

# Historic Sites

**Welcome.** Today, Ennerdale is home to just a handful of people. However over the past 4000 years Ennerdale has been shaped by the ebb and flow of people living and working in the valley. The historic landscape of Ennerdale sets it apart from other Lakeland valleys because of the diversity, complexity, and survival of its archaeological remains. It holds the most impressive collection of valley bottom Bronze Age (2000 BC to 800 BC) and domestic medieval (AD 410 to AD1600) archaeology in the Lake District.

**Suitability.** Most of the sites are only a short walk from the Forest Road and so can be easily accessed on foot. The road between the lake and the car park and upto Smithy beck Longhouses is reasonably steep.



Smithy Beck Longhouses



Smithy Beck Bloomery

Wild Ennerdale is a partnership between people and organisations lead by The National Trust, The Forestry Commission, United Utilities and Natural England. **Our vision is "to allow the evolution of Ennerdale as a wild valley for the benefit of people, relying more on natural processes to shape its landscape and ecology."**

For more information visit [www.wildennerdale.co.uk](http://www.wildennerdale.co.uk)



Cairnfield East of Gillerthwaite

Please Protect Our Wild Valley  
**Don't start fires**  
Protect and respect wildlife, trees and plants  
Keep dogs under control  
Take your litter home  
Make no unnecessary noise  
Take only memories away



Woundell Beck Vaccary

**Smithy Beck Bloomery** is a medieval iron smelting furnace, fuelled by charcoal, which produced wrought iron. Iron ore was heated to remove iron oxide and other impurities to leave a single grapefruit sized lump of metallic iron known as a 'bloom'. The bloomery was constructed here to take advantage of the extensive native woodlands that existed in medieval times.

**Smithy Beck Longhouses**  
A number of these structures are 'double walled', a design unusual in the Lake District. These structures were probably the homes of the iron miners working at Clewes Gill or those involved in the smelting operation down by the lake. The forest road to the site involves a steady climb.

**Gillerthwaite Longhouses**  
These two houses are part of a group of 11 medieval houses, with associated cultivation terraces and stock pounds, which extend in a band up the slope from the valley floor. The monuments reflect a sizeable, agricultural community that once lived in the valley some 600 years ago. The house sits on a natural terrace and appears to have two opposing gaps on its longest side that forma 'cross passage', suggesting a domestic function. The house appears to be surrounded by a bank which may have been used as a back stop for tree trunks cantilevered across the inner wall to form a roof covered in branches and heather.

Start from Bowness Knott car park Grid Ref NY110153 or Postcode CA23 3AU

**Woundell Beck Vaccary**  
A vaccary is an historical term describing a pastoral cattle ranching farmstead, typically dating from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, the word comes from the medieval Latin *vaccaria*, derived from *vacca*, a cow. Today the site is used to handle one of our herds of Galloway cattle, an internal wooden fence has been erected to protect the historic walls.

**River Liza Settlement**  
This is a sub-circular enclosed settlement that straddles the River Liza footpath. The settlement is thought to have been occupied during the Iron Age, over 2000 years ago. The interior is likely to have contained round houses and animal pounds and outside there is a cairnfield, an area of ground that had been cleared of stone for farming. Follow the footpath from the road alongside Low Beck.

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