Historic England

Farmstead and Landscape Statement

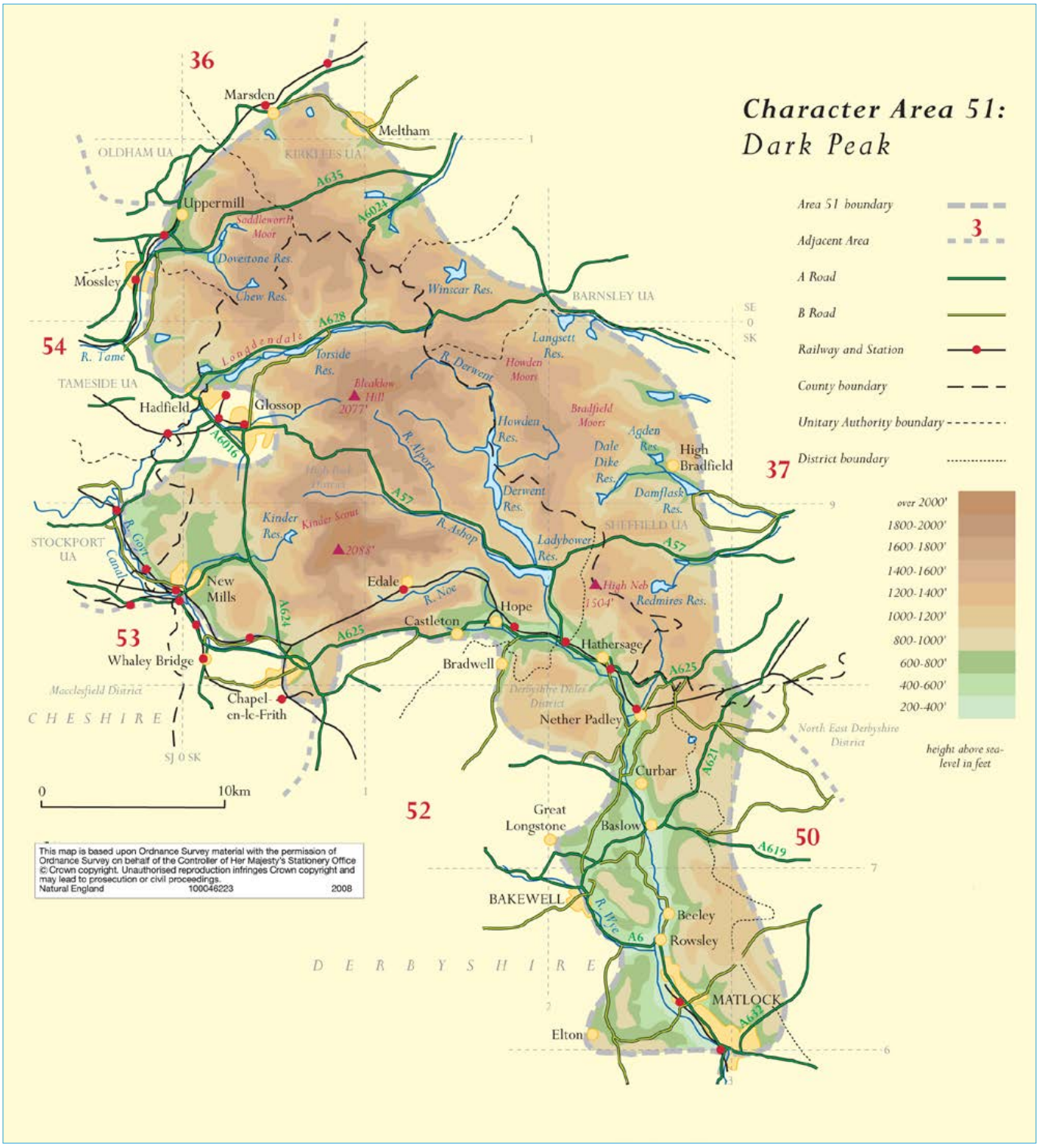
Dark Peak

NATIONAL CHARACTER AREA 51

Introduction

The Farmstead and Landscape Statements will help you to identify the historic character of traditional farmsteads and their buildings in all parts of England, and how they relate to their surrounding landscapes. They are now available for all of England's National Character Areas (NCAs), and should be read in conjunction with the NCA profiles which have been produced by Natural England using a wide range of environmental information (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles). Each Farmstead and Landscape Statement is supported by Historic England's advice on farm buildings (https://historicengland.org.uk/farmbuildings), which provides links to the ***National Farmsteads Character Statement***, national guidance on Farm Building Types and a fully-sourced summary in the ***Historic Farmsteads: Preliminary Character Statements***. It also forms part of additional research on historic landscapes, including the mapping of farmsteads in some parts of England (see https://historicengland.org.uk/characterisation).

Front cover: A large, isolated steading set in small regular fields of amalgamated strip fields below Abney Fells, on the Dark Peak-White Peak border. The house is built to one side of an L-plan yard of early to mid-19th-century buildings. The house was extended to the right in the early to mid-19th century, and probably at that point the main 'polite' entrance was re-orientated away from the remodelled farmyard. It was in this period that the moorland (in the background) was enclosed with rectilinear stone boundaries. Photo © Jen Deadman



This map shows the Dark Peak, with the numbers of neighbouring National Character Areas around it.

Summary

See the National Farmsteads Character Statement for a short introduction to the headings below, including maps and tables.

The Dark Peak is an extensive area of high moorland and adjacent in-bye land, comprising a large part of the Peak District National Park. The area is bordered to the north-west by the Manchester Pennine Fringe, to the north by the Southern Pennines and to the east by the Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe. Towards the south-east lies the Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent, and to the south-west the area adjoins the South West Peak. To the south, there is a sharp transition with the contrasting limestone landscapes of the White Peak. Under 2% of the area is urban and over 8% is woodland. The National Park accounts for 84% of the area.

Historic character

- There are high densities of dispersed settlement, with farmsteads set in landscapes enclosed by dry stone walls and hedgerows from the medieval period. There are also some areas are of regular enclosure, including some designed estate landscapes such as those of the Chatsworth Estate.
- Linear farmsteads are predominant, and courtyard plan farmsteads (mostly U-shaped) were developed within regular enclosure landscapes on some estates.
- Field barns appear to be concentrated in landscapes of piecemeal enclosure of medieval strip fields, and so may form part of coherent patterns of piecemeal enclosure.

Significance

- Farmsteads Mapping has shown that there is an exceptionally high survival of traditional farmsteads as in many of the other northern England uplands and upland fringes. Farmsteads Mapping in the Peak District National Park shows that, recorded from late 19th-century mapping, 76% of farmsteads have more than half of their historic form surviving. This is a high level of survival in a national context. This significance is heightened by the fact that the farmsteads and working buildings, including their field barns, sit within a landscape which retains visible evidence for land use and settlement from the prehistoric period. Of special significance in a national context, and for the uplands of northern England, are:
- Working buildings with fabric from the 18th century and earlier, which are most commonly found attached to houses or found on high-status farmsteads.
- Cruck-framed barns, such as around Bradfield, which may relate to ancient and piecemeal patterns of enclosure.
- Planned estate farms, relating to the improvement of surrounding farmland.

Present and future issues

- The rate of redundancy for traditional farm buildings has accelerated in recent years, as in other upland and upland fringe areas of England, due to the replacement of stalling by loose housing and the replacement of hay production by mechanised bulk handling.

- Many farmsteads are in residential use, including some linked to 'hobby farming'.

- In this National Character Area, the Photo Image Project (2006) recorded a high proportion of listed working farm buildings converted to non-agricultural use (47.5%, the national average being 32%). The project also noted an above-average percentage (13.3%, the national average being 7.5%) of listed working buildings showing obvious signs of structural disrepair.

Historic development

- Peat development and the disappearance of the early tree cover on the high moors began in the early post-glacial Mesolithic. The lower moors result in part from the clearance of the native upland forests in the Neolithic and Bronze Age to provide grazing land. They have for centuries been utilised by surrounding communities for summer grazing, with peat, heather and bracken cut for fuel, bedding, roofing and fodder. There is extensive evidence, especially on the gritstone uplands to the east of the Derwent valley, for Bronze Age settlement including hut circles and ring cairns with field systems and associated cairnfields; sufficient barrows survive to indicate that they relate to whole farming communities rather than being high status. The area was also exploited during the Romano-British period.

- Late Saxon royal manors, including the village of Hope, in Hope valley, formed the core of extensive areas of medieval royal forest. Late 16th- and 17th-century gentry houses are a notable feature.

- The gritstone uplands to the east of the Derwent have dense concentration of industrial remains relating to coal mining and production of millstones from the medieval period, and lead smelting. These developed in combination with agriculture, largely in contrast to later industrial development concentrated in the western industrial fringe and Middle Derwent valley, southwards from Froggatt to Matlock. These have more villages in valley bottoms, many the result of late 18th- and 19th-century expansion with cottages and terraced housing. In Derwent and its tributaries, water power was used from the medieval period, notably for powering bellows of smelting mills and, from the mid-18th century, cotton mills; the world's first cotton factory was built at Cromford, 1771, to its southern boundary. The rivers Goyt and Etherow to the west powered cotton mills and gritstone mills.

- Ancient valley-side woodlands were managed on an industrial scale for charcoal-burning (platforms) and white-coal (drying kilns) production for the lead smelters.

- Open heather moorlands were predominantly managed for sheep grazing from the medieval period and accessed by trackways from valley bottoms. By the 19th century, cattle rearing – to supply meat to the growing cities nearby – had grown in importance although sheep farming tended to be dominant in the dales and on dale sides.

- Roads and tracks in the upland core – including those that linked upland grazing to lowland settlements – remain visible as hollow ways, superseded in the 18th and 19th centuries by the present road system.

- Grouse shooting was a major activity on open heather moorlands from the early 19th century. From the 19th century, reservoirs and associated water catchment systems developed in upland valleys of the northern moors.

Landscape and settlement

- Dry stone walls enclose the higher fields while hedgerows are more common on lower ground.
- Longdendale, Upper Derwent Valley, Edale and Hope Valley exhibit a high degree of dispersal in the historic settlement pattern, with small hamlets and many individual farmsteads of medieval origin (especially in areas of former royal forest colonised from the 13th century) set in ancient and post-medieval regular and irregular enclosure and intermixed with houses and cottages. Isolated farmsteads on the escarpments rising from Derwent Valley to the eastern moorlands also include some with medieval origins, set on oval-shaped or irregular enclosures.
- Other isolated farmsteads result from in-takes from the moor typically of 14th- to 17th-century date, associated with small-scale enclosures. Some farmstead sites, including those associated with oval enclosures, could be pre-medieval and even prehistoric.
- There are some traces of medieval strip fields retained in patterns of enclosure around valley settlements (for example at Castleton in Hope Valley) and some survival (as at Chatsworth Park) of fossilised ridge and furrow.
- During the late 18th and 19th centuries, regular enclosure of the open moor and common, and large private improvement schemes were undertaken by large landowners, such as the Dukes of Devonshire. There are shelter belts to farmsteads.
- Some farmsteads to lower dales (for example on Chatsworth estate in middle Derwent) are set in landscapes with 19th-century estate architecture and plantations.

Farmstead and building types

In a national context, the area has a medium density of pre-1750 farmstead buildings.

Farmstead types

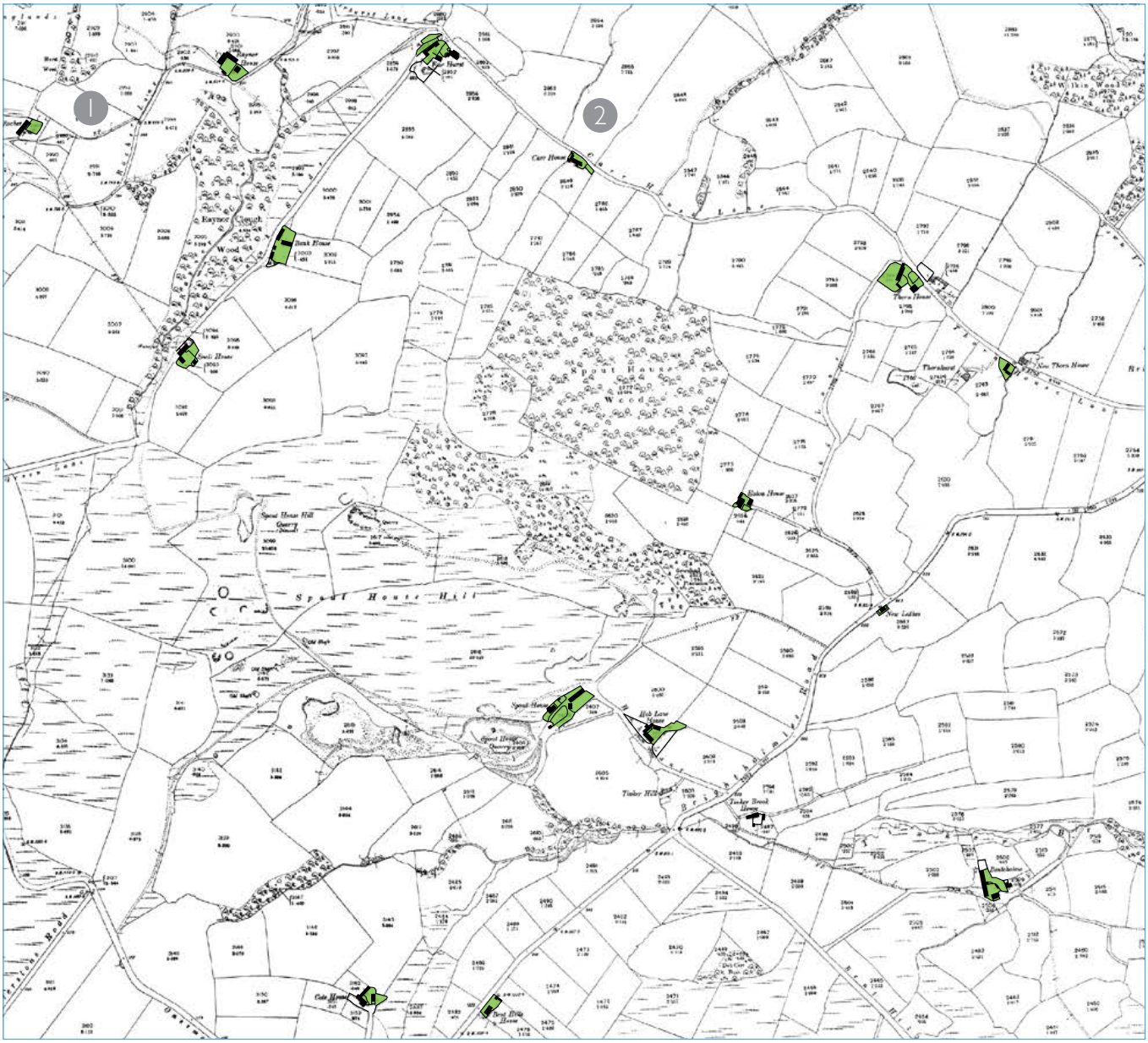
Farmsteads were originally linear in form but the increase in the upkeep and overwintering of cattle in the 18th century gave rise to the development of the courtyard groups evident today. The key farmstead types that had developed up to the end of the 19th century, and that are still evident today, are:

- Linear farmsteads, which are still predominant. Some originate as medieval to 16th century longhouses and others developed as parallel or L-shaped plans with later barns, cow houses, cart sheds and stabling.
- Courtyard-plan farmsteads are mostly small-scale with buildings to one or two sides of the yard. Medium-scale courtyard groups and, more rarely, larger-scale farmsteads associated with larger fields, developed on some estates from the late 18th century.
- Dispersed cluster farmsteads are common with a particular concentration on the western edge of the area. These farmsteads are often small in scale with one or two farm buildings.
- Small-scale farmsteads associated with secondary or dual employment in local industries.

Building types

- There are three- or four-bay, cruck-framed barns of 15th- to 17th-century date (part of a South Pennines group).
- Combination barns dating from the 17th century either have a wide range of functions (threshing barn, cow housing, stabling, hay lofts) or comprise threshing barns with full-height, central threshing floor, flanked by lofted bays for animal housing at either end and external openings for pitching hay.
- There are two-storey ranges with cattle housing and haylofts over. Some have entries to the gable end (a type found in Lancashire and Cumbria) and inscribed, pre-1750 dates.
- Distinctive 18th- and early 19th-century field barns with hay lofts above cow stalling, including bank barns with a lower floor built into the slope, are clustered in areas of intensive lead mining.
- Stables and cart sheds are frequently found adjoining the working buildings or as a component part of the combination barn. They are also found as free standing buildings.
- Outfarms comprise buildings and yard without a farmhouse. They were built to house cattle in the field with associated working buildings. They can be sited some distance from the farmhouse.

View over Edale to the lower slopes of Kinder Scout. Dispersed settlements, isolated farmsteads and numerous field barns lie in a landscape of piecemeal enclosure delineated by hedged boundaries. Higher up the slope, the walled rectilinear fields of 19th-century enclosure are visible. In the foreground, a linear farmstead lies in the shelter of mature hedgerow trees. Photo © Jen Deadman



Maps are based on 2nd edition 25" Ordnance Survey maps, which show farmsteads after the last major phase in the building of traditional farmsteads in England. © Crown Copyright [and database rights] 2020. OS 100024900

Farmstead, showing the buildings in black and the boundaries of the main yards (highlighted in green), working areas and gardens.

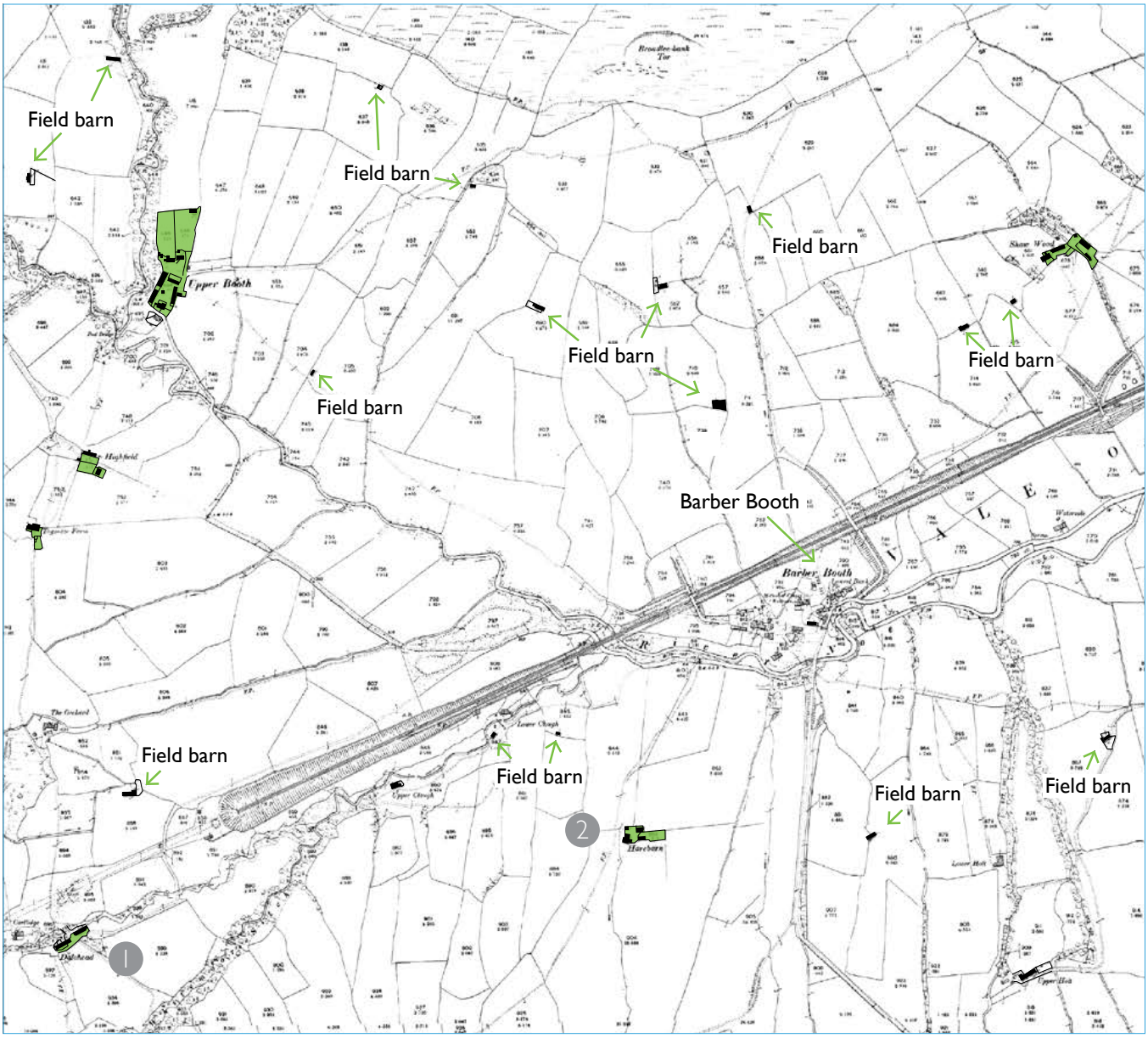
0 250 500 m

0 0.25 miles

N

Area north of High Bradfield

This is a landscape of medieval dispersed settlement. To the north lie reservoirs and the conurbation of Stocksbridge. This small area has many houses and barns of 17th-century date, including cruck-framed barns, set around common land dotted with many small gritstone quarries. Most farmsteads were built to linear plans, some developing from the 17th century into loose courtyard and multi-yard plans, as at (1), some being extended into L-shaped plans (2) and small-scale courtyard plans. Many fields have the irregular and ovoid shapes, typical of medieval enclosure from moorland and woodland, interspersed with the rectilinear enclosures typical of 18th- and 19th-century survey-planned enclosure. Here, in the 19th century, the agricultural economy changed from cattle rearing to dairying, including the supply of liquid milk by rail and then road for nearby Sheffield.



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Farmstead, showing the buildings in black and the boundaries of the main yards (highlighted in green), working areas and gardens.

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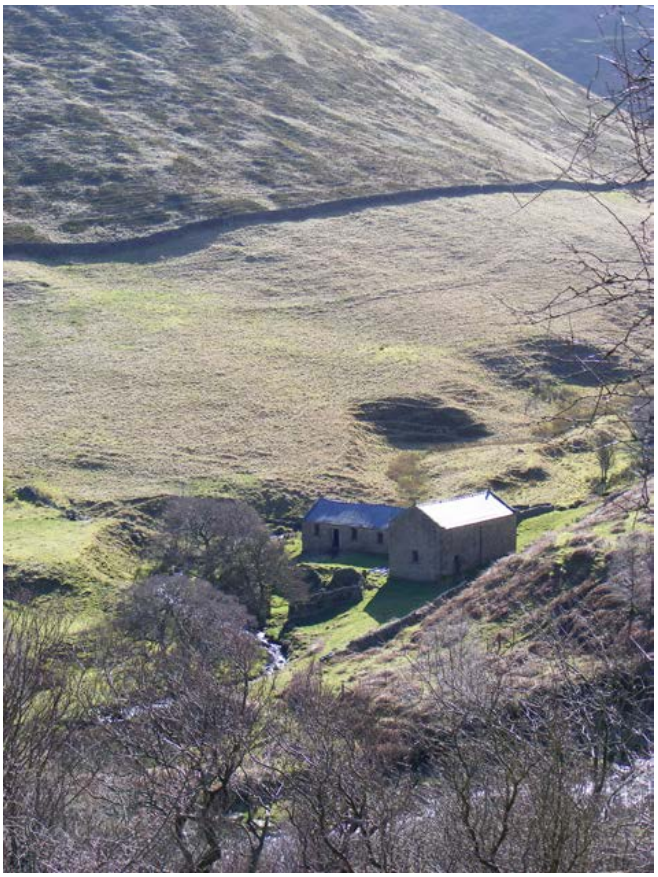
N

Vale of Edale centred on the village of Barber Booth and Upper Booth

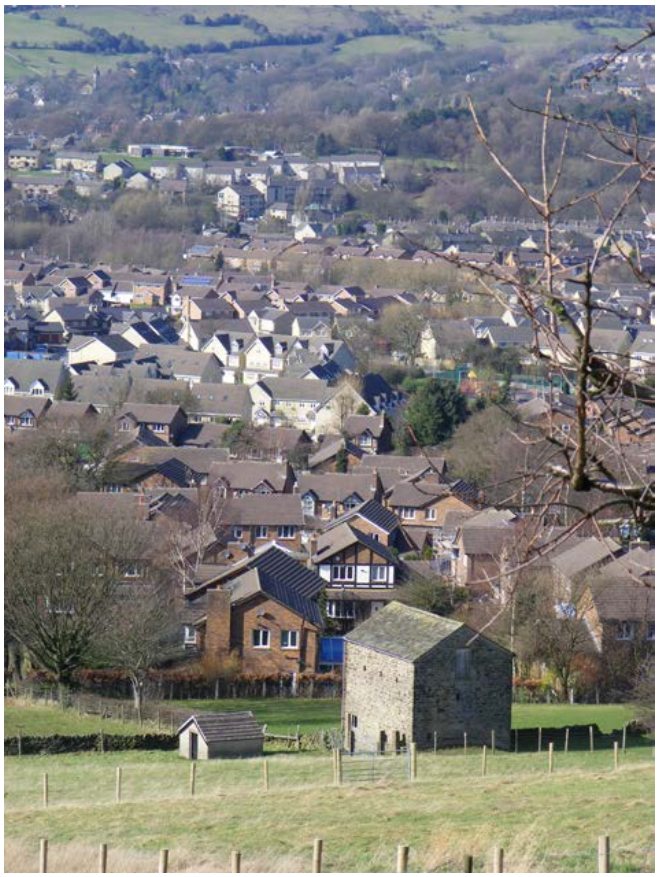
The 'booth' name is indicative of settlements which originated in the medieval period as summer pastures for sheep. The general landscape is one of hamlets or folds in the valley bottom and small steadings (linear or small courtyard plans) set close under the fell side, away from the road, within small, irregular fields that became enclosed by the 17th century. Cruck-barns survive in the hamlet of Barley Booth and on isolated farmsteads. The 17th-century and earlier farmsteads with recorded 17th-century or earlier buildings are linear in form, for example at Dalehead (1), and a small number of large farms developed around farmsteads with many yards for cattle and with a large combination barn (as at Upper Booth, to the north-west). Adjacent to Manor House Farm (2), located in an isolated position to the south, are what appear to be two tofts and crofts set in a large field, possibly evidencing an earlier, nucleated settlement which has been abandoned and moved up the hillside. The abundant field barns provide testament to the importance of dairying here in the 19th century, liquid milk being exported to nearby towns by railway.

Hardtimes Farm, one of several isolated farmsteads caught between the conurbations of Glossop and Stalybridge. It sits in a landscape of 19th-century enclosure, overlying earlier piecemeal enclosure. Photo © Jen Deadman

An upland mining area, where isolated steadings and field barns sit within small irregular enclosures. The remainder of the fell is divided up into large, irregular-shaped parcels by stone walls which snake across the landscape. Mine shafts and bell pits are dotted throughout the area. Photo © Jen Deadman



Snake Pass, High Peak. A small outfarm lying in the bottom of the steep-sided Woodlands Valley. An inhospitable region where farmsteads sit on meagre, piecemeal enclosure on the tight valley sides. Photo © Jen Deadman



Landscape above Glossop, in the north of the area. Here, the dense mass of the conurbation ends abruptly as the land begins to rise above the valley bottom to the fell tops. The barn sits in relict strip fields on the edge of the town, above which, behind and to the east, lie rectilinear fields of late enclosure. On the high fell tops the enclosure has reverted back to moorland. Photo © Jen Deadman

To the south-west the landscape is more gentle and farmsteads (usually linear or small-scale loose courtyard types) lie scattered in fields of piecemeal enclosure with traces of medieval strip field cultivation (balks and ridge and furrow) overlain by later enclosure. Photo © Jen Deadman

Farmstead set below the moor edge on the High Peak, one of many linear farmsteads occupying a remote and isolated position. It lies amongst fields of piecemeal enclosure. Photo © Jen Deadman

Linear plan This huge linear-plan range, lying in an area of pastoral and arable land, is set adjacent to a square of rectilinear fields called 'Peat Lands'. Within the range, all the functions of a large mixed farm can be accommodated. At the heart of the unit is the threshing floor flanked right and left by cattle housing and stabling. A two-bay, open-fronted cart shed stands adjacent to the farmhouse which is dwarfed by the working buildings. Photo © Jen Deadman

This small, mixed farm of 46 acres on the eastern edge of the High Peak follows the laithe house plan. A combination barn (laithe being the local term for a barn) adjoins on the return to form an L-shape. The laithe house typically incorporated a barn under the same roof-line. There was no internal access between the two. The high-arched cart entry enabled a loaded cart to be led onto the floor of the barn, which could also be used as a threshing floor. A small opposed door was opened for winnowing. A byre with a loft over was often sited at the low end, and hay was stored at the upper end. Photo © Jen Deadman

Isolated farmstead on the Broomhead estate in the east of the area. It lies in an area of moor intake fields, beyond which are more regular fields of later enclosure. The plan form, an L-plan range of integral house and working buildings, is typical of the area. Photo © Jen Deadman

Large farmstead set between Upper Midhope and Midhopestones. A long, linear range of one- and two-storeyed buildings, including the farmhouse, forms one side of a large courtyard arrangement. Photo © Jen Deadman

Hamlet of Upper Midhope. Late 18th-century, L-shaped range of working buildings steading, now converted. It comprises a long, two-storey range with a byre with loft over flanked by a granary and a threshing barn. Adjoining at a right angle is a single-storey range. The farmhouse stands away from the yard. Fields are small but regular, possibly due to the amalgamation of strip fields. Photo © Jen Deadman

Nether Booth, Vale of Edale. regular U-shaped arrangement including this long, linear roadside range, possibly 18th-century. It fronts a large yard on the other side of which is a part-lofted combination barn with outshots. Photo © Jen Deadman

Mid-19th-century estate farmstead in regular-shaped fields of 19th-century enclosure. L-shaped, regular courtyard arrangement with the large combination barn dominating the yard. Photo © Jen Deadman

An 18th-century steading set under the lea of a hill, in a busy area of scattered small holdings. The landscape is a patchwork of small, irregular fields interspersed with blocks of small rectilinear fields. The farmhouse is flanked by two combination barns to form a U-shape with an integral house. Photo © Jen Deadman

Remote, 18th-century farmstead set under moor edge escarpment. It is set at the end of a track and lies in fields of piecemeal enclosure. Unusual asymmetric loose courtyard arrangement with individual buildings grouped around the yard, the main component of which is a large combination barn. The house is L-shaped with a working building attached to the right. Photo © Jen Deadman

Dispersed plan farmstead at Castleton on the Dark Peaks-White Peaks border. The farmstead comprises a loose group of buildings set either side of a drove way which leads onto the moorland.
Photo © Jen Deadman

Combination barn The high cart-entry to this mid-19th-century building is flanked by two cattle entries leading to lofted byres. Unusually, the pitching holes are circular, possibly indicating an estate building. Narrow vents pierce the upper walls to provide ventilation to the hay lofts. Photo © Jen Deadman

The large combination barn can serve a host of functions. This late 18th- or early 19th-century example dominates the large courtyard, providing threshing floor, large cattle byres, hay lofts and stabling. Photo © Jen Deadman

Roadside combination barn, with outshot forming the return of an L-shaped plan form. The farmhouse lies apart. The outshot is not as common to the area as in other parts of the Peak. It frequently houses a stable or sometimes acts as a cart shed. Photos © Jen Deadman

Highlow Hall barn near Hathersage. 17th-century combination barn with hayloft above cattle housing. The eaves line was originally lower, as there is evidence for raising to its present height. The front elevation is punctuated with entries, the shape of the massive lintels being a characteristic feature of 17th-century buildings in the area. Photos © Peak Park

Cow house Simple, two-storey mid-19th-century cow house comprising a hay loft over byres which complements the threshing barn to which it adjoins at right angles. There is no access between the two. Photo © Jen Deadman

Field barn Distinctive 18th- and early 19th-century field barns with hay lofts above cow stalling are a common sight. They are frequently seen clustered in areas of intensive lead mining and often take the form of a bank barn. 'Variant' bank barns, built across the slope, with entry to the cow house in the gable end, are mostly 18th century in date: these typically had entries inserted into side walls to enable better access to stalls. Bank barns built along the slope (termed 'true bank barns') were built from the mid-18th century on most holdings. This field barn on hillside outside Glossop has entries in the side walls and a taking-in door at the upper level in the gable. It is early 19th century in date. Photo © Jen Deadman

Outfarm On a much larger scale, this roadside bank barn has a threshing floor or cart shelter with an open hay mow to the right, and a byre, lofted over, on the lower side. Cattle entries are set in the gable end, and the integral outshot houses another byre. An additional open-sided shelter shed has been added in more recent times, where cattle are still housed today. A small yard area has been created in the return. This arrangement could be classed as an outfarm. An outfarm comprises buildings and yard without a farmhouse, built to house cattle in the field, with associated working buildings. They can be sited some distances from the farmstead. Photo © Jen Deadman

Materials and detail

- Sandstone and gritstone, used either singly or in combination, are the predominant building materials, the latter particularly for lintels and architectural detailing.
- Sandstone flags were later widely replaced by Welsh slate roofs.
- Some 16th-century or earlier timber-frame building remains, the latter often surviving as cruck-framed buildings with later stone infill.

Historic England

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The **West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project**, led by English Heritage (now Historic England), has mapped the historic character, survival and use of farmsteads across the whole region which includes part of this NCA. For the Summary Report of 2009 see https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/west-midlands-farmsteads-landscapes/
For more detailed guidance on farmsteads in the National Park see the Peak District Historic Farmsteads Guidance - https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/looking-after/living-and-working/farmers-land-managers/historic-farmsteads-guidance

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