



# FOREST OF BOWLAND

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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Cover Image - RSPB/AONB Birds of Bowland  
school visit to Laund Farm, Chipping  
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# Chairperson's View



## View from the Chair:

### **County Councillor Albert Atkinson, Chairman of the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee**

It never ceases to impress me the way the AONB Partnership continues to deliver its core aim of conserving and enhancing our fabulous Bowland landscape, whilst also working with communities and businesses to celebrate what's special about the landscape and as a result helping to support the rural economy.

Festival Bowland, the year-round programme of events in and around the AONB, exemplifies this partnership working with the AONB team, partner organisations, voluntary and community groups and businesses all coming together to offer a wide array of fantastic experiences for residents and visitors alike. The events enable people to enjoy and understand better the landscape of the AONB and the work of the AONB Partnership.

Another continuing success story for the AONB has been the work with local businesses to support the development of sustainable tourism across the area. In November 2011, the AONB was awarded runner-up in the 'Best Destination' category at the Virgin Travel International Responsible Tourism Awards. The accolade is testament to the collective effort of the AONB team, partner organisations, community groups and most of all the tourism businesses themselves, who have worked hard over the last five years to deliver tourism with sustainability at the core.

I was also fortunate enough to be invited to the 'Bowland Symposium' on sustainable tourism held in May 2012, to welcome visitors from all over the country coming from as far away as the Cairngorms and Cornwall to learn about the Bowland experience. It was clear from the response of both speakers and delegates at the event that Bowland is now seen as one of the 'leading lights' in the development of sustainable tourism in the UK.

The JAC made a visit to Stephen Park in April 2011 to hear about the exciting plans for the development of visitor amenities in Gisburn Forest. The development of the new amenities has continued apace and is anticipated to be complete in late 2012. Alongside the work at Stephen Park, there has been a very interesting example of community archaeology developing, with the AONB team working with United Utilities, Slaidburn Archive and Oxford Archaeology North to conserve and protect the site of the original St. James' Church at Stocks-in-Bowland. Consecrated in 1852, the church was demolished during the construction of Stocks Reservoir during the 1930's and eventually rebuilt, on a smaller scale, on its present site at Dalehead. The site of the original church became part of School Lane car park on the edge of Gisburn Forest and recent plans to improve the layout of the car park also provided the opportunity to safeguard the foundations of this well-remembered local building.

On reflection, in these continuing difficult times for the UK economy as a whole, I believe that making connections between the landscape and the communities and businesses within it will remain critical for the Partnership, as it strives to achieve the vision for the area set out in the AONB Management Plan.

Finally, I urge you to take a moment to look through this annual report to appreciate the bold steps the Partnership has been taking towards this ultimate goal.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'A. Atkinson'.

# AONB Manager's View



## New Ways of Working

The austere times in which AONBs now find themselves pose a real challenge for continuing the fantastic work of the AONB unit and the wider partnership in the coming years. However, it has also made us carefully examine how we currently operate and to look at new and innovative ways of working.

The Natural Environment White Paper, published in June 2011 has been instructive in showing how the Coalition government views its future involvement in shaping some of the nation's best loved landscapes such as AONBs. The development of 'Local Nature Partnerships' and 'Nature Improvement Areas' points to a new "landscape-scale" approach to biodiversity and wildlife conservation. This approach is one that is almost second nature to the AONB staff and they are already responding to this new agenda, developing new partnerships to help conserve and enhance two of Bowland's most treasured habitats: upland hay meadows and the blanket bogs covering its moorland tops.

In early 2012, funding was secured to support 'Bowland Haytime', a joint project between the AONB and Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (YDMT). Over the next year, it aims to restore and enhance upland hay meadows across the area, working closely with local farmers, volunteers and residents. We look forward to working with YDMT on this exciting project and anticipate it leading to a closer working between ourselves and the Trust in the future.

The AONB has supported the Lancashire Upland Peat Partnership to develop a restoration plan for large areas of Bowland's blanket bog. It can often be easy to overlook blanket bog habitat as being something special. However, within a global context, it is the UK's equivalent to the rainforest in terms of its importance for biodiversity and addressing climate change. It also plays host to many of the bird species for which the Forest of Bowland is famed. This new plan will hopefully help to unlock the funding still available within both the public and private sector to support restoration and conservation measures. An excellent illustration of restoration on this scale can now be seen on Fiendsdale Head in the western fells of Bowland. The AONB, Lancashire County Council Environment & Community Projects, Natural England, Bleasdale Estate and United Utilities worked together to deliver some outstanding access and habitat improvements for this SSSI moorland.

The AONB Partnership has also been considering new ways to maximise the funding we can draw down from charitable trusts and the private sector. The Partnership is currently limited in the funding sources to which it can apply due to it being hosted by a local authority. The AONB Unit has spent time over the last year listening and learning from different approaches taken by other AONBs and protected landscapes, such as 'Friends' groups, charitable organisations and community foundations. The AONB Partnership has now committed to work with the existing charitable company, Bowland Tourism Environment Fund, to investigate extending the remit of this charitable arm of the AONB Partnership.

A new way of working for government was established in early 2011, with the tri-partite agreement between Defra, Natural England and the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB). This agreement has resulted in the NAAONB being very well-positioned to represent AONB interests at the highest levels of government. The relationships are continuing to develop with Defra, including some interesting collaborative initiatives proposed on sustainable tourism and models for future investment in the public benefits provided by the natural environment, such as clean air and water, carbon storage, food security and flood risk alleviation.

On a more personal note, I have now been in post within the AONB team for more than a year and I can probably say that I now feel settled into the job. I count myself as very lucky to be working to conserve and enhance such a wonderful landscape as Bowland's and also to work with such committed and talented people within both the team and the wider partnership. Looking back over the last year, I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience and look forward to continuing this work into 2012 and beyond.

**Elliott Lorimer, Principal AONB Officer.**

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# Natural & Cultural Heritage

## RSPB Bowland Wader Project

Despite the Wader Project being in existence for eleven years now, new, keen and enthusiastic farmers and landowners are still joining forces with us to help boost Bowland's nationally important wader populations. To date we have engaged with over 175 and the majority are delivering some form of positive management for breeding waders - 81 of these farms are doing so through Natural England's Environmental Stewardship schemes.

The Wader Project continues to rely heavily on the Higher Level Stewardship scheme to help deliver habitat for the area's waders. Four new agreements have been secured on Bowland farms in the past year that are now working hard to manage pastures and meadows for Lapwings, Curlews, Redshanks, Snipe and Oystercatchers. The Wader Project also provided significant input to two other agreements and another four are currently in the application stage. In addition, several farm visits were made with agents who are working up applications for farmers, to ensure that as much benefit for Bowland's waders and other wildlife will be delivered through these schemes.

As well as funding secured through the Higher Level Stewardship scheme, organisations including United Utilities, Ribble Valley Borough Council and the AONB's Sustainable Development Fund have also provided welcome top ups for various habitat works across the AONB this year. In addition, Water Framework Directive funds were secured to enhance wader habitat on three sites within the Ribble catchment. One of these, Champion Moor flood pool, was re-instated after a succession of dry years. Land drains were blocked to allow seasonally damp ground on an area of pasture that had formerly held breeding Lapwing, Redshank and Snipe. Within a few weeks of the work being completed, all three species were back breeding on or close to the pool and a recent visit has confirmed the presence of fledged Lapwing chicks.

The Sustainable Development Fund funded a range of Wader Project work this year. This included production of the Birds of Bowland newsletter; on farm interpretation boards and a training event that was held on Chipping Moss in March to help volunteers brush up on wader survey techniques. Thanks to quality habitat after a long history of partnership work on this site, all five species of Bowland's in-bye breeding waders were seen so everyone could get their eye in and just as importantly their ears! The best way to accurately survey waders is to see them before they see you and learning their calls is key to this!

As well as hosting the training event, Chipping Moss also benefitted from a visit from the RSPB's spoil spreader this year. It is a tractor mounted machine that rapidly clears out ditches but re-profiles their edges too to provide first class habitat for wader chicks. Despite horrible weather, Mark Smart, who manages our Berney Marshes reserve in Suffolk, did an excellent job and the open muddy edged ditches, formerly silted up and choked with rushes, have been made full use of by the breeding waders on site this spring.

Alston Wetland on the edge of Longridge had a bumper year in 2011 with a remarkable 21 Lapwing nests on what is only a 19 acre site! Three pairs each of Redshank and Little ringed Plover also bred and there was a nesting attempt from a pair of Common Sandpipers, although the latter failed to raise any young. The site was truly stuffed with birds, as to add to the wader glut, almost 500 burrows were excavated by the Sand Martins in the artificial nesting bank with numerous chicks successfully fledged!

On the research front, the Lapwing Trial Management Project which ran from 2006-2010 has yielded some worrying findings; the fact that Bowland's Lapwing population continues to decline being the headline grabber. The number of young Lapwing fledging is still below the threshold required to increase the population. Despite evidence that predator control can have a positive effect on Lapwing productivity, even in areas of Bowland where this is practised, there is still a net drop in the Lapwing population. As we have always believed, this points to habitat quality being the key driver of Lapwing breeding success. The LTMP has backed this up, as the research has demonstrated that Lapwing have significantly higher breeding success on farms with specific Stewardship scheme funded management for breeding waders, supported by regular support and advice from the Wader Project. Clearly there is still a long way to go to reverse the decline in one of our best known and loved farmland birds. So if you own or manage land with breeding Lapwings please get in touch to see how you could do your bit to help.



Adult redshank with part-grown chick at Alston Wetland  
© Gavin Thomas, RSPB

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# Natural & Cultural Heritage

## RSPB on the United Utilities Bowland Estate

The United Utilities estate in Bowland was the only estate in England to fledge young hen harriers in 2011. Seven of the nine nesting attempts in England took place on the United Utilities estate and resulted in twelve young birds taking to the skies. With harrier breeding successes decreasing in recent years these figures highlight the importance of the United Utilities estate for English hen harriers.

Merlin's and peregrines had somewhat different seasons. Merlin's fledged seventeen young from five attempts whereas peregrines only fledged four young from six attempts.

The programme of guided walks run as part of the AONB's Festival Bowland remained popular with 130 people attending 8 walks along the Langden valley. Led by members of the RSPB and United Utilities team, the 'safaris' provided attendees the opportunity to spot and learn about upland birds and come away with a better understanding about the way in which the estate is managed for multiple benefits including raw water quality, biodiversity, farming and upland shooting.

The partnership of United Utilities, Lancashire County Council's countryside service, Natural England and RSPB successfully ran the hen harrier nest camera project for the fourth successive year. Five weeks of

footage were recorded from when the chicks were just a few days old until they fledged. One of these chicks was fitted with a satellite transmitter; you can read about her travels if you visit [www.bowlandwildlife.org.uk](http://www.bowlandwildlife.org.uk) This remains a popular project with members of the public and allows us to promote hen harriers in the Forest of Bowland and highlight the problems they continue to face.

In October, the RSPB launched 'Skydancer' an exciting new four-year project aimed at raising awareness and promoting the conservation of hen harriers in the north of England. It will focus on practical conservation and community engagement in communities in and around the Forest of Bowland AONB, RSPB's Geltsdale nature reserve and North Tynedale in Northumberland, the areas where hen harriers have most recently bred. Funding for the project has been provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund, United Utilities, and SITA Trust with additional support from the Forestry Commission.

As always a big thank you to everyone we have worked with this year; we couldn't have achieved all this without your help.

To find out more about Skydancer and to see footage from the Bowland harrier nest filmed in 2011 visit [www.rspb.org.uk/skydancer](http://www.rspb.org.uk/skydancer)



Female hen harrier being fitted with a satellite tag  
by Stephen Murphy of Natural England  
© Jude Lane

Hen harrier safari in Langden Valley  
© Jude Lane

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# Natural & Cultural Heritage

## Deer Parks

A research project uncovering Bowland's past landscapes has been led by Nigel Neil and Ruth Thurnhill, and with support from Tarja Wilson, Graham Cooper and members of Chipping Local History Society. This study was commissioned by the AONB as a pilot project for further historical landscape studies in the area.

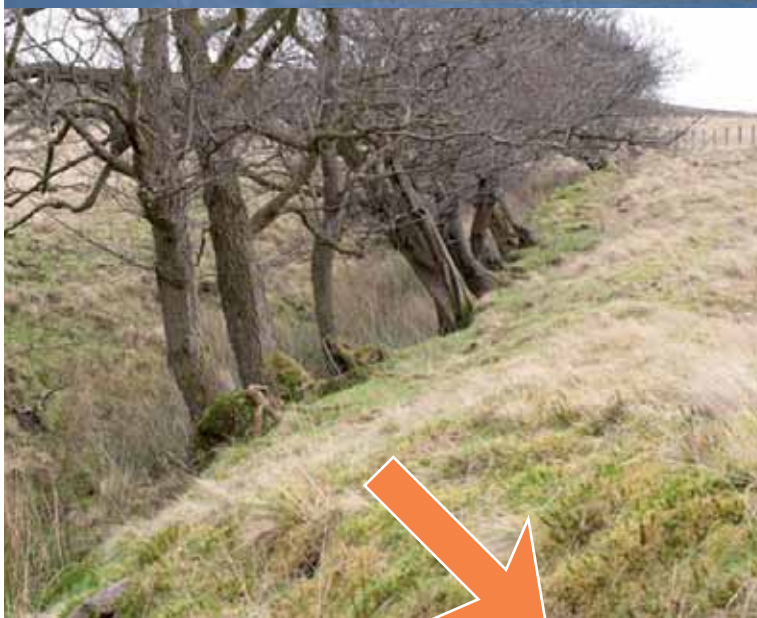
Many people know that Bowland has long been a hunting ground for Kings and Queens and other major landowners, but we wanted to explore how these past uses can still be seen in our landscape today.

The project focussed on two areas, Leagram near Chipping and Radholme near Whitewell. Leagram has long been recognised as an estate with roots that can be traced back to a deer park created in 1349; but Radholme was less well known. This research has uncovered some new references to both deer parks; and also found important links to today's landscape.

Radholme was a settlement noted in the Domesday Book as Radun, but the earliest potential references to a deer park appear in 1259 and then more certainly in 1322. It was a park of around 1000 acres, enclosed along the eastern boundary by a ditch and fence, the pale, which had to be maintained by the park keeper. The Hodder marked the western boundary. Relics of the line of the pale can still be seen at Hall Hill, Kitcham Hill and near Burholme Farm. The deer park was subdivided by 1641 when a written survey was undertaken, and a field map from 1835 shows smaller field boundaries belonging to various owners, but still holding to the original park boundaries. From this we have assumed that the area was 'disparked' sometime after 1641.

Over at Leagram it appears the deer park was shorter lived, being established in 1349 when a keeper was appointed. However it fell into disuse in the mid sixteenth century when it was first leased and then sold by the Crown to Sir Richard Sherburne (later the Shireburn family of Stonyhurst). It was disparked and enclosed in 1563. A fabulous map of the park dated 1595 and drawn by Edmund Moore shows the boundary and subdivisions, and from this we have been able to trace the line today – largely following paths, roads, field boundaries and landforms. Place names such as Pale Farm, Chipping Lawn, Salter Fell and Park Gate also provide clues to the past.

The project is not yet complete and we hope to produce a full illustrated report in the Autumn of 2012 and interpretive information including interactive features on our website, plus some download and guided walks later in 2013.



Leagram dispute map from around 1595 originally drawn by Edmund Moore.  
(National Archives TNA E 317 Yorks 49)

© Nigel Neil

Ditch and bank (probable pale) above Burholme

© Graham Cooper

Burholme Boundary map

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# Natural & Cultural Heritage

## Peat Restoration and Associated Path Improvements on Bleasdale Fells

Over the winter of 2011/2012 a combination of habitat restoration and public access improvements were carried out on Bleasdale Fells. This work focused on two areas: Fiendsdale Head and Fairsnape Fell plateau, and was largely funded through Defra's Higher Level Stewardship administered by Natural England with support from the Forest of Bowland AONB, United Utilities, Bleasdale Estate and Lancashire County Council.

Bleasdale Fells form part of the Bowland Fells Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): part of this designation is because these upland fells support the largest expanse of blanket bog and heather moorland in Lancashire and provide suitable habitat for a diverse upland breeding bird community. The area has been designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the European Birds Directive in recognition of this.

Unfortunately the habitats on parts of the Bleasdale Fells have deteriorated through a combination of natural effects such as the wind and rain, overgrazing, increasing recreational use of the area and wildfires.

At Fiendsdale Head, to prevent further deterioration and enable the habitat to recover 840metres of the footpath over Bleasdale and United Utilities land has been restored using a combination of flag path surfacing

and subsoil re-profiling with associated drainage and habitat restoration. The eroding peat in the wider area has been re-profiled and heather brash/grass seed applied.

On Fairsnape Fell plateau, where the surface vegetation has been lost or is degraded, the exposed peat is eroding away. A large area has been fenced off and within it the eroding peat hags have been re-profiled and reseeded with heather brash/grass seed. Until the edges are re-colonised and stabilised by the new vegetation these edges will be unstable. The area has been fenced off to exclude sheep grazing in order to give new plants the best chance of becoming established.

At the fence junction near the cairn at 1707, use of the kissing gates over the deep eroding peat had become very difficult. Here the gates have been relocated away from the eroding peat and a subsoil/flag path has been created linking people off Wolf Fell to the cairn at 1707.

Three quarters of the world's remaining heather is found here in Britain, but it is under threat. If the project is successful, there is a larger area on the fell that could also be re-seeded providing vital habitat for declining birds such as lapwings, curlew, golden plover and merlin which thrive elsewhere on the moor:



Fiendsdale path before  
© Tarja Wilson

Completed section of flag path with kissing gate  
© Tarja Wilson

Hymac path works on Fiendsdale  
© Tarja Wilson

Reprofiling work on Fairsnape  
© Tarja Wilson



# Natural & Cultural Heritage

## Woodland Management on Reserve in Southern Bowland

Lancashire Wildlife Trust manage an area of mixed woodland about 28 hectares in size situated in south Bowland. It includes areas of birch and oak, together with spruce and Scots pine plantations.

One section is predominantly birch with a dense ground cover of purple moor grass. A population of roe deer, together with some sika deer, inhabit the woodland and the surrounding area. The dense grass and the effect of deer grazing have been preventing any natural regeneration within the woodland and the development of any under story at ground level.

The Trust is keen to maintain the life of the wood and to improve its structure for the benefit of breeding birds. With this in mind a one hectare section of the woodland has been fenced off with permanent 1.8m high deer fencing to exclude any deer from the enclosed area.

In addition, sections of plastic temporary deer fencing have been erected, creating compounds protected from the deer into which birch saplings from an adjacent section of woodland have been transplanted. Three such compounds have been erected by volunteers and approximately 130 saplings transplanted into them to date.

The vast majority of the saplings have taken root and areas of young woodland are in the first stages of development.

Natural regeneration is still limited, but the next stage is to break up areas of the dense grass within the protected compounds allowing in light and exposing the soil underneath for the benefit of dormant seeds within the soil and new seeds falling from the surrounding trees. Access to do this work is restricted due to the wet nature of the ground, ruling out the use of heavy machinery. The intention is therefore to use horses pulling a simple plough across the ground to break up the tussocks of grass.

The project has been supported by a grant from the AONB and a Green Partnership Award from Lancashire County Council. It is enabling new life to be breathed into the wood and plans to be made for further improvements.



Digger work in LWT's woodland  
© Phil Dykes

New deer fencing erected  
© Phil Dykes

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# Natural & Cultural Heritage

## Education

Over the last four years the AONB and RSPB have worked together to deliver an excellent Outreach Education Project – teaching primary schoolchildren about the precious habitats and important bird life in the Forest of Bowland, and about how farmers and land owners are managing their land for wading birds such as lapwing, curlew, snipe and redshank. This year, following on from this work, the AONB Unit has commissioned some research into developing a suite of on line educational materials for schools to use during educational visits to farms. The researcher, Ian Hart, has interviewed farmers and teachers to find out what curriculum areas they want to focus on during farm visits, and work is now underway to develop the website and resources – watch out for news at [www.forestofbowland.com](http://www.forestofbowland.com)



Milking demonstration at New Laund Farm  
© Forest of Bowland AONB

Shearing demonstration at New Laund Farm  
© Forest of Bowland AONB

"I Spy" at Laund Farm  
© Forest of Bowland AONB

Farm tours in style!  
© Forest of Bowland AONB

[www.forestofbowland.com](http://www.forestofbowland.com)

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# Natural & Cultural Heritage

## RSPB/AONB Birds of Bowland Outreach Project

This very successful education project is a collaboration between the Forest of Bowland AONB and the RSPB and engages with schools to celebrate and develop an understanding of the importance of the AONB for landscape, birds and other wildlife.

In this, its fourth year, the project began work with 177 pupils from six primary schools around the edge of the protected area: Gisburn, Chatburn, Longridge CE, St. Wilfrid's (Longridge), St. Peter's (Leck) and St. Wilfrid's (Melling).

As in previous years the flexible nature of the programme, and the skill of the Leighton Moss-based RSPB teachers, meant that children from Reception age right through to Year 6 were able to get involved. Three classroom sessions were completed in each school beginning with habitats in November; moving on to adaptation in January and finishing with migration in March. This year's project is due to be brought to a close in May with highly anticipated visits to Cobble Hey Farm near Garstang and Laund Farm near Chipping.

The project has now worked with 33 primary schools in and around the Forest of Bowland and consistently receives very positive feedback from those involved. One teacher from this year's project told us, "The whole project has been truly marvellous – the best I have had the privilege of being a part of.", Encouragingly, another teacher wrote, "The Children have obviously gone home to discuss the sessions as a number of parents have made really positive comments.", whilst a head teacher commented, "Great resources and really well-organised leaders. A real treat!"



A closer look at the Forest  
© Forest of Bowland AONB

Some impressive camouflage head gear!  
© Forest of Bowland AONB

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# Natural & Cultural Heritage



## Habitat Restoration

In 2011 the Forest of Bowland AONB published a Climate Change Adaptation Plan which identified that the area's key assets at high risk to climate change were blanket bog and its associated wet upland habitats; upland hay meadows and wet woodlands. In order to attempt to conserve and restore, and in some cases to extend, these vulnerable habitats we have this year carried out two important pieces of work.

The first has been to fund a piece of detailed research into the state of Bowland's upland blanket bog and peatlands. The Lancashire Upland Peat Partnership has produced a report which includes detailed and accurate mapping showing the area and condition of our peat. It also maps where moorland grips are, and where they might need to be blocked in order to restore the blanket bog. The report then goes on to assess priority areas for restoration, and to identify where existing Higher Level Stewardship agreements will not be able to fund these works. The aim of the Partnership now is to secure funds which will enable these priority areas to be brought back into tip top condition.

The second piece of work has focussed on our upland hay meadows. Currently we have a number of excellent species rich traditionally managed hay meadows in the AONB, however; they are often isolated and this reduces their resilience to climate change. Our aim is therefore to restore other semi improved grassland to hay meadow status, and to increase the connectivity between sites. Starting with a survey of existing grasslands designated as Lancashire Biological Heritage Sites (BHSs) or North Yorkshire Sites of Important Nature Conservation (SINCs) we are about to embark on a new project in partnership with Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust. Over in the Yorkshire Dales the Trust have developed effective and proven techniques of cutting hay from donor sites which are species rich, and spreading within 24 hours on donor sites which show potential for restoration. Thanks to funding from Lancashire Environment Fund this project experience can now be brought to Bowland, and again using Higher Level Stewardship payments, the restoration works will be managed by the Bowland Haytime project officer, Sarah Robinson. Watch out for more news about the project on our website and in next year's Annual Report.

Aerial view of peat habitat on Fairsnape Fell  
© Tarja Wilson

Bird's eye primrose  
© Jon Hickling

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# Natural & Cultural Heritage

## Marvellous Meadows Leaflet

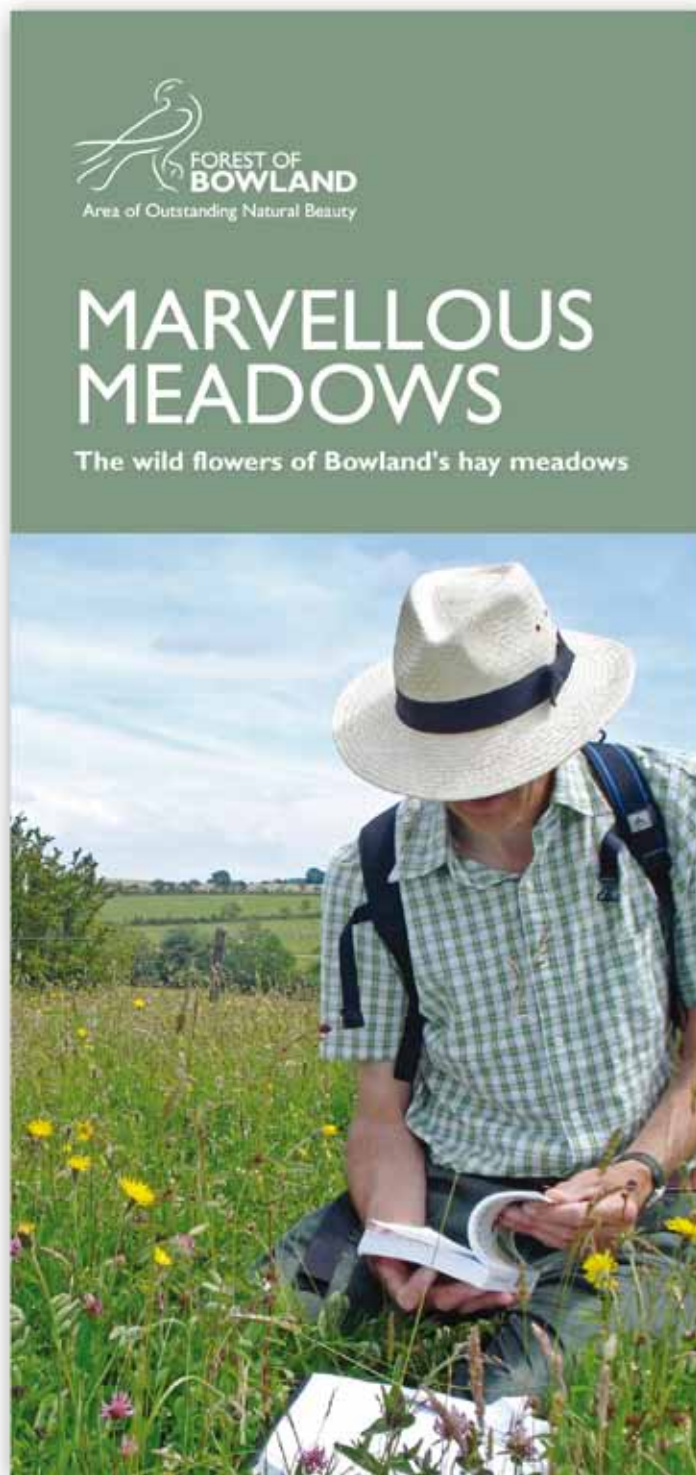
A new leaflet - Marvellous Meadows - featuring the wildflowers of Bowland's meadows has been produced. Flower rich hay meadows within the Forest of Bowland are a riot of colour during late June and early July. They are to be found on areas of limestone around Slaidburn and on the glacial and alluvial soils of Tarnbrookdale, Hindburndale, Roeburndale and also along the Hodder Valley.

Special thanks to Martin Charlesworth, Jon Hickling and Geoff Morries for their joint efforts in producing this wonderful leaflet. Follow this link for a pdf version of the leaflet

[www.forestofbowland.com/files/uploads/pdfs/FOB%20MeadowsLeafLoRes.pdf](http://www.forestofbowland.com/files/uploads/pdfs/FOB%20MeadowsLeafLoRes.pdf)



Spotted-orchids and Hawkbits in summer  
© Jon Hickling



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# Natural & Cultural Heritage

## Hedgelaying Training in Bowland Well Supported

The Forest of Bowland AONB runs a Traditional Boundaries programme that includes grant aid towards positive management of drystone walls and hedgerows. Also as part of this programme training courses and support towards competitions in the skills of drystone walling and hedgelaying are run.

Over 7 days in November at Knotts Farm, Quernmore, 13 members of the local community and local contractors gathered to learn and develop the traditional skill of hedge laying in the Lancashire & Westmorland Style with expert tuition provided by Joe Craig and Geoff Whitley.

Fifteen students on a Diploma course in Land Based & Horticulture Skills at Garstang Academy spent four days stripping down and rebuilding 30 metres of drystone wall under the expert tuition of master craftsman Mike Rushton from Tamarack Outdoors Ltd. This is the second year that the Forest of Bowland AONB has supported the practical and field visit elements of this course based at Cobble Hey farm & Gardens. The students also build up skills in fencing, hedgelaying, flagging and a range of horticultural skills, as well as spending time out in the field or on the fell with local farmers, gamekeepers and countryside staff

In total across Bowland 1750m of hedges have been laid at Quernmore, Aughton, Goosnargh, Ribchester, Marles Wood, Bashall Eaves and Sawley. In addition to this, 500m of hedgerows have been replanted in Goosnargh, Aughton and in the Ribble valley.

The tradition of hedgelaying started to decline after WW2 and by the 1970's the loss in hedgerows was happening at an alarming rate: skills in hedgelaying and hedgerow maintenance were in danger of being lost forever. Out of these concerns was born the National Hedgelaying Society and the development of grant schemes to encourage the restoration and positive management of hedgerows. Maintenance of hedgerows is now part of good farming practice and the skills of the hedgelayers are in great demand.

To find more about hedgerows and the different styles of management go to the National Hedgelaying Society website <http://www.hedgelaying.org.uk/styles.htm>



Hedgelaying training session at Quernmore  
© Tarja Wilson

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# Natural & Cultural Heritage



## St. James' Church Community Archaeology Project

During 2011 the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty team began working in partnership with United Utilities and Slaidburn Archive to conserve and protect an important piece of Bowland's heritage – the site of the original St. James' Church at Stocks-in-Bowland

Consecrated in 1852, the church was demolished during the construction of Stocks Reservoir during the 1930's and eventually rebuilt, on a smaller scale, on its present site at Dalehead. The site of the original church became part of School Lane car park on the edge of Gisburn Forest and recent plans to improve the layout of the car park also provided the opportunity to safeguard the foundations of this well-remembered place of worship, ensuring that car parking provision avoided the footprint of the church.

Phase 1 of the project began after a successful launch at Tosside Community Hall in September. Thanks to the dedication and enthusiasm of local people and volunteers, combined with expert supervision by professional archaeologists from Lancaster-based Oxford Archaeology North, a significant part of the church foundations were revealed.

After only 12 days during October and November, the walls of the entire nave and porch were uncovered, every stone trowelled clean, drawn, plotted and photographed (in triplicate!) and a huge amount of soil dug out and barrowed away.

At the start of the project we had little idea of how we would progress with the excavation and so we were very pleased to reach the stage we did before winter set in. It was also lovely to see both adults and children getting involved and making a real difference to the understanding we have about the heritage of this part of Bowland.

During the winter break the foundations were covered with geotextile and sand to protect them from the worst of the weather and the site was temporarily fenced off.

Thanks to continued funding from United Utilities, with support from the AONB, the second phase of the excavations has now been planned. United Utilities will then arrange for the foundations to be consolidated in order to conserve them for the future.

The project has been very fortunate in that Slaidburn Archive holds a number of old photographs depicting the area and, once practical work on the ground has been completed, we hope to install some interpretation on site. This will help visitors to Gisburn Forest and Stocks Reservoir understand a little about the history of St. James Church and the village of Stocks-in-Bowland. North West Sound Archive, now based at Clitheroe Castle, also has several recordings featuring the memories of local residents who either had family, or who themselves lived in the village. The AONB hopes to be able to include extracts of some of these fascinating recordings on our website in the future.

Learning how to use the surveying equipment  
© Forest of Bowland AONB

Removing the overlying soil and vegetation  
© Forest of Bowland AONB

Examining "finds" on site  
© Forest of Bowland AONB

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# Natural & Cultural Heritage

## Wyre Borough Council

Wyre Council works with statutory and voluntary partners, agencies, local communities, youth groups and volunteers to undertake the careful management of the natural heritage of the Forest of Bowland AONB and continues to help deliver the Forest of Bowland Management Plan.

Wyre Rangers and volunteers patrolled the following key visitor sites: Brock Picnic Area and Valley, Nicky Nook and Grizedale Valley and Delph Quarry and Harris End Fell lay-bys, the Wyre Way Long Distance Trail, promoted routes such as the Scorton Millennium Way and gateway sites such as Garstang Millennium Green and Brock Station Trust Pocket Nature Reserve and promoted routes helping to ensure these places are safe and welcoming.

### Brown Hare Project

The Wyre Ranger Service and Lancashire Wildlife Trust have led two guided walks and a workshop with the aim of increasing involvement in the Brown Hare Survey Project. This year Wyre Ranger Service undertook to survey 10, one kilometre squares in the Bowland area at places such as Nicky Nook, Cobble Hey, Brock and Bleasdale with the help of four volunteers in April and May 2012.

### Brock Station Trust Pocket Nature Reserve

Working with Brock Station Trust the Rangers helped to build a dry-stone wall feature and install a new interpretation panel and also supported a tree planting day in which Bilsborrow School took part and a tree was planted for every child in the village.



Brown Hare  
© Barry Tyrer



### Holme Wood Project

Volunteer Rangers have helped to improve a section of boardwalk on a path in an ancient semi-natural woodland near Scorton. The concessionary footpath is very popular but traverses a damp woodland. The Rangers have designed and constructed the boardwalk so as to protect the delicate plant life, reducing erosion and helping to improve access for walkers. 500m of footpath and boardwalk were replaced and 10 volunteers gave over 100 volunteer days on Phase 1 of this project, which is due for completion in 2013. The project is a partnership between Wyre Council and United Utilities.

### Garstang Millennium Green

The council's volunteers have supported the Garstang Millennium Green Trust by giving practical assistance on footpath improvements. The Garstang Millennium Green Trust have a team of volunteers who have been very successful in fundraising and have embarked upon a programme of improvements to the Green that have led to resurfacing of the footpaths, replacing stiles with kissing gates, installing new bins and dry-stone wall features. Two new information panels have been installed along the route of the Wyre Way on the Green, and an additional one on the Garstang market town's riverside picnic area, funded by a number of local partners.

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# Social Equity & Economic Opportunity

## West Bradford Village Hall Renovations

It seems quite a long time since Community Futures was first contacted about assisting West Bradford Village Hall in making the hall energy efficient and at the same time more inviting and comfortable for users.

Village hall committee members have attended Community Futures training events to learn about how they could improve their hall and whether they could utilise renewable energy systems. LAVCH (Lancs Association of Village & Community Halls) have also focused on energy efficiency in their meetings and are advising members on long term sustainability.

The next step was to invite Community Futures to carry out an Energy Audit on the hall and this was completed December 2010, which provided useful recommendations on what could be done and advice on potential funding sources. This was followed by advising the Committee on how to prioritise the work, evidencing need and obtaining quotations for the planned project.

It was decided that the priority was to improve the main hall. The very high ceiling, lighting, exposed block walls and high windows of the hall had been designed as a sports facility, when nowadays most of the use is for social events.

After agreeing the scope of the project, Community Futures advised on potential funding and how to go about applying, including registering with Entrust as an Environmental Body (EB) which then entitled West Bradford VH to apply for funding. Having the Energy Audit report provided strong evidence of need along with supporting letters from users, along with a commitment from the VH Committee to provide

the match funding to apply to Lancashire Environmental Fund (LEF) for a £30,000 grant towards the estimated costs of £47,589.

The LEF grant was finally approved in June 2011 but the Committee decided to carry out the work over Christmas and New Year so that regular users would not be too badly interrupted. Project work included lowering the ceiling height by 1.5m by replacing the existing suspended ceiling with a new one with additional insulation; new lighting including mood lighting; a mechanical ventilation system which preheats fresh air with stale warm air; four large, new windows and insulated plaster boards in the gable end wall plus dry lining of all other walls, improvements to the heating system, decoration, fire alarms and sprinkler system and new internal glazing. However, major works inevitably take longer than planned and the project was successfully completed in February 2012 with the opening ceremony on 4th March.

The end result is a spectacular hall renovation which will be appreciated by users who will be keen to utilise it. There is now a beautiful view of Pendle Hill through the new windows which provides the ideal back drop for a wedding celebration!

Community Futures has provided on going support and advice throughout this project and would be happy to support other village halls as they seek to improve their facilities to meet the needs of the present, yet securing a sustainable future through energy efficiency measures and long term facility improvements.

Contact [finlayh@communityfutures.org.uk](mailto:finlayh@communityfutures.org.uk)



West Bradford Village Hall before renovations  
© Community Futures

West Bradford Village Hall after renovations  
© Community Futures

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# Social Equity & Economic Opportunity



## Tramping Across Bowland

On the west side of Bowland the self-guided Trampler Trails, linking rural tourism businesses who make up the Wyresdale Wheels partnership, have become so popular that the demand for similar trails elsewhere in Bowland has grown. So much so that extra help has been provided through a consultant who, working with the Environmental Projects officers, has developed seven more trails. Ribble Valley Inns (a member of Bowland Experience Ltd), through their dedication and support in raising monies through visitor giving for the Bowland Tourism Environment Fund, helped to finance this work.

In July, for the sixth successive year, Lancashire hosted the Disabled Ramblers for four days in Bowland and Arnsdale Silverdale AONBs. This also provided the opportunity for local residents to join the treks using one of the 11 Trampers loaned by Lancashire County Council, Wyre Borough Council, Wyresdale Wheels and Bowland Experience Ltd. More than 30 local Trampler users, plus friends and family, explored the delights that the area has to offer ranging from the limestone pavement, flower rich grassland and mosses of Silverdale through to the woodlands of Grizedale valley and wilder expanses of Caton Moor.

The Grizedale/Nicky Nook Trampler ramble, July 2011  
© Tarja Wilson

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# Social Equity & Economic Opportunity

## Global Responsible Tourism Accolade for Bowland

In November the Forest of Bowland AONB were recipients of a runner-up 'Best Destination' award from The International Responsible Tourism Awards. The award was presented to the team on 9th November as part of World Responsible Tourism Day at the World Travel Market in London, sponsored by Virgin Holidays.

The AONB team were delighted to be the runner-up of this prestigious award. The accolade is testament to a collective effort of the AONB team, partner organisations, community groups and most of all the tourism businesses themselves who have worked hard over the last six years to deliver tourism with sustainability at the core. Since 2005, the Forest of Bowland AONB team has developed a programme of sustainable tourism activity and works closely with tourism organisations, businesses and communities. Work has included supporting businesses to develop sustainable activities; working with communities to celebrate their special and distinctive qualities; developing new walking, cycling and horse riding opportunities; developing marketing materials to promote local businesses and communities; supporting businesses to undertake green accreditation and providing training for tourism staff and businesses. The AONB has also been instrumental in setting up Bowland Experience Ltd. – a company established by Bowland tourism businesses, which aims to provide a "business-to-business" network for supporting and promoting the tourism businesses of the Forest of Bowland AONB.

The rigorous awards process relies on travellers and the industry to nominate exemplars in the field of sustainable tourism. Once all the nominations are received - over 1,000 in 2011 - the judging process really begins. Organised by founder [www.responsibletravel.com](http://www.responsibletravel.com) since 2004, several stages are designed, alongside the International Centre for Responsible Tourism, to really put the nominees through their paces. At each stage the list gets shorter, until their expert panel of judges debate the finalists on an annual judging day. Previous winners of the Best Destination Category include Aspen, Colorado, Cape Town and the New Forest. The winner for 2011 was Røros in Norway.

For further information about the awards visit  
[www.responsibletravel.com/awards](http://www.responsibletravel.com/awards)



Hetty Byrne and Cathy Hopley receiving the Forest of Bowland AONB's award as part of World Responsible Tourism Day at the World Travel Market in London

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# Social Equity & Economic Opportunity

## Bowland Experience

The company now has 90 members representing all kinds of 'visitor economy' operators across the AONB area. During the year, it ran courses on "Bowland Welcome" and "First Aid at Work". The latter provided HSE accreditation for participants.

As part of the AONB's commitment to the Europarc Charter, we were asked to attend conferences on sustainable tourism in Riga (Latvia), Olot (Catalonia), and Steenwijk (Netherlands) to explain how the business network was developed and evolved into Bowland Experience. Edwina Miller, of Cobble Hey Farm and Gardens, who is a director of Bowland Experience Ltd was invited to run a workshop at the launch of Causeway Coast and Glens Europarc Charter in Ballymena, Northern Ireland.

The AONB hosted a meeting of the Europarc Sustainable Tourism Working Group in February at Austwick. Dalesbridge Centre and The Traddock Hotel were generous in providing accommodation and meeting facilities. The Group is reviewing the operation of the Charter and recommending updates particularly to the way Part 2 is implemented to engage with the tourism businesses.

For more information about Bowland Experience and its members, please visit [www.bowlandexperience.com](http://www.bowlandexperience.com)



Staff from The Traddock with members of the Europarc Sustainable Tourism Working Group  
© EUROPARC Consulting Ltd

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# Social Equity & Economic Opportunity



## Bowland Tourism Environment Fund.

BTEF has benefitted hugely from £8,500 raised by the Three Fishes Inn at Great Mitton which raised this sum from Visitor Donations. This will be used to support the Trampler Project in Bowland and has already been used to develop seven new Trampler Trails. The Fund encourages other businesses – either individually or in local ‘clusters’ – to consider similar schemes to enable visitors to participate in the work of the AONB.

Other projects supported by BTEF grants include wildlife ponds at Girl Guiding Waddow Hall (which includes wheelchair access) and as part of Chipping-in-Bloom which has built a conservation area to be enjoyed by local residents and visitors. The Fund also approved a grant to support RSPB work on peregrine harrier research on the United Utilities estate.

Please visit [www.bowlandtefund.org](http://www.bowlandtefund.org) for more information about the Fund and grant application criteria and process.

Craig Bancroft, of Ribble Valley Inns, presents a cheque to members of Bowland Experience Ltd, Lancashire County Council and the Forest of Bowland AONB  
© Ribble Valley Inns

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# Social Equity & Economic Opportunity

## Lancashire Green Tourism Project

The three-year Lancashire Green Tourism Project came to an end in September 2011. Over the three years the businesses participated in some excellent projects, and 56 businesses achieved Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) accreditation: 9 Bronze, 24 Silver and 23 Gold awards. During the three years, because of their ongoing commitment and new developments, ten businesses also improved their grading levels, progressing from bronze and silver to silver and gold awards.

Some of the other highlights of the project include:

- **Two new visitor leaflets:** a Tea Shop guide and map highlighting 30 places to enjoy afternoon tea in Bowland and for the more energetic a Gisburn Forest Mountain Bike Trails leaflet, highlighting the fantastic trails and businesses in and around Gisburn Forest.
- **12 best practice case studies** highlighting the actions of GTBS gold accredited businesses [www.forestofbowland.com/visit\\_greentourism](http://www.forestofbowland.com/visit_greentourism)
- **100 businesses receiving one-to-one support and guidance**, web support and GTBS advisory or grading visits and 82 individuals attending work-based training related to sustainable tourism including the popular Sense of Place training, green ideas and green showcase days.
- **Production of downloadable walking routes** linking GTBS accredited accommodation providers, to encourage visitors to have a car free holiday.
- **Wildlife blogging websites** developed by Barrie Tyrer web consultancy working with the Lancashire Green Tourism project and 20 tourism businesses to highlight the wildlife hotspots of this beautiful area [www.bowlandwildlife.org.uk](http://www.bowlandwildlife.org.uk) and [www.lancashirewildlife.org.uk](http://www.lancashirewildlife.org.uk)

A final piece of work for the project was an **online green guide to the Forest of Bowland AONB**. With a wonderful variety of businesses and holiday experiences to choose from, the guide was produced to help visitors plan a green holiday to Bowland and experience firsthand wonderful car-free explorations and wildlife watching opportunities [www.forestofbowland.com/green\\_guide](http://www.forestofbowland.com/green_guide)

Many thanks to the project funders Lancashire County Council (LCDL) and the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board (now Marketing Lancashire); Barrie Tyrer web consultancy for his ongoing support to businesses in developing their online green marketing messages, and all the tourism businesses who have been involved.

Although the project has finished, support for tourism businesses in the Forest of Bowland will of course continue, in particular supporting those wishing to undertake Green Tourism Business Scheme Accreditation.



Presentation of GTBS awards to tourism businesses at Ribby Hall, May 2011 by Peter Mileham, High Sheriff of Lancashire  
© Denis Oates, LCC

Presentation of GTBS awards to tourism businesses at Samlesbury Hall, April 2010  
© Denis Oates, LCC

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# Social Equity & Economic Opportunity

## Sustainable Development Fund 2011-12

This year we supported thirteen projects including conservation, arts and education initiatives, by allocating just under £38,000 of grants. Projects were submitted by a variety of groups and individuals, all of whom were seeking to live and work more sustainably within our outstanding landscape.

**Hodder Riverbank Enrichment** was delivered by Ribble Rivers Trust ([www.ribbletrust.org.uk](http://www.ribbletrust.org.uk)) and based along the River Hodder around Newton in Bowland. A grant of £2,764 enabled the Trust to improve the banks in order to bring back riverine species.

**Broadband for the Rural North (B4RN)** [b4rn.org.uk](http://b4rn.org.uk) is an innovative community enterprise set up to bring fibre optic to the home, providing superfast broadband to the northern parts of the AONB. SDF was able to help the company with initial start up costs (£5,500) to publicise public meetings, fund legal costs and hold a successful share launch.

**Gazegill sustainable education project** was the second phase of Gazegill Farm's project to provide facilities on site at their farm classroom. Funds from SDF (£3,000) helped to provide a range of resources, as well as dairy processing and milk testing equipment, so students can carry out real life activities on the farm.

[www.gazegillorganics.co.uk/default.aspx?section=education](http://www.gazegillorganics.co.uk/default.aspx?section=education)



**RSPB Bowland Wader Project** received a grant of £4,935 as part of SDF's on-going support for this excellent project. Funds supported an edition of the Birds of Bowland newsletter, farm interpretation boards, training for volunteer lapwing surveyors, and hire of a super machine called a Spoil Spreader which can create shallow scrapes and ditches.

RSPB's Bowland Education project also received SDF support this year: a grant of £2,500 enabled the field teachers to continue rolling out our education programme to six primary schools around the edges of the AONB.

**Lancashire Wildlife Trust** ([www.lancswt.org.uk](http://www.lancswt.org.uk)) also received two SDF grants totalling £6,470 in 2011. The first was towards the cost of publishing the Flora of North Lancashire: a book which celebrates many years of collecting plant species recordings. The second supported important habitat conservation work at LWT's nature reserve in south Bowland, the only reserve in the AONB.

Ribble Rivers Trust river bank works  
© Ribble Rivers Trust

RSPB birdsong activity  
© Forest of Bowland AONB

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# Social Equity & Economic Opportunity



2012 is the 400th anniversary of the infamous **Lancashire Witches** [www.lancashirewitches400.org](http://www.lancashirewitches400.org) trial, and a number of organisations are working together to commemorate this. Green Close Studios received an SDF grant of £3,000 to support their attempts to identify, develop and promote a new long distance walking route, following in the steps of the accused men and women from Pendle to Lancaster Castle, across the fells of Bowland. The grant also enabled artists working with Green Close to engage with local communities and school groups to develop a number of creative activities. Roughlee parish council were also keen to commemorate 1612 by commissioning a statue of Alice Nutter; a resident of the parish, who was one of those accused of witchcraft. Early work to come up with designs for a sculpture and to consult with residents was supported with an SDF grant of £3,000.

Another arts project in the AONB was supported by an SDF grant of £2,818. The Dutch rural theatre company **PeerGroup** will be working with **Cultrapedia** locally to develop and put on a performance which is linked with the Preston Guild. Working with young people from Newton in Bowland, PeerGroup have found out more about local people and places, and a number of performances are planned for August 2012 in Gisburn Forest and Avenham Park in Preston.

**Bleasdale Parish Hall** support a community archive and in 2011 they decided to research the history of the schools in Bleasdale, with support from a £2,250 grant from SDF. The services of a professional archivist were secured and the pictures and information gathered were scanned and stored on a laptop. Workshops and events were held, culminating in an exhibition entitled 'Yesterday for Tomorrow' at the parish hall on April 1st attended by over 60 people.

Following on from the AONB's study into the potential for hydro power in the area, the owners of **Clough Bottom farm** near Bashall have worked with Ian Benson to further investigate the possibility of harnessing the power of Bashall Brook. A small grant of £1,000 allowed more detailed measurements to be made and discussions to be held with the Environment Agency. Unfortunately, at the present time, this scheme will not be developed any further.

Finally, a grant of £550 was made to **Lesley Woods** to carry out a feasibility study into an arts and tourism project to bring a 'sheep parade' to Bowland. Inspired by similar temporary sculpture trails Lesley spoke with various agencies, artists and businesses to assess the potential for organising this initiative for the AONB. Lesley is now pursuing this project with support from Bowland Experience and hopes to apply for arts funding to now bring 'the March of the Hares' to the area in 2014.



# Social Equity & Economic Opportunity

## Bowland Symposium Inspires a UK Audience

A significant part of 2011/12 was spent planning and developing the Bowland Symposium, which was held over the 1st and 2nd May, 2012 at Mytton Fold Hotel, Langho.

Showcasing sustainable tourism in the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the event ultimately attracted 80 delegates from other protected landscapes from all over the UK, including Cornwall, Brecon Beacons and the Cairngorms.

The event proved a fantastic opportunity to showcase the many sustainable tourism initiatives that have been delivered over the last six years to a wide audience, and continue to champion Bowland as a sustainable tourism destination.

The symposium attracted speakers from the International Centre for Responsible Tourism, Professor Harold Goodwin and Dr Xavier Font; the CEO of the National Association for AONB's, Howard Davies; and Manda Brookman, Director of the Cornwall Sustainable Tourism Project.

County Councillor Albert Atkinson opened the proceedings with a welcome to the area: *'The Forest of Bowland has become a shining beacon to other protected areas in the United Kingdom. In particular they have built a reputation for inclusive and business led partnerships and have established best practice models for local produce, local distinctiveness, and providing access for all through the use of Trampers'*. The day continued with excellent keynote speakers and a series of Bowland themed workshops.

The second day of the Symposium was a great opportunity to showcase the businesses and some fantastic examples of best practice. Four field trips were organised visiting around 20 sustainable tourism businesses in Bowland including cafes, pubs, visitor attractions and accommodation providers.

Feedback from delegates was very positive, one person commenting: *'the conference was totally inspiring, strategically spot on, with excellent speakers and pitched ideally for the audience'*. Thank you to everyone involved, in particular the businesses who truly inspired delegates and gave them a real 'Bowland Experience'.



Delegates attending the Bowland Symposium at Mytton Fold Hotel, Langho  
© Louise Mills

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# Enjoyment

## "Beautiful Bowland" Photo Competition

The 'Beautiful Bowland' photo competition ran over the summer of 2011 with some fantastic entries that really captured the essence of Bowland. Our judges had the difficult task of picking the winners, and were impressed by the quality of the landscape images and in particular the quality photos submitted by the younger age group. There were 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes in three categories: Professional, General (non-professional) and Under 16s. The winner in the professional category was Jon Brook with his image of the Great Stone of Fourstones, Graham Wilkinson took the winning photo in the general category with cyclists enjoying a break on Longridge Fell, and Lois Westall won in the Under 16s category with her image capturing a fun day out at Sawley Abbey.

The contribution of prizes from the tourism businesses for the competition was overwhelming, and we were grateful for the expert judging by Graham Cooper and Veronica Caperon, who kindly donated their time. One judge commented: 'A great collection of photographs reflecting the beauty of Bowland and the activities of residents and visitors enjoying the spirit of the area. I was particularly impressed with the efforts of the Under-16s. Well done to all.'

Some of the competition photos have since been used in Forest of Bowland printed materials and on the website, so they've been a welcome addition to our stock of AONB images.

To view galleries of the winning pictures and all entries go to:  
[www.forestofbowland.com/photowinners](http://www.forestofbowland.com/photowinners)



Photo competition winning entry – Professional category  
© Jon Brook

Photo competition winning entry – General category  
© Graham Wilkinson

Photo competition winning entry – Under 16s category  
© Lois Westall

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# Enjoyment



## Festival Bowland 2011

A packed programme of 163 events made up Festival Bowland 2011 – our year-long calendar of events celebrating the birds, wildlife, landscape and culture of the Forest of Bowland AONB. From bat walks to brown hare surveys, green woodworking to geo-caching and poetry to printing, the range of activities offered something for everyone.

A highlight of the spring season was Blaize Theatre's production of *Sward* – the story of a meadow. Developed as part of the North Pennines AONB's Hay Time project and brought to our area by Spot On Rural Touring, the play offered a highly entertaining and humorous look at the history – and future – of our rare hay meadows.

Throughout the months of May and June, Bowland Arts Festival once again offered creative opportunities to explore and celebrate Bowland's natural and cultural heritage through a host of workshops, performances, walks and exhibitions.

Later in the year, Apple Day gave visitors a bag-full of apple themed ideas and produce, from local varieties of fruit to cakes, pies and cider – the apple press proving popular again! This year, well-known local chef, Paul Heathcote, came along to deliver a cooking demonstration using local, fruity produce – all very entertaining!

2011 saw the introduction of an incentivised postcard scheme which gathered key data from festival-goers in order to help shape the future delivery of the programme. Cobden Farm Bed & Breakfast very generously donated a 2-night stay at their silver- (now gold!) rated business as the prize for the winning entry.

Festival Bowland is co-ordinated by the Forest of Bowland AONB. The steering group includes RSPB, Lancashire County Council, Wyre Borough Council and Bowland Arts Festival. Support for the 2011 Festival also came from: Natural England, the Wildlife Trusts of Lancashire, Manchester & North Merseyside, Heritage Lottery Fund, United Utilities and local businesses and farmers.

Visitors enjoying a Trumper Trek above Whitewell  
© Forest of Bowland AONB

Steve Edwards and Paul Heathcote celebrating Apple Day, 2011  
© Martin Charlesworth

A photo walk around Dunsop Bridge  
© veronicasgallery.co.uk

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## Bowland Arts Festival – planning a sustainable future

The Bowland Arts Festival 2011, ran successfully last year despite the economic downturn and funding challenges. During May 1st – June 30th the festival delivered 194 days of activity, which benefited 65 participants and an audience of 7056 people. 172 artists were involved in the programme and the festival involved 70 volunteers.

Following last year's festival the group re-assembled to take a strategic look at the sustainable future for the festival. Thanks to the collaborative working of Green Close with the Ribble Valley Arts development team and arts development officers from Lancaster & Wyre; grant funding has been secured from the Lancashire County Council Arts Unit and Arts Council England to undertake a review of the successes of the festival and plan for its sustainable future. The project will deliver more ambitious arts events across Bowland in three pilot projects: environmental theatre, music & visual arts. [www.bowlandarts.co.uk](http://www.bowlandarts.co.uk)

Now in its 6th year; the Bowland Arts Festival contributes in a really meaningful way to the Festival Bowland programme; particularly engaging families in an awareness of the unique beauty and the importance of the habitats which make up the Forest of Bowland AONB.

For further information or to give input into the review & consultation please contact : **Sue Flowers, Artist & Director, Green Close Studios, Melling, Carnforth, Lancashire, LA6 2RB**, email [sue@greenclose.org](mailto:sue@greenclose.org) or telephone **015242 21233 / 07940 775290**. Alternatively, please contact: Katherine Rodgers, Arts Development Officer; Ribble Valley Borough Council, Platform Gallery, Station Road, Clitheroe, Lancashire, email [arts.development@ribblevalley.gov.uk](mailto:arts.development@ribblevalley.gov.uk) or telephone **01200 443071**.





# Enjoyment

## Young People's Bowland Art Project

During 2011/12 the AONB worked in partnership with Lancashire County Council's Young People's Service (YPS) to deliver a series of arts-based workshops to young people in rural areas. The sessions were designed to offer young people between the ages of 11 and 19 the chance to work with an artist to develop pieces based around the theme of "Bowland".

Not only did the sessions allow the AONB to reach a group of people outside the age-range of our more regular audience, they also allowed the YPS to offer their young people opportunities which they would perhaps be less likely to access in normal circumstances: the chance to learn skills from practicing artists.

Workshops were held in Sabden, Slaidburn, Longridge and Newton in March, during which time 29 young people worked with artists Julie Miles (ceramics), Anita Burrows (printmaking) and Anne Somers (fused glass) to produce some great work.

An exhibition of the young people's work is due to be held at the Bowland Visitor Centre, Beacon Fell Country Park, during June 2012.



Concentrating at the fused glass workshop!

© Forest of Bowland AONB

One of the finished lino-cut prints

© Forest of Bowland AONB

Preparation sketches for the ceramic workshop

© Forest of Bowland AONB

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# Enjoyment

## Lancashire Witches Walk – a new development for Bowland

Thanks to funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the AONB Sustainable Development Fund a new long distance walking route for Lancashire has been researched and developed as part of this year's plans to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the Lancashire Witch trials.

The development of the route has been led by Green Close, an arts organisation based in Melling, who specialise in rural & social development through the arts. Working closely with the Lancashire Countryside Service, local walkers, historians and the Long Distance Walkers Association the new 51-mile route will run from Barrowford to Lancaster across the Bowland Fells. Research for the route's development enabled Green Close to register as a new Environmental Body and draw down funding from the Lancashire Environment Fund to create signage for the route and upgrade stiles and pathways. Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy, is currently drafting a poem to be inscribed along the route.

For further information see [www.lancashirewitches400.org](http://www.lancashirewitches400.org)



Planning the Lancashire Witches Walk route  
© Green Close Studios

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# Enjoyment

## Garstang Walking Festival

Garstang is one of the key gateways for visitors to the Forest of Bowland AONB.

Wyre Council, in partnership with the new Friends Group and local people, helps to organise an annual Walking Festival in Garstang. 80% of the walks are led by volunteers and partner organisations. The festival takes place usually during the second week in May.

One of the highlights of the 2011 Festival was the Wyre Way Challenge - a four day 46 mile walk from sea at Knott-End to the source in the Trough of Bowland. This is always very popular and people come from far and wide to walk the mainly riverside route making friends and finding out about the history and wildlife of the area along the way.

New walks for 2011 included the Fairtrade Way, this walk follows the newly created Fairtrade Way from Garstang to Lancaster which celebrates Garstang as the world's first Fairtrade town and tells the Fairtrade story; a Bushcraft walk with Mike Rushton from Tamarack Outdoor; a Ceramic Bird workshop and the Boundary Explorer - a series of walks following the boundaries of the borough of Wyre. The walking festival generates increased participation in outdoor physical activity, new customers to local cafes and shops and promotes the natural and cultural heritage of Garstang, the Lancaster Canal and the Forest of Bowland, bringing together a wide variety of volunteers from the local community.

## Friends of Garstang Walking Festival

A new Friends group has been set up in Garstang to support the Garstang Walking Festival in partnership with the Council. The main aim of the Friends of Garstang Walking Festival is to promote the Garstang Walking Festival and to enable the Festival programme to help people to enjoy the best of the natural and cultural heritage of the area. The inaugural meeting was held in January 2012. The group have started fundraising through membership and community events and are promoting the festival to a wider audience, helping to make the festival more sustainable.

## Active Wyre and Festival Bowland

In addition to the Garstang Walking Festival a total of 29 guided walks and activities were organised within the Forest of Bowland area helping to promote and encourage an appreciation of the wildlife and history of the AONB. Many of these events were promoted within the Festival Bowland programme, examples of which included a Whimbrel Watch, Garstang and Calder Vale Super 8 Walk and Ride, Wardstone Challenge, Bleasdale Monday walk, Claylands Legstretcher, a Bat walk and 12 health walks from Garstang and Scorton.



Walkers gather in Garstang  
© Wyre Coast and Countryside Service

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# Coordination & Management

## Undergrounding for Visual Amenity at Stephen Park

Electricity North West (ENW) has worked closely with the AONB and the Forestry Commission to invest £114,000 to replace 12 overhead line poles in Gisburn Forest with more than a kilometre of underground cable. The work forms part of a five-year, £5.4m ENW project to replace lines identified as being most visually intrusive within the National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the North West.

The project was identified as important by the AONB and the Forestry Commission to improve the visual amenity of the forest track from the road to Stephen Park. The track will provide the main access for visitors to the planned 'Hub in the Forest' development at Stephen Park. This development, led by Forestry Commission, will create new car parking, landscaping, toilets, cafe, and improved access and interpretation for visitors to the forest.

Further undergrounding schemes are currently being progressed by ENW for overhead lines in Littledale, Roeburndale and Mallowdale for completion by 2015.



Undergrounding at Gisburn Forest – before  
© Forest of Bowland AONB

Undergrounding at Gisburn Forest – after  
© Forest of Bowland AONB

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# Coordination & Management



## AONB Planning Design Guidance

The Principal AONB Officer held meetings with local planning authority officers during early 2012 to discuss the development of planning design guidance for buildings and roads/public realm within the AONB.

A steering group has now been established to guide the development of an initial 'AONB Building Design Guide'. Pendle Borough Council and Lancashire County Council have kindly offered some officer time to act as a smaller 'writing' group, alongside the Principal AONB Officer. It is anticipated that a draft design guide will be produced later in 2012, to be followed by consultation with local planning authorities and other AONB partners.

Traditional stone cottages  
© Forest of Bowland AONB

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# Coordination & Management

## National Association for AONBs

The AONB Unit has contributed to responses made by the National Association for AONBs on key consultation documents including the Rural Economy Growth Review (REGR), the National Planning Policy Framework and EU CAP Reform.

In particular, the NAAONB joint response to the REGR has resulted in AONBs being identified by Defra and Visit England as a key partner in the delivery of RDPE funding to support sustainable tourism within rural areas. Potential collaborative working between AONBs on sustainable tourism is being investigated.

Also, the NAAONB have been working to help raise the profile of the 'AONB family' nationally, working closely with Communications Officers within AONB units. The launch of the new website, 'Landscapes for Life' [www.landscapesforlife.org.uk](http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk), wider use of the 'AONB family' logos and branding and the development of an updated NAAONB Communications Strategy have been key areas of work.

Finally, AONB Unit staff members have attended a number of NAAONB and Northern AONB Group meetings:

- NAAONB Annual Conference in Cornwall, July 2011
- NAAONB AGM in London, October 2011.
- Northern AONB Group meeting hosted by North Pennines AONB, November 2011
- NAAONB Northern Chairs and Lead Officers Meeting in York, January 2012
- NAAONB Lead Officers Meeting in Birmingham, February 2012



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# Financial Summary

## Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee Budget

	Actual 2011/2012 (Out-turn prices) £'s
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
<b>Core Costs</b>	
Salary, N.I. and Superannuation	152,812
Out-based premises	22,835
Travel and subsistence	9,441
Central, Departmental & Tech. Support	60,773
Core Activities	20,208
<b>SUB TOTAL OF CORE COSTS</b>	<b>266,069</b>
<b>Non Core Costs</b>	
Employees	0
Travel and subsistence	0
Projects/Information	143,318
<b>SUB TOTAL OF NON CORE COSTS</b>	<b>266,069</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>409,387</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	
<b>Government Grants</b>	
Defra Grant	254,000
<b>Contributions</b>	
United Utilities	6800
<b>County Councils</b>	
Lancashire	41,087
North Yorkshire	6,800
<b>District Councils</b>	
Craven	5,900
Lancaster	6,800
Pendle	6,800
Preston	6,800
Ribble Valley	6,800
Wyre	6,800
<b>TOTAL INCOME RECEIVED</b>	<b>348,587</b>
<b>CONTRIBUTION TO SUPPORT COSTS (IN KIND)</b>	
Lancashire County Council	60,800
	<b>409,387</b>

# Membership



## Membership and Terms of Reference of the Joint Advisory Committee 2011/12

### Lancashire County Council

CC A Atkinson  
CC S Charles  
CC D Smith

### North Yorkshire County Council

CC R Welch

### Craven Council

Cllr L Barrington

### Lancaster Council

Cllr R Sherlock

### Wyre Council

Cllr R Brooks

### Ribble Valley Council

Cllr R Elms

### Preston Council

Cllr J Browne

### Pendle Council

Cllr J Starkie

### Lancashire Association of Town and Parish Councils

M Helm

### Yorkshire Local Council Association

Cllr C Price

### United Utilities

I Grindy

### Environment Agency

D Bond

### RSPB

A Gouldstone

### Landowning and Farming Advisory Group

A Taylor  
T Binns

### Ramblers Association

D Kelly

### Natural England

N Clark

### Bowland Experience Ltd

J Beavan

### Bowland Tourism Environment Fund

J Collinson



# Membership

The Committee and its constituent bodies are playing the major role in ensuring that the Forest of Bowland Management Plan is implemented. The role of the Committee and its Terms of Reference is as follows:-

The Joint Advisory Committee supports and encourages an active partnership between all of the agencies involved and co-ordinates management over the whole of the AONB. The aim is to:

- promote the AONB at national, regional and local level,
- ensure that the AONB is conserved and managed effectively,
- work to assist the social and economic well being of the AONB commensurate with the conservation of its special qualities,
- provide a forum for the exchange of information and ideas,
- consider any issues likely to affect the area adversely and agree action,
- make recommendations for new initiatives

A range of organisations with interests in the AONB is eligible for membership. Members include local authorities and the key organisations and interests, including representatives of local people, whose involvement will assist in implementing the Management Plan. Membership is kept under review and is at the discretion of the local authorities. Ideally there should be between 10 and 20 members and, where it is not practicable to include all of the represented interests, regular consultation mechanisms should be established.

## Brief for the Joint Advisory Committee

- co-ordinate the preparation and implementation of strategic plans for the AONB, including the preparation of the statutory Management Plan,
- advise local authorities preparing structure plans, local plans or other plans covering all or part of the AONB, to ensure that policies and practices (including those for development control) are co-ordinated and consistent with the statement of commitment and AONB Management Plan,
- advise local authorities and other agencies on the level of resources required for effective AONB management,
- lobby to influence organisations that are not members of the JAC in the delivery of their services and programmes in order to benefit Bowland communities, businesses and the environment,
- advise on, and co-ordinate the actions of the constituent organisations to achieve the objectives of the AONB and, in particular, ensure that the statement of commitment and Management Plan are implemented and reviewed. This includes:
  - receiving monitoring reports from the partners on progress and achievements in implementing the Management Plan, reviewing the Management Plan every five years and producing an annual report,
  - agreeing an annual work programme for the AONB to be delivered by the partners and the AONB Staff Unit,
  - carrying out special studies of key issues, as they arise, for example by setting up working parties or conducting research
  - advising the appropriate local planning authority about any developments within or adjacent to the AONB that are likely to affect significantly the landscape character of the area,
  - acting as forum for the discussion of major issues affecting the character of the AONB
  - promoting other action that is necessary to further the objectives of the AONB designation



# Contact

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