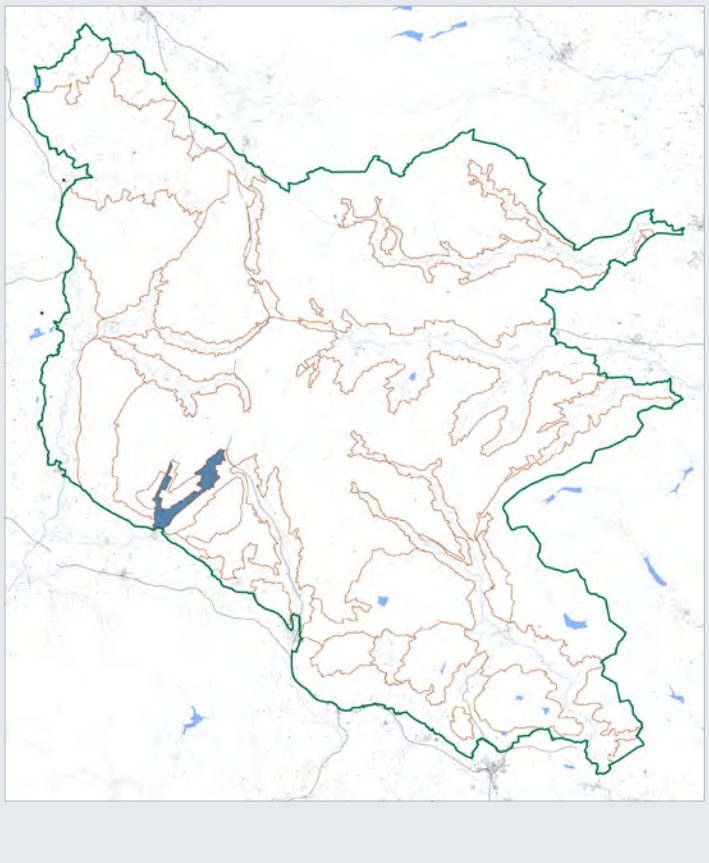
Twistleton Scars, from Springcote

LCA 12 Chapel-le-Dale

Yorkshire Dales National Park Landscape Character Assessment

YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

LCA 12 Chapel-le-Dale



Key characteristics

- Deep glacial dales, with varied profiles that reflect the underlying bedrock; North Craven Fault creates abrupt shift in character to south where rivers step down over a series of waterfalls and have incised steep wooded glens within a broader dale.
- The steep, high summits of Ingleborough, Whernside and Gragareth loom high above the dales
- Prominent outcropping stepped limestone scars and screes line the valley sides.
- Watercourses are partially visible and often below ground within limestone areas; by contrast there are torrential flows where the rivers cut through the Ingletonian rocks to the south.
- Patterns of stone wall enclosures accentuate the local landform, with straight limestone walls crossing the U-shaped dales and extending straight up and onto the steep valley sides, unobstructed by rocky scars
- Strongly contrasting landscape patterns, with wooded glens in the Ingleton Glens, starkly open pastures within minimal tree cover within Lower Chapel-le-Dale and Kingsdale and well treed valley landscape within upper Chapel-le-Dale
- Limited settlement; a string of hamlets along historic packhorse route in Upper Chapel-le-Dale, but dispersed and often isolated farmsteads elsewhere
- Historic routes through the dales, including the Roman Road from Ingleton to Bainbridge via Chapel-le-Dale
- Quarries (disused and active) exploiting the rich seams of Ingletonian bedrock

Landscape context

The Chapel-le-Dale landscape character area (LCA) comprises the twin dales of Kingsdale to the west and Chapel-le-Dale to the east, which have eroded the flanks of the high Millstone Grit capped uplands of Ingleborough and Whernside. These are deep glacial valleys with a distinctive identity.

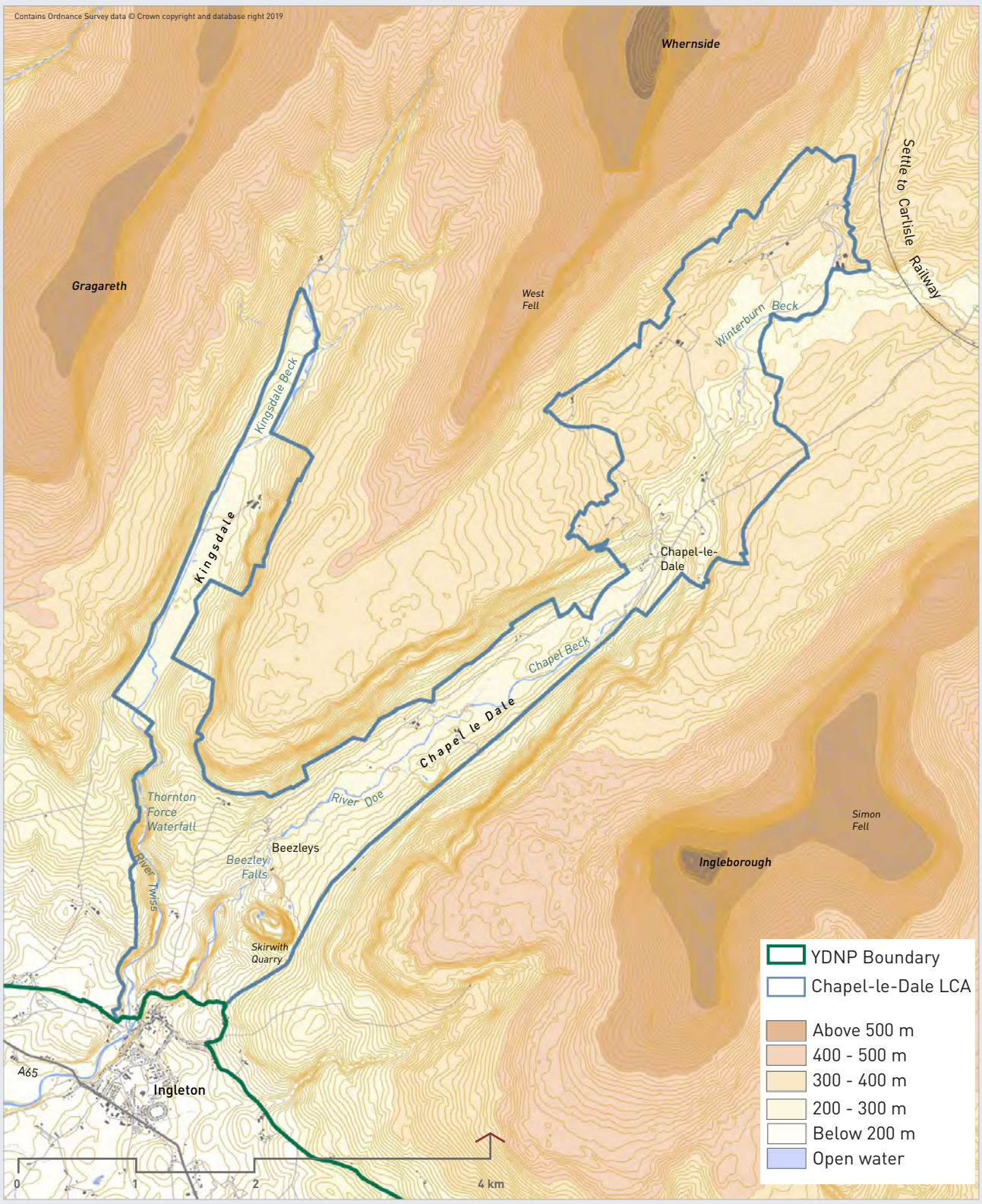
The surrounding bedrock is dominated by Great Scar Limestone, which outcrops as dramatic linear, banded scars along the high valley sides. Above the limestone, the steep stepped upper slopes of Ingleborough and Whenside are formed from rocks of the Yoredale series, with caps of Millstone Grit forming the landmark flat-topped plateau summits that dominate views from the adjacent dales.

In the upper part of Chapel-le-Dale, the Winterburn Beck has cut down into the limestone bedrock to form a relatively broad, undulating dale. However, there is a sudden change in the character and topography of the dale at the hamlet of Chapel-le-Dale. To the south of this point, the valley narrows and then becomes a deep, straight U-shaped trough; the Chapel Beck has cut deeper into older Ingletonian rocks of the Precambrian period, with limestone bedrock exposed on the upper dale sides and the stepped profile and cliffs surrounding the summit of Ingleborough high above the dale to the east.

To the west, the smaller Kingsdale is enclosed by limestone uplands. Both Chapel-le-Dale and Kingsdale are dominated by the huge, consistent limestone scars which follow the contours on both sides of each dale, emphasising the rocky, carved character of these dramatic glaciated valleys.

The North Craven Fault cuts across Chapel-le-Dale at Beezleys and defines a sharp shift to limestone bedrock and a series of spectacular waterfalls as the Rivers Twiss and Doe cut through steeply incised short wooded valleys and gorges surrounded by undulating valley slopes.

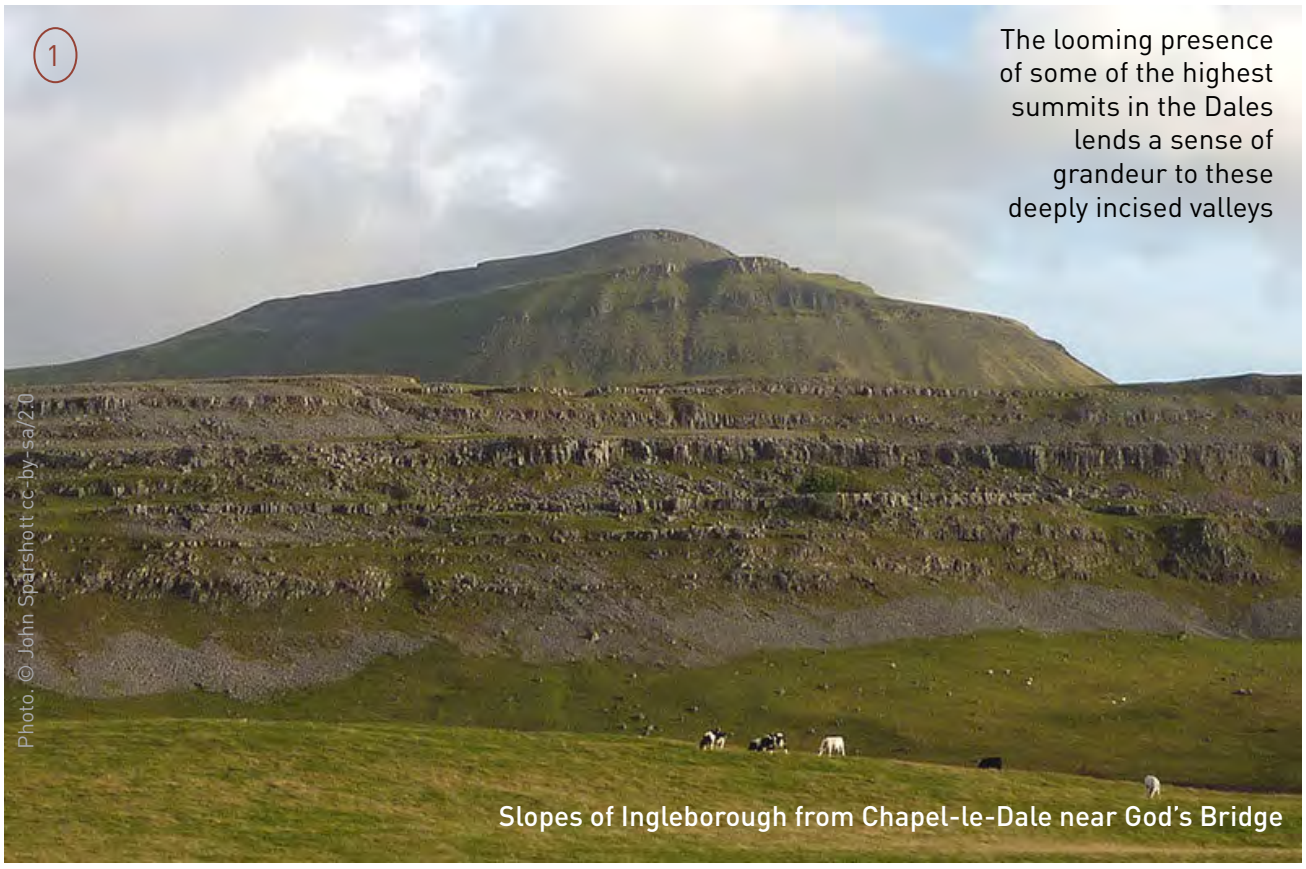
Landscape context: Chapel-le-Dale





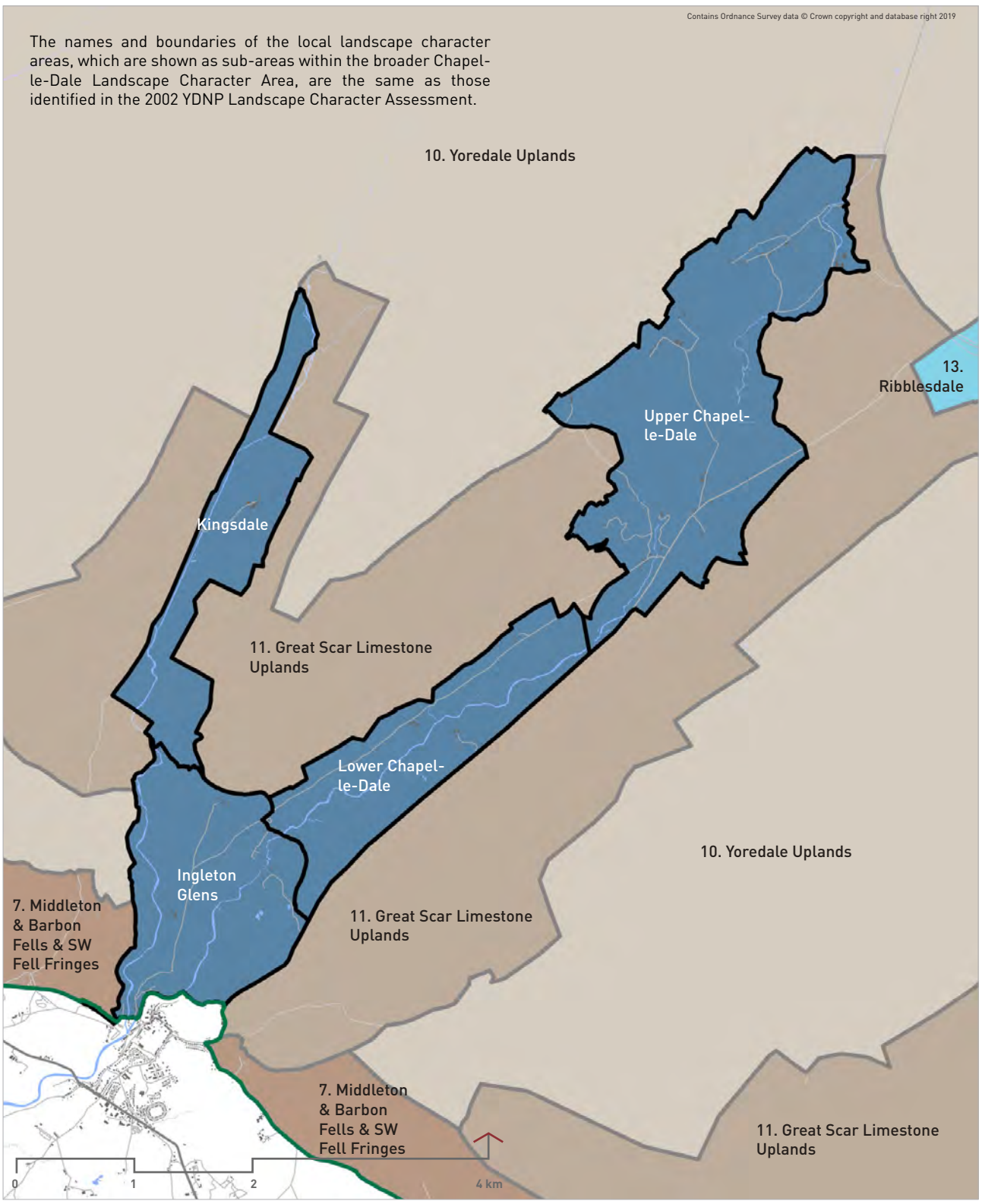
Chapel Beck flows through a short narrow, wooded glen within the hamlet of Chapel-le-Dale

Numbered photographs illustrate specific key natural, cultural and perceptual features in the Chapel-le-Dale LCA (see page 8)



Slopes of Ingleborough from Chapel-le-Dale near God's Bridge

Landscape character: Chapel-le-Dale



Landscape character

The principal variations in landscape character at a local scale are:

- **Ingleton Glens** – the lower part of Chapel-le-Dale at its junction point with Kingsdale, extending southwards to the National Park boundary. This is a diverse faultline landscape of steep wooded glens interspersed by contrasting elevated farmland and quarries, overlying limestone and Ingletonian bedrock.
- **Lower Chapel-le-Dale** – an open, straight U-shaped valley underlain by Ingletonian rocks, deeply incised between the looming summits of Ingleborough and Whernside and dominated by banded limestone scars and screes.
- **Upper Chapel-le-Dale** - Undulating, broad upland dale underlain by limestone, with an undulating valley floor. Well treed and with pastoral character.
- **Kingsdale** – a small hidden limestone dale, steeply incised from surrounding limestone upland areas.

A simple landscape pattern in Kingsdale; Braida Garth Wood is a semi-natural ancient woodland



Braida Garth Kingsdale

Distinctive landscape character

The landscape of the Chapel-le-Dale LCA was shaped by the erosive action of glacial ice, which scoured the deep U-shaped profile of Kingsdale and Chapel-le-Dale. Within Kingsdale, glacial moraine impounded meltwater to form a temporary lake; the flat valley floor within this dale and the shallow but steep banks at what would have been the lake's margins are evidence of this post glacial landscape.

Both valleys have a remote, rocky character, dominated by the dramatic banded limestone scars, which line the upper valley sides. They are dominated by the imposing summit of Ingleborough projecting above the scars to the east and the steep ridges of Whernside to the north and Gragareth to the west.

There is minimal settlement; only the small hamlet of Chapel-le-Dale and isolated farmsteads along the roads and tracks below the scars. The name Kingsdale means 'Valley of the Vikings' and the present-day linear pattern of isolated farmsteads seems to reflect that of the early Norse Vikings, who established a very thinly dispersed settlement pattern at the dale heads in the 10th century.

Superimposed on the erratic lines of prehistoric footpaths, the first well-built roads were constructed by the Romans. The road between Bainbridge and Ingleton, which passes beneath Twistleton Scars, was the major Roman road in the area and is still recognisable in places by its straight lines. Packhorse traffic created new bold high lines over the fells; the Craven Way climbs out of Dentdale to a high level route over the bleak northern slopes of Whernside before linking the line of farms down from Ellerbeck at the head of Chapel-le-Dale. At Kirby Gate it traversed the length of Scales Moor and from there to Ingleton. In 1751, the main turnpike from Richmond to Lancaster provided a major route through Wensleydale and then followed the Roman road from Bainbridge to Ingleton via Chapel-le-Dale.

The railways provided the impetus for the development of quarries on a commercial scale. The Skirwith Quarry, near Ingleton, extracts Ingletonian rock for road building and Silurian slates for roofing, exploiting the rich seams of Ingletonian rock that are exposed along the North Craven Fault.

Ingleton Glens

South of the North Craven Fault, which cuts across Chapel-le-Dale at Beezleys, the abrupt change in the underlying rock (from the Ingletonian series to the north of the faultline to limestone in the Ingleton Glens area) creates a diverse landscape character. The steeply incised wooded valleys and gorges of the River Twiss and Doe cut winding courses through the valley, the rivers crossing the faultline via a series of spectacular waterfalls including Thornton Force, Hollybush Spout and Pecca Falls on the River Twiss and Beezley Falls, Rival Falls, and Snow Falls on the River Doe. These deep wooded gorges are largely invisible from the surrounding landscape and are cloaked by ancient broadleaved woodland, which is often supplemented by mixed plantations that extend up the dale sides.

The open, elevated pastures that surround the glens are divided into medium sized irregularly shaped fields with scattered trees and hay meadows, enclosed by drystone walls. There are small areas of bracken and rough pasture on the upper slopes.

The large active quarry at Skirwith Bridge, with its stepped ledges, structures and piles of grey Ingletonian roadstone, is visible as a massive scar on the side of Ingleborough when viewed from the opposite valley side. The landscape is also peppered with the remains of former quarries, including at Meal Bank, Storrs Common and close to Snow Falls.

Lower Chapel-le-Dale

An open, straight U-shaped valley, which is deeply incised between the looming steep upland ridges and summits of Ingleborough to the east and West Fell (a southern extension of the Whernside ridge) to the west. This part of Chapel-le-Dale is underlain by rocks of the Ingletonian series and, in contrast to the well-treed limestone landscapes to the north and south, it has only very sparse tree cover and a stark, open character which is dominated by the densely stepped limestone scars and screes of the upper valley sides.

The River Doe meanders across the valley bottom, disappearing and re-appearing beneath its bed, rarely visible as a feature within the landscape and marked only very occasionally by trees. Superimposed upon this landscape is a regular pattern of straight walls enclosing medium to large pastures which extend up and across the near vertical scars. The pattern of walls, and the straight roads which run either side of the valley, serve to emphasise the straight alignment of the valley sides.

The use of local limestone for field stone walls and the occasional isolated farm buildings create a strong unity of character throughout the dale. Settlement is limited to scattered farms and isolated grander houses including Dale House and Twisleton Dale House, which are sheltered by a few trees.



Sheltered hamlet of Chapel-le-Dale



Historic pattern of walled pastures on the outskirts of hamlets within Upper Chapel-le-Dale

2

Multiple deep potholes, sink holes and caves on the limestone uplands enclosing the dales



St Leonard's Church, Chapel-le-Dale

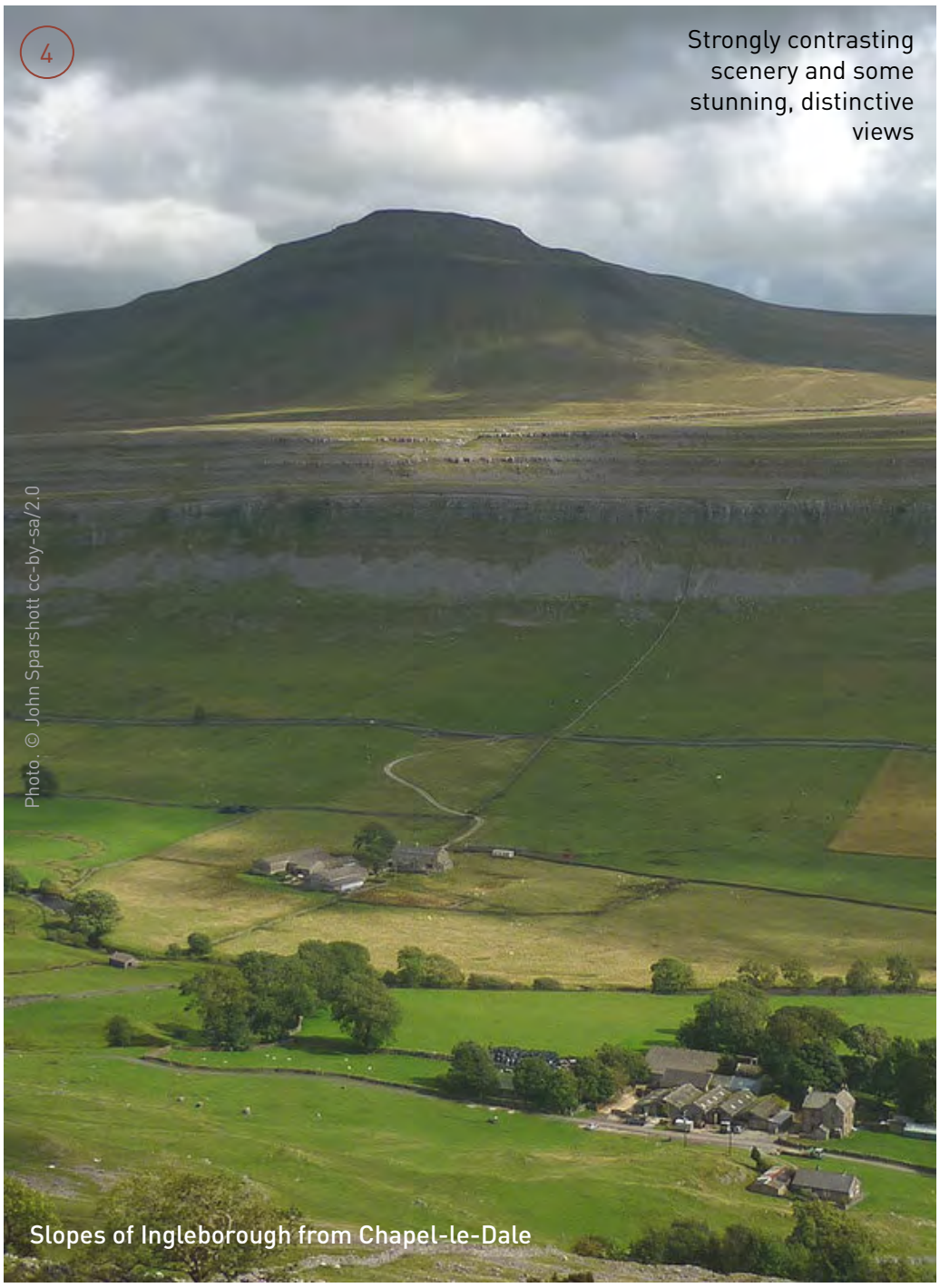


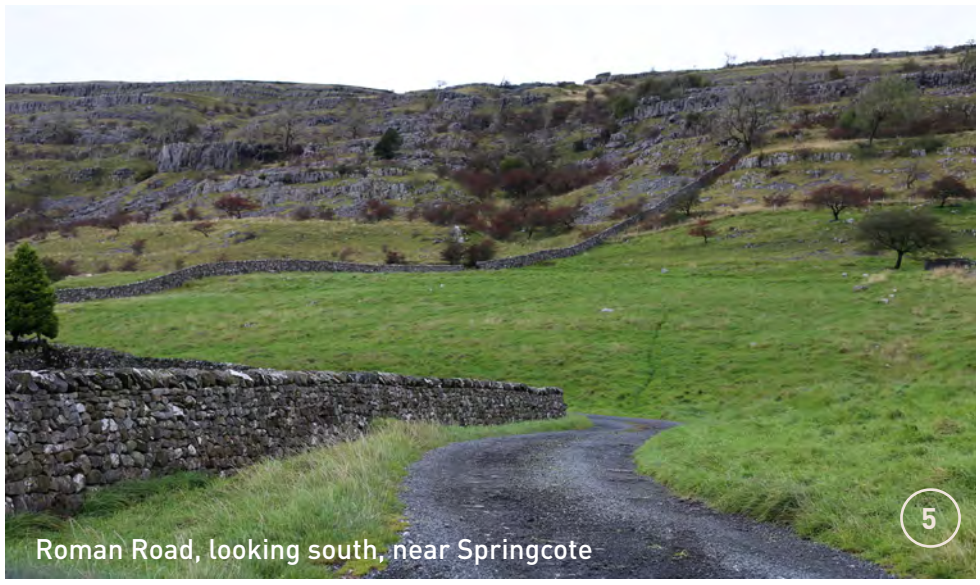
Photo © Gordon Hatton cc-by-sa/2.0

Hurtle Pot

3

Numbered photographs illustrate specific key natural, cultural and perceptual features in the Chapel-le-Dale LCA (see page 8)





Historic routes, including a Roman Road along Chapel-le-Dale and packhorse over Scales Moor and through Upper Chapel-le-Dale





Upper Chapel-le-Dale

North of the limestone spur known as 'God's Bridge', the valley of Chapel-le-Dale narrows as the limestone scars enclosing the dale draw together and the roads running either side of the valley in the lower dale converge at the hamlet of Chapel-le-Dale. Above Chapel-le-Dale, the dale broadens out and becomes more open, with broad, gently farmed slopes to the north and a more rocky moorland character to the south. The dale head is enclosed by the impressive Ribblehead Viaduct (within the Yoredale Uplands LCA 10).

Winterscales Beck, which drains the upper dale, follows a winding course across an undulating and hummocky valley floor. The beck disappears below ground at Haws Gill, leaving a narrow dry valley as far as Chapel-le-Dale. There are many typical features of limestone scenery including shakeholes, potholes and caves throughout this part of the dale.

A regular pattern of limestone walls extends up onto the moorland sides, with smaller, older and more irregular field patterns around the hamlets of Ivescar, Bruntscar, Ellerbeck and Chapel-le-Dale.

The dale is well treed, particularly near Chapel-le-Dale where there is a densely wooded narrow gorge alongside and to the south of the chapel. There are also groups of trees along the valley sides, clinging to the scars, along field boundaries, lining the beck and alongside the former packhorse route over Whernside, which connects the line of hamlets and is a distinctive feature within the upper part of the dale. A large regular block of conifer planting on West Moss is a negative landscape feature, at odds with the undulating, small-scale landscape pattern.

Kingsdale

Kingsdale is a small hidden limestone dale, steeply incised from the surrounding limestone upland areas and enclosed at its lower, south eastern end by the raised grassy hump of Raven Ray, a glacial moraine, which almost blocks the mouth of the dale and limits views to the south. Kingsdale has a strikingly straight, U-shaped form. There is a marked contrast between the steep valley sides, which are strongly patterned by rocky limestone scars, and the simple landscape of open pastures on the flat valley floor.

The dale is drained by Kingsdale Beck, an open, shallow watercourse which often runs dry. It follows a very straight course along the length of the dale before cutting a steeply incised, winding channel through the glacial moraine to the south of Kingsdale.

To the east of Kingsdale, the land rises via a series of minor scars to the ridge of West Fell and from there to the summit of Whernside, which dominates views to the east at the dale head. To the west, the pronounced white banded scars of Keld Head, Greenlaids and Shout Scars are overlooked by the steep slopes of Gragareth. Below the scars there are scattered rocky outcrops and screes. The surrounding limestone uplands are peppered with pot holes, sink holes and caves, including Rowton Pot, a sheer drop of 65m and Marble Steps Pot, which drops 60m. A number of tributary gills start their descent at high elevations on the adjacent fells only to disappear below ground before the top of the steep dale sides. Springs also occur at the foot of the slope within the lower dale and flow into the beck.

The valley bottom is crossed by straight limestone walls, which enclose large, rectangular fields. In some parts of the dale the walls extend straight up onto the valley sides, crossing the valley side scars, to create a pattern of very large enclosures within adjacent moorland. The fields are less intensively farmed towards the more elevated upper dale, where wet flushes are marked by rushes and a more textured valley floor. There are areas of rough grassland and bracken on the valley sides towards the dale head.

Woodland and tree cover are very limited within the open dale, however small woodlands, including the ancient woodland at Braida Garth Wood and the wooded steep-sided gills at the dale head, are a focus in local views. There are also trees along some of the rocky scars, accentuating the linear alignment of the banded rock strata.

The quiet, gated minor road and the almost complete absence of settlement contributes to the peaceful, lonely qualities of Kingsdale. There are just two farms in the centre of the dale and at the dale head.



8

Gently stepping scars emphasise contours on the lower slopes of Ingleborough. Gills spill over the rock face of a disused quarry





Spectacular waterfalls within deep wooded glens - where the Rivers Twiss and Doe cross the North Craven Fault



The wooded Ingleton Glens are hidden from views across the surrounding undulating open pastures



Integrated patterns of natural and cultural features - limestone walls and scars display a subtly balanced working landscape which has a depth of beauty and meaning



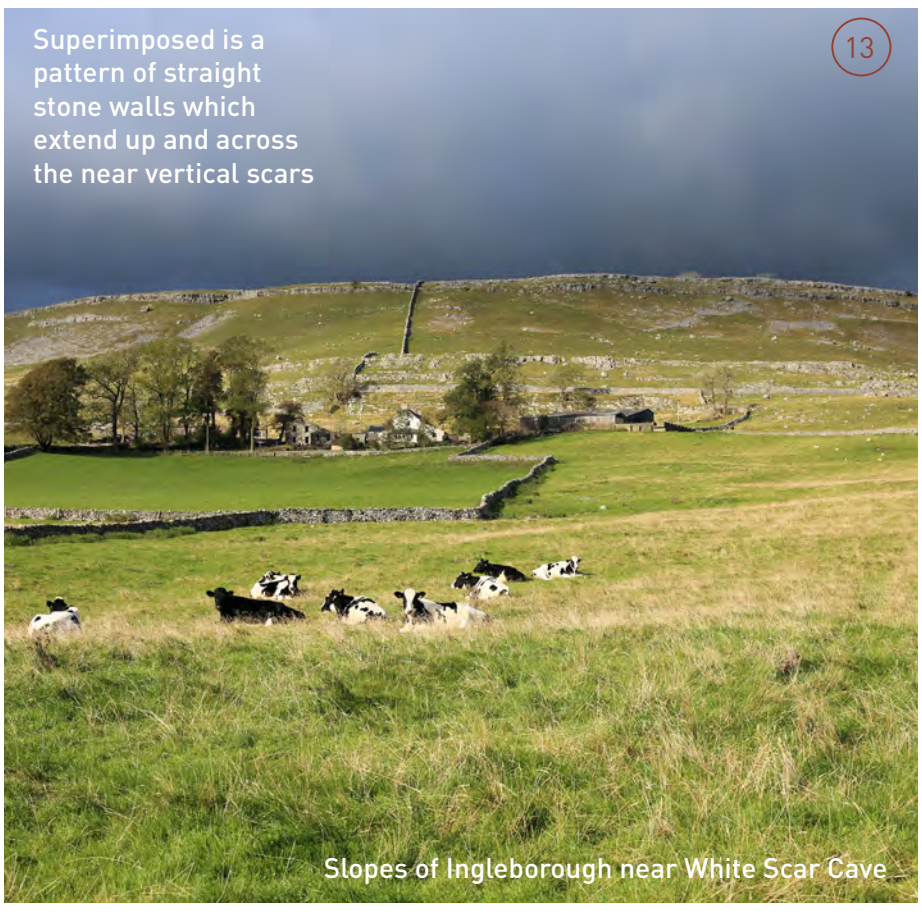
Keld Head Scar Kingsdale 12



Ribblehead Viaduct is a landmark, beyond the dale head

Photo. © Greg Fliitchett cc-by-sa/2.0

Upper Chapel-le-Dale, near Iverscar



Superimposed is a pattern of straight stone walls which extend up and across the near vertical scars

13

Slopes of Ingleborough near White Scar Cave

Key natural, cultural and perceptual features

NATURAL

Deeply incised, straight U-shaped dales, enclosed by steep, high summits - Chapel-le-Dale and Kingsdale are distinctive and classic examples of glacial valleys. (16)

Prominent limestone scars and rocky outcrops eg Twisleton Scars, on the slopes of West Fell in Chapel-le-Dale and Green Laids Scar on the slopes of Gragareth in Kingsdale, which accentuate the alignment of the rock strata, and the scale of the landform. These limestone cliffs are also considered to be internationally important for their diverse geology and habitats (designated as part of the Ingleborough Complex SAC. The whole of Kingsdale is also within the Whernside SSSI. (4) (7) (8) (12)

Multiple deep potholes, sink holes and caves on the limestone slopes of the dales - eg Yordas Cave, where Yordas Gill plunges down into the cave through its roof, Rowton Pot and Jingling Pot on the slopes of Gragareth in Kingsdale and Hurtle Pot and White Scar Cave in Chapel-le-Dale. (3)

Spectacular waterfall sequences within deep, wooded gorges in the Ingleton Glens, where the Rivers Twiss and Doe cross the North Craven Fault. The principal waterfalls are Thornton Force, Pecca Falls, Beezley Falls and Snow Falls. At Thornton Force the Carboniferous limestone can be seen resting upon the Ingletonian, a classic example of geological unconformity. (9) (10)

Fine examples of ancient gorge woodland at Thornton and Twisleton Glens; the species composition of the woodland reflects the underlying geology - Thornton Glen is principally ash with an understorey of hazel; wych elm is frequent by the riverside, yew grows on cliffs and scars and oak-birch woodland has developed on the acidic soils overlying slate.

CULTURAL

Historic routes, including the Roman Road connecting Ingleton and Bainbridge, which follows the west side of Chapel-le-Dale, and the historic packhorse route over Scales Moor, which links a line of small hamlets in Upper Chapel-le-Dale. (5) (6) (14)

Prominent pattern of walled fields across open dale landscapes, often accentuating their trough-like form. **Historic irregular walled field patterns** around the hamlets of Ivescar, Bruntscar, Ellerbeck and Chapel-le-Dale. (2) (15)

Quarries within an area influenced by fault lines, where there are valuable exposures of Ingletonian rocks and slates. Small disused quarries are a characteristic feature of these dales and the large active quarry at Skirwith Bridge is a significant detractor. The **19th C industrial lime extraction and production site at Meal Bank** is a scheduled monument. The complex includes a Hoffman Kiln and associated quarry workings and tramways. (8) (17)

PERCEPTUAL

The looming presence of some of the highest peaks in the Yorkshire Dales - Whernside (736m), Ingleborough (723m) and Gragareth (627m) creates strongly contrasting scenery and some stunning, distinctive views. They lend a sense of grandeur to these deeply incised valleys. (1) (4)

Integrated patterns of natural and cultural features: the combination of limestone walls within the dales and limestone scars and screes on the enclosing slopes displays a subtly balanced working landscape which has a depth of beauty and meaning. (11) (12) (13)

Lonely, primal character of Kingsdale and parts of Chapel-le-Dale, which stems from the natural, rocky enclosing slopes and the lack of habitation. The abrupt gateways to these distinctive dales suggest a **sense of secrecy and mystery**. (4) (16)

Photos that illustrate specific key natural, cultural and perceptual features are numbered eg. (10)



Drove road crossing the slopes of Wackenburgh Hill, Kingsdale

14



Braida Garth Kingsdale



15

Prominent pattern of drystone walled fields across open dale landscapes

Slopes of Ingleborough near White Scar Cave

16

A classic deeply incised, straight, U-shaped glacial valley

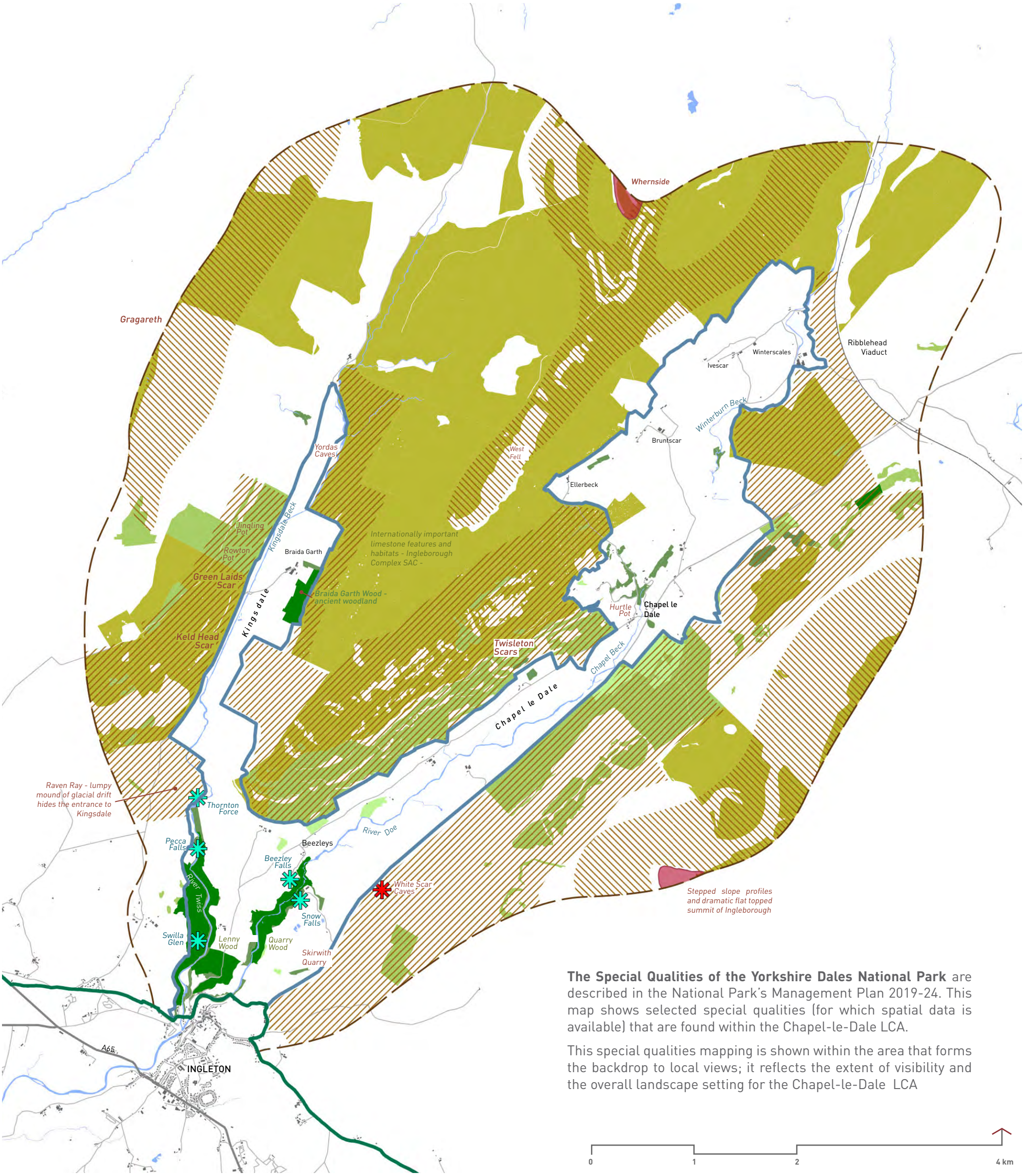
The abrupt gateway to Kingsdale from Raven Ray evokes a sense of secrecy and mystery



17

Disused quarry on Storrs Common north of Ingleton

Yorkshire Dales National Park - Natural Beauty and Wildlife Special Qualities: Chapel-le-Dale



The Special Qualities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park are described in the National Park's Management Plan 2019-24. This map shows selected special qualities (for which spatial data is available) that are found within the Chapel-le-Dale LCA.

This special qualities mapping is shown within the area that forms the backdrop to local views; it reflects the extent of visibility and the overall landscape setting for the Chapel-le-Dale LCA

Special Qualities of the YDNP

- YDNP Boundary
- Chapel-le-Dale LCA boundary
- Extent of area that forms the backdrop to views from the Chapel-le-Dale LCA

Natural beauty

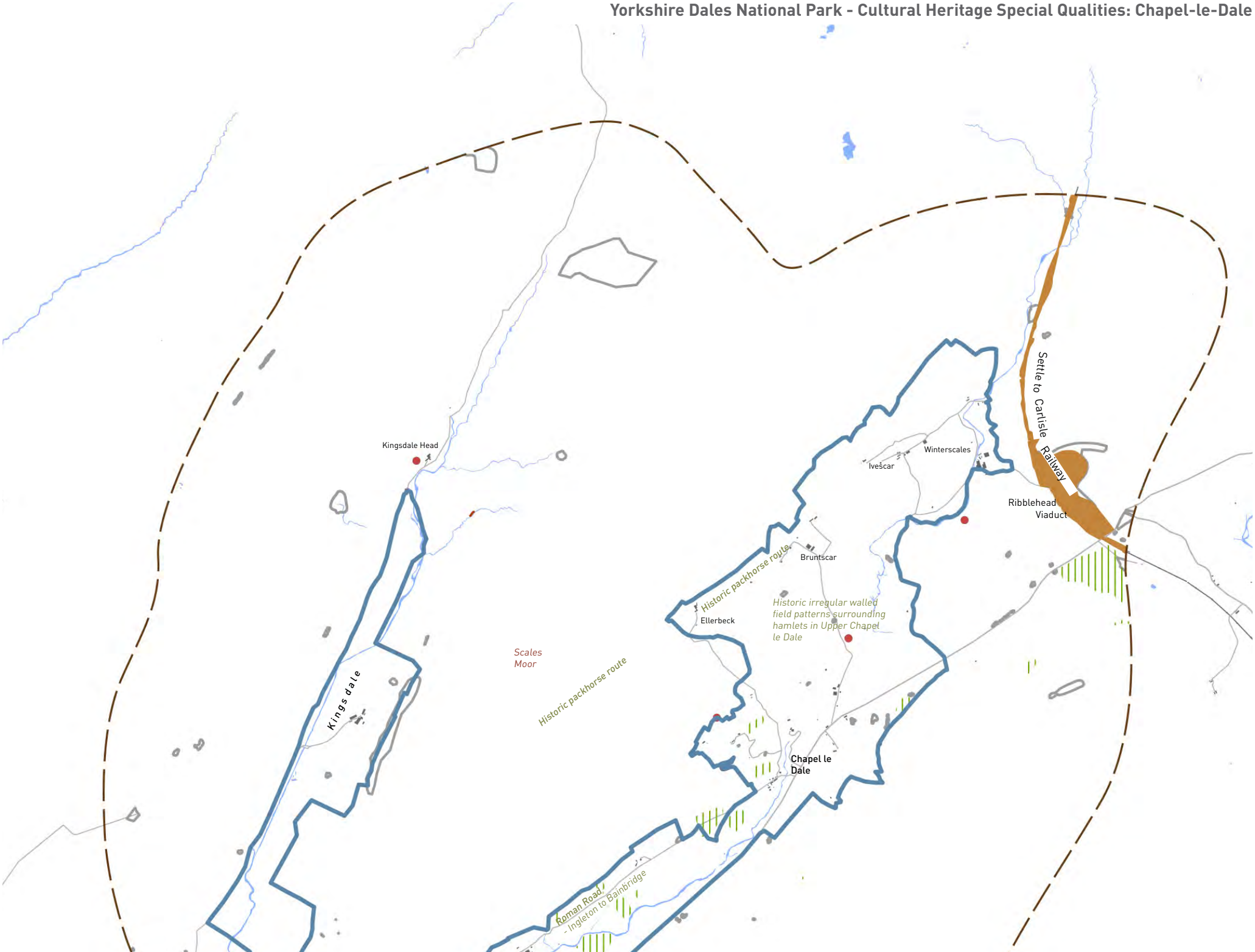
- **Dales with distinctive stepped profiles**
  [Displaying outcrops of rocks from Yoredale series]
- **Fells that rise to over 700m**
  [Including the Millstone Grit capped 'Three Peaks']
- **Outstanding classic limestone scenery**
  [Underlain by Great Scar Limestone & displaying distinctive karst character]
- **Extraordinary cave systems**
  ['Caves' noted as 'recognised attraction' in YDNPA Visitor Strategy]
- **Significant glacial/post-glacial features**
  [Prominent drumlins and glacial drift landforms]
- **Spectacular waterfalls**
  ['Water features' noted as 'recognised attraction' in YDNPA Visitor Strategy]

Wildlife*

- **Flower-rich hay meadows and pastures**
  [Lowland meadows; Upland hay meadows]
- **A range of rare limestone habitats**
  [Limestone pavements; Lowland calcareous grassland; Upland calcareous grassland]
- **Extensive areas of moorland**
  [Upland heathland; Blanket bog; Lowland raised bog]
- **Small areas of broadleaf woodland**
  [Deciduous woodland; ancient woodland (darker tone)]

*Priority Habitats [S41 NERC Act 2010]

Yorkshire Dales National Park - Cultural Heritage Special Qualities: Chapel-le-Dale



Special Qualities of the YDNP

- YDNP Boundary
- Chapel-le-Dale LCA boundary
- Extent of area that forms the backdrop to views from the Chapel-le-Dale LCA

Cultural heritage*

- **A traditional pastoral landscape**
  [Traditional stone-built field barns]
- **An exceptional range of archaeology**
  [Strip lynchets & prehistoric field systems that are prominent]
- **Powerful reminders of periods of dominance by large estates and religious houses**
  [Ancient & historic parklands & other ornamental landscapes]
- **The remains of former rural industries**
  [Sites of former lead & coal mines & lime kilns]
- **Settle-Carlisle Railway Line**
  [Conservation Area]

* YDNPA Historic Environment Record

sheilsflynn

www.sheilsflynn.com

Cambridge Studio
32 St Barnabas Road
Cambridge CB1 2BY

telephone: 01223 229994
email: cambridge@sheilsflynn.com