and the manorial courts. By the nineteenth century, only a few remnants of open field had survived in places such as Kentmere and Langdale, which were finally enclosed under the general Enclosure Act of 1836.[20] Other fragments of open field enclosed by act of Parliament were mapped at Eskdale, Askham, Mosedale and in small areas along the northern boundary of the Park north of Bassenthwaite at Sunderland, Ireby, Caldbeck and Hesket Newmarket. In all these places, there had been piecemeal enclosure of the open fields, and the planned enclosure represented the completion of a long process.

The greater part of planned enclosure in the lowlands was undertaken in wetland landscapes. Although this forms a minor topographical element of the Lake District National Park, over 3,000 hectares of wetland were systematically reclaimed and enclosed in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These areas lie mostly on the southern boundary of the National Park, on the estuaries of the River Kent and surrounding mosses, along the Rusland Pool valley, the estuary of the River Leven and, on the lower reaches of Kirkby Pool where it meets the Duddon estuary. This area is distinguished by the deeply indented coastline of the northern edge of Morecambe Bay, with extensive estuaries reaching far into the foothills. It includes both the former mosses of the river valleys and the marine and estuarine silts on the edge of

*Plate 26: The ruler-straight boundaries and regular shapes of the parliamentary enclosure field systems in the Lyth Valley, near Levens. Contrast these with the less regular fields around the village of Levens on the adjacent higher land (© Cumbria County Council)*

[20] Whyte 2003, 17

Morecambe Bay.[21] Although most was enclosed through parliamentary enclosure, nearly a third was carried out by private agreement, for example the area around Rusland known as Souterholme Meadows, which was enclosed privately in 1861 by Dickson Archibald of Rusland Hall. Archibald used Crayston Webster, a Kendal land surveyor who had been involved in a number of enclosures by act of Parliament.[22]

The distribution of planned enclosures is concentrated on the east and the north-west sides of the National Park, with smaller pockets on the moorland to the south-west and the lowland mosses on the south. The central massif remained unenclosed, as much of it was too steep and too poor in quality to enclose and improve. Even around the central valleys very little land was subject to planned enclosure, probably because all the viable land for improvement on the lower fellsides, had already been enclosed as intakes, and what was left was considered unimprovable or uneconomic. Thus there were small areas of planned enclosure around the edges of the higher fells, in places such as Eskdale, Santon Bridge and south of Keswick, but within the narrower valleys further enclosure was very limited. In Great Langdale, for example, the only planned enclosure was of a small area of former common field in the valley bottom.[23] The lower slopes of the surrounding valley sides had already been enclosed as intakes, and the very steep fellsides remained unenclosed common as they would have been considered unimprovable.

Some of the higher fells were enclosed, for example on the east side of the National Park, on the Shap Fells and around Kentmere, Longsleddale and High Street. Much of this enclosure was undertaken in the later part of the nineteenth century, and took in large areas of grassy moorland. The aim here would have been to provide improved pasture, through drainage, rather than trying to increase the area of cultivatable land. On the north and north west sides of the National Park, settlements on the low lands, for example around

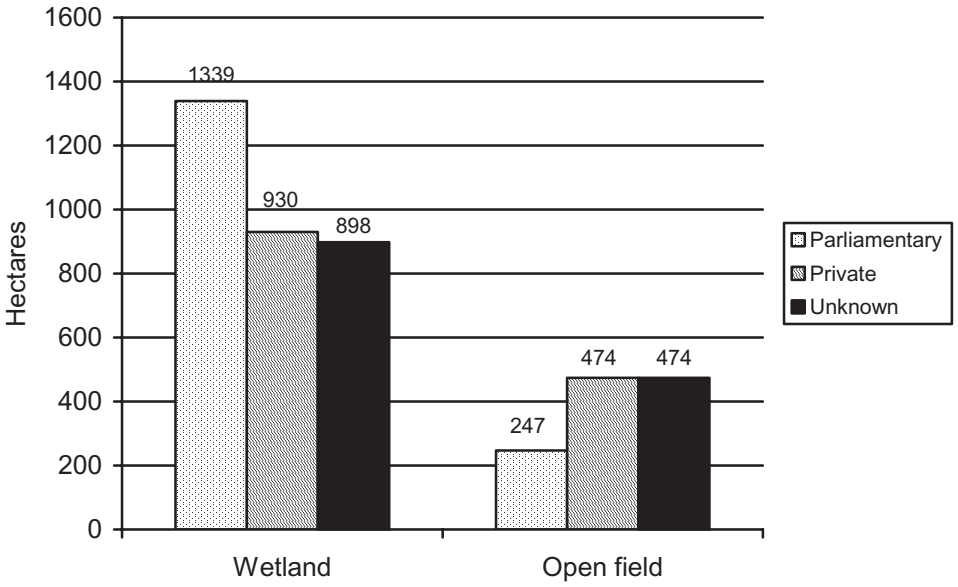


*Figure 19: Areas of lowland landscape types covered by planned enclosure. Figures given in hectares*

[21] Hodgkinson *et al* 23-31
[22] Hodgkinson *et al* 2000, 31
[23] See Great Langdale case study

*Plate 27. The distant view of Bruntt Knott, Over Staveley, shows the regimented lines of planned enclosures walls crossing the fells (© Egerton Lea Consultancy Ltd)*

Loweswater, Embleton and Matterdale, had access to extensive common grazing land on the lower fells, large areas of which were enclosed by act of Parliament by the mid-nineteenth century. The largest single area to be affected by planned enclosure was in the south-east of the National Park, in a process which transformed the appearance of the landscape over a period of around 50 years. There the low, rolling fells between Kendal and Windermere, including the valley wetlands around Cartmel Fell and along the Kent estuary, were enclosed mostly by the mid-nineteenth century.

**Field Patterns**

As with ancient enclosures, the field shapes of planned enclosures were classified into three types. 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. It is difficult to assess patterns within these multiple variations, and at a Park-wide scale such differences in detail may not be meaningful. It is more useful to group the variations into three broad field types, based on those defined by Rackham,[24] that is regular, semi-regular and irregular fields.[25] A detailed discussion of these field types can be found in the chapter of Ancient Enclosure (see page 45). The broad field types vary slightly from the definitions for ancient enclosure, in that the types of boundaries seen in planned enclosures are almost always straight, or ruler-straight, even when the field shape itself is irregular. A fourth category, of unenclosed land, was also used, where enclosures have subsequently fallen out of use. Altogether, around 20% of former planned enclosures can now be considered to be unenclosed. In some areas, for example around Ennerdale and on Torver Common, this is the result of modern forestry plantation. In the Shap Fells, on High Street and between Ennerdale and Crummock Water, the abandonment of field boundaries have meant that areas of planned enclosures have reverted back to unenclosed moorland and fell.

[24] Rackham 1986, 155
[25] For a definition of morphological types, see chapter in ancient enclosure

These enclosures of moorland on the high fells were the most marginal lands enclosed in this way, and it is unsurprising that in many instances, the upkeep of the enclosure system has been uneconomic. In the analysis of field morphology, the figures for land reverted back to unenclosed moor have been omitted, as they would skew the pictures of the distribution of field morphology. A summary of field types is given below:

- *Regular* fields are set out according to a geometrical pattern, sometimes in a 'mindless' fashion.
- *Semi-regular* fields are less regular in layout, the geometry is more complex, or perhaps the layout is restricted by others factors such as topography. In this grouping, boundaries themselves may be less regular.
- *Irregular* fields are still laid out according to a survey, but no attempt has been made at regular geometry, or topography has severely restricted the use of a geometric grid.

Unsurprisingly, the areas of planned enclosures are dominated by regular field patterns, making up 63% of the total. Semi-regular field patterns comprise only 2% of all planned enclosure. This figure might be expected to be higher, as the rough terrain of large areas of the National Park would make the layout of regular field systems difficult. The low figure, however, is probably because semi-regular fields comprise regular field shapes but with curving or wavy boundaries, a feature more often found in ancient enclosure types. Even where field shape is irregular, planned enclosures are characterised by straight boundaries, one of the key features of field systems set out by surveyors. The, perhaps, surprising figure is the relatively large proportion of planned enclosures with an irregular field shape, which cover an average of 35% of the total area. The reasons for this are varied. In some instances, such as on the fells between Longsleddale and Ambleside, irregular enclosures were the result of a combination of difficult terrain with the enclosure of oddly shaped areas of land left over from earlier intakes and more regularly shaped planned enclosures. The areas of planned enclosure are clearly distinguishable from earlier intakes, however, as they are demarcated with ruler-straight boundaries, clearly set out by a surveyor. Even where the terrain was less obviously difficult, such as in the south-east quarter of the Park, between Kendal and Windermere, planned enclosure resulted in a patchwork of regular and irregular field shapes. Here, large areas remained unenclosed up until the nineteenth century, so that planned enclosure dominates in a mixed pattern of regular and irregular fields, which reflects the quite difficult terrain of low rolling fells with numerous areas of rocky outcrops, almost all of which was enclosed through act of Parliament.

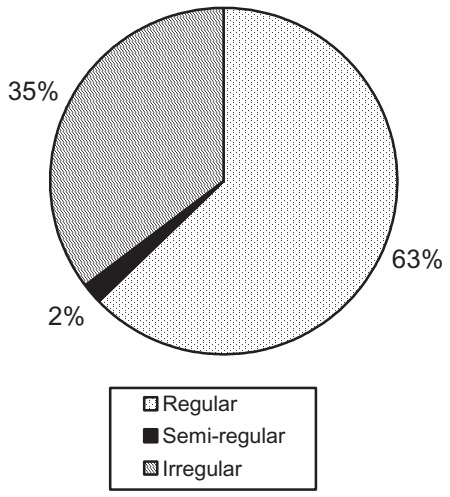


*Figure 20: The proportion of field shapes for all types of planned enclosure*

The proportion of irregular field shapes appears to be significantly higher for planned enclosure by private agreement, at 44%, than that for parliamentary enclosure at 35%. Any significance is probably misleading, however, given that enclosure by private agreement only accounts for 7% of all planned enclosures, and that a large proportion of the privately planned enclosures comprises the enclosure of the old and new parks at Isel Hall. In other areas of privately planned enclosures, such as in the lowland mosses, the layout of fields was perhaps more regular than in than the uplands, as there were fewer topographic constraints for surveyors.[26] Here, there appears to be no difference in field shape between fields enclosed by private agreement and areas of parliamentary enclosure. In these areas most enclosures have ruler-straight boundaries and are demarcated with drains and either hedges or fences. The drained and improved estuarine marshes and the wider river valleys, such as the Lyth valley, tend to exhibit the characteristics of a 'mindless' grid system, whilst the more constrained river valleys, such as those of the River Winster and Rusland Pool, have ruler-straight boundaries but the field shapes themselves are less regular as the field patterns fit into the narrow valley bottoms. An important element of the enclosure of lowland mosses, as well as in areas of upland moss, was the continued importance of peat cutting for fuel. Many allotment holders received moss dales where they could cut peat, and these took the form of groups of narrow rectangular strips.[27] They are clearly distinguished on the enclosure award maps but, in the uplands in particular, the areas were quite small and were quickly worked out. In the lowland mosses, although they covered only a very small percentage of the planned enclosures, these moss rooms can still be distinguished. They are evident, for example, in the Lyth Valley near

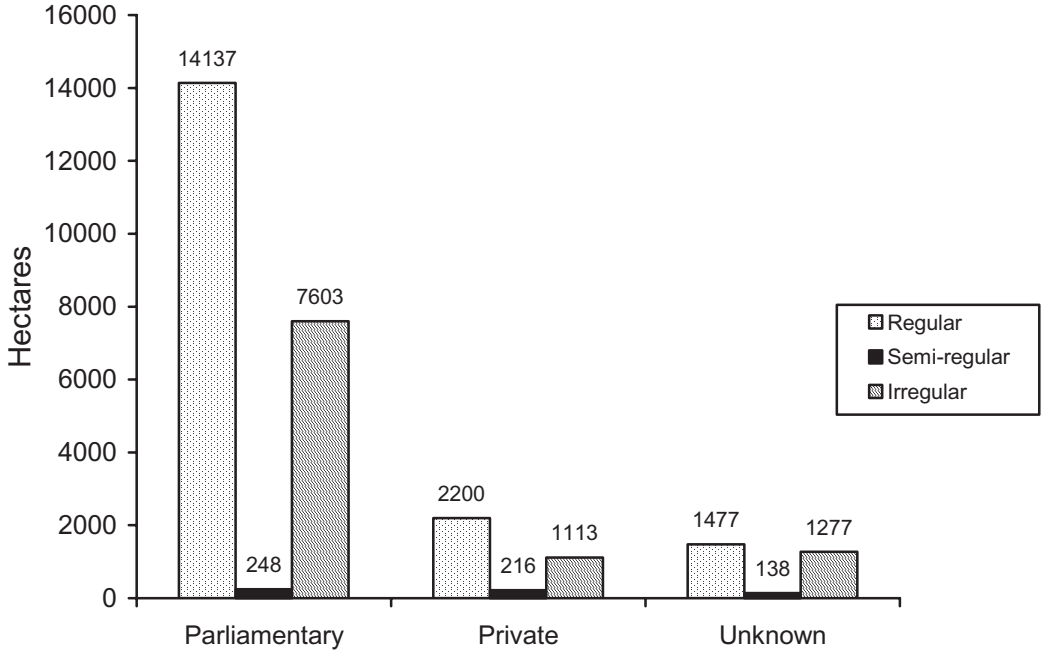


*Figure 21: The proportion of field shapes by planned enclosure type*

[26] Whyte 2003, 64

[27] Whyte 2003, 76

Brigsteer, in the Winster Valley near Witherslack, and in the valley of Kirkby Pool near Broughton in Furness.

In addition to field shape, the HLC looked at degrees of boundary change in planned enclosure. As well as assessing how the changing needs of farming might have led to the rationalisation of fields, it would also be an indication of how successful was the enclosure and improvement of the newly enclosed land. Some enclosures on the higher moorlands and fells, for example in the Shap Fells and parts of Ennerdale, were not maintained and although the stone walls can still be followed on maps and on the ground, they have ceased to function as boundaries and the land is now, to all intents and purposes, unenclosed. The assessment of boundary change was done through a simple comparison of boundaries on the Ordnance Survey first edition maps of the mid-nineteenth century and on modern maps. It not only assesses boundaries which had been removed, but also the construction of new boundaries to make new fields. Boundary change was divided into five categories;

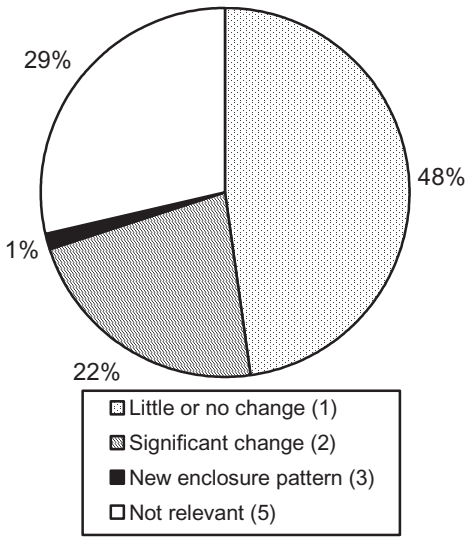


*Figure 22: Comparison of boundary change in fields relating to all planned enclosure*

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, or field pattern completely gone.

Category 5 was applied to areas which were no longer enclosed, such as where there had been large areas of forestry plantation, for example around Ennerdale, or where boundaries had fallen into disuse, such as around the Shap Fells. The areas of modern woodland plantation covered a significant percentage of the total area, and has thus been included in the figures, but is discussed in more detail in the chapter on woodland. There were no planned enclosures which could be considered to come under category 4. The following charts shows boundary change for each type of planned enclosure, and the overall levels of boundary change.

Given that most planned enclosure was undertaken on marginal land, and given the economic pressures of modern hill farming[28] and the expense of maintaining dry stone walls, there has been a relatively low level of significant change in the boundaries of planned enclosures across the Lake District National Park. The figures for land which has reverted to unenclosed moor, recorded as 'not relevant' in the boundary change figures, may also appear disproportionately high, as this has been calculated by area, rather than by numbers of enclosures. The large extent of land that has reverted to an unenclosed character and is now either forestry or moorland, reflects the large size of the original planned enclosures in areas of high moorland and fell. The proportionately large amount of planned enclosure of unknown type, which has reverted to unenclosed land, is concentrated in the Shap Fells and in the lowland

[28] Institute for European Environmental Policy, Land Use Consultants and GHK Consulting, 2004

mosses around the Kent Estuary. In this latter area, there has been a deliberate recent policy to encourage reversion, in an effort to encourage wildfowl and biodiversity.[29] Elsewhere the pattern of significant change to field boundaries is generally evenly spread across most types of planned enclosures, creating a patchwork effect. Recorded boundary change tends to reflect small-scale rationalisation of fields into larger enclosures, and this is particularly evident in the lowland mosses around the Lyth Valley and Winster Valley on the south western boundary of the Park.

Even though the recording of boundary types was not possible within the HLC, it can be said that most of these late eighteenth or nineteenth century enclosures were bounded by hedges or dry-stone walls. Parliamentary enclosure, in particular, often stipulated minimum standards for the boundaries, although local variations do exist. Hedges were normally of hawthorn planted on stone-fast earth banks, sometimes interspersed with tree saplings at regular intervals. The trees might be holly, hazel, alder or willow, or a variety of fruit tree, such as apple or damson. The hedges were known as 'quickthorn' or 'quickset', meaning that they were living hedge that established rapidly, unlike the brushwood barriers which were common up until the early post medieval period. Hedges were more commonly used on lower lying land, but where they could not thrive, stone walls were used instead. Stone walls also became used more commonly on lower ground from the mid-nineteenth century.[30] Despite variations in the construction of older stone walls, relating to tradition and geology, they can be distinguished from enclosures walls which were built to a fairly standard technique. This technique normally used less massive foundations, but comprised two outer faces, linked by two course of through stones and with a rubble core. The wall usually tapered towards the top, which had a line of capstones designed to shed water.

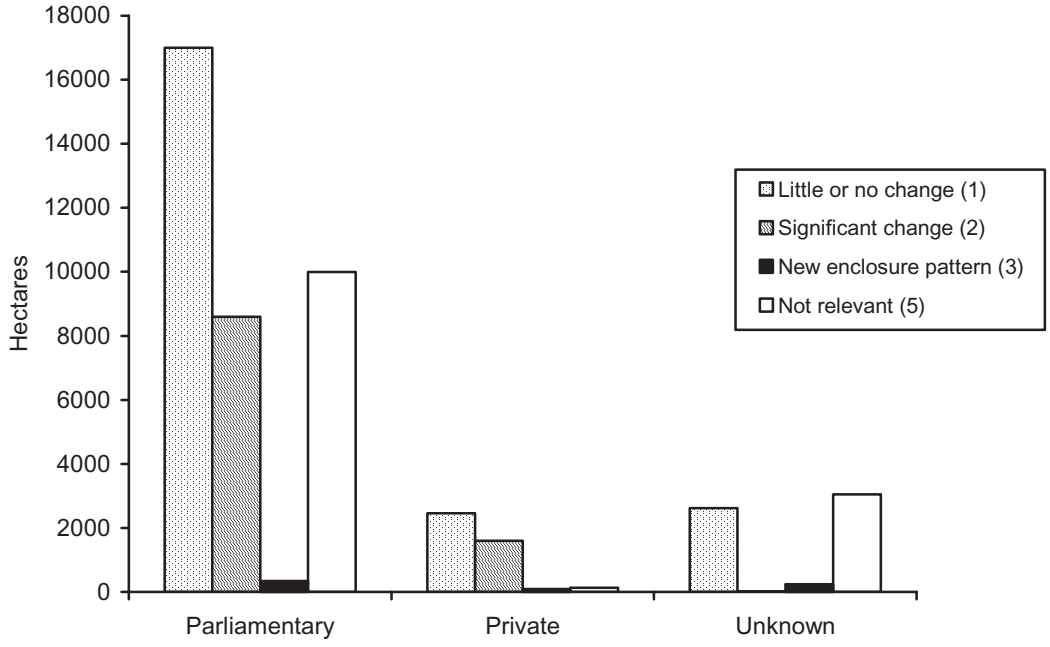


*Figure 23: Comparison of boundary change between different types of planned enclosure*

[29] Harpley 2005

[30] Whyte 2003, 65

## The Landscape of Planned Enclosures

Planned enclosure probably produces the most highly recognisable landscape type. The field morphology is fairly simple and comprises straight, or ruler-straight, boundaries even where the field shape itself may be irregular. Within the category of planned enclosures, the main contrast is between the larger enclosures of the uplands and the smaller, sometimes strip-like fields of the lowland mosses. As well as areas of small allotments enclosed for peat cutting, planned enclosures in the former mosses were closely linked to drainage. That is, enclosures usually fitted into a drainage pattern which conditioned the layout of the field system, as the canalised waterways had to flow downhill and drain the fields. This had the physical effect of creating a landscape of straight lines, sometimes marked by hedges or fences, but also of reed-filled ditches. There is also a contrast between the very large planned enclosures of the high moorlands where the poor quality of the land restricted the levels of improvement which could be carried out, and the denser field patterns in the lower fells. This is most clearly illustrated in the contrast between areas such as the moorlands above Matterdale and Threlkeld in the north of the National Park where fields tend to be very large, and the south-east quarter of the Park, between Kendal and Windermere. In this latter area a distinctive field pattern evolved as a patchwork of regular and irregular field systems, where the process of enclosure was completed in the nineteenth century. Before the process of parliamentary enclosure, by which most of this area was enclosed, the area would have had the appearance of islands of enclosed and improved land in a sea of unimproved waste.[31] More than anywhere else in the National Park, the process of planned enclosure probably transformed the appearance of this area.

*Plate 28: The parliamentary enclosure of the Lyth valley, just outside the Lake District National Park. The draining of the lowland moss has created a grid-like field system bounded by hedgerows and ditches (© Egerton Lea Consultancy Ltd)*

The transformation of the countryside was affected by more than just the laying out of regular field systems. Other features, too, formed part of the process, such as roads, quarries and farmsteads, which are characteristic of planned enclosure. Quarries were always a feature of common land, and would have been controlled by the

[31] Whyte 2003, 5

*Plate 29: Lime kiln, typical of the many small kilns built following planned enclosure (©LDNPA)*

manor along with other common rights. A provision was made in most enclosure acts for quarries to provide material for the construction of boundary walls, roads and even farm buildings. Many of these quarries were very small and in use for only a short time. The grassed-over remains of many of these quarries can still be seen, usually following the line of the wall. Individual allotment owners might also extract stone from their own land, and in limestone areas lime kilns were often built adjacent to the quarries for burning lime for agricultural use. Lime was then spread on the fields to improve the quality of the land. These kilns are a characteristic feature of the present-day limestone landscapes of the National Park, and there are early examples around Coniston and on the northern fringes near Shap, Caldbeck and Cockermouth.[32] New farm buildings, such as barns were commonly erected on the newly enclosed land, and where large areas were enclosed, there was the opportunity to create new farms.

Within the Lake District National Park, the number of new farms appears to have been fairly limited, as this process was less common on higher lying land, and in the largest area of enclosure in the south-east of the National Park, the patchwork nature of enclosure would have limited the areas where new farms could be established. Even so, there is evidence for enclosure-period farms along the B5284 road between Kendal and Bowness, for example Pound Farm at Crook and Barn Farm near Bonning Gate. New farms were also established on the newly enclosed moorlands north of Matterdale and to the east of the Blencathra range, such as Greenah Crag Farm north of Troutbeck. New roads were provided, both as new access to the more remote fields, and as replacement for earlier tracks across the common.[33]

For some of the larger landowners, afforestation offered a better return than rent from grazing on some of the poorer quality land. In particular, large areas of land on the west side of

*Plate 30: Parliamentary enclosure road, characterised by its straight course and minimum-width specification (© Egerton Lea Consultancy Ltd)*

[32] Lowe 1989, 105-7

[33] See the chapter on communications

Windermere was put down to plantation, including Claife Heights which was planted up with larches by John Curwen from the late eighteenth century.[34] In the south-east of the National Park, planned enclosure resulted in a transformation of the landscape, not just by allowing some estate owners to afforest their land, but by freeing up land to be sold off for development. Around Bowness and Windermere from the early nineteenth century, plots of land were sold for the construction of villas and mansion houses for the wealthy visitor, with the higher ground to the east providing views over the lake.[35] From a landscape of individual farms and small hamlets surrounded by extensive areas of common waste, this area was gentrified with large houses and villas set in well-wooded, extensive landscaped grounds. Further east, on the low fells north of Kendal, the enclosure of the common waste of Strickland Roger is more typical of the enclosed common land which remained open. Enclosed in 1853 following the General Enclosure Act of 1845, it comprises fields with ruler-straight boundaries, with a more grid-like field system on the lower slopes of the fells with irregular field shapes on the higher rockier areas. A new farm, Potterfell House[36] was established on the lower slopes, though now abandoned. The enclosure road built to access the farther fields is not the ruler-straight track which might be expected, however, as the steep fellsides necessitated a zigzag route which followed the contours of the hill. Whereas individual owners around Windermere took advantage of ownership to plant large areas with trees, at Strickland Roger valleys were dammed to create artificial tarns, which supplied the paper mills in Burneside with much needed water, as

*Plate 31: Stone enclosure wall, built to a minimum specification. A course of 'through' stones can be seen halfway up the wall. Beyond is a small stand of conifers, typical of small-scale enclosure-period plantations (© Lucy Drummond)*

[34] Whyte 2003, 33, 79
[35] Whyte 2003, 34

[36] Marked as East View on modern maps

well as providing income as trout fisheries.[37] Notably, the enclosure process also included a four acre allotment set aside for recreation, marked by boundary stones, though its remoteness and marshy character would have provide little scope for recreational use.

The method by which planned enclosure was carried out does not appear to have had an effect on the physical appearance of the field systems, even though the dating of planned enclosure suggests that areas enclosed by private agreement tend to be earlier. Indeed, privately appointed commissioners were sometimes the same men who carried out many of the parliamentary enclosures in the same area.[38] In general, the difference between enclosure by private agreement and enclosure by act of Parliament is one of process. Both types of planned enclosure resulted in landscapes of fields with straight boundaries, large fields, or at least fields larger than the old enclosures, bounded by fences, hawthorn hedges or stone walls built to a minimum specification. Differences in field patterns appear to be relate more to topography and land quality, and irregular elements are found where they come up against older field patterns, parish and township boundaries, and natural features such as streams and rocky outcrops.

## The Changing Countryside

The Lake District National Park Management Plan recognises the importance of the landscape character and has policies which seek to conserve field patterns.[39] The strong rectilinear field pattern imposed on the landscape by planned enclosure

*Plate 32: When hedgerows are not maintained they progress from hedgerows to isolated trees and bushes and ultimately to a loss of historic character (© Archaeo-Environment Ltd)*

[37] Whyte 2003, 86-7
[38] Whyte 2003, 29
[39] LDNPA 2004, 19 policies 1.4, 1.5

dominates the character of much of the countryside and represents the culmination of enclosure history in our present day landscape. Much of this landscape has undergone very little change and the greatest threat is likely to be neglect, rather than proposals for change. Where boundary walls or hedgerows are not maintained and modern fencing introduced, these strong field patterns are weakened, the character and sense of historic continuity changes and a neglected appearance results.

Modern farming techniques mean that many of these elements are now redundant, including gate posts or stoops, often discarded while modern gates are inserted in different locations. Farms and barns are often subject to change of use from agricultural to domestic and through time this can have long term effects on landscape character if the enclosed land is no longer grazed. The introduction of plantations over some of the enclosures has obscured the logical field patterns. Many of these

*Plate 33: Ruined sheep fold next to a planned enclosure wall on Green Quarter Fell (© Egerton Lea Consultancy Ltd)*

Contributing towards the historic character of the planned enclosure landscape are the various landscape elements including scattered farmsteads and barns, stone gateposts, quarries, sheepfolds, bields, small-scale planting of trees and roadways surveyed into the landscape at the time of enclosure. Within the walls are also a number of historic features such as hogg-holes, water smoots, wall heads and styles. minor landscape elements, however, are neither recorded by HLC, nor are they always recorded by the Historic Environment Record. Enhancement of both data sets needs to take place if management is to be informed.

Many planned enclosures are now redundant and it is unrealistic to expect that all of them should be preserved. In some cases where a change of use is considered to be acceptable, there may be scope to

conserve the regular grid pattern within the new land use. For example, shelter belts and new tree planting can be designed to reinforce the regular pattern in the landscape rather than obscure it. The desirability of strengthening field patterns in particular areas is recognised in the Lake District National Park Management Plan.[40] In some instances it may also be appropriate to allow field systems to decay and become relict remains within our landscape. In such cases, the lower courses of stone of the boundary walls should be retained so that the boundary can continue to contribute to landscape character. In other areas where there is a good landscape pattern representing continuity from open common land to anciently enclosed land through piecemeal enclosure and ultimately planned enclosure, then conservation may be a priority in order to conserve the visual representation of time depth.

*Plate 34: Redundant hog hole in a planned enclosure wall on Cocklaw Fell (© Egerton Lea Consultancy Ltd)*

A number of planned enclosures will have gone through a process of improvement through the addition of lime and may have been ploughed for a time, particularly in the early years of the nineteenth century when ploughing of former grazing land was a patriotic act. Many of the present day enclosures however have now reverted to semi-improved pasture. It is still technically possible for these fields to be ploughed, but farming conditions are unlikely to encourage it. There however biodiversity reasons for ploughing to encourage appropriate habitats for some upland breeding birds. Such use of the land would be visually quite alien to the twenty-first century Lake District landscape, although it would not have been out of place a hundred years ago.

The areas of enclosure which consist of hedgerows are suffering from a lack of maintenance. The resulting process of decline has been outlined by Muir[41] starting with the abandonment of hedge-laying leading to gappy hedgerows. These gaps are widened by livestock and the gaps stopped with rails and items of farm debris. Eventually the shrub components of the hedge die, leaving the hedgerow trees standing in a hyphenated line. One by one these die, so that in its closing stages the old hedgerow is seen as an alignment of a few trees separated by wide gaps. An ongoing survey of hedgerows in all of Cumbria has shown that about half of all hedgerows surveyed are still stock proof.[42] The loss of enclosing hedgerows will have a significant impact on historic landscape character and biodiversity and maintenance should therefore be encouraged through agri-environment schemes and other management agreements. The Cumbrian Wildlife Trust survey of hedgerows is on-going and the results

[40] LDNPA 2004, 19 policy 1.7

[41] Muir 2004, 117

[42] Cumbria Wildlife Trust, www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/cumbria/Projects

should be incorporated into the HLC programme.

Pollarding, mainly within hedgerows has been an important aspect of historic character in a number of Lake District valleys, including Great Langdale,[43] Eskdale, Wasdale and Miterdale.[44] HLC has not collated data on pollarding, but any future enhancement on boundary composition should include reference to pollarding where it has made a significant contribution to the landscape character.

The main tool for hedgerow protection is the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations, however these Regulations only permit data which existed before 1997 to be used in assessing the importance of hedgerows. This means that, at the time of publication, the HLC data (and indeed the Cumbrian Wildlife Trust data) cannot qualify. However the HLC data has the potential to provide a broad date range for hedgerows and an historical context. It can also help to assess the contribution that hedgerows make towards the character of an area and so should become a management tool as part of the Hedgerow Regulations.

While the majority of planned enclosures are defined by stone walls or hedgerows, there are a number of rare instances where the Victorians have used railings (sometimes on top of stone walls) to define former enclosure walls, particularly where they meet a roadside, for example at Lingmoor and Side Pike and were also used in the 1930s to fence the new stretch of road south of Millbeck and the New Dungeon Ghyll hotel.[45] These support a particular character and should be retained or replaced with like if necessary.

Management agreements tend to encourage reduced grazing levels and the use of wildlife corridors, although these are less useful in a predominantly pastoral area. The creation of wildlife corridors should

*Plate 35: Stone wall with iron railings in Langdale (© LDNPA)*

[43] Lund and Southwell 2002
[44] National Trust 1997, 59
[45] Lund and Southwell 2002, 47

conform to the general pattern of enclosure and not introduce alien field shapes, such as curving boundaries. More recently there has been a move to allow planned enclosure lowland mosses to revert to their pre-nineteenth century waterlogged state in order to improve their wildlife value. Such proposals will have an impact on landscape character and while such lowland enclosures represent only a small area of the Lake District, conservation initiatives should aim to be multi-disciplinary. While the historic landscape character will be affected, the reintroduction of waterlogging and the removal of trees and drains will help to protect buried archaeological remains which may have survived in the peaty soils since prehistoric times.

In a future with less farmers to maintain field boundaries it is possible that 'a return to nature' will be proposed for some areas in the National Park. Such a possibility is recognised in the Lake District National Park Management Plan[46] and would alter the historic character in areas of planned enclosure. Such proposals would need to be assessed against the impact on landscape character, buried archaeological remains and biodiversity.

Late enclosures tend to have had a relatively short agricultural life and in the Lake District, any ploughing within planned enclosures was usually restricted to the Napoleonic years. This means that there is a high potential for earlier remains to survive below ground. By conducting a comparative mapping programme of SMR sites and HLC landscapes it is likely that a distribution of particular monuments, for example Bronze Age burial mounds, will coincide with planned enclosures.

**Shaping the Future: Recommendations**

- Proposals which will result in a weakening of the field pattern should be assessed against the overall impact on landscape character and representation of time depth. Retention of the field pattern should be considered within any development proposals.
- Proposals to convert farms or barns to residential use need to be assessed against their likely future impact on historic landscape character.
- Areas of planned enclosure within or adjacent to urban areas (such as Keswick) may not have been

*Plate 36: A well maintained planned enclosure wall on Cocklaw Fell. It also marks the parish boundary between Longsleddale and Kentmere (© Egerton Lea Consultancy Ltd)*

[46] LDNPA Management Plan 2004, 31

included in the HLC programme. Any proposals within these areas should be added to HLC and appropriate assessment carried out before decisions made on future use.

- Landscape elements within this landscape type such as stone gateposts and limekilns, should be retained. Stone gateposts should be reused rather than replaced with modern gateposts.
- Hedgerows and dry stone walls are suffering from a lack of maintenance and agri-environment schemes and local management agreements should be used to encourage their reconstruction using traditional hedge-laying and stone-walling techniques. Further guidance is given in the chapter on anciently enclosed land.
- Repairs to stone walls or hedgerows should reflect the local traditional construction or planting.
- Where stabilisation or restoration is not feasible the base courses and foundation stones should be maintained as a minimum thus providing evidence of former activity and character.
- HLC has not mapped landscape elements within the planned enclosure type. Boundary composition, roads, gateposts, ponds, field names, pollarding, farms and farm names and tree planting may also be contemporary elements within the landscape which contribute towards landscape character. These should be added to the HLC or HER in due course.
- Management regimes emphasise the importance of hedgerows for biodiversity. Future management agreements with landowners should seek to adopt a more holistic approach which enhances hedgerows for their landscape and wildlife value.
- A comparative mapping programme using HLC data on planned enclosures and the HER may show a correlation between this landscape type and particular archaeological monuments. The resulting information can assist in understanding the value of planned enclosures and may act as a predictive tool for future management.
- On the assumption that the forthcoming review of the Hedgerow Regulations will allow HLC data to be used, then it has the potential to inform applications and provide a historic context for particular field boundaries.