

The team surveyed a relatively small but archaeologically rich area that lies between the Lickle and the Duddon valleys. The terrain consisted of farmland, woodland and open sheep-grazed fell. In the fields we recorded interesting barns, abandoned farmsteads and a variety of wall features including hog holes, rabbit smoots, styles and gate stoops. We also noted a number of walls that had been constructed using upright slabs or 'shards'. Old track-ways were identified as were a variety of stone bridges where these tracks crossed streams and rivers.

Much of the woodland that we surveyed had been coppiced in the past and revealed a wealth of evidence of former woodland industries. We found numerous charcoal burners' platforms or 'pitsteads' and some huts or shelters as well as the abandoned track-ways and walls that had been used by these workers.

On the open fells where the land has been largely left undisturbed over the centuries considerable indication of the prehistoric occupation remains. The earliest farmers created numerous clearance cairns in their efforts to create grazing for stock and these still remain. Other cairns including ring cairns, some with the remains of central burial cists, revealed burial and ritual activity. There were also early walled enclosures and ditches where land had been drained. We also found the remains of a few early medieval long houses.

Features associated with the sheep farming that has taken place on the fells over many centuries were also abundant. These included various shepherds' shelters and both circular and rectangular sheep folds. In the past plant fibres such as flax and hemp were used to making fabric. The process involved soaking them in 'retting' ponds and we found a large site where this was thought to have taken place. We also came across kilns where bracken would have been burnt to make potash used in the process of woollen production. Other industrial features were noted. These ranged from a single medieval iron smelting site to scores of stone quarries and their associated workings including adits and quarry buildings.

Archaeological features associated with the use of the fells for training by the army in the Second World War were also identified. These included the finding of a practice mortar bomb in the early weeks of the survey. We later found ramps and possible munitions trenches.

This brief summary is far from comprehensive. Hopefully, however, it conveys the wealth of fascinating evidence of past human activity that our team were privileged to study and record.