



# Raisbeck to Kelleth

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## Vernacular Structures Trail

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The native stone is used and reused. When a wall tumbles beyond repair the stone is rebuilt into another wall or a house nearby. The stone for the rebuild pinfold and the cone came from old field walls built originally from the eighteenth century quarries. This continuum makes for harmony in the environment.

**Speed's Map, 1610**

The tiny house on the green was built in 1780 by the yeoman farmers of Raisbeck as a dame school. How many children would fit in here? What would they be taught?

A pinfold was for keeping stray livestock until the owner paid a fine. Now it guards a stone cone made by Andy Goldsworthy. Or does the cone watch over the fold, like a stone man?

How much information does Speed's map convey, compared with the later maps by Jeffrey and Greenwood?

In medieval times, Orton church belonged to distant Conishead Priory, and the land hereabouts was already a great sheep ranch.

Because the land was poor and sour, the landowners decided to divide it up among the bigger farmers, who were then required to fence and improve it.

But this meant that some of the smallholders lost their grazing rights and became farm labourers, or went to work on the railways.

After the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the local farmers continued to pasture their cattle and sheep on the commons.

Many people left the land altogether and went to work in the new industrial towns.

This division of the open moors had dramatic effects on the fertility of the land:

Commons that had only been capable of half starving the animals pastured upon them, with peeing and burning, fencing and draining, liming, ploughing and sowing, changed in the course of a few years from an annual rental value of 6d to 1s per acre to one of from 20s to 30s per acre. F. W. Gamett, *Westmorland Agriculture*, 1912.

Often the water runs underground. How much water flows in the beck at Slapestone Bridge? Why are the watergates hung from chains?

Can you see where Tam Sike disappears for a short distance?

Where all these sheep have over-grazed the turf is worn away. This erosion can be seen as bare limestone pavement on Orton Scar to the north.

Why was red sandstone, softer than limestone, often used for quoins (cornerstones)?

Planning controls ensure that most new buildings reuse local stone. Can you see this in a bungalow at Raisbeck and a garage at Kelleth?

As you look across the fields, you can see how the landscape was completely rewritten as a result of the Enclosure Award (1759). The long limestone walls march straight across the land, defining the new fields with no regard for the topography.

How different these are from the contour lines on the Ordnance Survey map, which seem to meander on the gentle slopes of these high green pastures.

Barugh [bar] is from beorg, a hill, or a mound. Could it have been an ancient burial mound?

Raisbeck, Kelleth, and most of the place-names of the area derive from Old English and Old Norse. Where did the people come from to farm these uplands more than 1000 years ago?

The wide verges have a rich flora, and many young trees of which native species?

The farmers are so familiar with their walls that they use them as cupboards. What sort of things do they store in them?

That heap of rubble in the field at Wain Gap was once a limekin. Where have all its facing stones gone?

The Enclosure Map (1779) shows a gate across the road at this medieval 'gap' in a wall for a wagon to pass.

This minor road was important enough to have milestones. Are they still there?

Once there was a house at Wain Gap, now its remains form part of the sheep pens.

New roads were made, 60 feet wide between the walls. How wide is the road now? Spot the place where the road narrows into Waingap Lane, which runs through the medieval strip fields around Kelleth.

The only Listed Building in Kelleth is the grand house built of limewashed rubble. It stands on a plinth, with projecting wings to either side of a canopied porch.

Can you identify the stone quoins, lintels, mullions and cornices?

Access to farmland is a delicate subject. Shouldn't the "right to roam" be balanced by respect for the land?

Think how easy it is to destroy that which we have come to admire. How can we tread lightly?

The wells were the local water supply, and were also used by travellers and their horses on the tumpike road through Kelleth.

The name Kelleth comes from *kelid*, *AVS* the slope with a spring. Can you find a spring at Bank Wells?

**Ordnance Survey 6" map, Westmorland Sheet 29, 1920 edition**



Ordnance Survey 6" map,  
Westmorland Sheet 29, first edition, 1851