

BURNBANKS

MODEL SETTLEMENT

MANCHESTER'S VISION

In 1930, the Lord Mayor of Manchester set off the first blast to begin the work - the only casualty was one rabbit. The physical and social impact though was immense. Many farms were compulsorily purchased and the village of Mardale was drowned. The dam across Haweswater Beck was completed in 1940 but the reservoir took two years to fill. It raised the level of the lake by 30 metres and increased its capacity to 19 thousand million gallons. Using force of gravity alone, the water travelled over 100 miles to Manchester without the need for pumps. World War Two had a direct effect on life at Burnbanks – many workmen were called up for service and families moved away. The population began to fall and the character of the village changed. Some of the houses were dismantled and re-erected elsewhere.

With the creation of the Lake District National Park and the reorganisation of local government responsibility for Haweswater and Burnbanks passed out of Manchester's hands. Much of Burnbanks became hidden under self-seeded trees and shrubs.



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HE WANTED FOR NOTHING...
..it was a proper modern village

Once the war ended, painters, plumbers and electricians replaced labourers at Burnbanks and in time many forgot that their houses were prefabricated cast-iron. A few engineers lived at Naddle Gate, alongside but separate from the craftsmen. They managed the work of constructing extensive pipelines to bring water from Swindale, Cawdale and Heltondale. The emphasis was on maintaining the dam and its water supply and on keeping the large surrounding estate in good order.

Burnbanks remained a well-serviced settled community, threatened only by Manchester's periodic water supply alerts. One scheme in the 1970s would have raised the height of the dam so that the reservoir drowned the entire valley, including Burnbanks and the Haweswater Hotel. New accommodation was to be provided in a YHA hostel, along with a 'modest' caravan and camp site. A Haweswater Action Committee was formed in 1977 to oppose plans for raising the height of the dam and increasing public access.

