

# Wooded Hills and Pavements

## Location

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This sub type is found in Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty only.

## Key Characteristics

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- Low rolling wooded hills
- Open pasture of mainly drained mossland
- Coastal features include cliffs salt marshes and shingle beaches
- Extensive limestone pavement
- Views out across Morecambe Bay and up to the Lakeland Fells exist

## Physical character

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This sub type is found on Lower Carboniferous limestone with calcareous brown soils. The landscape has steep scarp slopes, exposed limestone pavement or other rough rocky outcrops. It has similar characteristics to other limestone landscape types, but its coastal associations provide additional distinctiveness.

Limestone pavement is an important feature of the area. Most of the pavement is within woodland blocks which are often visible in open clearings.

This landscape of low, rolling hills terminates in a varied coast including estuarine features such as cliffs, salt marsh and shingle beach.

## Land cover and land use

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This landscape is a complex mosaic of improved pasture, grassland, mosses, limestone outcrops and woodland and woodland pasture. The pasture is divided into small to medium sized fields bound by a strong matrix of limestone walls and high hedges. Woodland cover is

extensive and includes former coppice pavement, hazel, ash and natural yew woods. Pavement is often visible in open clearings within the woodlands. Large coniferous plantations are being restored back to locally native woodland. Small orchards are scattered throughout the area.

Nineteenth and 20th century settlements are generally nucleated and include Victorian coastal towns. More traditional vernacular farmsteads and settlements are dispersed inland. Medieval and historic field patterns are often visible close to the settlements and provide open spaces within them. Pele towers notable historic features in the area. The settlements, woods and fields are connected together by a complex network of narrow winding lanes enclosed by stone walls and high hedges which thread through the area.

## Ecology

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A landscape characterised by large expanses of upland mixed ash wood and wooded limestone pavement, limestone grassland and species-rich hedgerows. The woods support high-brown fritillary and mezeleon, whilst the grassland is important for butterflies such as northern brown argus, high-brown fritillary, pearl-bordered fritillary. Duke of Burgundy fritillary and small blue and rare plants such as fingered sedge. Where the rock outcrops open limestone pavements support a range of characteristic and rare species, including dark red helleborine, limestone fern, rigid buckler-fern, angular Solomon's seal and lily-of-the-valley. Pavements also support a number of rare invertebrates, such as the narrow-mouthed whorl-snail.

## Historic and cultural character

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The historic landscape is mainly a mixture of ancient enclosure, parkland and woodland. Much of the woodland is ancient coppice wood and contains

evidence of former woodland management and industries. There are former quarries: limekilns and occasional iron mines scattered throughout. The limestone kilns are a common feature and many date from the late 18th to mid 19th century when farmers burned limestone to create quick lime, which was then added to the land to improve its fertility. Caves contain evidence of prehistoric occupation from the Ice Age through to the Romans. Deer parks and designed landscapes are still evident.

## Perceptual character

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This is an unusual or rare landscape and its scenic beauty is recognised in the national landscape designation. In places it is a complex, intimate landscape which can easily lose a new visitor not familiar with its matrix of roads and footpaths and woodlands. Towards the coast and around Arnside Knott it is more open and the contrast between the expanses of sand and limestone cliffs and headlands provide additional drama. In higher parts there are dramatic views across the sky, sands and mudflats of Morecambe Bay out to sea and across to Grange over Sands and the Lake District fells. Here the changing weather, seasons, skies and tides influence the open views which can sometimes be tranquil and calm and at other times be wilder and more elemental. Local views, which are generally limited by rolling topography or woodland and are sometimes dominated by large features such as Arnside Knott and Middlebarrow Hill.

## Sensitive characteristics or features

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The complex mosaic of grassland, mosses, limestone features and woodland are sensitive to changes in land management practices. The matrix of limestone walls and high hedges is sensitive to changes in land management and farming diversification. Pele towers and their open locations are sensitive focal points in the landscape. The enclosed narrow and winding rural lanes are sensitive to road improvements and new access to development. The special character of the Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is sensitive to unmanaged changes to land management, village expansion and tourism development. There are some valued views from open parts of wooded pavements across Morecambe Bay and the Lakeland

Fells that could be sensitive to changes in woodland management and poorly sited development.

## Vision

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**This landscape will be conserved and enhanced in accordance with the Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan.** Development and the intensity of vehicular traffic will be subject to strict controls. The co-ordination between recreation and countryside management will continue enhancing facilities for quiet enjoyment and understanding. Pasture, mossland, woodland and pavements will be managed to enhance biodiversity. Farmers and landowners will be encouraged to adopt detailed management and restoration projects to support mosaic habitats, traditional farming patterns, semi-natural woodlands, unimproved and limestone grasslands, mosslands and features of historic or cultural significance including parkland.

## Changes in the Landscape

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Over the next 10 – 20 years this landscape could be subject to the following changes or issues:

### *Management Practices*

- Intensification of agriculture and larger farm holdings could affect distinctive features such as species rich grassland, traditional field boundaries and woodland.
- Afforestation using non-native species now ceased.
- The former destruction of limestone pavement for garden rockery has been stemmed as a result of protection afforded by Limestone Pavement Orders.
- A decline in the distinctive character of historic parklands, and in the fabric of historic features such as lime kilns and fortified farmhouses

### *Development*

- Development of residential, holiday homes, caravan sites (and extensions), minor road improvements and recreational facilities have led to some 'suburbanisation' of rural character.
- Planned and incremental expansions of settlement such as Arnside could result in a loss of historic boundaries and a weakening of vernacular or traditional characteristics.

- Extension of limestone quarrying and small-scale local industry can erode the woodland and intimate character.
- Energy infrastructure or other large scale development could be sited in adjacent landscapes which could affect open views.

### **Access and Recreation**

- Over the next decade, the planned implementation of enhanced access to the whole of the English coast could result in some disturbance to wildlife in sensitive locations at certain times of the year.
- Coastal access will be improved to support the coastal open access programme. Space will be needed to allow the route to shift in this dynamic area and in response to any future coastal erosion.
- Parts of the landscape are likely to continue to be attractive for recreation and tourism purposes. This could lead to traffic congestion, issues with parking and heavy use of some footpaths. Footpaths and facilities may be improved linked to the coastal access roll out.
- There is likely to be continued interest in development linked to tourism and recreational activities including the expansion of some of the large caravan sites. This could lead to loss of open farmland, woodland. Incremental suburban features could also erode the character of the area.

## **Guidelines**

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### **Natural Features**

- Conserve and restore the broad scale pattern of ancient semi-natural woodland cover through appropriate management for amenity and nature conservation benefits.
- Encourage appropriate species and structural diversity of woodlands to maximise ecological interest and attractive combinations of colour and texture.
- Retain the character and structure of yew dominant woodland.
- Retain and appropriately manage areas of historic 18th and 19th century designed landscapes and parkland.
- Continue to enhance the appearance and biodiversity value of existing commercial and coniferous plantations and support the removal of planted woodland from pavement areas.
- Conserve and enhance through appropriate management, the biological diversity of the characteristic open mosaic of bare rock outcrops, species rich calcareous grassland, heath and scrub vegetation.
- Encourage natural diversity through the reversion of drained and intensively managed mossland and pasture back to semi-natural wetland and meadows.
- Reverse the effects of agricultural improvements and scrub/woodland encroachment on remaining wetland mosses through the adoption of environmentally sensitive management measures.
- Encourage the reversion of drained and managed mossland back to semi-natural wetland.

### **Cultural Features**

- Conserve and restore through appropriate management the dry stone walls and hedges which enclose the historic pattern of small-scale fields and lanes.
- Discourage field enlargement and introduction of fencing to subdivide fields, or to replace or gap-up walls and hedgerows.
- Conserve and enhance disused quarries and historic structures such as medieval farmhouses, wells, lime kilns and associated quarries.

### **Development**

- Manage any further expansion of villages to respect their natural and historic boundaries and features and to avoid sprawl and encroachment into surrounding countryside and important village settings.
- Protect village fringes from unsympathetic peripheral development. Ensure any new developments are visually contained and respect the scale, traditional form and character of the settlement and building materials.
- Resist infill development of important open or historic spaces within villages.
- Enhance villages through sensitive environmental improvements to entrances, village greens, estuary frontages etc.
- Retain the character of the rural road network and encourage new highways signage to reflect the rural character of the area.
- Manage other development, such as new or extensions to caravan sites, to prevent unsympathetic development, additional suburban characteristics and to ensure they are visually contained and are of an

appropriate scale.

- Manage the siting of large scale development, and particularly energy infrastructure, in adjacent landscapes where it could adversely affect key coastal and inland views.

### ***Access and Recreation***

- Support the roll out of coastal access and encourage sensitively sited coastal access and recreational infrastructure. Coastal access footpaths, areas and facilities should be improved and developed to be compatible with the undeveloped and natural character of this sub type.
- In line with the Marine and Coastal Access Act consideration should be given to routing coastal access footpaths along appropriate sea defence structures.
- In areas where coastal access will introduce new routes appropriate access management may be needed in sensitive locations at certain times of the year to minimise disturbance to wildlife.
- Protect sensitive natural habitats through careful routing of paths and provision of vehicle restraints.
- Resist the expansion or further development of tourism or recreation facilities, which would prejudice the quiet scenic qualities of this area.
- Develop traffic management schemes to address the problems of congestion and parking whilst avoiding measures to increase capacity for cars.
- Minimise the visual intrusion and ecological damage created by existing facilities such as car parks, lay-bys, waymarking, signage and footpaths through sensitive siting and design, and use of high quality durable materials.