

SMALL-SCALE HERITAGE FEATURES SURVEY

Summary Report
November 2023



WESTMORLAND DALES



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PROJECT

The Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership Scheme aims to unlock and reveal the hidden heritage of the Westmorland Dales, which lies to the north of the Howgill Fells in Cumbria within the Yorkshire Dales National Park. This five-year scheme is primarily funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and involves 22 different projects that explore the area's natural and cultural heritage.

One of these projects focusses on Small-Scale Heritage Features. The aims of the project were twofold – firstly to provide training to volunteers, and connect them to their local environment, and secondly to increase our understanding of historic environment data in these villages.

The survey was carried out in 10 settlements across the Westmorland Dales scheme area. These settlements are well dispersed and offer a good sample of the small-scale heritage features that can be found, as well as contributing to an area's sense of place and local identity.

The survey focusses on small scale and utilitarian heritage features. Examples include churn stands, datestones, and gate stoops.

Fieldwork was undertaken by volunteers and apprentices, using public rights of way networks around each settlement to carry out a level 1 survey.

The results will contribute to a greater understanding of the Westmorland Dales settlements and their development. The records have been used to enhance the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority's Historic Environment Record.



Figure 1 Letter box dating to the reign of Queen Victoria.

WESTMORLAND DALES SETTLEMENTS

All of the settlements in the Westmorland Dales have origins in the medieval period. In some cases, this is indicated by the earthworks in the fields surrounding the settlement. The terracing of the landscape is evidence of medieval arable agriculture. Most of the villages' planforms originate in the medieval period, with two parallel lines of tofts and crofts backed by lanes (as shown in *Figure 2*).



Figure 2 An artist's impression of a Westmorland Dales village in the late-medieval period, by Allan T. Adams.

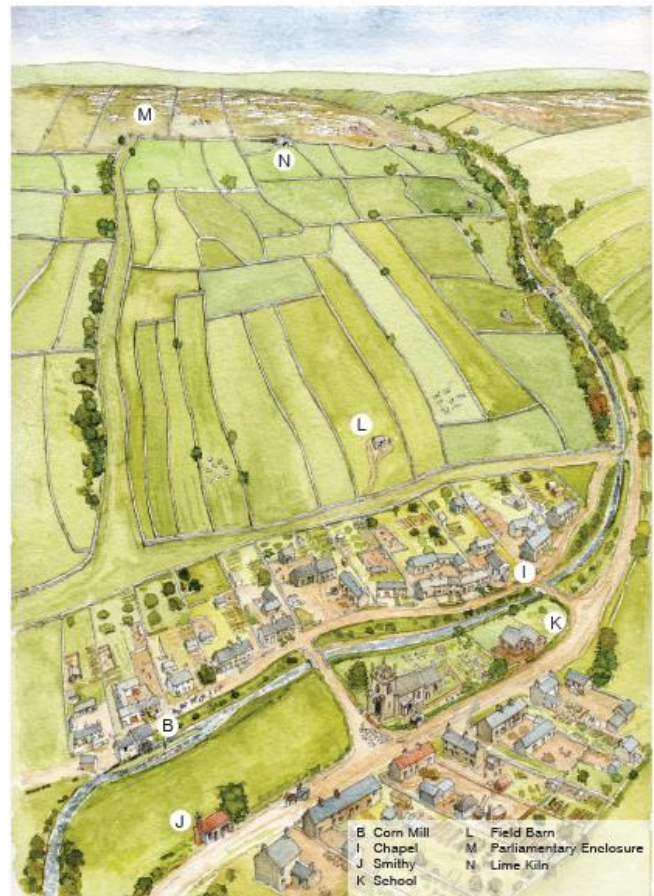


Figure 3 An artist's impression of the same village in the 19th century, by Allan T. Adams.

The settlements developed through the post-medieval period, with farmsteads rebuilt and the construction of further communal buildings (for instance chapels and schools). This development is reflected in the datestones found around the village. Small heritage features also reflect a change in agriculture, from a mixed arable and pastoral system of the medieval period, to one dominated by pastoral farming in the later post-medieval period.

RESULTS

The survey produced a detailed report for each settlement which is available separately. This is a simple overview of the results. In total, 794 features were surveyed across 10 settlements.

Crosby Garrett	117	Nateby	48
Crosby Ravensworth	96	Newbiggin-on-Lune	43
Great Asby	105	Orton	105
Little Asby	10	Ravenstonedale	110
Maulds Meaburn	76	Tebay	84

Table 1 A table showing the number of small-scale heritage features recorded in each settlement surveyed.

A number of different features were found, including –

Boot Scrapers	13	OS Benchmark	17
Bridge	40	Gate Piers	12
Churn Stands	20	Sheep Creep	4
Datestones	78	Stile	61
Gate Stoops	289	Telephone Kiosk	5
Letter Box	14	Water Smoot	34
Memorials	13		

Table 2 A table showing number recorded by small-scale heritage feature.

Many datestones were recorded, with examples dating from the 17th to 21st centuries. However, many are not in their original location as they have been moved and relocated with later rebuilding on the farm and in the village.

Despite this, many date from the ‘Great Rebuilding’, a period of regional rebuilding in stone in the late 17th and through the 18th centuries.

A large number were found on chapels, halls and schools.





Milk churns were placed on churn stands to be collected by the milk cart/lorry. They typically date from the coming of the railway until the 1970s when milk was collected by tanker. At this time there was also a decline in the number of dairy farms, and again after the Foot and Mouth outbreak in 2001.

Churn stands reflect a change from the local production of cheese and butter, to the export of milk to towns and cities. This had not been possible before the railway allowed quick transportation.

Churn stands are located on roadsides, and as such are vulnerable to being hit by vehicles. Other stands have been removed, and timber stands have disintegrated.



The largest number of features surveyed were gate stoops. These stone blocks are found on either side of gateways. However, they are vulnerable to removal, in part due to modern agricultural vehicles being wider.

Gate stoop (left), squeeze stile (right)





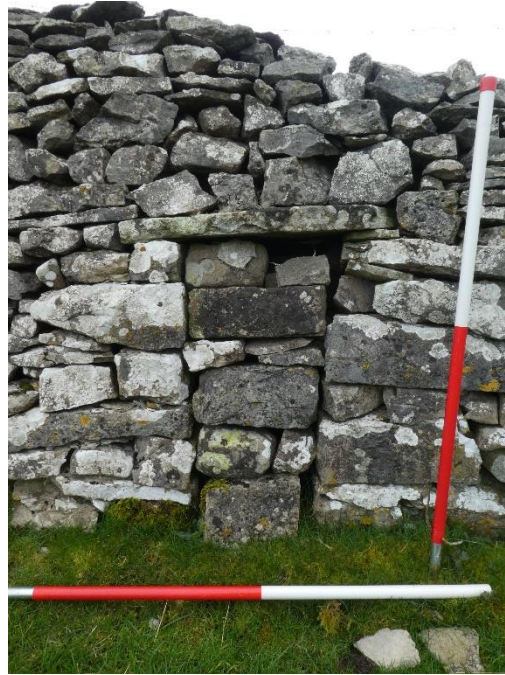
Stiles come in a variety of forms. In the Westmorland Dales they are typically 'step' or 'squeeze' stiles. They are usually found on public rights of way, to allow walkers to move from one field to another. Increasingly, stiles are being replaced by gates to make routes more accessible.

Dovecotes can be freestanding buildings, however in the Westmorland Dales they are commonly found in the gable ends of farm buildings (and in the porch of some farmhouses). They were typically for nesting pigeons, which along with doves, were an important food source historically, but were also kept for their eggs and feathers.



Mounting blocks were usually located outside public houses or churches, on the main street, or on some farmsteads. They were used by people to mount their horse. They were common features until the late 18th century, when wheeled vehicles became more commonplace.

Sheep creeps (also referred to as hogg holes, cripple holes, or sheep smoots) are gaps in walls that allow sheep, often lambs, to move between fields. There are usually blocked following changes in farming methods and changes in land ownership.



Several telephone kiosks were surveyed, this included three in Tebay that date to the 1990s and two K6 telephone kiosks. Of the K6 type, one dated from pre-1953 (the Tudor Crown) and one from post-1953 (the St Edward's Crown).

The majority of these now house defibrillators.

Memorials come in a variety of forms. The majority were war memorials. However, other features surveyed commemorated Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation and one of Queen Victoria's Jubilees.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Please note that this summary report has been created using reports written by the Westmorland Dales Team.

