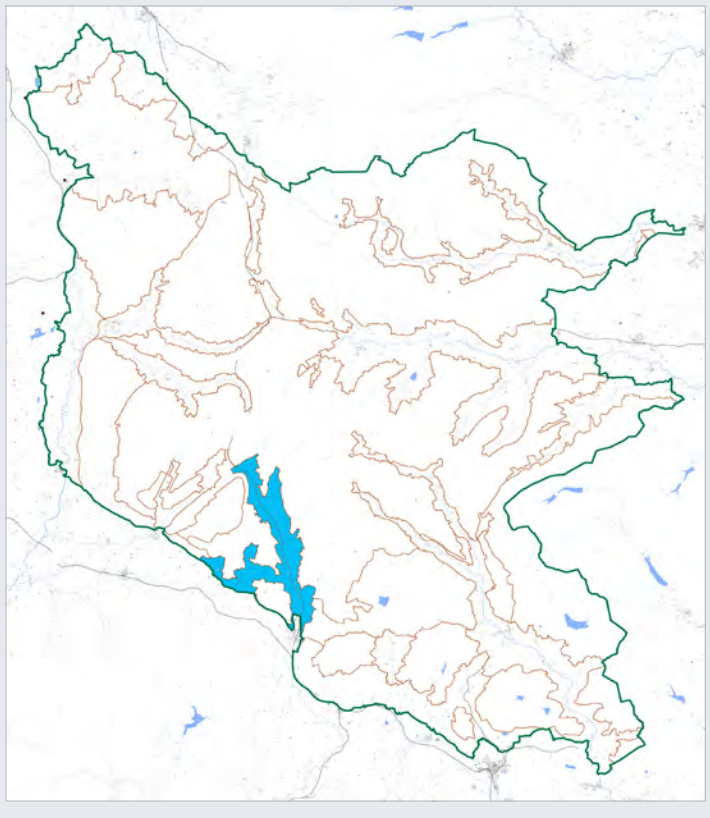
LCA 13 Ribblesdale

Yorkshire Dales National Park
Landscape Character Assessment

YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

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LCA 13 Ribblesdale



Landscape context: Ribblesdale

Key characteristics

- Broadly U-shaped dale overlying limestone bedrock to the south and west (characterised by extensive limestone cliffs and outcrops) and rocks of the Yoredale series to the north and east (with more rounded summits and narrow banded rock outcrops).
- Dale widens and side slopes become shallower towards the upper dale, where a drumlin field extends across the valley floor and up onto the fells to the north.
- Limestone pavements and scars are very prominent visual features, particularly on the western valley side; the open cliff faces and notched profiles of Ribblesdale's extensive rock quarries are also dominant features punctuating the patterns of outcropping rock on the upper dale sides.
- The domed summits of Pen-y-ghent and Ingleborough overlook the dale
- River Ribble meanders within a deeply incised channel through glacial deposits on a gently undulating or flat valley floor. The river is partially screened by undulating topography, with few tributary gills.
- Lower dale is well wooded, with often linear ancient woodland following the contours of the riverbanks, beck sides and extending high up to the valley side scars; upper dale is relatively open with only scattered individual trees, groups of trees sheltering settlements and woodland clinging to limestone scars on the valley sides.
- The pattern of limestone and gritstone walls forms a strong component of the dale character. The pattern of fields extends onto the adjacent fell tops generally as large regularly shaped enclosures.
- Strong walled field pattern is especially evident where the valley floor is flat and open. Occasional barns located at field corners.
- Fields are of mixed sizes and shapes enclosing mainly improved pasture with scattered hay meadows on the valley floor and lower slopes.
- The dale forms an important transport corridor for both the B6475 and Settle to Carlisle Railway; the latter is a prominent linear feature, running north-south along the length of the dale.

Landscape context

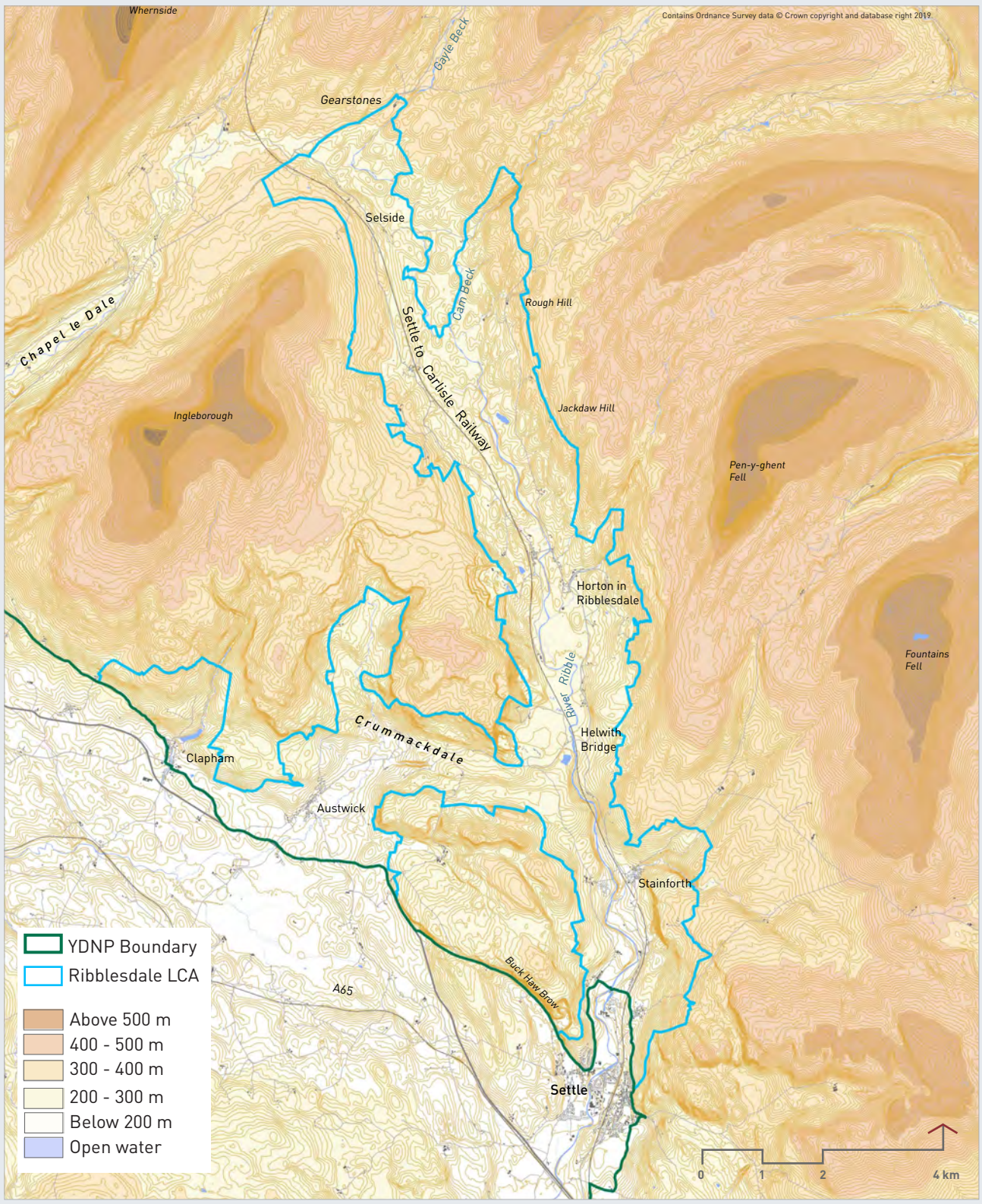
Ribblesdale is a deep U-shaped glacial valley, eroded through the surrounding Great Scar Limestone and the banded strata of rocks of the Yoredale series, which lie above the limestone. The scenery is dominated by the rocky scars and cliffs of the Great Scar limestone and the dramatic stepped slopes and plateau-topped summits of Pen-y-ghent to the north east and Ingleborough to the north west of Ribblesdale. The distinctive form of these summits results from the layered strata of resistant rocks, which are here protected by a hard impervious cap of Millstone Grit.

The Great Scar limestone dominates the lower dale, near Settle, where there are prominent high scars on the cliffs to east and west. North of Stainforth the dale is enclosed by rocks of the Yoredale series to the east and by the Great Scar limestone to the west, where the lower slopes of Ingleborough are broken by boulders, limestone pavements and scars. To the east the Yoredale strata have formed slopes with a more rounded profile, but bands of limestone often outcrop as narrow scars, as on Jackdaw Hill and Rough Hill.

Ribblesdale is on the southern edge of the Great Scar limestone, where the bedrock strata are divided by the Craven fault lines. At Buck Haw Brow, near Settle, the National Park boundary follows the alignment of the South Craven Fault; here the scenery is influenced by limestone to the north and by gritstones to the south. There is an outcrop of older Silurian rocks in Lower Ribblesdale and the North Craven Fault, which runs through Crummackdale and south of Helwith Bridge, marks the transition between limestone (to the south) and Silurian bedrock (to the north).

The dale is drained by the River Ribble, which flows north to south from the head of Ribblesdale to the edge of the National Park at Langcliffe and from there flowing southwards into Lancashire. The Ribble is joined by Gayle and Cam Becks just below Selside and a number of smaller tributary becks which drain the eastern slopes. There are fewer becks on the valley slopes to the west because here water, sinks down through the porous Great Scar limestone and re-emerges as springs above impervious layers near the foot of the slopes.

Ribblesdale was carved by glacial ice and the glacial



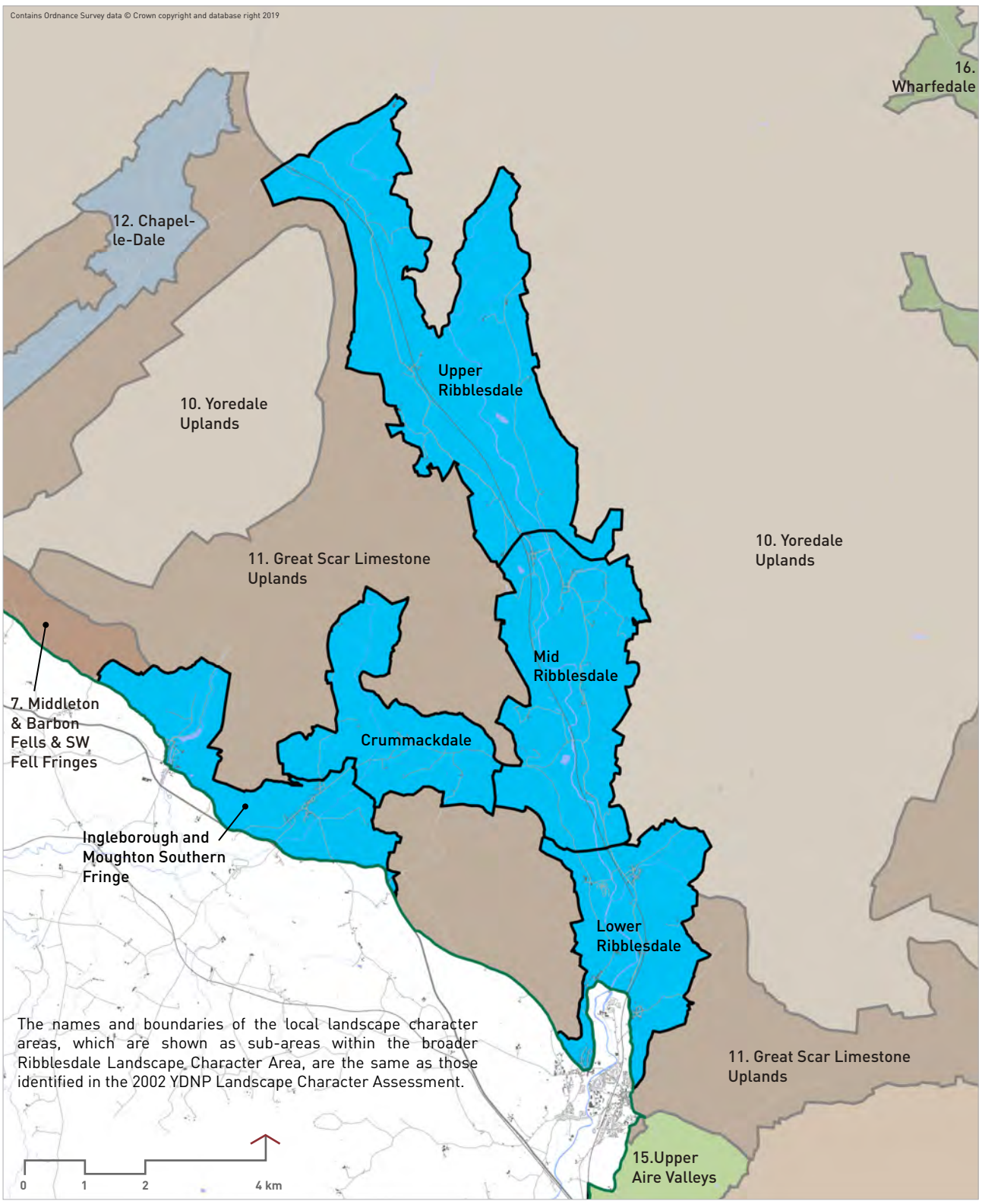
Numbered photographs illustrate specific key natural, cultural and perceptual features in the Ribblesdale LCA (see page 8)



Stark quarries, walled pastures and settlement, integrated by woodland - Lower Ribblesdale from Cow Close

Juxtaposition of verdant scenery and industry gives Ribblesdale a distinctive identity

Landscape character: Ribblesdale



boulder clay deposited following glaciation is a feature of the valley floor landscape today. The River Ribble and its tributary becks often flow within incised channels which have cut down through the glacial till and the valley floor often has a hummocky, slightly terraced form. In Upper Ribblesdale and to the north of the dale head near Gearstones there is a notable drumlin field, with a 'swarm' of rounded hills.

Landscape character

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

- **Lower Ribblesdale** – well wooded dale enclosed by limestone uplands with prominent scars and rocky outcrops on the steep dale sides.
- **Mid Ribblesdale** – enclosed by steep limestone slopes, sliced by quarry faces to the west and terraced, slopes with narrow banded limestone outcrops to the east; relatively open, with trees defining water courses and sheltering settlements.
- **Upper Ribblesdale** - broad and open part of the dale, with gently stepping, shallow valley sides and an extensive drumlin field across the valley floor.
- **Crummackdale** – upper reaches are quiet, isolated and enclosed by an amphitheatre of limestone pavement and scars; dale widens to a relatively open, settled and gently undulating lowland dale.
- **Ingleborough and Moughton Southern Fringe** - steep wooded glen on undulating south eastern slopes of Ingleborough and broader valley of Austwick Beck, to the south of Crummackdale.

Distinctive landscape character

The pattern of the landscape in Ribblesdale has been influenced by the early settlement sites of the Angles, the Danes and, in the 10th century by the Norse Vikings. Following the Norman Conquest, the majority of the land in Ribblesdale was under the ownership and management of monasteries and the network of tracks and drove roads were developed to support the local pastoral economy, which was dominated by sheep farming.

The arrival of the railway, first the 'Little' North Western Railway northwards from Skipton in 1847 and subsequently the Settle-Carlisle line in 1876 enabled the large scale development of quarrying for Great Scar limestone at Horton in Ribblesdale, at Ribblehead and at Giggleswick. The Settle-Carlisle is a feature of Ribblesdale; its level, straight course contrasts dramatically with the undulating and terraced landscape on the valley sides and floor. To the north of Ribblesdale, the sweeping Ribblehead Viaduct is one of the famous landmarks of the National Park.

There are three large aggregate quarries on the western side of the dale between Helwith Bridge and Horton in Ribblesdale. These have a significant impact on the landscape of this part of Ribblesdale. Horton Quarry produces limestone aggregates for the construction industry. Skid resistant road surfacing materials are produced from Dry Rigg and Arcow Quarries. The prominent rock faces and cliffs cut by these quarries on the western valley slopes are a distinctive feature of the Ribblesdale landscape and the settlements of Horton and Settle, which are strongly influenced by the presence of the railway, the quarries and (in the case of Settle) cotton, paper and lime mills, have a semi-industrial character.

Lower Ribblesdale

In Lower Ribblesdale, views are dominated by the surrounding limestone uplands, with Moughton and the distinctive upswept form of Smearsett Scar above Little Stainforth to the north west and the notched horizon of Langcliffe Scar to the south east. The dale sides slope steeply towards the enclosing limestone uplands, which are marked by frequent scars and rocky outcrops. The prominent, wooded Stainforth Scar and the exposed face of the quarry, which interrupts the scar, mark the upper, eastern valley side.

The river follows a strongly meandering course across the valley floor, dropping dramatically at Stainforth Force, a popular beauty spot. This part of Ribblesdale is well wooded, with strips of ancient woodland following the contours of the riverbanks and extending high up the valley sides and along the valley side scars.

The pattern of limestone and gritstone walls forms a strong component of the dale character, although it is often masked by the extensive tree and woodland cover. The pattern of long rectangular fields crossing the slope around Borrins is particularly striking. Fields provide pasture for sheep and cattle and are generally cropped for silage. Steeper slopes alongside the river or on the valley sides often remain uncultivated and the resulting variation in land cover serves to emphasise the topographic variety of the dale. Field barns are scattered across the area.

Mid Ribblesdale

South of Horton the valley floor is very wide and flat, reflecting its origins as a post-glacial lake. The river cuts a winding narrow course through the area of glacial moraine that would have impounded the lake south of Helwith Bridge, with the effect of enclosing and limiting views down the valley.

On the western valley side the exposed limestone pavements on Moughton are a very prominent visual feature forming bands of outcropping rock. Here the valley profile has been completely altered by large quarries, , which dominate the landscape of Mid Ribblesdale; they have cut away the upper western valley sides, creating extensive open slabs and terraces of quarried rock.

This part of Ribblesdale is generally quite open with woodland vegetation mainly confined to the lower valley slopes and bands of trees associated with outcropping rock. The River Ribble is broad and meanders within an incised channel and a relatively open floodplain. The river is often hidden by its enclosing steep banks.. Large, individual parkland trees and small woodland copses scattered on the valley floor and lower side slopes give a more wooded character around Studfold.

There is a strong walled field pattern on the flat valley floor, south of Horton in Ribblesdale, with occasional field corner barns. Fields are of mixed sizes and shapes enclosing mainly improved pasture with scattered hay meadows on the valley floor and lower slopes. There is a valuable concentration of hay meadows on the lower valley slopes south of Horton-in-Ribblesdale. The field pattern extends up the valley side and onto adjacent moorlands as large regular enclosures.

The principal settlement is Horton in Ribblesdale, a straggling dispersed village of traditional and modern buildings constructed mainly in local Studfold Sandstone, situated at the bridging point of the River Ribble. There are separate clusters of houses associated with a bridge over Brants Gill Beck and the railway station.

2

Small settlements with diverse mix of buildings (pubs, terraced workers' housing, mills)



Little Stainforth from B6479 south of Taitlands



Bridge at Stainforth from the south ...



Stainforth developed at a river crossing point between two villages

.... and from the east



Stainforth Beck

Steep enclosing valley sides are patterned by prominent limestone pavements, rocky scars and outcrops



Lower Ribblesdale from Cow Close, above Langcliffe

Numbered photographs illustrate specific key natural, cultural and perceptual features in the Ribblesdale LCA (see page 8)



Langcliffe

The wooded banks of the deeply incised river channel contrast with the open valley floor pastures



River Ribble banks north of Stainforth



Relatively wooded Lower Ribblesdale from Winskill Stones, above Langcliffe

Remnant of the extensive Craven & Murgatroyd Limeworks complex



Hoffman Kiln



Stainforth Scar

Dramatic outcropss of Great Scar Limestone are prominent landmarks

Deeply incised, meandering river channel in Mid Ribblesdale



incised River Ribble channel north of Stainforth looking north west to Moughton Nab

Upper Ribblesdale

Upper Ribblesdale is a very broad and expansive valley, with gently stepping, shallow valley sides. To the north of New Houses, the valley floor is dominated by an extensive drumlin field, which extends north-west of the dale head to Cam Fell. The smooth egg-shaped mounds dotted with sheep contrast with the distant stepped profile of Pen-y-ghent to the east. The rounded form of Park Fell and the stepped profile of Ingleborough dominate views to the north-west and the flanks of Whernside are visible to the north. There are prominent limestone scars (eg. Selside Shaw, Pasture Rocks) on the west valley side, above Selside and also other areas of banded outcropping rock on both sides of the valley and close to the valley floor.

At the head of the valley the River Ribble is a small, visually insignificant stream with low, open grassy banks winding between the drumlins. Further south, it becomes wider and more defined, notched into the valley floor with steep, tree-lined banks on either side. It has a platformed, stepped bed with stony beaches and a boulders. The few tributary gills are particularly well-defined on the eastern valley side where they often contain waterfalls.

Woodland cover is generally sparse and limited to the limestone scars on the valley sides, with occasional scattered individual trees on the valley floor. A small area of ancient woodland is associated with the valley side scars to the west of Selside and a further small area at Birkwith. Woodland cover increases to the south, with trees concentrated along the river and near settlements.

The pattern of stone walls and occasional field barns is often masked by the undulating topography but becomes much more pronounced towards Horton in Ribblesdale, where walls cross the valley floor forming strong, parallel lines.

Crummackdale

Crummackdale is a quiet dale, isolated in its upper reaches, overlying Silurian shales, slates and grits. The dale head of an eastern tributary valley has been breached by the actions of water and ice such that it now connects, via a narrow gap, into Mid Ribblesdale. Upper Crummackdale is enclosed by an impressive amphitheatre of limestone pavement and scars. The limestone pavements here are known as the site of the Norber Erratics where boulders of Silurian slate, broken by glacial ice, were deposited on the limestone. Some boulders retarded the process of erosion of the limestone below and now sit on small limestone plinths.

Crummackdale is drained by Austwick Beck, which emerges from a cave at the dale head and follows a deeply incised, winding course before dropping over a waterfall above the hamlet of Wharfe. South of this point the beck diminishes in size, flowing partly underground. Although there is little woodland, the valley floor is well treed, with trees following the alignment of becks and gills and sheltering hamlets and farms. The valley sides are generally more open with patches of scrub above Wharfe and scattered trees present on scars. Exceptions to this pattern include the significant area of ancient woodland known as Oxenburgh and Wharfe Woods clothing the scars on the upland area to the south and creating a wooded horizon to views in this direction and occasional small mixed or deciduous woodlands on the valley side. Settlement within the upper dale is limited to the isolated hamlet of Wharfe, accessible only by unmade bridleways, and the small farms situated mainly on the lower valley sides. The dense network of walled green lanes and tracks that link the settlements and scattered farms is a feature of Crummackdale.

Ingleborough and Moughton southern fringe

Within lower Crummackdale, Austwick Beck flows within a relatively open and gently undulating dale, which contrasts with the steep, deeply scarred slopes of the limestone uplands of Ingleborough to the north west and Moughton to the north east and south east. The pattern of walls plays a significant role in this lower dale landscape, where the valley floor is relatively open and settlement a significant influence. The village of Austwick straggles along lanes and around small greens. Woodlands associated with Austwick Hall and distinctive historic patterns of long narrow strip fields are locally influential in the landscape setting of Austwick and strip lynchets are a feature of the valley side to the west of the village.

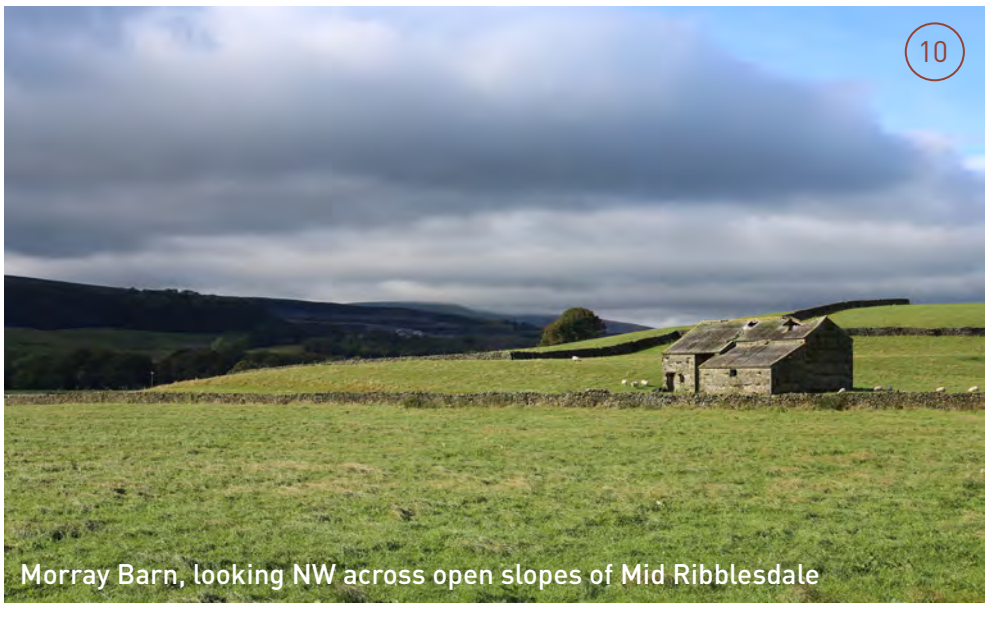
Further to the west, the beck-side village of Clapham is divided by Clapham Beck, which has incised a steep narrow valley into the southern slopes of Ingleborough. The valley's distinctive wooded character is strongly influenced by the historic parkland of Ingleborough Hall; the natural deciduous woodland of the gill has been supplemented by extensive mixed plantings which surround the lake created by the damming of Clapham Beck and form the backdrop to a mix of 19th century parkland and walled pastures.

Ancient woodland and wood pasture clinging to limestone scars to south east of Crummackdale



Lower Crummackdale south east of Austwick - Oxenber Wood

Historic network of field stone walls and occasional isolated field barns is prominent in more open parts of the dale

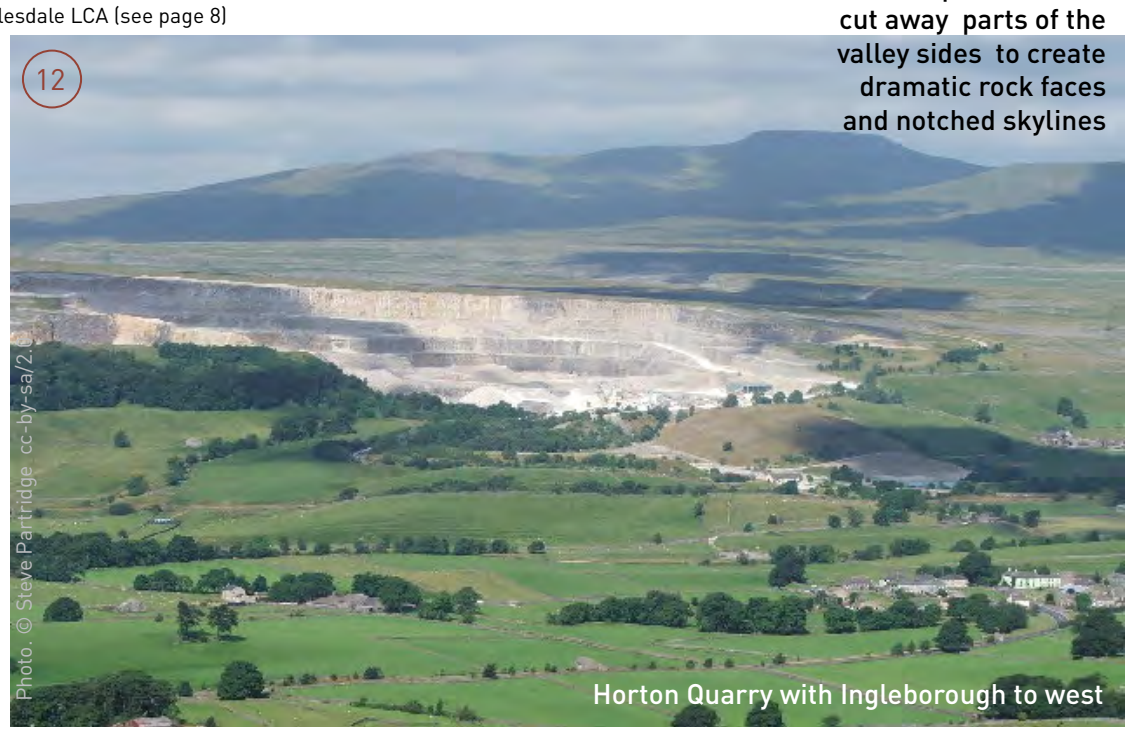


Morray Barn, looking NW across open slopes of Mid Ribblesdale

Numbered photographs illustrate specific key natural, cultural and perceptual features in the Ribblesdale LCA (see page 8)

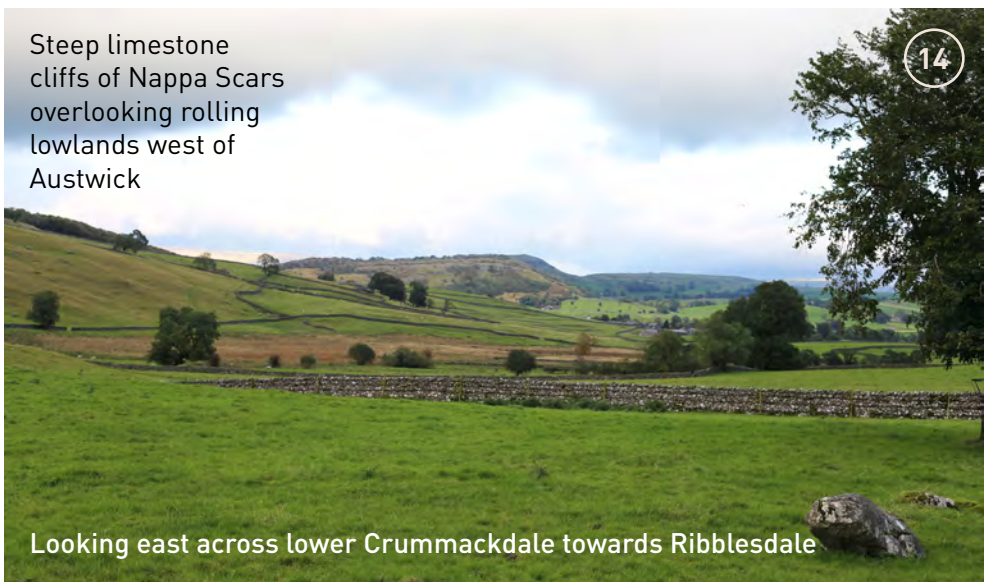

11
Strip lynchets on outskirts of Austwick

Massive quarries have cut away parts of the valley sides to create dramatic rock faces and notched skylines


12
Photo. © Steve Partridge cc-by-sa/2.
Horton Quarry with Ingleborough to west


13
Evening light on White Stone and Studrigg Scar, Crummackdale

Striking views to the dramatic flat-topped summit of Pen-y-ghent, which stands as a sentinel over Ribblesdale

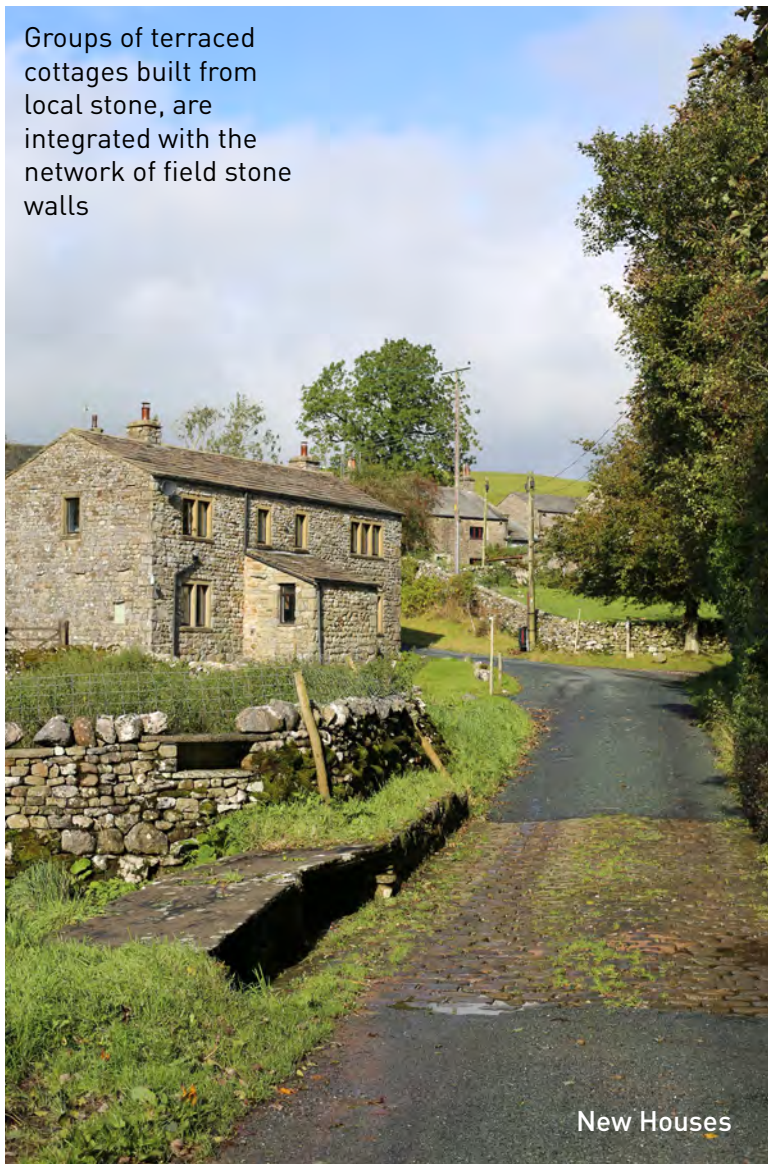

Steep limestone cliffs of Nappa Scars overlooking rolling lowlands west of Austwick
14
Looking east across lower Crummackdale towards Ribblesdale


15
Photo © David Martin cc-by-sa/2.0
Pen-y-ghent to east of Selside

Numbered photographs illustrate specific key natural, cultural and perceptual features in the Ribblesdale LCA



The Tarn and Far Moor in Upper Ribblesdale



Groups of terraced cottages built from local stone, are integrated with the network of field stone walls

New Houses

Key natural, cultural and perceptual features

NATURAL

Pyramidal twin uplands of Ingleborough and Pen-y-ghent, with plateau tops surrounded by sheer cliffs, are dominant landmarks in views to the north west and north east of Ribblesdale. (15) (16)

The Craven Faults create dramatic variations in the scenery, between the Great Scar limestone bedrock to the south and west, rocks of the Yoredale series to the north east and Silurian outcrops within the valley. (7)

Steep enclosing valley sides are patterned by prominent limestone pavements, rocky scars and cliffs. Limestone pavements in upper Ribblesdale are part of the Ingleborough Complex SAC. The sites are internationally important for calcareous grassland, with a particularly rich flora in areas where flushing occurs. The pavements are sometimes wooded, as at Colt Park. (3) (7) (13) (14)

Extensive drumlin field of rounded pastures on the valley floor of Upper Ribblesdale contrasts with the gently stepped valley sides and surrounding upland moors. (21)

Diverse sequence of river landscapes, from a stony beck with open grassy banks in Upper Ribblesdale to a deeply incised, meandering channel in Mid Ribblesdale and a semi-wooded, broader river alongside a series of historic mill sites in Lower Ribblesdale. (5) (8) (15) (18)

Areas of ancient woodland associated with scars and gorges. The most extensive example is the area of ancient wood pasture in a mosaic with limestone pavement, marsh and grass communities that occurs at Oxenber Wood, Crummackdale. (9)

Scattered hay meadows throughout the dale; the upland meadows near North Ribblehead, within the Ashes Pasture and Meadows SSSI are part of the North Pennine Meadows SAC. (16)

CULTURAL

Intact and historic network of field stone walls and occasional isolated field barns, which forms a prominent field pattern in more open parts of the dale. Remnants of the medieval open field system survive on outskirts of some villages. (1) (10) (11) (14)

Walled drove roads and packhorse routes, which connect sheltered dale settlements to the surrounding moorland pastures eg Long Lane between Clapham and Selside, which remains in use as a recreational route today (the Pennine Bridleway). (19)

Settle to Carlisle Railway is a prominent, linear feature along the valley, with the track laid sometimes along the valley sides and sometimes on embankments; arched brick bridges, revetments, sidings and the dramatic curving Ribblehead Viaduct across the valley of Winterscales Beck to the north of Ribblesdale. (17)

Craven and Murgatroyd Limeworks - extensive scheduled remains of the 19th and 20th century industrial lime extraction and production complex at Langcliffe, which includes the massive triple draw Hoffman's Kiln. (6)

Massive quarries have created a sequence of dramatic rock faces and notched skylines that are dominant in mid Ribblesdale. (12)

Small-scale, semi-industrial character of settlements such as Horton in Ribblesdale and Settle, with clusters of terraced workers' cottages at river crossings and related the sites of mills, quarries and railway stations. (2) (4) (20)

PERCEPTUAL

Striking views to the dramatic peaks of Ingleborough and Pen-y-ghent, which stand as sentinels over Ribblesdale. (15) (16)

A diverse range of landform, landcover and settlement, with juxtaposition of verdant scenery and industrial character within a compact dale, gives a distinctive identity to Ribblesdale. (1)

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



16

Upland calcareous grassland which is part of the Ingleborough complex SAC

Photo © Greg Fitchett cc-by-sa/2.0

Brae Pasture Nature Reserve



The linear railway infrastructure is a distinctive feature of the Ribblesdale landscape

17

Settle to Carlisle railway at Selside

18



In Mid Ribblesdale,the River Ribble has cut down through the glacial drift deposits to create an incised channel and a diverse, intimate river corridor landscape

Helwith Bridge

19



Photo. © John Sparshott cc-by-sa/2.0

Historic packhorse route, connecting the dales villages of Selside and Clapham across the moorland tops

Pennine Bridleway near Borrins



Mid Ribblesdale south of New Houses

20



Horton in Ribblesdale

21



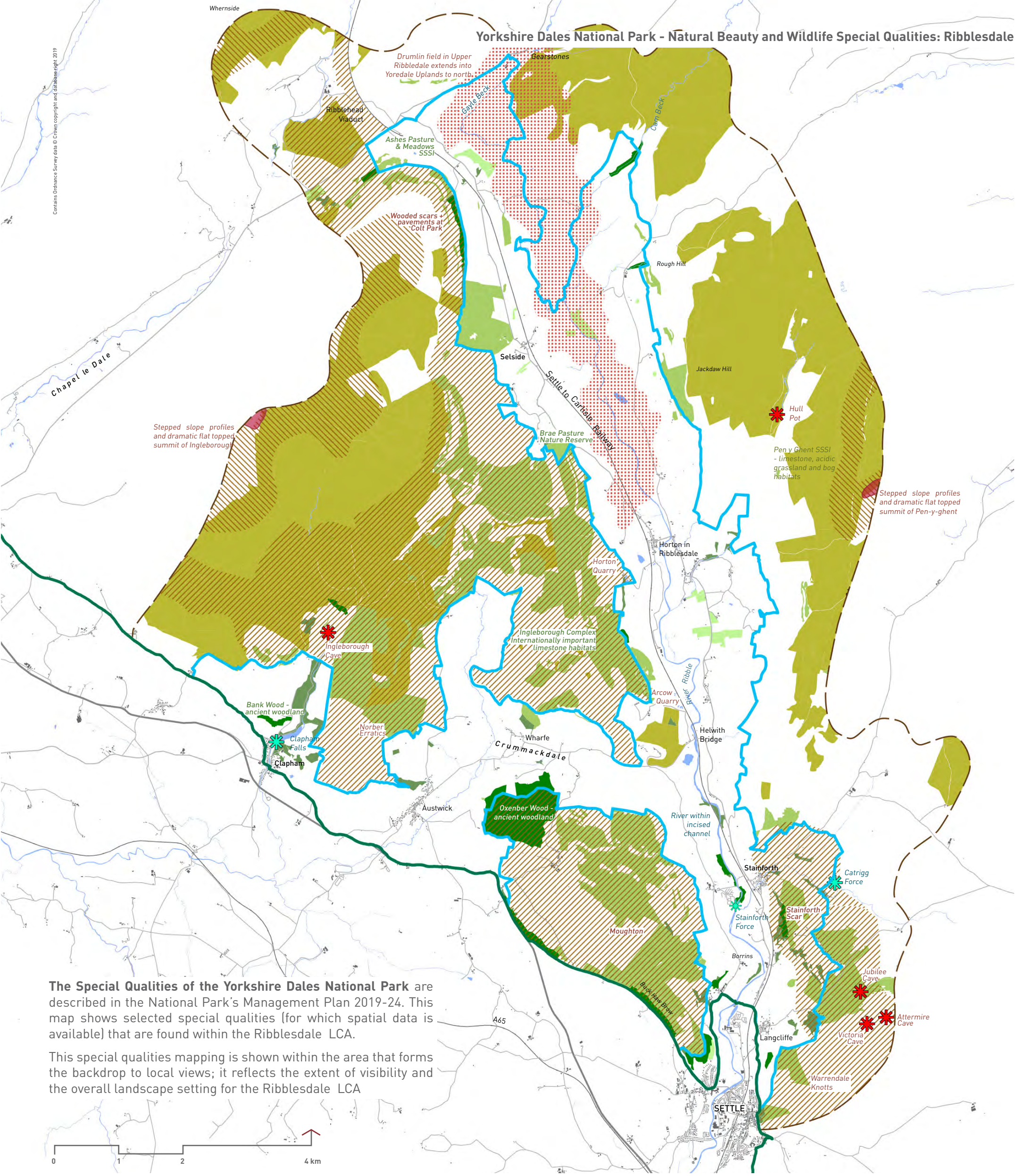
Photo. © David Martin cc-by-sa/2.0

Drumlin field on the valley floor of Upper Ribblesdale, where glacial till has been moulded into rounded hills

Drumlins to east of Selside

Yorkshire Dales National Park - Natural Beauty and Wildlife Special Qualities: Ribblesdale

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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 Ribblesdale 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 Ribblesdale LCA

Special Qualities of the YDNP

- YDNP Boundary
- Ribblesdale LCA boundary
- Extent of area that forms the backdrop to views from the Ribblesdale 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: Ribblesdale

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Ribblehead Railway Construction Camp
Prehistoric settlement site - Ribblehead
Ribblehead Viaduct 1870
Disused limestone quarries
Prehistoric settlement site - Ashes Shaw Pasture
Early Neolithic to Roman settlement site - Ingman Lodge, Shaw Pasture
Chapel le Dale
Selside
Settle to Carlisle Railway
Historic packhorse routes - Long Lane connects Clapham and Selside across the moor tops
Limestone quarrying on Harber Scar (from 1901
Horton in Ribblesdale
Horton limeworks and quarry (from 1888)
Foredale Quarry and limeworks (disused)
Ingleborough Hall - extensive wooded 19th C parkland
Clapham
Historic network of walled green lanes and tracks
Wharfe
Austwick Hall
Extensive ridge and furrow and medieval field systems
Austwick
Crummackdale
Helwith Bridge
Stainforth
Little Stainforth shrunken medieval village earthworks
Tattlands
Craven Limeworks
Murgatroyd's Limeworks and Quarry (scheduled monument)
Borrins - distinctive rectangular field pattern
Abbeylands
Extensive ridge and furrow and medieval field systems
Langcliffe
Langcliffe Hall
SETTLE
A65
0 1 2 4 km

Special Qualities of the YDNP

- YDNP Boundary
- Ribblesdale LCA boundary
- Extent of area that forms the backdrop to views from the Ribblesdale 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]
- **Historic settlements with distinctive traditional architecture**
  [Conservation Areas - Note: the Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Barns and Walls Conservation Area is not shown]

* YDNPA Historic Environment Record

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