

### Station III

#### West's Description

This station was located on the shore between Wallow-crag and Stable-hills (NY 267 215) and at the time of West's visit was on the edge of the common land. Two huge fragments of "ferruginous coloured rock, pitched into the side of the mountain by their descent"<sup>40</sup> added to the sense of the sublime. The station afforded particularly good views of the islands (Lord's-island was richly dressed in wood while the positioning and shape of the islands were considered particularly pleasing) and the white church of Crosthwaite with the strong background of Skiddaw added to the picturesque. The opposite shore was bounded by a range of hills whose skirts descended in gentle slopes ending in cultivated ground. The whole western side of the lake was considered more beautiful than words could express and contrasted violently with the southern extremity of the Lake with Falcon-crag and the forest of broken rocks forming a "horrid



Plate 103: View across to Lord's Island from Station III (© Archaeo-Environment Ltd)

*amphitheatre*". The immediate margin of the lake was more gentle with meadows and pasture up to the foot of the rocks. Over a border of hedgerow trees, Lowdore-house could be seen under Hallow-stone crag which was covered in soft vegetation. Beyond it the "awful craggy rocks that conceal the pass into Borrowdale, and at their feet a stripe of verdant meadow, through which the Derwent serpentizes to the lake in silence".<sup>41</sup>

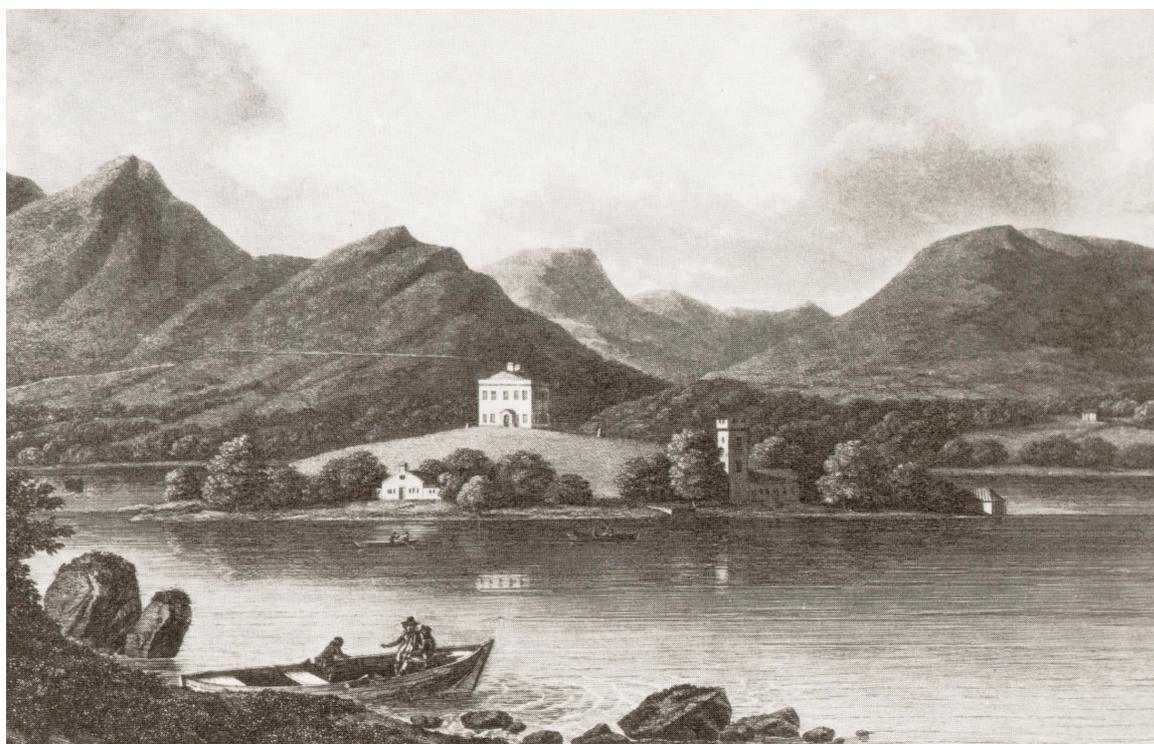


Plate 104: Pocklington's Island (Derwent Isle) by John "Warwick" Smith 1795

<sup>40</sup> Bott 1994, 89

<sup>41</sup> Bott 1994, 91-2

### The Islands

There are seven permanent islands and one occasional island on Derwentwater. Of these only four are large enough to be mapped in any detail and so only Derwent Isle, Lord's Island, St Herbert's Island and Rampsholme Island are included here. These islands in contemporary eighteenth century paintings are shown with considerably less woodland cover and Derwent Isle in particular has clearly visible buildings. Today these buildings are only visible from the Keswick ferry as it passes between Derwent Isle and the west bank and from Station VI. The 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map (1867) 1:10,560 depicts the islands with woodland cover, but St Herbert's Isle and Rampsholme Island do not appear to be particularly densely wooded. This would have pleased Gilpin who in 1778 wrote that to be beautiful the island should be irregular in shape and "*ornamented with ancient oak, rich in foliage, but light and airy*". However if the islands are round and "*the wood upon it be thick and heavy...it can never be an object of beauty*".<sup>42</sup>

Today, Gilpin would struggle with the round and heavily wooded Lord's Island (see above). Wordsworth<sup>43</sup> also seemed to be troubled by the islands on Derwentwater. He suggested that they "*were neither fortunately placed nor of a pleasing shape; but if the wood upon them were managed with more taste, they might become interesting features in the landscape*".

Derwent Island was first known as Hest Holm in the thirteenth century when it was given to Furness Abbey by Alice de Romilli who changed its name to Vicar's Island. Leland referred to the island as being "*full of trees, like a wilderness*" in 1539,<sup>44</sup> but its character was to change dramatically in 1569 when it was sold to the Company of Mines Royal. The new owners tidied up the island, removed stones and dug up hedges and weeds. They built a brewery and a bakehouse, a pigeon cote, a pigsty and a windmill. They also laid out a garden and planted an orchard of some 300 apple and pear trees, dressing the ground with manure transported by cart from Lady Radcliffe's estate over the frozen lake in winter.



Plate 105: Derwent Isle today from the west side (© Archaeo-Environment Ltd)

<sup>42</sup> Gilpin 1788, 103

<sup>43</sup> Wordsworth in Bicknell 1984, 79

<sup>44</sup> Bott 1994, 19

Considering the small size of the island this was a considerable development, but by the middle of the seventeenth century all that remained was “*a little ruinous house*”. West writing in 1776 still referred to it as Vicar’s-island “*with a hut upon it, stript of its ornamental trees, by the unfeeling hand of avarice*”. In 1778 the island was bought by Mr Polkington who built a mansion on it, together with a mock fort, church and boat house<sup>45</sup> and he planted trees round the perimeter with paths leading to his creations.<sup>46</sup> One of his more bizarre creations was the ‘ghost tree’ which was an unfortunate oak, stripped of its bark and branches and painted white. Some of the visitors to King Pocky’s “*Paradise Island*” were impressed with his “*improvements*” but many were appalled. Perceptions of beauty had changed and the landscape matured by the fourth edition of West’s book when the editors added a footnote suggesting that if West could see Vicar’s-island now, he would believe it to be “*one of the most beautiful spots in the whole compass of the tours*”. Pockington was to be responsible for many other changes, including the popularisation of the Bowder Stone and the construction of Barrow Cascade House on the eastern shore of Derwentwater. He then had the waterfall enlarged behind his house and doubled its height.<sup>47</sup> All these improvements to nature took place after West’s death but were referred to in later editions by subsequent editors.

As a broadly strategic tool dealing with landscapes on a large scale, HLC is not able to represent these many changes to landscape character on Derwent Isle, but could at least indicate that the islands had gone through significant change. However in this instance it failed to characterise Derwent Isle in any way. Despite being heavily wooded today it was not identified as being wooded, neither was it identified as ornamental parkland. Such small

omissions have no great impact when working on a strategic scale, but do matter when making informed management decisions for specific land holdings. Therefore HLC data does need to be checked on the ground before embarking on a new management regime.

St Herbert’s Island was named after a saint contemporary with Cuthbert who had a cell there. Wordsworth wrote a poem about him and claimed to have seen his remains. A chapel was built on the island in the fourteenth century. In 1777 the island was “*heretofore full of wood, which grew about a little house called St Herbert’s hermitage*”.<sup>48</sup> In 1761, the then owner, Sir Wilfrid Lawson cut down all the old trees and replanted the island. HLC has failed to characterise Herbert’s Island as having any tree cover presumably on the basis that very little was shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map, although Lawson’s trees must have been over 100 years old by then. The second edition however showed considerable tree cover.

The margins of the lake were well wooded as was Lord’s Island in the centre of the lake when West was writing (referring to Station VIII) and another unnamed island (Rampsholme presumably) was cultivated and fringed with trees. Only Lord’s Island has been characterised by HLC as having ancient woodland cover.

A less well known island on the lake is the ‘floating island’ recorded by a number of authors in the eighteenth century, but not West. It appears occasionally in the bay below Lodore and the hotel has apparently kept records of its appearance for many years. This mass of tangled vegetation appears when marsh gases (upon which it rests at the bottom of the lake) become trapped in the weeds and carry the ‘island’ to the surface.<sup>49</sup> As an ephemeral feature, HLC does not record

<sup>45</sup> Wordsworth in Bicknell 1984, 162

<sup>46</sup> Bott 1994, 53

<sup>47</sup> Bott 1994, 54

<sup>48</sup> Nicholson and Burn 1777, 84

<sup>49</sup> [www.lakelandscape.co.uk](http://www.lakelandscape.co.uk)



Plate 106: Redundant enclosure on the west bank of Derwentwater (© Archaeo-Environment Ltd)

it, but it has been known to stay visible for as much as 14 weeks at a time.<sup>50</sup>

So even in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there appears to have been conflicting ideas of what beauty consisted of with West admiring the richly wooded isles, Gilpin considering them to be lacking in beauty and Wordsworth suggesting that they needed more tasteful management in order to be interesting landscape features. Historic Landscape Characterisation has, unsurprisingly, not identified any changes in boundary patterns on the islands. However none of the islands feature in any HLC interpretation except Lord's Island which is characterised as consisting of ancient woodland. While the contemporary accounts would agree that woodland was located on the islands, the eighteenth century paintings are generally of islands with very little vegetation, perhaps because they were considered more picturesque without dense woodland cover.

#### *Views to the West Bank Today*

At first glance, the west side of the lake does not appear to have changed significantly since West's visit. However

a more detailed examination of the western shore clearly shows significant landscape change. West referred to cultivation along the lake edge and while no arable fields are to be seen now, former enclosures can be identified by differential vegetation growth marking out the boundary walls (see plate 105). It is unlikely that they would have been used for cultivation and are too small to have been identified by the HLC process.

Since West's visit much of the western side of the lake has been redesigned to create ornamental parkland and while this has now reached maturity and is not easily distinguished from across the shore, or from aerial photographs, it has clearly gone through quite radical changes since the eighteenth century. HLC has successfully identified parkland at Lingholme to Hawes End, but has inexplicably failed to identify Foe Park, Brandlehowe Park or Manesty Park, nor has it characterised an area of parkland simply known as The Park, which should have been enough to flag up its status.

<sup>50</sup> Winter 1997, 163

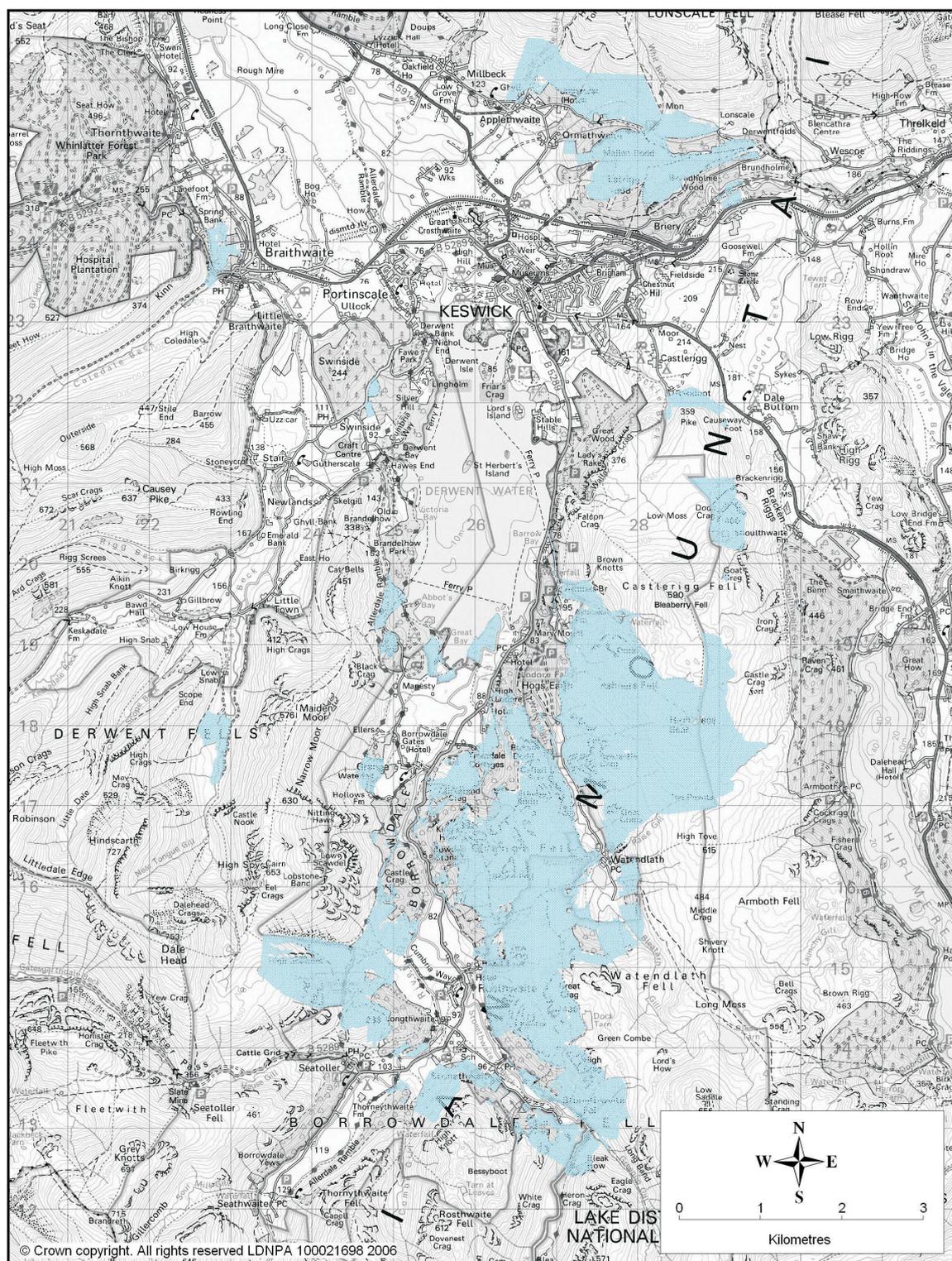


Figure 91: Intakes in the Derwentwater area as identified by HLC. The methodology has failed to pick up small redundant intakes on the west bank (plate 105) as they could only reasonably be identified through examination of aerial photographs or fieldwork. It does show the predominance of intakes on high ground above Rosthwaite which reflects its earlier farming tradition and on Latrigg to the north. The presence of these intakes was confirmed through fieldwork (see Stations IV and VII)

The distribution of ornamental parklands is examined more closely under Station VI.

HLC records and characterises the landscape created by human action, but Gilpin noted that the natural features were less subject to change, "*the water remaining unaltered by time and the rocks, and mountains, which environ the lake, are as little subject to variation, as any of the materials of landscape can be*".<sup>51</sup> However significant changes were already taking place in the natural environment. The woodlands at that time had already suffered considerably from destruction after the earl of Derwentwater forfeited his lands to the king after taking the wrong side in the 1715 rebellion. His land was passed to the Trustees of the Greenwich hospital, who immediately realised their asset by felling all the trees for timber around Foe Crag. By 1772 when Gilpin was writing, the land around Keswick had long lost its trees and "*Few however now remember it in its splendour*".<sup>52</sup> Gilpin was particularly concerned that the methods of tree felling in the north did not allow trees to regenerate naturally. Entire woodlands were sold and felled, whereas in the more 'civilized' south only mature trees were felled and the younger ones left within enclosures where they could grow to maturity. It is clear therefore that considerable changes in landscape character were being made in the eighteenth century around Derwentwater.

HLC has identified two forms of woodland cover today; ancient woodland and plantation woodland. This is based on coverage as depicted on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map dating to the 1867. If it was present in the 1860s it is designated as ancient and later woodlands are plantations. Because of the long history of felling and replanting, this designation adequately reflects the character of the landscape today but does little justice to

the long history of change which has taken place.

This examination of the HLC changes in woodland cover around Derwentwater also raises concerns about the designation of woodland as being 'ancient' or 'plantation' which might inadvertently attach values, for example ancient woodland being of more historic value than plantation. It is clear that in areas designated as being plantation that they are replacements of ancient woodland in existence before the eighteenth century and that ancient woodland might be a result of eighteenth century plantation. The ancient plantation at Cockshut Hill consists of modern trees on an ancient site and so is no more historic than the plantations on Foe Crag. It is therefore important that raw HLC data is not used to attach values to different landscape types.

### *The Station Today*

The station itself is no longer on the edge of common land; indeed the land was enclosed around the station by the time of the publication of the OS map in 1867. HLC has identified the adjacent fields as woodland plantation and ornamental parkland and the presence of rhododendron bushes which now obscure the views from the station would certainly seem to confirm the latter interpretation.

The station today is still much used by walkers and is a favourite spot to stop and admire the Lakeland scenery. A chair has been placed on the station allowing relaxed views across to the west side of the Lake. However the growth of a particularly large rhododendron bush and some Scots Pine has obscured the views across to the islands and now it is necessary to head a little to the north to see over the vegetation. With a little judicious pruning and lopping West's station could be returned to its eighteenth century form.

<sup>51</sup> Gilpin 1788, x

<sup>52</sup> Gilpin 1788, xi

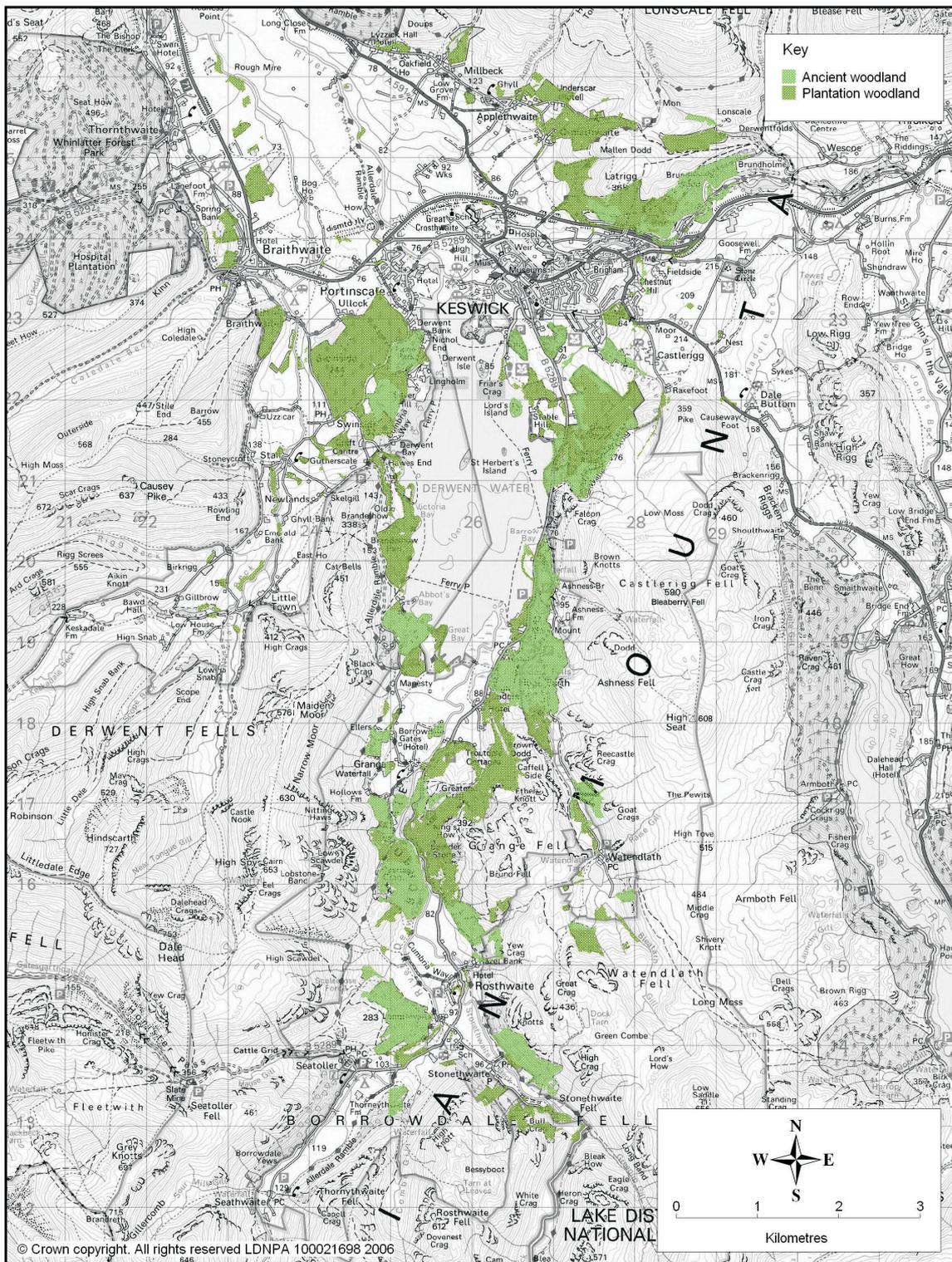


Figure 92: Woodland Cover around Derwentwater as defined by HLC. The plantations above the north west bank of Derwentwater are a replacement of woodland felled in the eighteenth century and plantations to the south west at Brandlehow are part of an ornamental parkland and should have been characterised as such. Of the four islands, now all heavily wooded, only Lord's Island was identified as having any woodland cover by HLC. Cockshut Hill (Station I) on the north-west bank is correctly identified as having ancient woodland cover, although the present day trees are replacements of those seen by West



*Plate 107: View south to Castle Crag from Station III (© Archaeo-Environment Ltd)*

#### Station III Summary Recommendation

A small amount of pruning or lopping of bushes would restore the views of the islands.

## Station IV

### *West's Description*

In 1789 fine views could be obtained from the top of Castle-crag in Borrowdale (NY 24950 15930); of the lake and the vale of Keswick, the village of Grange at the foot of the crag, and the white houses of Keswick, with Crosthwaite church at the lower end of the lake. Behind these the land was cultivated with “*a beautiful mixture of villages, houses, cots, and farms, standing around the skirts of Skiddaw...*” The ascent to the station was by a narrow path created to carry down slate quarried from the top. The station also provided views to the south in Borrowdale where the “*triangular vale, completely cut into inclosures of meadow, enamelled with the softest verdure, and fields waving with fruitful crops*” contrasted with the “*most horrid, romantic mountains that are in this region of wonders*” which surrounded it.<sup>53</sup> The route into Borrowdale included the “*Bowdare-stone*”, described as lying like a ship on its keel. The road wound around its base and extensive woods decked the steep sides of the pass where “*rock riots over rock*”. The scenes here were considered so subliminally terrible, “*the assemblage of magnificent objects so stupendously great, and the arrangements so extraordinarily curious, that they must excite the most terrible feelings of wonder and surprise...*”<sup>54</sup>

Even by 1789 the perceptions of the landscape were changing due to the familiarity of the scene and the increase in management for tourism. The route into Borrowdale had been perceived by Gray to be dangerous, only three years prior to his visit a rock fall had blocked the pass, the huge fragments still lying scattered around and he declined to proceed further than the Grange. By the time of West's visit the pass was being carefully kept open and had been improved, but the sense of awe and

majesty remained. On the summit of Castle-crag, West believed there to have been an ancient fort, probably of Roman origin but subsequently used by both Saxons and the monks at Furness (who bought Borrowdale in 1209) to guard the pass. In more recent times the land was quarried and a lead pan with an iron bow and smelted iron found.<sup>55</sup>



Plate 108: Partially obscured views from Station IV (© Archaeo-Environment Ltd)

### *Views to the North Today*

HLC research would suggest that the views from the station to the north should be broadly similar to those of the eighteenth century as the majority of fields consist of ancient closes and ancient woodland. No planned eighteenth to nineteenth century enclosures have been identified at the south end of Derwentwater, the only examples being near Keswick and Lattig. However a substantial amount of new woodland planting near Grange to the north post-dates West's visit. The views of Crosthwaite and Keswick have changed in scale but not in general impression. Interestingly the landscape character of Crosthwaite was first referred to in 573 AD when St Kentigern set up his cross in Crosfeld. According to the twelfth century 'Life of St Kentigern' “*He remained some time in a thickly planted place, where he erected a cross as the sign of the faith, whence it took its name in English “Crosfeld”...*”<sup>56</sup> which referred to the cross in a clearing.

<sup>53</sup> West 1789, 94-5

<sup>54</sup> West 1789, 96

<sup>55</sup> West 1789, 93, 95

<sup>56</sup> Winter 1997, 110



Plate 109: Unobstructed view north from Station IV including the village of Grange in the foreground (© Archaeo-Environment Ltd)

So there is somewhat tenuous evidence of woodland being cleared in the sixth century AD.

The settlement at Keswick retains white houses although West and Gray may have been surprised at its growth. It is no longer the “*poor little market town*” described by Leland during the reign of Henry VIII<sup>57</sup> nor is it “*greatly decayed*” or a “*mean little village*” as described in 1749 and 1772<sup>58</sup> which would therefore describe its perceived character when West was visiting. The church tower at Crosthwaite remains prominent in the landscape, but only on a clear day. The view north is more difficult to obtain now due to tree growth in front of the station and only one small area can still be used for views, nevertheless it is still broadly as it was in the eighteenth century and a little judicious pruning would restore the eighteenth century viewpoint.

### *The Views to the South Today*

The approach on foot to the station from the south has not changed significantly, although Gray may have been delighted by the ease with which cars can travel into Borrowdale past the Bowdar Stone, now a National Trust attraction. The road into Borrowdale was not built until 1842 and before its construction visitors such as West and Gray had to use a packhorse track via Watendlath.<sup>59</sup> The narrow path to the summit of Castle Crag is still picked out from shale waste and is perhaps better suited to goats than fieldworkers. The vale of Borrowdale remains a triangular vale but the “*inclosures of meadow, enamelled with the softest verdure, and fields waving with fruitful crops*” have been predominantly replaced with enclosed pasture land.

<sup>57</sup> Winter 1997, 161

<sup>58</sup> Winter 1997, 161

<sup>59</sup> Winter 1991, chapter 6

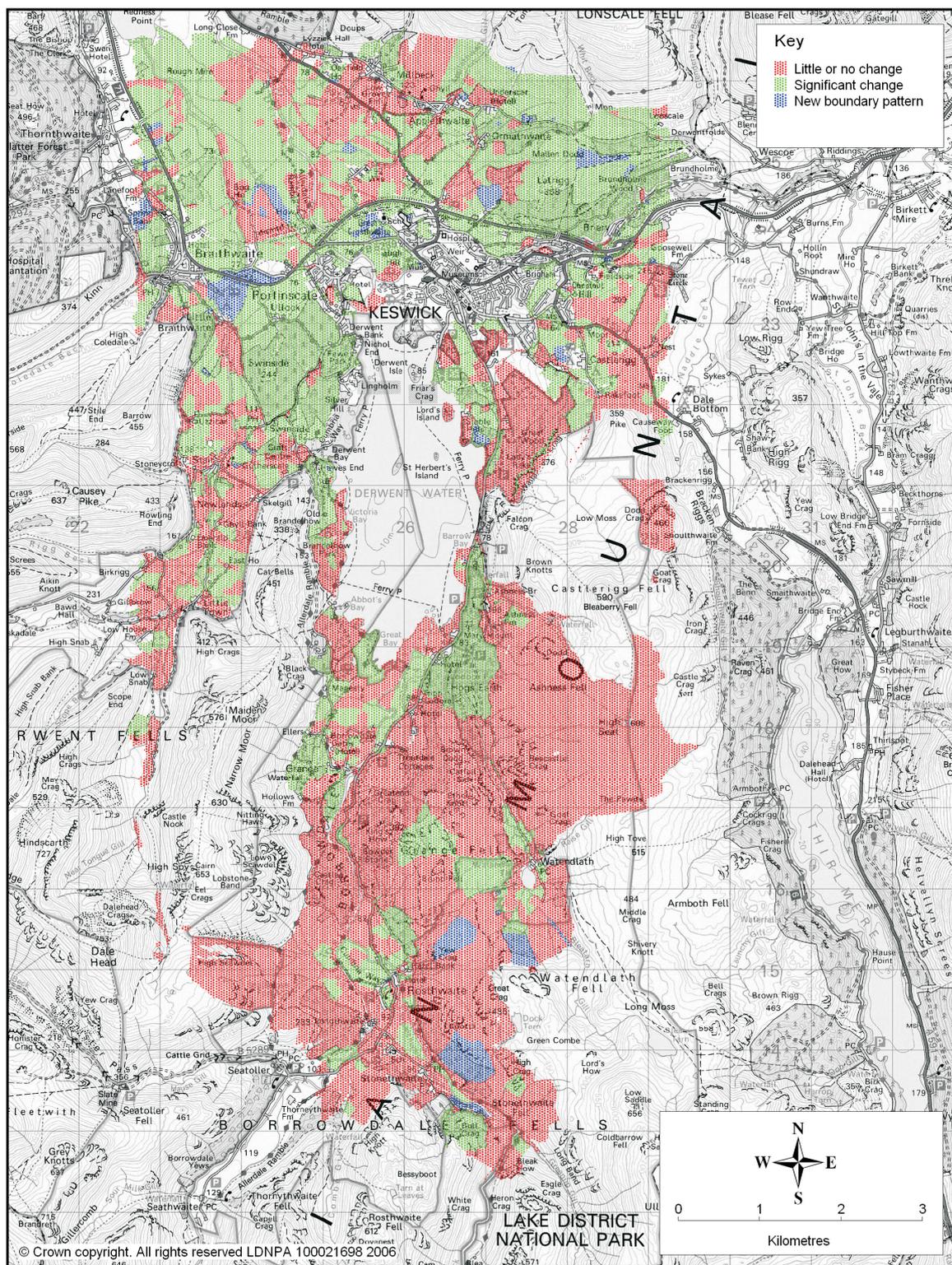


Figure 93: The HLC map shows that the majority of land south of Derwentwater has not undergone significant boundary change. The areas of most change are unsurprisingly around areas of settlement at Grange, Rosenthwaite, Watendlath and Lodore. Some of this land around Rosenthwaite and Grange is also defined as ancient enclosure

The field boundaries in this area are of hedgerows forming a distinctive character from that found on the north side of the station. Many of the hedgerows have deteriorated and now consist of isolated trees. Unless these hedgerows are brought back into active management the landscape character of this area will have changed dramatically within 30 years. HLC identifies most of the fields around Rosthwaite as ancient closes, confirming that the field shapes

are at least broadly that of West's time, however sufficient field boundaries have been altered to result in the fields around Rosthwaite as being designated as an area of significant change. What the identification underlines is the constant minor changes and adaptations which take place in any field system as long as it remains in use and which cannot be identified in detail by HLC. These constant minor shifts in field boundaries do not need to result in a



*Plate 110: Borrowdale and Rosthwaite from Station IV. The 'inclosures' of the eighteenth century remain although many have been slightly altered in shape. The hedgerows have been reduced to individual trees in many instances and the land use has altered from "fields waving with fruitful crops" to pasture. In the future the loss of hedgerows is likely to result in a significant loss of character unless remedied immediately. It is unfortunate that HLC cannot identify this potential loss; only traditional fieldwork can (© Archaeo-Environment Ltd)*

change of landscape character as long as the fields conform to their original scale and distribution. HLC also identifies two areas of common meadow near Rosthwaite thus confirming the continuing presence of West's "*inclosures of meadow*". Johnny's Wood, Frith Wood and High Hows Wood on Castle Crag are identified as ancient woodland confirming the lack of significant change around Rosthwaite.

There is evidence of intaking on both sides of the fells above Rosthwaite and fellside walls advance across the hills, many now tumbled down and redundant. West makes no mention of these intakes and they are not dated here. However a comparison with work in Langdale would suggest that such intakes can date to between the Age of Statesmen (late sixteenth to mid eighteenth centuries) or the Age of Improvement (1750-1870).<sup>60</sup> Now the fell sides are covered in bracken, but it is unlikely that any bracken would have been in evidence in the eighteenth century. HLC maps (see figure 92) confirm the presence of intakes on the valley sides around Rosthwaite "*surrounded by the most horrid, romantic mountains that are in*

*this region of wonders...*". The intakes of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries enclosed existing common pasture on the lower slopes of the fells. These pastures were geographically defined but nevertheless open areas of fell, which had developed from the medieval rights of common grazing on the wastes belonging to the lord of the Manor. Over the years it had become accepted that farmers pastured their cattle on specific areas of the lower fells close to the farmhouse, rather than on the common generally. This would have been similar to the heaving of sheep. Being closer to the farm they could be more easily and practicably enclosed than the sheep heafs.

#### *Station IV Summary Recommendation*

The tops of the trees on the north facing slope of Castle Crag should be pruned to restore the views across the lake to Keswick.

Unless the hedgerows around Rosthwaite are managed there will be a significant change in character in this area and a loss of this landscape type.

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<sup>60</sup> National Trust 2002, figures 7 and 8