CHAPTER 15. RYDAL HALL AND PARK CASE STUDY

by C Newman

"*Enchanting Rydal! When in thought I stray*
To fairer haunts, and more congenial scenes,
How turns my retrospective glance on thee!
And in the faithful mirror of the mind,
Thy mountain outline, thy rich, native woods,
An azure mere, with its pine-crested isles"[1]

Introduction

The modern settlement of Rydal lies on the main road (A591) from Kendal to Keswick in the valley of the River Rothay between Lake Windermere and Rydal Water and Grasmere. The historic township of Rydal runs from the pre-1974 county boundary between Westmorland and Lancashire northwards to include Loughrigg Fell, Rydal Water and the valley of the Rydal Beck as far as Rydal Head and the old county boundary between Westmorland and Cumberland. The township now forms part of the civil parish of Lakes, and is focused on a small nucleation around the church at the east end of Rydal Water. The area covered by the case study comprises the historic township of Rydal, which now forms the modern administrative ward of Rydal and Loughrigg. Rydal lies in one of most visited parts of the Lake District National Park, between Ambleside and Grasmere, and Rydal Mount is well known as the home for many years of William Wordsworth.[2] The historic township is dominated by fell, whilst settlement is restricted in the valley of the River Rothay.. The modern landscape is well wooded, both within and surrounding the landscape park of Rydal Hall.

Aims and Methodology

The choice of Rydal, and in particular Rydal Hall and its landscape park, as a case study was aimed at a more detailed analysis of the development of a well-wooded and designed landscape, with well-known literary and Picturesque associations. In particular, the aim was to look at whether and how any areas of ancient woodland had been enhanced and extended by the introduction of exotic and parkland tree species. To this end, a walkover of the Rydal area was carried out, with a particular emphasis on Rydal Park, its ornamental features and its woodland.[3] This data could then be compared to the more general landscape types defined by the HLC, looking at the strengths and weaknesses of the HLC methodology, and at ways in which the HLC data could be enhanced. The documentary sources available for Rydal are relatively plentiful, with estate maps and other estate documentation contained in the County Record Office in Kendal (CROK).[4] In addition, the memoirs and accounts of Sir Daniel Fleming, lord of the manor in the seventeenth century, have been published, and provide a wealth of detail on the running of the estate.[5] Other, secondary sources, contained in the County Library in Kendal and online were also consulted, along with information provided by the staff at Rydal Hall.

[1] Unattributed quote in Rose 1847, 54
[2] Rydal Hall and gardens, The Wordsworth Museum, www.wordsworth lakes.co.uk

[3] Thanks are due to Luke Steer, the LDNPA' former Tree Preservation Officer for valuable information on the trees of Rydal Park
[4] CROK WD Ry collection
[5] Tyson 2001; Historic Manuscripts Commission 1890; Collingwood 1928

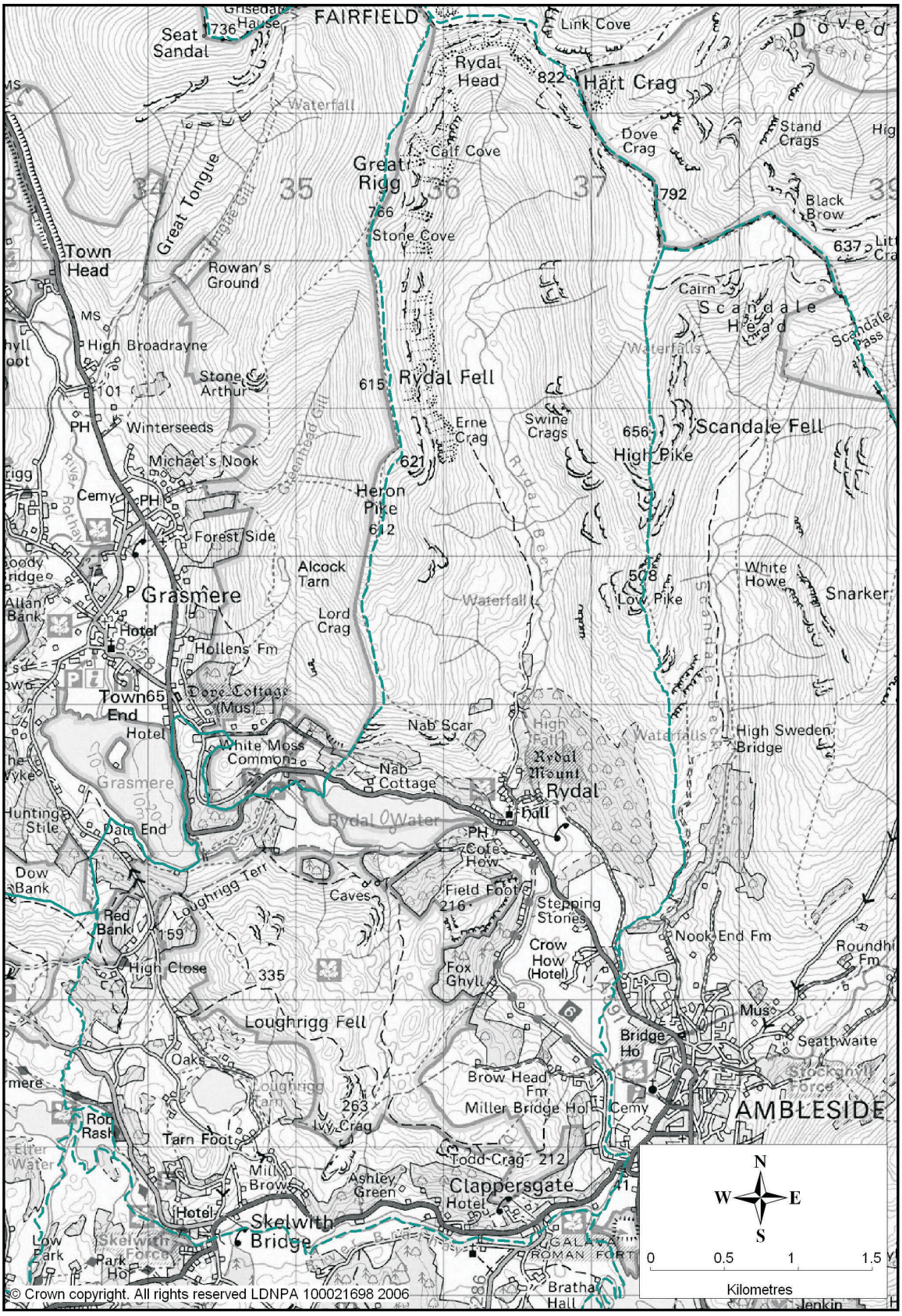

Figure 80: The Rydal study area, delineated by the broken blue line

Study Area

The focus of the study area was Rydal Hall, its gardens and landscape park, but it also looks at the wider area of the historic township, most of which formed part of the Rydal Hall Estate. Within the township are a number of buildings, listed either grade II or II*, which date from the sixteenth century onwards, including some with important literary connections. They include Rydal Hall itself, Wordsworth's home at Rydal Mount, as well as former farmhouses such as Cote How. The study area lies at the heart of the Lake District National Park, with Grasmere and Rydal Water to the north and Windermere to the south, and is surrounded by high fells. It is part of the Windermere, Rothay and Brathay Valleys historic landscape character area, and the Eastern Fells JCA. It is within the Cumbria High Fells Character Area, as defined by the Countryside Commission,[6] and many of the wide range of characteristics defined for the high fells can be seen in or from Rydal. These include:

- Spectacular rugged mountain scenery
- Radiating pattern of deeply glaciated valleys with extensive lakes, rivers and semi-improved and improved grazing land
- Farmland and sheltered valley landscapes at lower altitude with woodland, dry stone walls, hedgerows, copses, pollarded trees and scrub vegetation
- Traditional stone farm buildings in vernacular styles
- Extensive areas of ancient, semi-natural, broadleaf, mixed and conifer woodland

Plate 87: Rydal Park looking north towards Rydal Water and Grasmere. A landscape of 'spectacular mountain scenery', 'deeply glaciated valleys with extensive lakes', and 'extensive areas of ancient, semi-natural, broadleaf, mixed and conifer woodland' – Countryside Commission 1998 (© Egerton Lea Ltd)

[6] Countryside Commission 1998, 31

- Relatively formal lakeshore landscapes of managed grassland, with occasional boathouses and dwellings and broadleaf woodland and individual trees in a parkland setting
- Ancient patterns of stone walls which subdivide lowland pasture and high fellsides.

Historical Background

The historic township of Rydal and Loughrigg lay within the medieval parish of Grasmere, in the former county of Westmorland, and covered an area of 5,200 acres (*c* 2104 hectares). Its population was small, numbering only 230 in 1801, when it was described as concentrated in the village of Rydal and hamlet of Loughrigg.[7] In the medieval period Rydal and Loughrigg lay within the Barony of Kendale. In baronies such as this, dominated by upland, land held little agrarian value so large areas were retained as demesne land and were adapted for the most appropriate use, thus they were administered as private forests, or hunting preserves. Within Kendale Barony, for example, the whole of the parish of Grasmere was described as forest in the thirteenth century.[8] Despite the status of the upland forests as hunting preserves for the lord of the manor, there does also seem to have been exploitation of the land as pasture by peasants. Tenants in Grasmere, Langdale and Loughrigg, for example, paid '*forestsilver*' to Kendale Barony in 1453 for the agistment of stock in the forest.[9] In other words, tenants paid for the right to pasture their stock on forest land, not as rights to common waste, but purchased rights on demesne land. The role of the forests soon came to be less important than the process of manorialisation, as estates became smaller as land was partitioned between heiresses. This process can be seen in Rydal, which was granted as a manor out of a moiety, or portion, of the Barony of Kendale, to Roger of Lancaster before in 1274.[10] Even though this was granted as a manor, it was still regarded as forest and is described as such in the confirmation of the grant to Roger in 1274.[11] The boundaries of the manor are described in detail as follows,

> "*Beginning at Dove Crag by way of the top of the ridge between Rydal and Scandal, along the watershed, following the top of the ridge as far as Scandendestay in le Swythene; and thus descending to Swythene, by way of the footpath called le Waythesti, as far as Amelsate* [Ambleside] *park, and thus follows the right side of the park as far as Scandelbec; and thus follows Scandelbec as far as Routha* [Rothay]; *and thus follows the Routhay, ascending as far as Routhemere* [Rydal Water]*; and so following Routhemere as far as opposite le Brokestay, and along a line as far as le Brokestay, and from le Brokestay to the top of the Nab, and thus ascending to the top along the watershed, as far as Laverdkrag* [Lords Crag]*; and from Laverdkrag by the higher ascent along the top as far as le Ernekrag* [Heron Crag?]*; and thence along the top of the mountain as far as the boundary of Westmorland; and thus from the boundary of Westmorland as far as the summit of Dovecrag aforesaid*".[12]

[7] Whellan 1860, 825
[8] Winchester 1987, 20
[9] Winchester 1987, 84; Agistment, is the payment for land let out for summer grazing as a certain price per head of stock

[10] Whellan 1860, 825
[11] Farrer 1923, 10
[12] Nicolson and Burn 1777, 150; this is an approximate translation, aimed at giving the text a modern meaning, rather than literal equivalents. Where known, modern names are given in square brackets against place-names

The manor thus included the estate of Rydal, but excluded Loughrigg within the same township but which, with Ambleside and the rights to common of pasture in Grasmere, formed a separate part of the grant. A charter for the establishment of a large deer park at Rydal is said to have been granted in the reign of Edward I,[13] though a licence to empark is not recorded[14] and hunting rights already existed through its status as a baronial forest. The establishment of a deer park may thus relate to the manorial grant to Roger de Lancaster. A dispute over straying livestock between the lands of Roger and his neighbour, William de Lyndesey in 1277, led to an agreement to physically mark the boundaries by means of a fence 160 perches (just under one kilometre) in length.[15] The fence was to run along the top of the ridges marking the watershed on both sides of the Rydal Water valley. The term fence is unlikely to refer to a wooden paling, as that would have require large quantities of wood to be carried to the top of the ridge, but it does seem to relate to the earthwork remains of a bank and ditch which can still be seen on Nab Scar ridge. Although this earthwork boundary would have formed a barrier, it would have been insufficient in itself to keep out animals, and a dry hedge would probably have been built on top. This would have been constructed by driving in stakes and filling the gaps with wattles and brushwood,[16] in the same manner as many of the field boundaries within the enclosed in-bye lands. By 1581 part of this bank and ditch between Rydal and Grasmere had been replaced by a wall,

Plate 88: The boundary wall between the townships of Rydal and Ambleside, above Scandale Beck, fossilises the medieval boundary of Rydal manor. The wall was built in the mid-sixteenth century, and although regular maintenance has led to the rebuilding of large parts of the wall, it is clearly of some antiquity (© Egerton Lea Consultancy Ltd)

[13] Collingwood 1928, 86
[14] Farrer 1923
[15] Collingwood 1930
[16] Collingwood 1930, 6-7

and that between Rydal and Ambleside, above Scandale Beck, was marked by a wall from around 1565.[17] The boundary wall above Scandale is still extant and well maintained, and is distinctive by its height, and the large boulders used in its foundation, even though much of it has been rebuilt through regular maintenance. By the late sixteenth century, the deer park was still in existence, even though all the fallow deer had been removed, and Low Park, considered separate from Rydal Park, was considered to have been disparked "*a long time ago*".[18]

Plate 89: Old Hall Hill, the tree-covered hill to the left of the photograph, is the site of Rydal Old Hall. The cricket ground in front of the hill was known as the Old Orchard (© Egerton Lea Consultancy Ltd)

Much of Rydal remained as demesne land and was used as hunting grounds, controlled directly by the lord of the manor, but with tenants allowed to graze their stock in return for rent.[19] Settlement appears to have been mostly in the Loughrigg part of the township, and from the post medieval settlement pattern this probably took the form of dispersed farmsteads. In 1390, a rental of the lands of Philippa, widow of Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, records 17 tenants in Loughrigg who had either a cottage, a toft or a messuage, plus two others with a small piece of land. There was also a fulling mill, plus income from the fisheries of Rydal Water and the River Rothay, and from '*walkingsilver*' (fulling).[20] The income from '*forestsilver*', that is from grazing rents on demesne land, rendered nothing by the late fourteenth century, suggesting that Rydal manor continued to be farmed directly as demesne land. The tenants from Loughrigg who paid '*forestsilver*' to Kendal Barony in 1453[21] were probably

[17] Winchester 2000, 29-30
[18] Collingwood 1928, 86
[19] Farrer 1924, 24
[20] Farrer 1924, 22
[21] See above, footnote 9

grazing stock on the wastes outside Rydal.

As well as a fulling mill, there was also a corn mill and kiln in Rydal, although the first documented reference is not until 1454, in a rental.[22] The mill does not appear to have been sited near the Old Hall, but was probably on Rydal Beck adjacent to the site of the later New Hall, where a mill is recorded in the seventeenth century.[23] The fast-flowing beck would have provided a plentiful water power supply for the mill, and both the beck and the mill was taken into the gardens created by Sir Daniel Fleming in the late seventeenth century. In 1770, this area of the park is marked as Mill Orchard, with a possible mill race and several buildings, one of which would have been the mill itself.[24]

The Rydal estate passed to the le Fleming family in the first half of the fifteenth century, when Isabel, daughter and co-heir of John de Lancaster, married Sir Thomas le Fleming, whose family was based at Coniston Hall, though following the marriage, Rydal became the principal seat.[25] They would have lived in the original medieval manor house, which lay to the south of the present Rydal Hall, on a mound known as Old Hall Hill, just off the west side of the A591, north of Scandale Bridge. By 1575, however, William le Fleming and his wife Agnes were living at Coniston, and the fishing rights, corn mill, kiln, and other properties of the estate were let to John Grigge.[26] The Flemings moved to the new hall in 1589, abandoning the old hall which by the late seventeenth century was ruinous.[27] The estate remained in the hands of the le Flemings until the mid-twentieth century and the death of the last of the family. During the Second World War, the house was used as a school, and it later became a hotel. It is now in the ownership of the Diocese of Carlisle and is used as a retreat.

Sir Daniel Fleming and Rydal

The most well-known of the Fleming family was Sir Daniel Fleming, who came into the possession of the manor of Rydal in 1653, and lived there until his death in 1701.[28] Sir Daniel, who was considered a distinguished antiquarian,[29] left memoirs in which he gives a brief description and history of Rydal,[30] and detailed estate and household accounts which provide a good picture of the estate in the second half of the seventeenth century.[31] The sixteenth century house which Sir Daniel inherited was extended and gentrified by him. He added the west wing, the back staircase and other rooms, although only part of the north east wing is still demonstrably late seventeenth century in date. He also built the stables and barns behind the hall, and he was responsible for the first work to enhance the landscape, building formal gardens, a grotto and the bridge over Rydal Beck.

In addition to the improvements to the hall and grounds, Sir Daniel kept his own detailed accounts on the income and expenditure for his extensive demesne lands which included the Rydal estate. The receipts contain the most pertinent information, as they illustrate what agricultural produce was sold by the estate, although they also include some customary payments and fines, as well as fees from tenants for particular services.[32] The accounts cover the years from 1688 until his death in 1701, and provide a picture of how his estate was managed, which he described as,

> "*a very wholesome and pleasant Seat, for such a mountainous County; being very well water'd & wooded, standing very dry, & having pleasant*

[22] Farrer 1924, 24
[23] Rawnsley 1916, 586
[24] Rawnsley 1916, 417
[25] Whellan 1860, 826
[26] Rawnsley 1916, 413
[27] Collingwood 1928, 86-7
[28] Nicolson and Burn 1777, 164-5
[29] Whellan 1860, 827
[30] Collingwood 1928
[31] Tyson 2001
[32] The following descriptions are all taken from Tyson 2001

Gardens, Orchards, Walks, a Pond, a Mill, & a Grot, adjoining thereunto".[33]

Sir Daniel's description of the landscape as well wooded is attested by the receipts. Every year, a substantial proportion of income came from the sale of either wood or timber. Wood referred to blown wood, underwood, loppings and trimmings as well as coppiced wood. In many cases, the species of tree is not recorded, and presumably this was harvested from coppices or loppings and trimming from standard trees. Occasionally, he specifies the tree species, where the wood came from either blown (fallen) trees, or cords of woods, perhaps because the latter represented an unusually large amount. He also specifies the sale of wood to particular persons, who must have regularly purchased wood from the estate, principally a cooper, a turner, a wright, the local forge and a shoemaker. Despite the demand for charcoal to fuel the iron bloomeries, there is no record, apart from one instance of wood sold to a forge, of the coppiced wood being used for this purpose. Indeed, the majority of wood produced by the estate went to coopers for barrel making. Timber wood is recorded in more detail, usually giving at least the type of tree taken. In the 13 years covered by the accounts, over 189 trees were sold for timber, mostly oak (around 64%), followed by ash (around 20%), with small numbers each of birch and alder. Most were deliberately felled for sale, though in 1688 there were 16 blown oaks, in 1689 an unspecified quantity of blown birches, and in 1699 3 blown birches. Amongst the uses the timber was put to were, oak for a sign post in Penrith, alders for a (landing?) stage in Ambleside, timber for a hammer beam in Cunswick Forge, and an oak for the smelt-house. Many of the oaks seem to have been taken from Baneriggs, an area of woodland lying between Rydal Water and Grasmere, with other trees taken from Birk Hag, Rydal How and Higher Orchard around Rydal Hall, as well as from Deer Hows to the south, Low How and Miller's Hag.

Plate 90: An old coppiced alder in an area of ancient woodland on the hillside above Rydal Hall. The accounts of Sir Daniel Fleming in the seventeenth century provide details of the wood sold from the estate, including from alders (© Egerton Lea Consultancy Ltd)

Other income came from fishing rights on the Rivers Rothay and Brathay, Rydal Water and on Loughrigg Tarn. In his memoirs, Sir Daniel discusses the fishing to be had in the local rivers,

"*There do yearly swim up this river of Routha … many very large Trouts, & up ye River of Brathay great store of Case*[34]*; & altho' these Two Rivers do run a great way together in one Channel, before they disembogue into Windermere, & are both very clear & bottom'd alike; yet ye Lords of Rydal … scarce ever catch any Trouts in Brathay or any Case in Routha; notwithstanding they yearly*

[33] Collingwood 1928, 87

[34] Char

do get many Case in ye former & many Trouts in ye other River".

A note on this statement in the memoirs suggests that spawning trout prefer the shallower waters of the Rothay, whilst char prefer colder depths and find pools in the Brathay in which to spawn.[35] The accounts do not generally distinguish on which waters rights to fish were given, although in 1690 a licence to fish Loughrigg Tarn was granted. The River Brathay is listed as the place for eel and char fishing between 1688 and 1691, but thereafter only the type of fishing is given. Despite Sir Daniel's reference to plentiful large trout, only eels and char are listed in his accounts. Hunting does not seem to have played a large part in the income of the estate, and there were no fallow deer left in the park, though he obtained some money from a rabbit warren in 1688, and he stated that there were many '*Martons*' (beasts of park or chase) left upon the fells above the park.[36] It is clear from the accounts that the estates main farming income came from stock, although there are occasional references to the sale of bigg (barley), malt and meal, and on one occasion oats. In 1693 and 1699 there was some income from hay, but this was perhaps an opportunistic product dependent on suitable weather to produce extra grass rather than a regular product. Some land was rented out to tenants for grazing, and each year records a number of agistment payments. In the main, however, many of the entries are for the sale of animals, with over half of these being sheep,

Plate 91: Rydal Park from the north. The landscape has been enhanced by small stands of trees, which comprise a mix of largely native and naturalised species, with small areas of conifers. Faint traces of ridge and furrow indicate that the pasture fields were regularly ploughed, although the poor quality of the land, and seventeenth century records, suggests that this was probably only done every few years, as a method of improving the pasture (© Egerton Lea Consultancy Ltd)

[35] Collingwood 1928, 87

[36] Collingwood 1928, 86

around 36% being cattle, both oxen, cows and a bull, and three horses sold plus one account of income from hens. Animal hides, from sheep, cattle and horses, were regularly sold, though wool only provided income from sales at Kendal in 1695 and 1696.

The overall picture of the Rydal estate in the seventeenth century is one of a well wooded landscape, farmed largely for cattle and sheep which would have provided milk and meat. Hides would have been a by-product of meat production, whilst wool may have supplied the estate's needs, with the surplus sold in good years. The intermittent recording of income from cereals may reflect the occasional nature of arable cultivation. The quality of land was generally too poor for anything but grass, but over the years the quality of the sward would diminish and become overgrown with moss. Cereals, mainly barley and oats, were seen as a way of breaking up and renovating grassland, providing a good income for the three or four years they were grown, and once grass was resown, provided a good quality and quantity of grass growth for a few years before it again became choked with moss.[37] It is this cyclical process of cereal cultivation that may be reflected in the occasional reference to cereal, meal or malt in the accounts, with the sale of barley in 1688 and 1689, then again in 1694 and oats in 1697.

The Landscape and Buildings of Rydal

The picture of Rydal Park and the Rydal estate provided by Sir Daniel Fleming in the late seventeenth century is one which is still recognisable in the landscape today. Farmland remains primarily permanent pasture, though the lower enclosures have been improved, and the principal stock is sheep. An indication that the land was once used for arable cultivation is suggested by the faint ridge and furrow which survives in the southernmost field of the park, opposite the site of the old hall. The area is still well wooded and the pattern

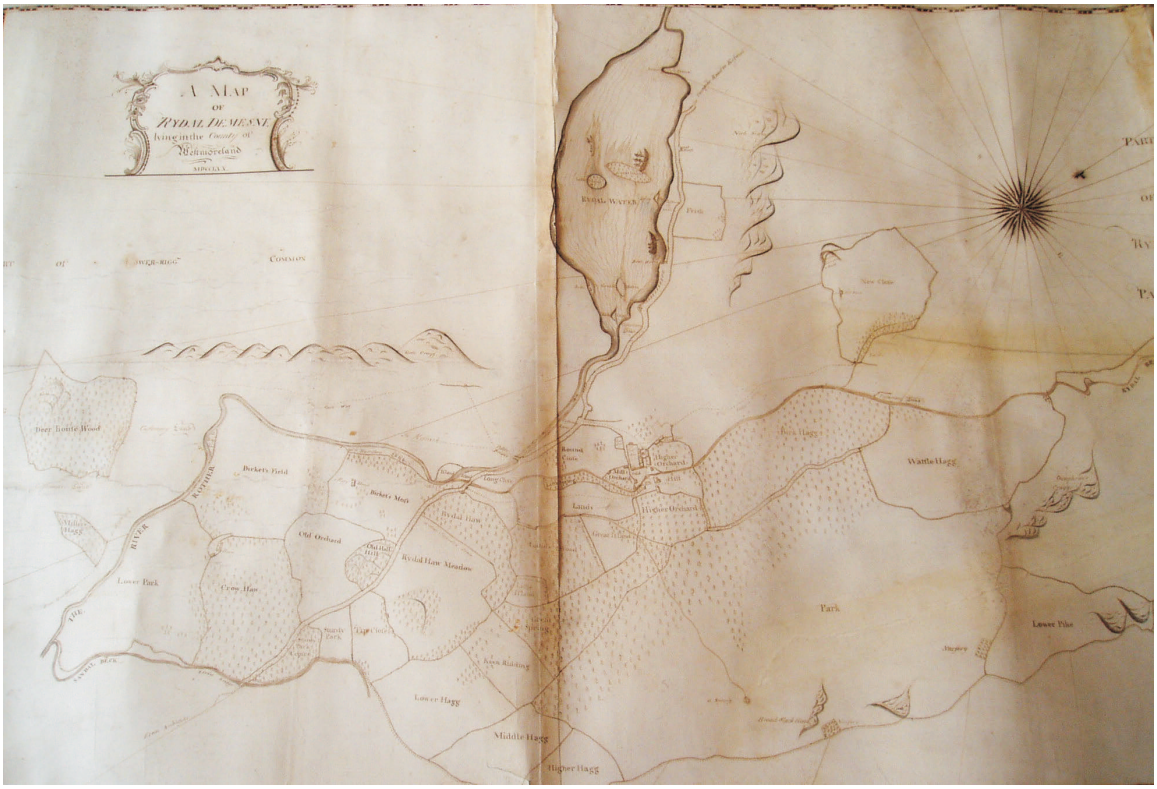

Plate 92: Map of Rydal Hall estate, dated 1770 (CROK WDB/35/184)

[37] Marshall 1818, 232-3

of woodland is similar to that shown on estate maps of Rydal Hall demesne and other estates in Rydal township of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[38] The largest and most detailed map is that of Rydal demesne dating to 1770, which shows Rydal Hall, the park and other farmland, with field names, woodland and other features. The small stands of trees which form part of today's ornamental parkland landscape were all in place by the late eighteenth century. These small plantations are a mix of native and naturalised species such as beech, oak, ash and sycamore, with some coniferous trees, generally placed on knolls to create focal points and enhance vistas. Between these small copses are individual deciduous trees, again forming part of the enhanced planting, which do not show on the estate or modern maps. Outside the park, maps of smaller estates from the first half of the nineteenth century show areas of woodland which are still extant, though in some cases have been extended through deliberate planting. The woodland above Fox Ghyll on the eastern edge of Loughrigg Fell, for example, is marked as Fell Intack and Top of Scar in 1830,[39] whilst the woodland of Rough Intake on the south side of Rydal Water was restricted to small copses in 1845.[40] These areas of woodland flank the sides of Loughrigg Fell, and were clearly planted to enhance the views from Rydal Park. They comprise a mix of largely native and naturalised species, with small areas of conifers, which provide a backdrop with a wide range of colours and shapes against the craggy outline of the fell.

Outside the area of ornamental parkland, on the lower fell slopes within the greater area of Rydal Park, is a large area of native woodland, including oak, ash, hawthorn, holly, hazel and birch, with alder concentrated around watercourses. This woodland is recorded as ancient semi-natural woodland on the Cumbria woodland inventory,[41] although on the lower slopes its aesthetic qualities have been enriched, particularly in the nineteenth century, with the planting of beech, chestnut and crab apple. This is one of the most historically significant areas of Rydal Park, as it is a surviving piece of woodland pasture, still grazed by sheep. The trees are widely spaced and include some veteran ash, oaks and alders, as well as areas of coppiced hazel and alder. It is likely that much of the wood and timber detailed in Sir Daniel Fleming's accounts came from this woodland, indeed, Birk Hag at the western end of this area of woodland, was recorded as the source of an oak in 1694, and other oaks were taken from 'the park' in 1695.[42]

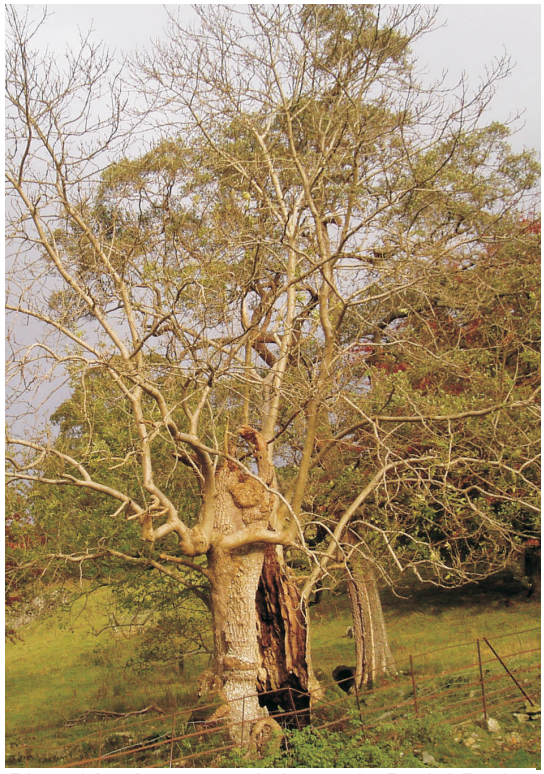

Plate 93: A veteran Ash tree in Rydal Park. In the post medieval period naturalised and exotic species were planted with such native trees to enhance the parkland landscape (© Egerton Lea Consultancy Ltd)

[38] CROK WDB/35/184 1770; CROK WD Ry/185 *c* 1825; CROK WDX/379/Pl/186 *c* 1830; CROK WD Cr/4/208 1845
[39] CROK WDX/379/Pl/186 *c* 1830
[40] CROK WD Cr/4/208 1845
[41] Phillips 1994, map 35
[42] Tyson 2001

Plate 94: The ha-ha style ditch and wall which forms part of the boundary to the Old Orchard field, now a cricket ground. Its date is unknown, but it is likely to be associated with reintroduction of deer in the eighteenth or nineteenth century (© Egerton Lea Consultancy Ltd)

By the late seventeenth century, the old hall had been abandoned for around a century, and was described as "*Ruins of Buildings, Walks and Fish-Ponds; & ye Place, where ye Orchard was, is now a large Close, without ever a Fruit-Tree therein, call'd now ye Old Orchard*".[43] The area of the old hall has probably seen the most changes to the landscape in the post medieval period. The nature of the first Rydal Hall is not known, and the ruins visible in Sir Daniel's time are now much overgrown. Although the knoll on which it stood is in a defensible position, there is no evidence that it was a defensible building. The document of 1277 which fixed the boundaries of the park refers to '*Rogerloge*', or Roger's Lodge, and it is possible that the old hall was built as a hunting lodge.[44] This does not preclude a building with defensible qualities, however, as it is thought that the late medieval defensible tower at Arnside, in the south of the county overlooking the Kent estuary, was built originally as a hunting lodge.[45] The hill on which the hall sat is now covered with trees and scrub. The field called the Old Orchard by Sir Daniel and on the estate map of 1770, is now a cricket ground, and the surrounding fields where there were once walks and fish ponds, have been drained and improved. The northern boundary of the Old Orchard, which marks the edge of the cricket ground, does provide some indication of a previous purpose. The boundary takes the form of a ha-ha, with a revetment wall on the north side and an internal ditch, built as if to keep animals within the area of the Old Orchard. Its origins are unknown, but it is unlikely to have been directly associated with the old hall, which was abandoned in the late sixteenth century. The earliest known ha-ha in England was built by Guillaume Beaumont for Colonel Grahame at Levens Hall, and dates to

[43] Collingwood 1928, 87
[44] Collingwood 1930, 6

[45] OAN 2006, 15

Plate 95: The game larder in the grounds of Rydal Hall, built by Sir Daniel Fleming in the late seventeenth century (© Egerton Lea Consultancy Ltd)

1692,[46] and it is extremely unlikely therefore that there would have been one at Rydal which pre-dated it by at least one hundred years. It does not seem to have been in existence at the time of Sir Daniel's memoirs and accounts, which are contemporary with the Levens Hall ha-ha, as it would have been a feature of note. The presence of a ha-ha probably represents the reintroduction of deer to the landscape park in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. The view of the old hall, with deer grazing around it, may thus have formed a focal point in the landscape. The reintroduction of deer would have post-dated Sir Daniel Fleming, as he notes that there were no deer in the park, as they had been removed by his grandfather.

Further enhancement of the parkland landscape built upon the work begun by Sir Daniel. He had laid out the formal garden terracing, planted mulberries and a cherry orchard. He also built the game larder and ice house in the grounds of Rydal Hall, though given the absence of deer in the park, game must have come from the plentiful supplies which he says were to be found on the hills above.[47] On the east side of the house he created the Grotto around a small waterfall on Rydal Beck. There are good views of the Grotto from the contemporary bridge over the beck, whilst below it is a small summer house, which was constructed with a window designed to provide the best frame for a beautiful view of the falls.[48] Sir Daniel's accounts provide a detailed account of the construction of the grotto in 1668, which he refers to variously as "*the Sumer house at the Cawweel*", "*the grothouse*", and "*the grot in the Mill-Orchard*". He documents the time and labour spent on providing slate for walls and roof, window glass and wainscotting. Also listed is work on "*walling and makeing of walkes, and the water-Race, &c in the Mill-orchard*".[49] This summer house is thought to be the earliest known example of a viewing station in the country, pre-dating the Picturesque movement by nearly a century. The window would have framed the view in such a way as to imitate the romanticized poetic landscapes of artists such as Claude Lorraine, the renowned landscape painter of the period. The setting echoes the compositions used by Claude, with trees to left and right, the waterfall as a central feature, and the fells providing a mountainous backdrop, all within the strong contrast of light and shade provided by the small ravine. The park and pleasure grounds created in the late seventeenth century were still much admired in the nineteenth century,

> "*In the woods and in the disposition of the ground around Rydal Hall, there is a charming wildness that suits the character of the scene; and whenever art appears, it is with graceful plainness, and meek subjection to nature. The taste by which a cascade in the pleasure*

[46] Crowder 2005, 21

[47] Collingwood 1928, 86

[48] The ice house, game larder and summer house are all listed buildings, grade II*

[49] Rawnsley 1916, 586

grounds, pouring under the arch of a rude rock, amidst the green tint of woods, is shown through a darkened garden-house, and therefore, with all the effect which the opposition of light and shade can give, is even not too artificial, so admirably is the intent accomplished of making all the light that is admitted fall upon the objects which are chiefly meant to be observed".[50]

Plate 96: Sir Daniel Fleming's grotto, with the Summer House in the foreground, designed to provide the ideal framed view of the falls (© Egerton Lea Consultancy Ltd)

[50] Unattributed quotation in Rose 1847, 5-6

Both the hall and the park continued to develop throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with substantial building additions to the house and enhanced woodland planting in the park. The final significant phase of development was the addition of a formal garden in front of the house by Thomas Mawson in 1909. He designed a rose garden and double terrace with balustrades, steps and topiary. Around the formal garden he added formal tree planting, using exotic imports of American and Japanese conifers, Japanese and other maples, mixed with older sycamores and horse chestnut, arranged carefully to provide a special and stately impression, yet designed to look random.[51]

Rydal Park dominates the development of the landscape, yet other buildings in the township are of historical importance. Most would have begun as tenanted farms and cottages of the estate, and Sir Daniel's accounts and the 1770 estate map demonstrates that many were held by customary tenancy. This would have provided a security of tenure, and helped to create the 'statesmen' yeoman farmers from the seventeenth century.[52] Their prosperity is reflected in the substantial properties they built for themselves, and which were eventually sold off as freehold estates. Amongst surviving buildings in Rydal with sixteenth or seventeenth century origins are Rydal Mount, Cote How, Glen Rothay, The Nab, Hart Head and The Mount.[53] Other land was also sold off, allowing the development of other properties in the nineteenth century. Fox How, Fox Ghyll[54] and Field Foot[55] were three nineteenth century properties, whilst Glen Rothay and Brockstones were existing estates which were sold in 1879.[56] Where properties remained within the Rydal Estate, they were leased out. The owners and tenants of these small estates took the opportunity to add to the Picturesque qualities of the landscape with their own planting schemes. The most famous of these is Rydal Mount, which was the home of William Wordsworth and his family until his death in 1850. The property, which is late sixteenth century in date with seventeenth and eighteenth century extensions, lies close to Rydal Hall and shares many of its views. Some landscaping had been carried out in the eighteenth century, with the creation of the Main Terrace, and this was added to by Wordsworth, who built three other terraces, including the Green Terrace in Dora's Field.[57]

The connection to Wordsworth and the Romantic movement, attracted other literary figures to Rydal. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the poet Hartley Coleridge, eldest son of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, lived at The Nab until his death in 1849, whilst Edward Quillinan, a poet married to Wordsworth's daughter, Dora, lived at Loughrigg Holme, and Fox Ghyll was the home of the writer Thomas de Quincy. In 1834, Dr Thomas Arnold, the headmaster of Rugby School, built and lived at Fox Ghyll, which also became the holiday home of his son, the poet Matthew Arnold. The Knoll was built by the writer and pioneering feminist, Harriet Martineau, in 1844. The novelist Mrs Gaskell was a visitor to The Knoll, as was Charlotte Bronte, who also visited Fox Ghyll.[58]

HLC Landscape Character

The HLC mapping of the area at least partly reflects the dramatic topography and dominance of surrounding fells. The two largest categories of landscape

[51] Rydal Park and garden, including the area of the old hall and cricket ground, is a registered park and garden, grade II
[52] Rollinson 1996, 66-7
[53] All are listed either grade II or II*
[54] CROK WDX/379/Pl/186; both are listed grade II
[55] CROK WD Cr/4/208
[56] CROK WD Ry/Box 12
[57] Rydal Mount in on the Register of Parks and Gardens, grade II
[58] The literary associations of these properties are outlined in the listed building descriptions

type are unenclosed land, at 353 hectares, and intakes, at 1,009 hectares, which together make up 62% of the total area of Rydal.[59] Woodland, covering 316 hectares, makes up another 15%, and much of this is on the lower fellsides, in areas of intakes. This southern part of Rydal is dominated by Loughrigg Fell in the centre of the Rothay and Brathay valleys, which forms the largest single area of unenclosed land, with a small area at Dow Bank on the western edge, and part of Heron Pike above The Nab. Intakes cover most of Rydal Fell as well as Little Loughrigg, the south-east

which is shown on the estate map of 1770,[60] suggests that sheep grazing was also important. It is names relating to the land as a former hunting ground that dominate, however, with references to Buckstones, Far Swine Crag and Near Swine Crag. Without access to documentary sources, the former existence of a deer park was not discernable by the HLC mapping process.

The coverage of around 15% woodland cover is above average for the Lake District National Park, whilst the proportion of ancient woodland to

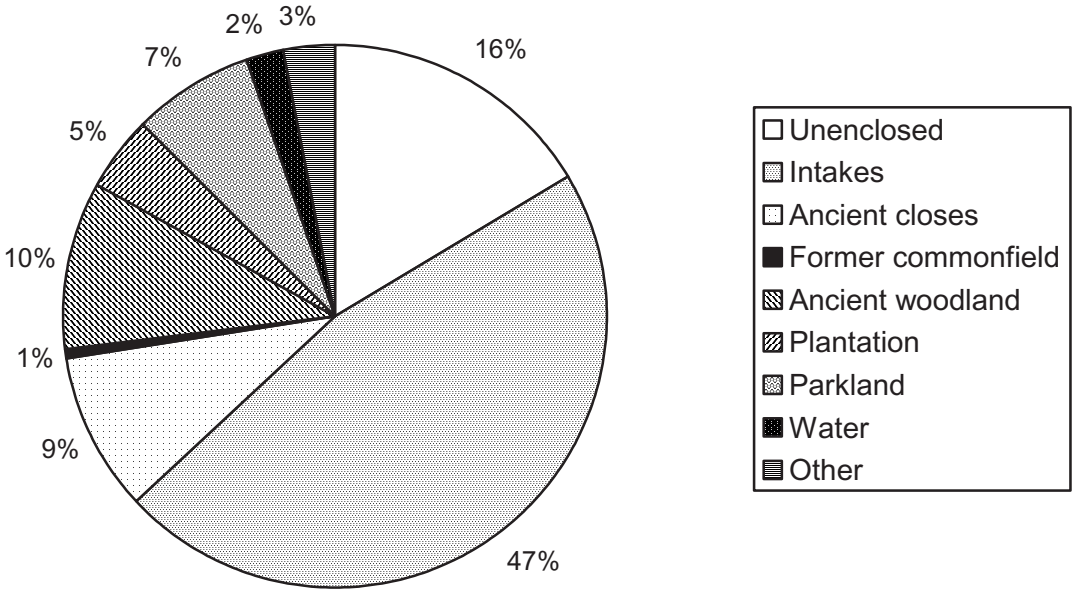

Figure 81: The proportions of historic landscape types in Rydal. 'Other' refers to roads, settlement and caravan sites

quarter, and the southern and northern edges of Loughrigg Fell. Many of the intakes in the upper part of the Rydal Valley are large and have been interpreted as cow pastures, and these would have been created privately by the Fleming family to provide more controlled pasturage for their own stock. Their use as cow pastures is supported by the presence of place names, such as Calf Cove below Great Rigg, but the presence of sheepfolds, at least one of

plantation, at around two thirds, is nearly twice the average for the Park.[61] Although the HLC mapping was limited in its definition of ancient woodland to areas of deciduous woodland shown on the first edition OS maps of the mid-nineteenth century,[62] it reflects quite well those areas defined as ancient woodland in the Cumbria Inventory of Ancient Woodland,[63] which includes

[59] Unenclosed land and intakes are shown on figure 83

[60] CROK WDB/35/184
[61] See the chapter on Woodland and Water
[62] See figure 84 for 1st edition OS map
[63] Phillips 1994, Map 35

much of the woodland around the edges of Loughrigg Fell as well as Rydal Park. HLC picked up the areas of deciduous woodland planted on Rough Intake to enhance the views from Rydal Park, but has mistakenly identified Baneriggs between Rydal Water and Grasmere as plantation, when the inventory defines it as ancient semi-natural woodland, and Sir Daniel Fleming's memoirs record timber being taken from there.[64] Low Wood and other woodland on the eastern edge of Loughrigg Fell have also been defined as plantation by HLC, though they are ancient woodlands in the Inventory, but the HLC is correct in this instance, as the Inventory categorised it as replanted.[65]

Rydal Park is a major individual landscape feature in the historic character area, covering 152 hectares although the area defined as ornamental parkland does not include all the area within the registered park.[66] Much of the High Park is defined principally as woodland, rather than as park, and the area of the old hall is defined as ancient enclosure, with woodland on the knoll containing the ruins of the hall. It is not possible for the two-dimensional process of the HLC to map the ornamental landscape elements of Rydal adequately, as the enhancement of the Picturesque landscape goes far beyond the physical bounds of the landscape park, and is intimately bound up with the farmland, the views of the fells and ornamental planting in gardens.

The anciently enclosed land, which covers 215 hectares is dominated by single dispersed farmsteads, and is confined to the narrow valleys of the Rivers Brathay and Rothay.[67] Only two small areas of possible former commonfield were identified by the HLC, on the north side of Loughrigg Tarn at Loughrigg Howe, and on the north shore of Rydal Water, near The Nab. Much of the enclosed land at Rydal would have been farmed directly by Rydal Hall, but small parcels of land are identifiable around the older farmsteads, such as The Nab, Cote How, Hart Head, Crow Howe, Tarn Foot and Skelwith Bridge. Older settlements such as these were identified during the mapping process by reference to the late eighteenth century county-scale map of Thomas Jeffreys,[68] whilst listed building descriptions have confirmed that some contain material dating to the sixteenth century. The dominance of craggy pasture, the lack of good farmland, and the dominance of the large Rydal estate would have always limited the amount of settlement in this area, and that is reflected in the dating categories assigned to much of the settlement. The only significant nucleated settlement of pre-1770 date is Rydal itself, though up to the late post medieval period, it would have comprised only Rydal Hall and a couple of other farms. Other nucleated settlements, such as Skelwith Bridge and Clappersgate, date largely to the nineteenth century, and reflect the growing popularity of the area for visitors, and the growth of holiday homes.

Conclusion and Summary

The HLC mapping of Rydal fairly reflects its historical development, though it is inevitable that the complexities and meanings behind that development are lost at the scale at which mapping was carried out. The dominance of intakes on the fells is significant, as they go up to the highest point of the township, as far as Fairfield. The reasons behind this significance are not clear without further research, however, and it is only by understanding the tenurial history of Rydal that this becomes apparent. The control of almost the whole township as the demesne land of one estate meant that there were no pressures to use the fells as common grazing. This allowed the lordship of the estate to farm it as it wished, which included the enclosure of

[64] Phillips 1994, Map 35; Tyson 2001
[65] Woodland is shown on figure 85
[66] See figure 86 for ornamental parkland
[67] Anciently enclosed land is shown on figure 87
[68] Jeffreys 1770

large areas in order to control grazing for its own stock. The poor quality of the land and low population levels would have removed the pressure to retain farmland, allowing landowners, particularly the Rydal Estate, to carry out schemes of ornamental tree planting. It also made it easier to sell or lease existing farms and cottages to non-farmers. Thus properties were available for purchase and rent for incoming middle-class intellectuals and interested followers of the Picturesque and Romantic traditions, such as the poets associated with Wordsworth.

One of the attractions of the area for Wordsworth and his associates is likely to have been the park and pleasure grounds at Rydal Hall, which were created as an idealised landscape as early as the late seventeenth century. Indeed, the gardens at Rydal Hall presaged many of the landscape ideals encompassed by the Picturesque and Romantic movement. In general, it can be said that the key influences on the landscape of Rydal are geology and nature, which were enhanced to conform to a particular landscape vision.

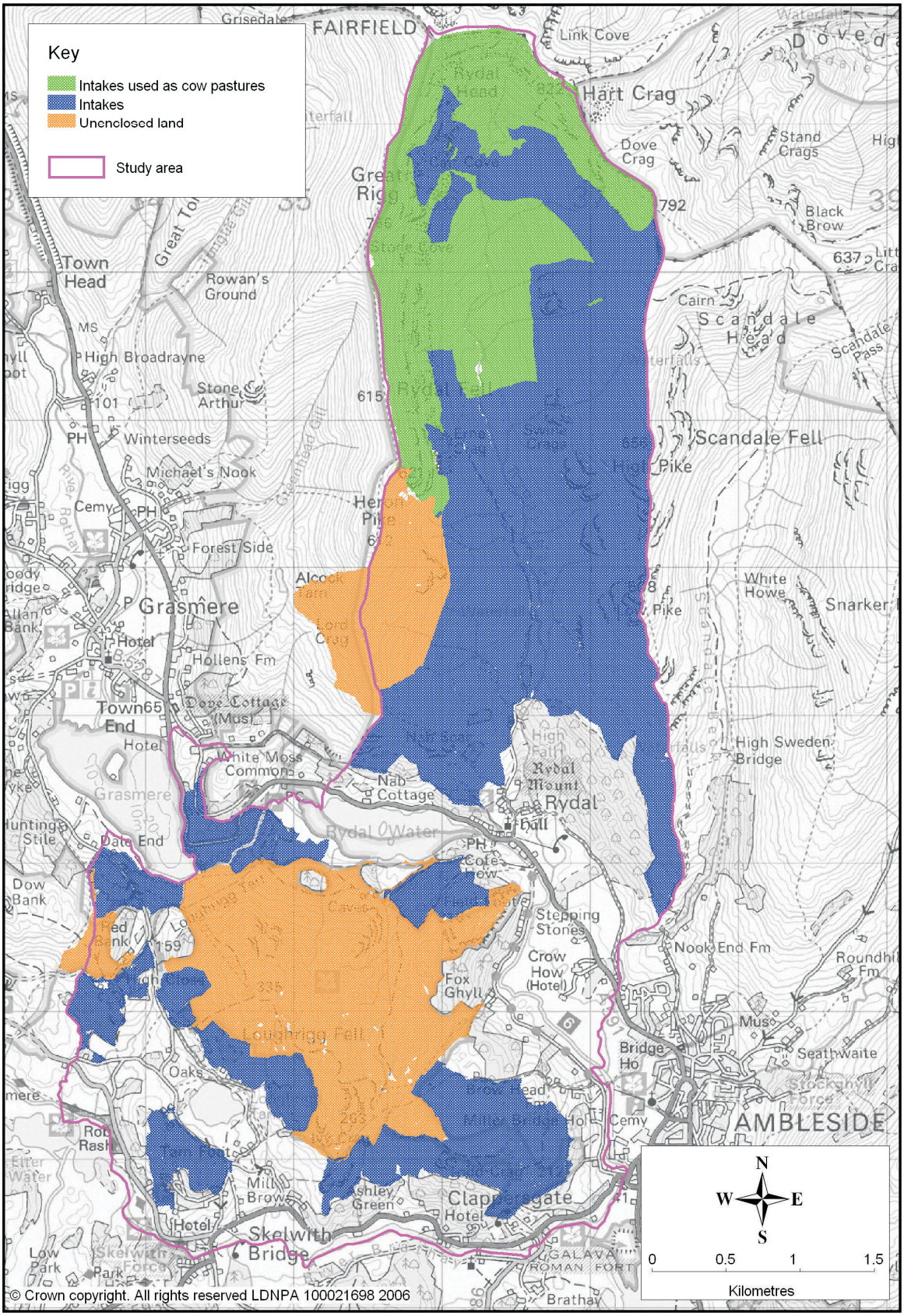

Plate 82: Unenclosed land and intakes in Rydal. The predominance of these landscape types reflects the dramatic topography of the township

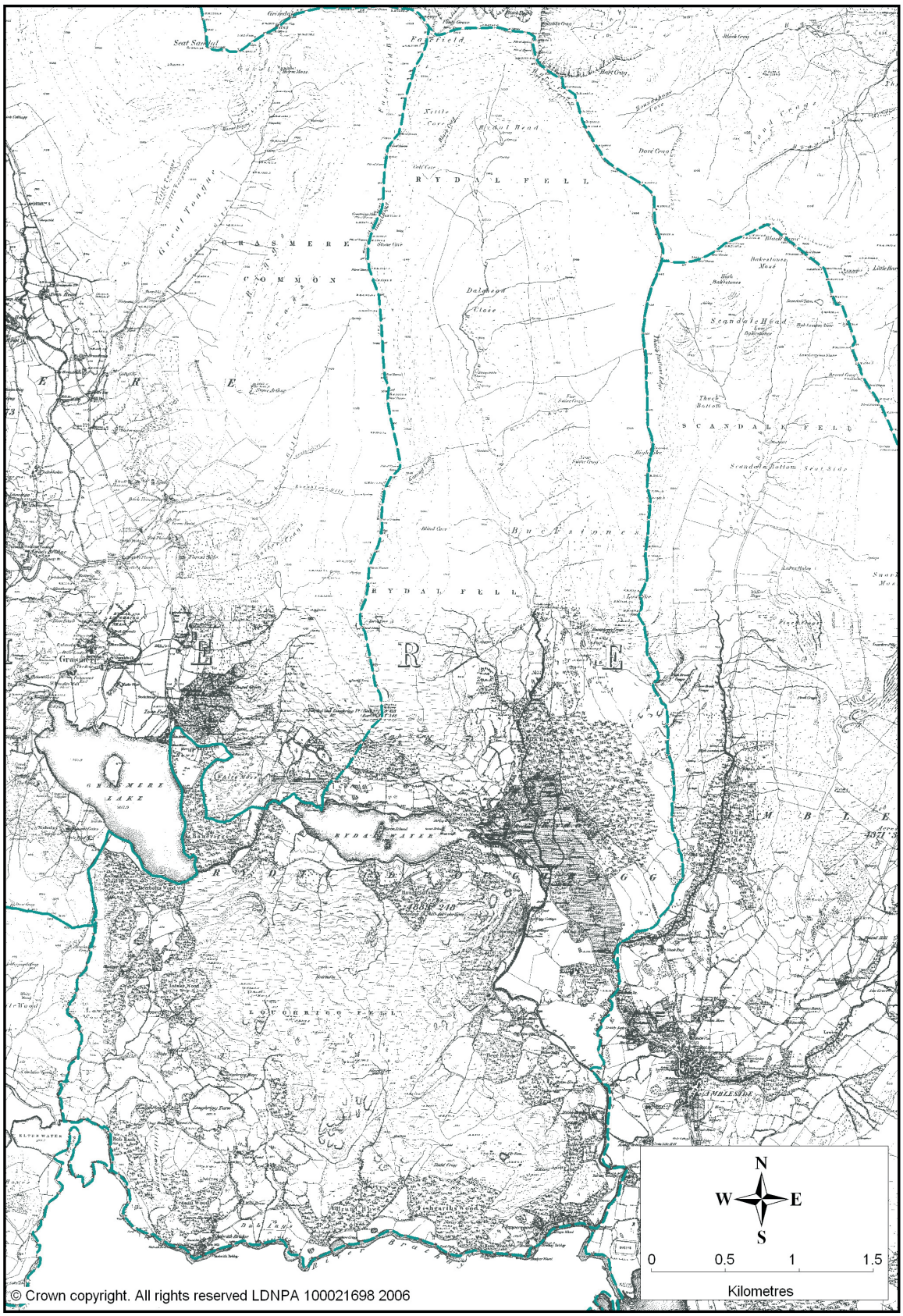

Plate 83: Rydal as shown on the OS 1st edition map. Rydal Park shows up as a dominant feature, with large areas of woodland

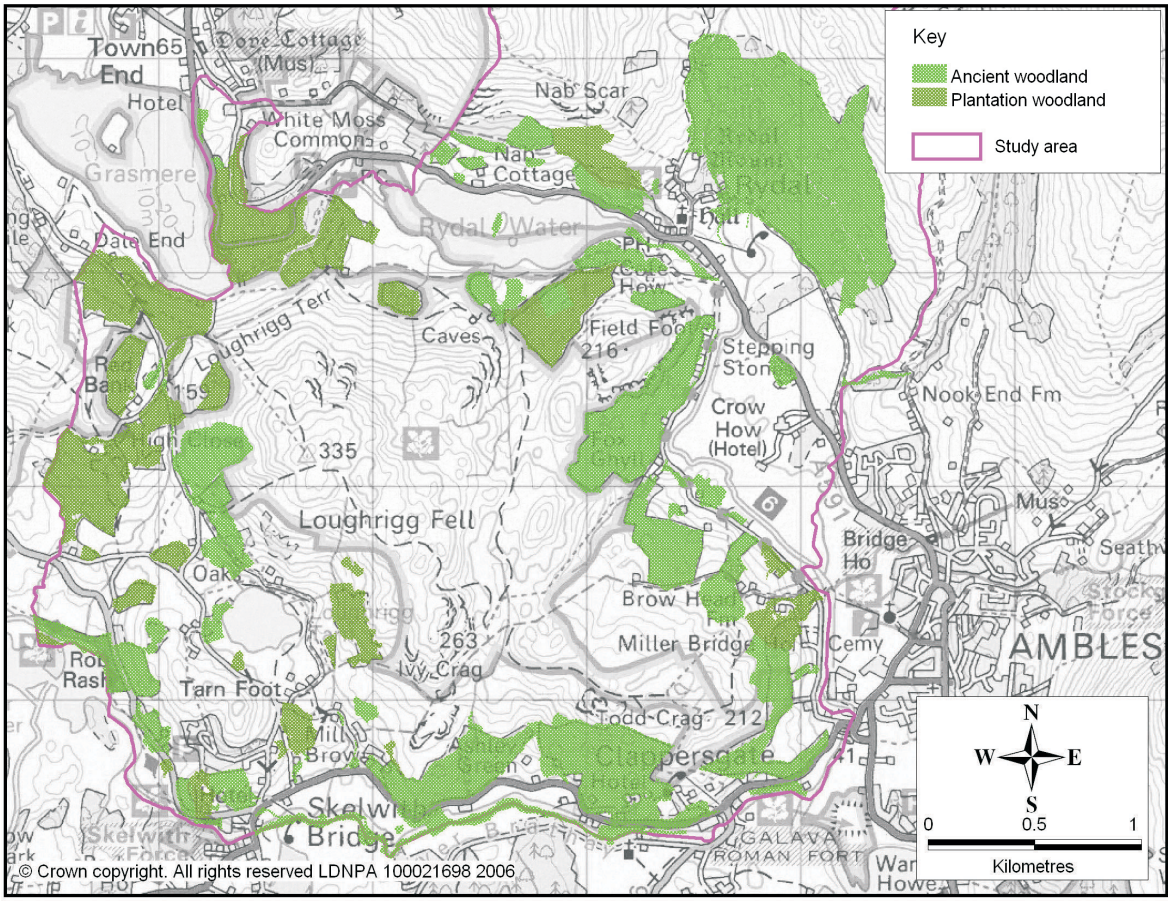

Plate 84: The distribution of woodland in present-day Rydal. The large block of ancient woodland towards the top of the map is mostly woodland pasture

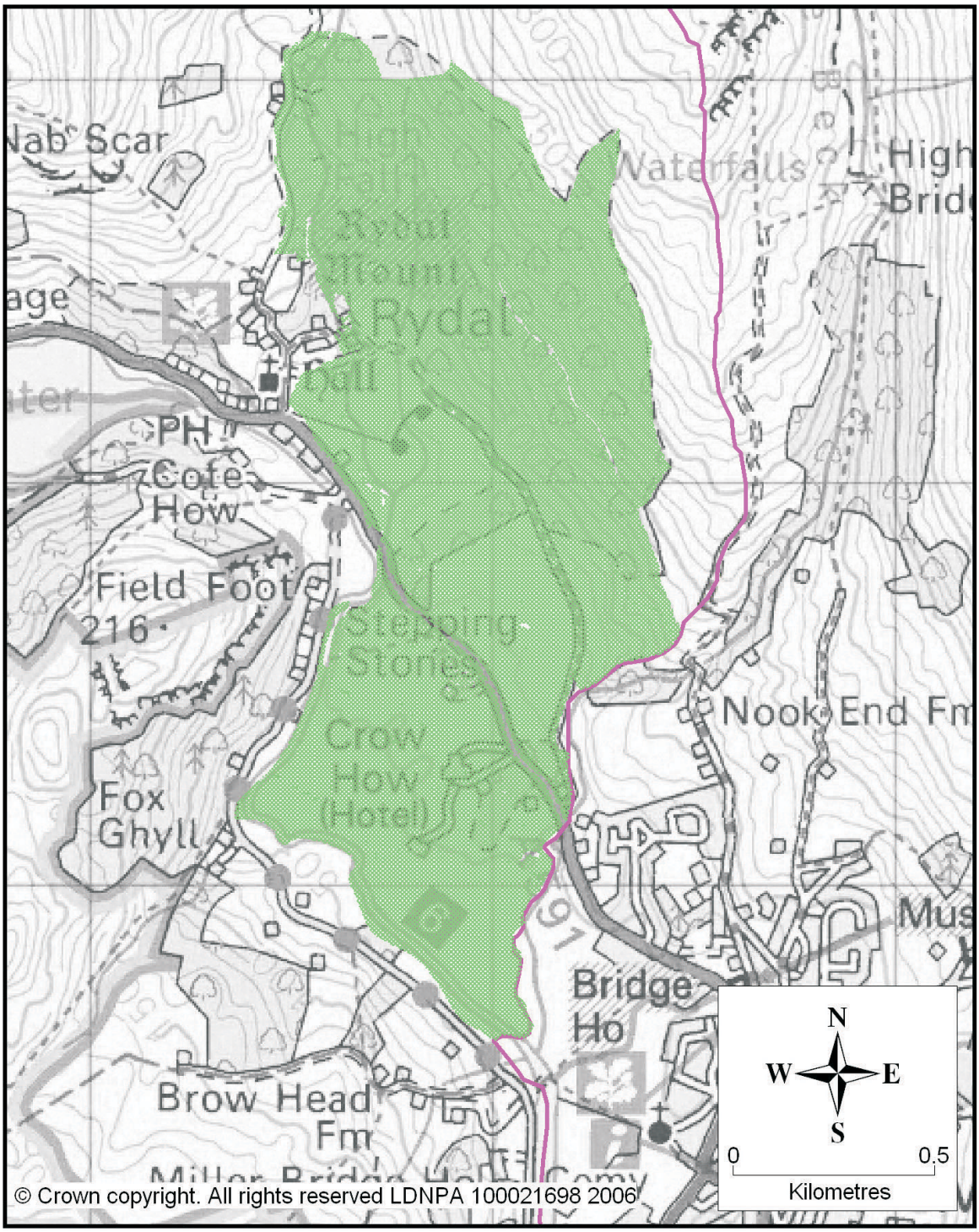

Plate 85: The area of registered park and garden for Rydal Hall. The HLC was not able to identify all of this area as ornamental parkland through the mapping process

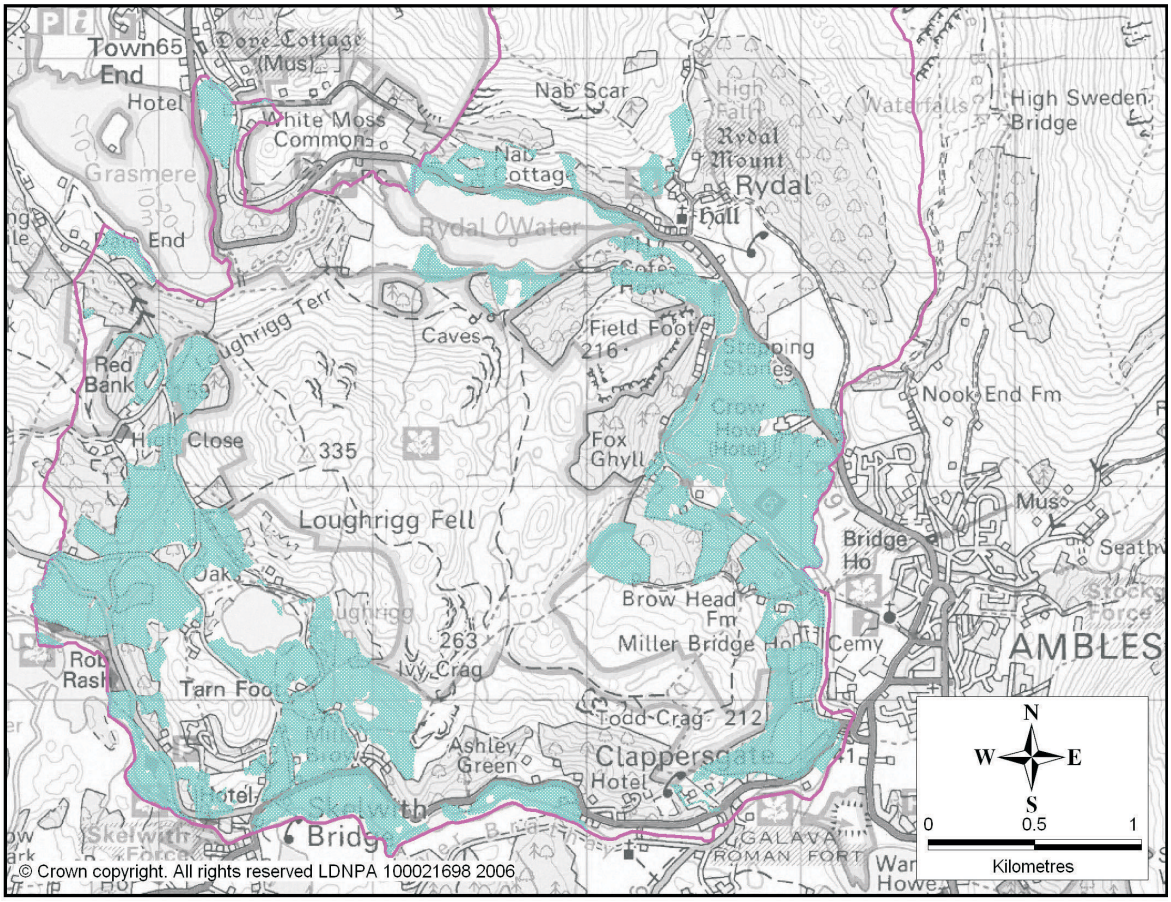

Plate 86: Areas of ancient enclosures at Rydal. The dominance of high fell across the township severely restricted the areas which could be enclosed and improved for farming. Faint ridge and furrow within the lower slopes of the park at Rydal Hall indicate that these, too, were once cultivated