Unlocking the past, understanding the present

Think of the Lake District and you’ll probably think of nature at its most sublime. But this spectacular landscape is far from natural.

People have lived here for some 12,000 years. Their actions have shaped the landscape we see today, just as our actions will shape the landscapes of tomorrow.

They’ve left behind a wealth of evidence, from barely-visible hut circles to triumphs of Victorian engineering.

The six leaflets in this series help you explore this evidence. The maps and site details suggest where to go and what to look out for.

They’re your key to unlocking the Lake District’s past and understanding its present.

The Lake District National Park Authority

We are committed to achieving the Vision for the Lake District National Park:

Working together for a prosperous economy, vibrant communities and world class visitor experiences - and all sustaining the spectacular landscape.

This Vision was developed by organisations with an interest in the National Park.

Our role is to:

■ help partner organisations work together through an agreed action plan
■ carry out our part of the work identified in that action plan

The Lake District National Park Authority

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Front cover: Dacre churchyard and 8th century decorative strap end, found during excavations at Dacre Springs Bloomery in 1986. This leaflet was designed by www.sinclair-design.co.uk 01539 737913

Image: 421x929 to 558x1020

Preserving the past

the past

Talking to

the Lake District

Discovering archaeology in the Lake District

Publication number 07/07/LDNPA/5000     In support of the conservation principles of the National Park Authority, the paper used in this publication is from a sustainable forest.
**Paths to discovery**

**1. Aughertree Fell settlement**
These three farmsteads date from Roman times, but reflect an older, local way of life. Each farm contains hut circles and animal pens, enclosed by parallel banks and a ditch. Outside lies a sprawling complex of fields of various shapes and sizes. Some of the boundaries are obvious, but the full extent of plots and connecting tracks can be seen only through aerial photography.

*Location:* Grid reference NY264381. Near minor road between Uldale and B5299. Roadside parking 2 kilometres (1.2 miles) north east of village, then short walk on bridleway.

**2. Dacre**
Stone cross fragments, massive re-used building blocks, and finds from an excavation in the 1980s all suggest there was a monastery here in Anglo-Saxon times. But the clinching evidence comes from the Venerable Bede, writing in 700 AD. He refers to a monastery ‘near the river Dacore, from which it took its name’. Look for the cross fragments in the 12th century parish church, built on the same site.

*Location:* Grid reference NY460266. On minor road off A66, 9 kilometres (5.6 miles) south west of Penrith. Limited parking in Dacre.

**3. The Howk Bobbin Mill**
These imposing ruins are the remains of a 19th century bobbin mill, built to help meet the huge demand from Lancashire’s textile industry. The mill closed in 1924 and the buildings began to deteriorate. The National Park Authority has recently carried out structural repairs to conserve this important piece of industrial history and make the site safe for visitors. Managed by the Lake District National Park Authority.

*Location:* Grid reference NY319397. Caldbeck, 11 kilometres (6.8 miles) south east of Wigton. Parking in village, then short walk west along beck.

**4. Blea Tarn**
You won’t see any archaeological remains here, but the past is written in the landscape. Pollen samples from the bottom of the tarn show that some of the forest disappeared between 3700 and 3100 BC, but grew back 1000 years later. It seems that people were clearing trees to make way for grazing or farming, but were not staying permanently in the same place.

*Location:* Grid reference NY293044. Near minor road off A593, 8.5 kilometres west of Ambleside. Parking is a short walk from the site.

**5. Springs Bloomery**
This grassy mound was once a medieval ‘bloomery’, a simple charcoal-heated furnace for smelting iron ore. The mound was partly excavated in 1897, but no-one knew how big an area the site covered. The National Trust needed to know this in order to care for it properly, and a geophysical survey provided the answers. Managed by the National Trust.

*Location:* Grid reference SD303953. West bank of Coniston Water. Park in Coniston, then take footpath south for 2.5 kilometres (1.6 miles).

**6. Ambleside Roman Fort**
A century ago, there was little sign that a Roman fort once stood here, guarding the supply route from Ravenglass. Today you can clearly see the foundations of the headquarters building, commandant’s house, granaries, gates and defences, all exposed by excavations in 1914-20. The dig also showed that this stone fort, built in the 2nd century AD, replaced an earlier wooden one. You can see some of the finds in the Armitt Museum & Library, Ambleside. Managed by the National Trust and English Heritage.

*Location:* Grid reference NY372034. 1 kilometre (0.6 miles) south of Ambleside. Short walk from car park along A593.

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**Key to symbols**
- Railway station
- Bus stop
- Car park
- Footpath
- Rough track
- Access for wheelchair users
- National Park boundary

*Find out more at:*
- [www.lake-district.gov.uk](http://www.lake-district.gov.uk)
- [www.visitcumbria.com](http://www.visitcumbria.com)
- [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)
- [www.cumbria-industries.org.uk](http://www.cumbria-industries.org.uk)
- [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

*Find out more on 0871 200 22 33.*