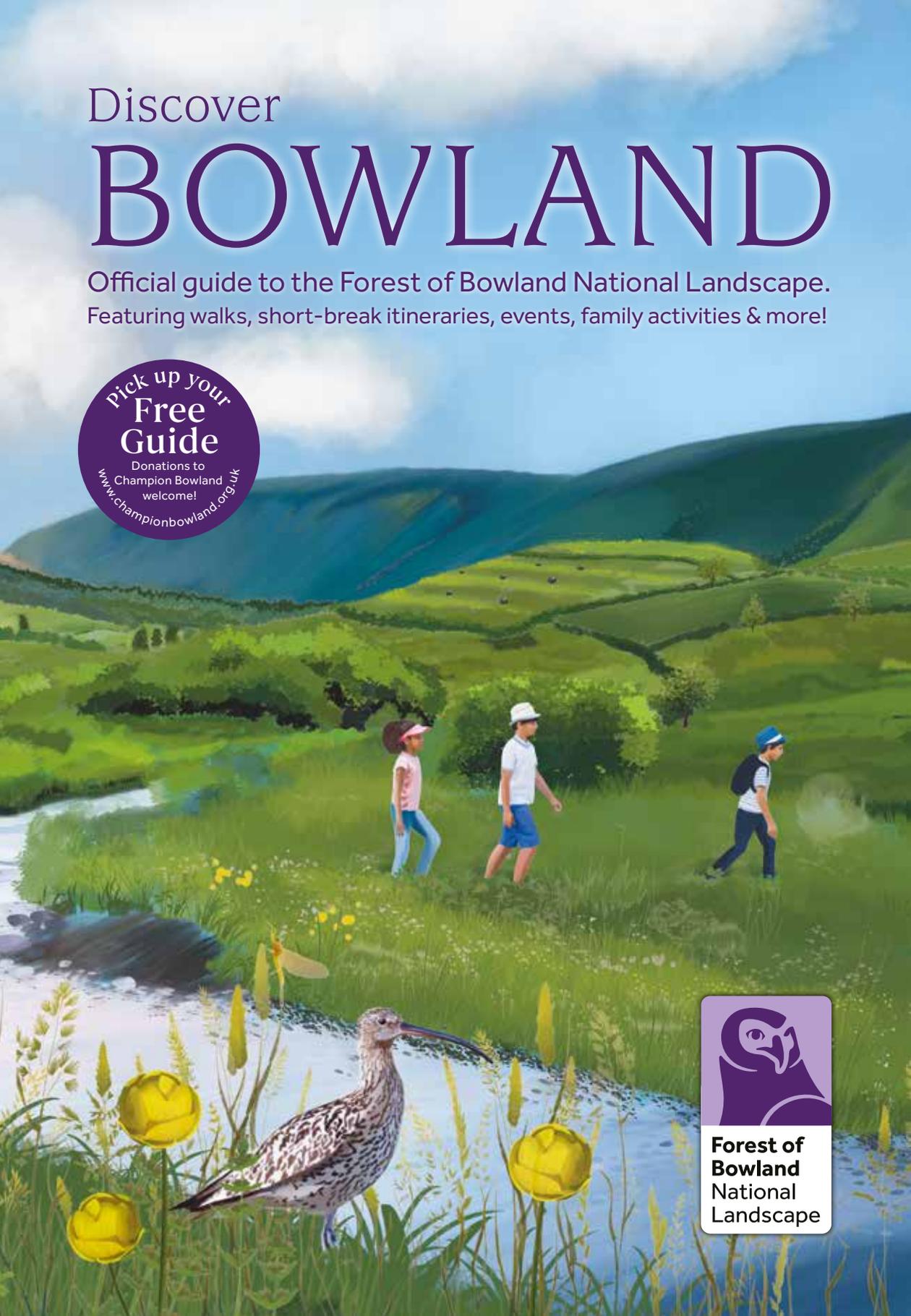


Discover

BOWLAND

Official guide to the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

Featuring walks, short-break itineraries, events, family activities & more!



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This guide is produced by the
Forest of Bowland National Landscape

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Discover Bowland in 2026

A Year of Bowland Adventures Awaits

It's been a busy and inspiring year for the Forest of Bowland National Landscape team, with a host of exciting projects delivered across the area. From peatland restoration and inclusive access improvements to nature connection activities and support for farmers and landowners through the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme—there's been plenty to celebrate.

Looking ahead, our new Management Plan sets out a bold vision for the future, focusing on nature recovery, climate resilience and community engagement.

Why not explore Bowland at a slower pace with our new Eco Escapes itineraries? Linked to the Clitheroe train line, they encourage car-free travel and invite you to discover hidden corners, seasonal beauty, delicious local food and outstanding places to stay.

Festival Bowland shines a spotlight on 14 incredible Champion Species and offers a year-long celebration of nature, heritage and culture through an inspiring programme of events.

Make 2026 the year you step outside and explore everything Bowland has to offer.



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LIVE FIRE COOKING EXPERIENCES
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CULINARY WORKSHOPS
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Lancaster



The Butterfly Effect CIC in Cockerham is a community project that brings people together through gardening, cooking, and seasonal gatherings to create small actions that ripple into big positive changes. Visit our website above for more info.

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TO FIND
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- CORPORATE DAYS
- ALPACA WEDDING ATTENDANCE
- HEN PARTIES
- BIRTHDAY PARTIES
- FARM EDUCATION (SCHOOL VISITS)

We invite you to visit our family farm in the heart of the Forest of Bowland, made accessible for all with mobility scooters available (no extra charge).

We also have a cosy B&B, should you wish to stay with us! Perfect for dark skies and country walks.



Discovery Map

Why not stay a while and explore the area at your leisure?

The Forest of Bowland offers a wide range of quality accommodation, activities and experiences.

- 1 Bowland Escapes - Chipping
- 2 Dominique's Kitchen +
Esse Foundry Kitchen - Barnoldswick
- 3 Eight at Gazegill - Rimington
- 4 Fell View Caravan Park - Scorton
- 5 Lakewood Cottages - Galgate
- 6 Laythams Holiday Lets Retreat -
Slaidburn
- 7 Lodges at Parsonage - Chipping
- 8 Lower Gill Holiday Cottages - Tosside
- 9 Little Oakhurst Glamping -
Stonyhurst
- 10 Meanley Estate - Newton in Bowland
- 11 Orchard Glamping - Catterall
- 12 Peaks and Pods - Rathmell
- 13 Smelt Mill Residential Centre -
Dunsop Bridge
- 14 Land & Sea and Patty's Barn -
Lancaster
- 15 The Traddock - Austwick
- 16 Wenningdale Escapes - Bentham
- 17 Wild Fox Distillery - Inglewhite
- 18 Wood End Alpacas -
Dunsop Bridge

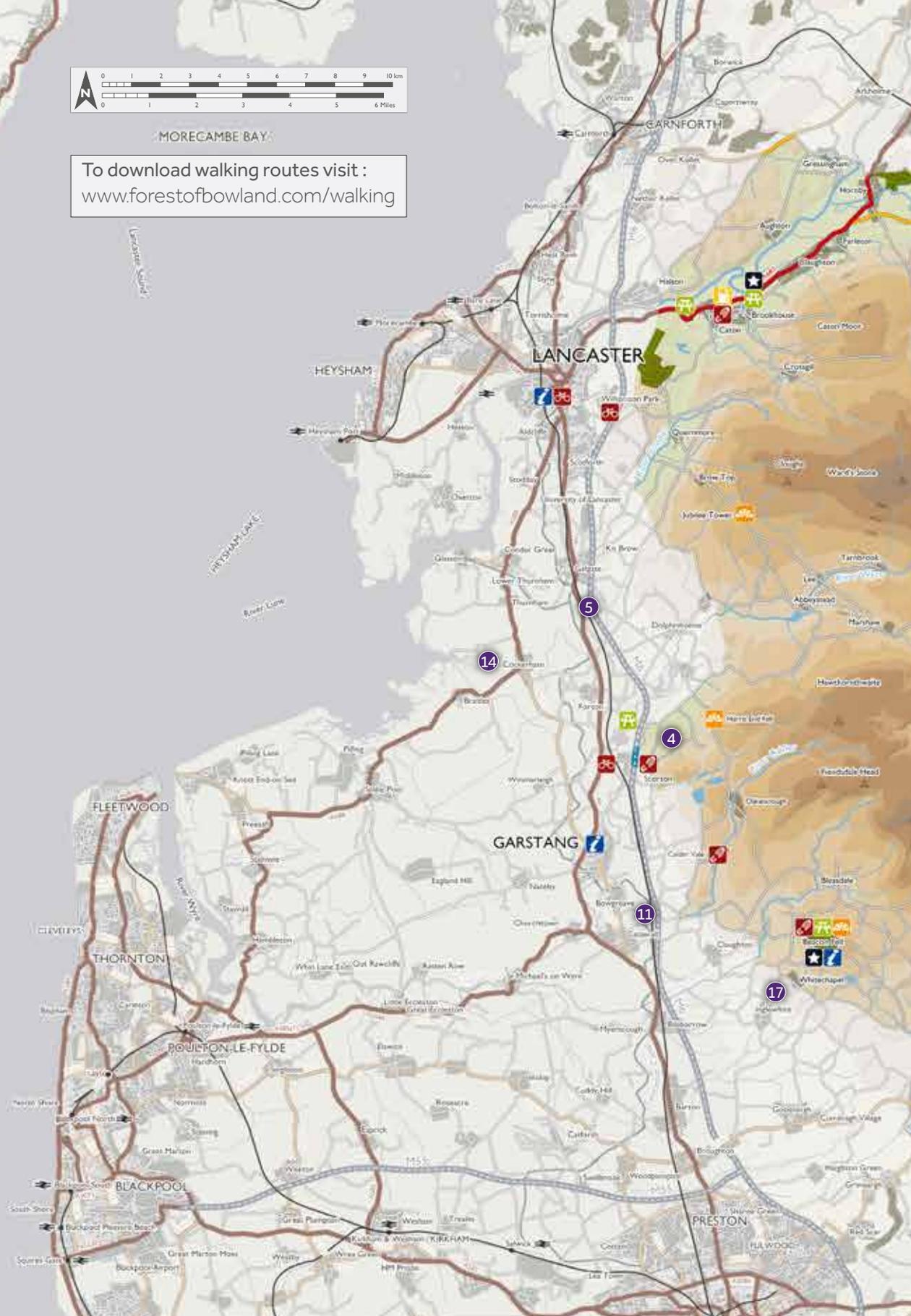
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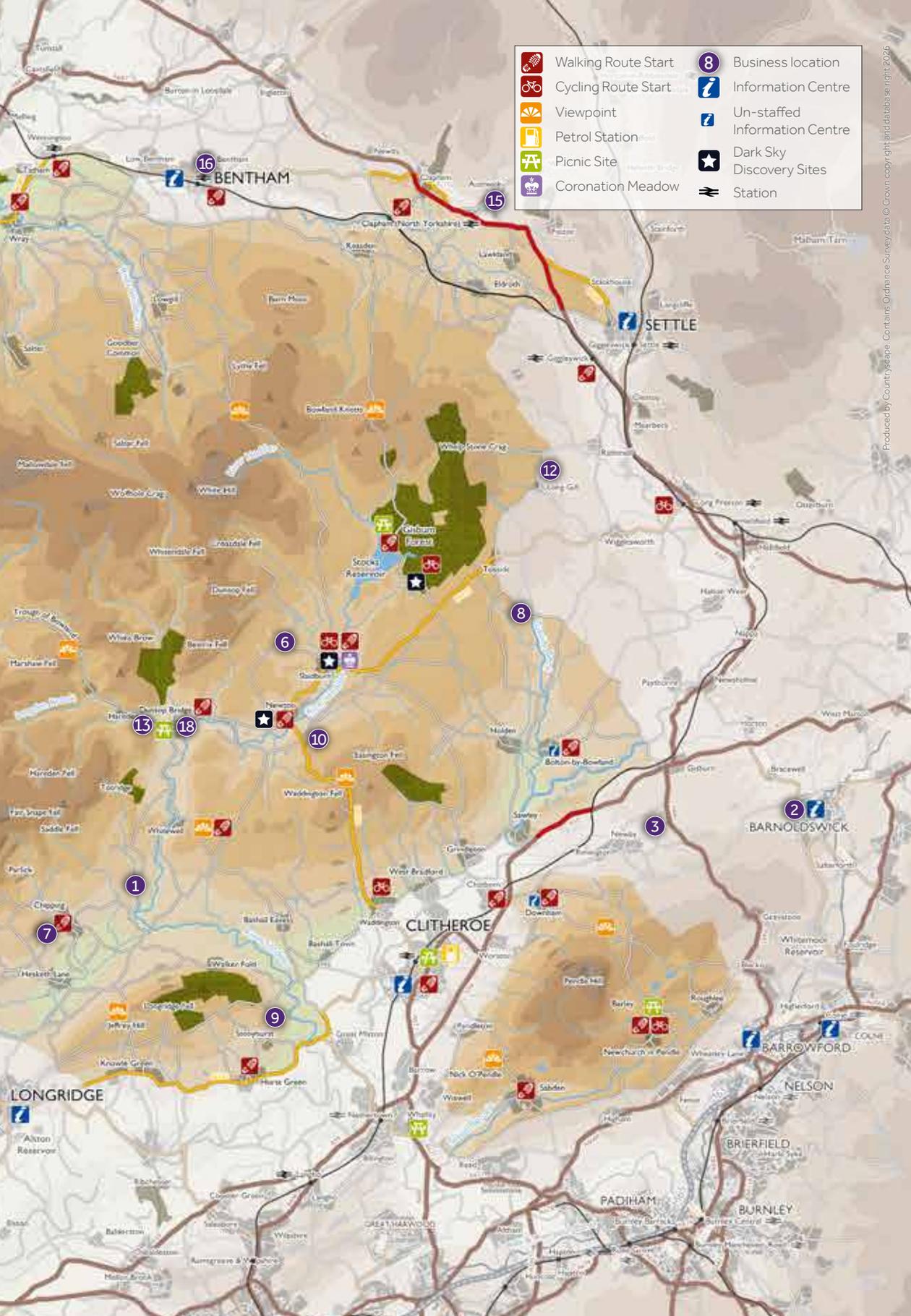




MORECAMBE BAY

To download walking routes visit :
www.forestofbowland.com/walking





- | | | | |
|--|---------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| | Walking Route Start | | Business location |
| | Cycling Route Start | | Information Centre |
| | Viewpoint | | Un-staffed Information Centre |
| | Petrol Station | | Dark Sky Discovery Sites |
| | Picnic Site | | Station |
| | Coronation Meadow | | |



A New Vision for the Forest of Bowland: National Landscape Management Plan 2026 - 2031

This spring, the Forest of Bowland National Landscape will unveil its new Management Plan—a bold and refreshed vision to protect, enhance and celebrate this extraordinary place for generations to come.

Formerly designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the Forest of Bowland now forms part of the National Landscapes family—a name that better reflects the significance of these protected places.

At the heart of the new plan is a commitment to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, the founding purpose of the National Landscape designation. This statutory document is more than a requirement—it's a roadmap for the future.

The Management Plan aims to:

- Celebrate the unique character and special qualities of the Forest of Bowland.
- Present a shared vision for its future, shaped by those who live in, work in and care for the landscape.
- Set out clear outcomes and measures to guide decision-making and action.
- Reflect the aspirations of a wide range of stakeholders, from local communities, farmers and landowners to local authorities and conservation organisations.

This collaborative approach ensures that the Forest of Bowland continues to thrive—not only as a place of outstanding natural beauty, but as a living, working landscape that supports biodiversity, culture and wellbeing.

If you find yourself in Bowland in 2040, this is a vision of what it is hoped you will experience. This new management plan provides a roadmap to ensure that the landscape, its wildlife, cultural heritage and communities not only thrive today but continue to flourish into the future.

Vision 2040

The Forest of Bowland landscape retains its sense of local distinctiveness, shaped by the expansive moorland of the Bowland Fells, the rolling patchwork of farmland, wooded cloughs, traditional stone buildings, and the distinctive pattern of villages, hamlets, and farmsteads.

Here, habitats are robust in the face of climate change and provide the natural services people depend upon—storing carbon, purifying air and water, reducing flood risk and supporting health and well-being.

The restoration of our species-rich hay meadows has gathered pace, making Bowland's meadows among the most beautiful and diverse in the English uplands. Peatlands have been restored as thriving wetland systems. The Ribble, Lune and Wyre are celebrated as clear, naturally flowing wildlife-rich watercourses. Breeding waders flourish, songbird numbers are recovering, and raptors—including the iconic hen

harrier—breed successfully, free from the persecution of earlier times.

Farming that is both profitable and sustainable sits at the heart of nature recovery, each reinforcing the other. Strong partnerships between farmers, land managers, conservation organisations, communities, and businesses ensure that collective action achieves greater outcomes for nature.

Bowland's rich, cultural heritage is valued, well cared for, and, like its natural heritage, contributes to a resilient local economy. People from all backgrounds can enjoy the area responsibly: residents take pride in living here, while nearby communities—from towns such as Preston and Colne—see Bowland as their special place to visit close to home.

Nationally, the Forest of Bowland is celebrated as an outstanding landscape where collaborative efforts to support nature, climate, people and place are clearly delivering benefits for all.

The new Management Plan launches in spring 2026. Find out more here:

www.forestofbowland.com/management-plan

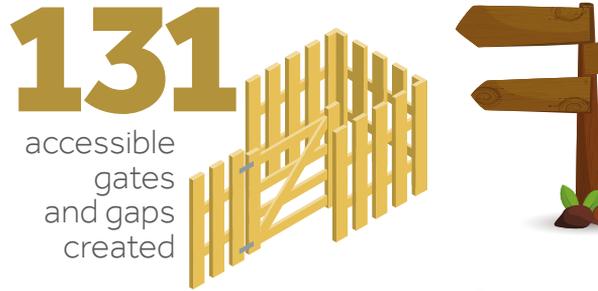
Successes and Achievements

Impact Since 2019

The Team have overseen the investment of nearly £17.25 million from a variety of sources including Defra, local authorities, United Utilities, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Arts Council England, Natural England, Environment Agency, Landscape Enhancement Initiative and more.

Achievements, in addition to those shown here:

- 1,088 ha of peatland restored
- 5,500 trees planted
- 14.5 ha of new woodland created
- 209 ha of wildflower-rich grassland restored or created



Events (2019-2026)



Forest of
Bowland
National
Landscape

638

events with a total of

19,824

attendees



225

training days held

1396

people trained



13.92km

footpaths improved or better managed

241

wildlife boxes installed



98

ponds and scrapes
created or restored



36

projects targeted
at recovery of
threatened
species



76

tourism businesses
contributing to initiatives

46

community groups supported



1088

ha of peatland restored



209

ha of wildflower
meadow restored

21



accessible amenities
created including rest stops,
toilets and bird hides



42.69km

hedgerows planted or restored

Nearly
£17.25
million
of investment overseen
by the team

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Visitors are welcome to fit us into their plans by arranging a visit while exploring the area, or to call in at their leisure on Saturdays. Sample and buy our gins, enjoy one of our popular cocktails, or simply sit back with a coffee and cake. Take in the views of our working stills and the surrounding farm – and yes, we're dog friendly too.

Opening times & how to book

Monday - Friday: visits available by pre arranged booking

Saturday: 10.30am to 5pm - all welcome

Book your visit via WhatsApp: 07532 762650

Email: spirited@wildfoxdistillery.co.uk

www.wildfoxdistillery.co.uk



MEANLEY ESTATE

Meanley is a family-run farming and sporting estate in the Forest of Bowland, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Set across 2,000 acres of grazing land, woodland and fell with views to the Three Peaks, the estate offers simulated game days, long-range rifle shooting, event space and accommodation, creative retreats, meat boxes, and stays for couples or groups - a unique countryside escape with something for everyone.



Simulated game days

Friends, corporate days, or pre-season practice, these days are fast-paced, authentic, and unforgettable.



Long-range rifle shooting

Expert tuition paired with the unique thrill of striking reactive targets at distances of up to 1 mile.



Event space in nature

A large, level private field, serves as a breathtaking canvas for whatever you can imagine.



Events accommodation

The Fellside lodge is our exclusive gathering space – offering warmth, privacy and a real sense of occasion.



Creative retreats

Our Creative Workshops are intimate, seasonal gatherings designed for those seeking beauty, peace, and inspiration.



Meat boxes

Beef, Lamb, Venison and Game all sourced from our fields and prepared by an expert butcher.

NEW



Couples and group accommodation

Meanley offers a range of accommodation from a romantic getaway couples retreat with spectacular views in a tranquil private setting ideal for rest and relaxation to family/ group accommodation for up to ten people. Ideal if you are joining us for an activity or as a stand alone holiday retreat. Please contact us to find the right place for you visit.



Farm to Fork Dining in the Heart of Bowland

Eight at Gazegill was created with one simple belief: food tastes better when it's rooted in the land it comes from.

Set in the heart of an organic farm that has been nurtured for generations, our restaurant celebrates the seasons and the incredible produce grown, reared, and foraged right here.

From pasture to plate, every ingredient tells a story of sustainability, respect for nature, and a deep connection to the countryside around us.

Led by Chef Patron Doug Crampton and our passionate team, we craft menus that champion flavour, creativity, and a true farm-to-fork experience.

Whether it's heritage beef from our meadows, vegetables grown just a stone's throw away, or wild herbs gathered from the hedgerows, each dish reflects the care, integrity, and joy at the heart of Gazegill.

Eight isn't just a restaurant, it's a celebration of place, people, and the power of food to bring us together.

We're delighted to share our table with you.



MICHELIN
2025

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by Doug Crampton



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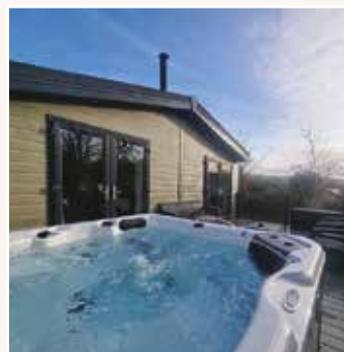
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A night under the stars, but with all the creature comforts you need for hassle-free camping.



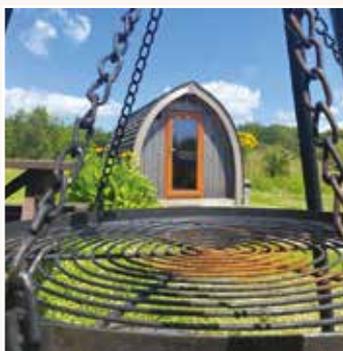
HOLIDAY LODGES

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Capturing the Best of Bowland



© Mark Harder

Tawny Owl at St James Church, Dalehead

“The owls of the Forest of Bowland are very special for me, it’s just so amazing to get up and spend a morning watching and photographing them”

As part of the 2025 review of our Management Plan, we invited people to share photographs that capture what Bowland means to them—whether through its landscapes, wildlife, heritage or vibrant communities. Through our Best of Bowland prize draw, we wanted to give everyone a chance to reflect on and celebrate what makes this unique area so special. These personal snapshots offer an insight into the deep connection people feel with Bowland, helping shape our shared vision for its future.



© Nigel Cowking

Champion Moor

“It’s where my grandad used to take me to watch wildlife and where my relatives all grew up”

© Tony Openshaw

View from Jeffrey Hill



© Gordon Yates

River Hodder
near Doeford Bridge



“The pristine waters of the river Hodder ensure an abundance of Kingfishers”



“It’s my go to place for nature and walking - a peaceful retreat in stunning scenery”

© Paul Shorrock

Oyster mushrooms, Slaidburn



“The fragments of temperate rainforest. The grayling in the Hodder. The animal and bird life. The people. It’s home as it was for some of my ancestors”



© Mike Coleran

Hazelhurst Fell, Bleasdale

“Freedom to walk and magnificent views”



©Susan Lowe

Littledale

“It is on my doorstep and a relatively quiet area; you can walk in isolation and hear nothing but birds and sheep”

© Ste Adair

River Ribble, Grindleton



“Morning Glory”



“Morning Bliss”

© Andrew Nuttall

Trough of Bowland



“Curlew sitting on a drystone wall”



© Ste Adair

Grindleton Fell



© Mike Coleran

Golden hour on Nicky Nook

“Great walking area”



© Joe Hayhurst

Parlick From Bleasdale

“Peace, serenity, landscape”

We'd love to see more of your images during 2026, please share them at :
www.forestofbowland.com/upload-your-photos

A photograph of two large, handcrafted scarecrows standing in a grassy field under a blue sky with white clouds. The scarecrow on the left is dressed in a white tunic with a prominent red cross, a white hood, and a long white skirt with black and white striped patterns. The scarecrow on the right is dressed in a white shirt, a brown vest with a gold floral pattern, a brown tie, and a long brown skirt with a large green diamond-shaped patch. A small child in a blue and white striped jacket and dark shorts stands between the two scarecrows, looking up at them. The background shows green trees and a wooden fence.

Life in Bowland:

*Where
Community
Thrives*

In Bowland, community spirit runs deep—from the cheerful bustle of village teas and the rousing brass of the Slaidburn Silver Band to the creativity of scarecrow festivals and the hands-on care of Friends of Bowland volunteers. These traditions celebrate connection, heritage and the joy of coming together.

Baking, Bluebells and Community Pride

Every May, as the woodlands around Calder Vale transform into a breathtaking carpet of bluebells, a beloved village tradition springs to life—Bluebell Teas. This heartwarming event, held each Sunday in the Village Hall, is more than just a celebration of spring; it's a tribute to community, heritage and the simple joy of homemade pie.

At the centre of it all are Brenda Price and Jen Richardson, two women whose dedication keeps the tradition alive. Their connection to Bluebell Teas runs deep—Brenda's mother, Enid, and Jen's aunt, Annie, first began the tradition in 1989. Their goal was to raise funds for the Mission Room, a unique shared space born from a rare ecumenical agreement between the Roman Catholic and Church of England congregations.

Enid, who lovingly cared for the Mission Room, saw the potential in combining warm hospitality with homemade treats. What began as a modest fundraiser has grown into a cherished annual event, drawing visitors from near and far to savour Calder Vale's culinary charm.

Today, Brenda and Jen carry the torch with the help of a devoted team of volunteers. The menu is a comforting blend of tradition and taste: hearty soups, savoury pies and cakes fresh from village ovens. *"Many come for the old-fashioned favourites,"* Brenda shares with a smile. *"Egg custard, lemon meringue pie, roulade, banoffee pie and my pea and ham soup are always best sellers."*



But it's not just the food that makes Bluebell Teas special. The tablecloths are sewn from fabric woven in the village mill, and the funds raised support a wide range of local causes—from the churches and school to the recreation field, village hall and over-60s club. "Whatever funds are needed to help support the village, really," Jen adds.

Timed to match the blooming bluebells, the teas offer more than just tasty food—they give visitors a real feel for Calder Vale's community spirit. Many people take a short walk through nearby Church Wood to enjoy the stunning bluebells before heading to the village hall for homemade soup, pies and cakes. It's a tradition that brings people together and shows how much the village values its history and hospitality.

Be sure to visit Calder Vale Teas on Sundays during May.



Slaidburn's Steam Rally: A Fundraising Tradition

It all began in 1979 when steam enthusiast David McNamee brought home a 1926 Aveling and Porter steam roller named 'Daniel'. After a three-day journey from Manchester to Slaidburn—ending with a well-earned pint at the Hark-to-Bounty pub—Daniel quickly became a local talking point.

The following year, David was invited to showcase Daniel at the village's May Queen Festival. The crowd loved it, and the idea of a steam-themed fundraiser was born. By 1981, David had rallied fellow enthusiasts and—with support from the pub landlord and the Slaidburn Estate—the first Slaidburn Steam Rally took place, complete with traction engines, a fairground organ and village-run stalls.

Over the years, the Rally grew to include vintage cars, tractors, maypole dancers from Brennand's Endowed School, and even the arrival of the restored 1931

Bounty Bus in 2013. Today, the Rally has grown into a vibrant celebration held on the village green, offering space for an impressive display of vintage cars, tractors and historic farm machinery. Visitors can enjoy a lively mix of attractions, including a tombola, a legendary homemade cake stall, traditional children's fairground rides, clog dancing and demonstrations from local makers and rural craftspeople.

Thanks to generous donations and the dedication of volunteers, the Steam Rally—still free to attend—has raised over £106,000 to date. These funds have supported a wide range of local causes, including St Andrew's Church, Brennand's Endowed and Thorneyholme primary schools, Slaidburn Village Hall, the Hodder Valley Show and the North West Air Ambulance—among many others.

David McNamee shares what makes the Steam Rally so special: *"The Steam Rally is a warm, welcoming community tradition that proudly showcases local skills and heritage. Each year, it draws both residents and visitors who come together to enjoy a slice of living history. Thanks to the dedication of our volunteers and the support of the local community, it also raises vital funds for local groups and causes,"* he says with a smile. *"It's fair to say—it runs on coal and community spirit!"*

In 2025, David McNamee was honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Transport Trust for his longstanding dedication to the much-loved Slaidburn Steam Rally.

The 2026 and 44th Slaidburn Steam & Vintage Vehicle Display will be held 13th – 14th June.

<https://www.slaidburnsteam.co.uk/>

Wray's Scarecrow Festival: A Village Tradition That Gives Back

It all began in 1992, when Wray resident David Hartnup returned from a holiday in France inspired by a quirky village tradition. Alongside fellow locals, he helped bring the idea to life in Lancashire—and so the Wray Scarecrow Festival was born. Now believed to be the longest-running scarecrow festival in the UK, the event celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2022.

Each April, Wray transforms into a whimsical open-air trail as scarecrows of all shapes and sizes—ranging from tiny figures to towering creations over four metres tall—pop up throughout the village. Crafted around annual themes inspired by current events, pop culture or pure imagination, these playful characters can be spotted in gardens, windows and on balconies, inviting visitors to explore and enjoy the creativity on display.

But the festival is far more than just scarecrows. Over ten days, Wray becomes a hub of activity, bringing together residents and visitors for a packed programme of community events. From the excitement of the road race and cycling challenge to the nostalgic charm of the fun fair and colourful parade, there's something for all ages. Quirky traditions like the ball race add a playful twist, while the fell race offers a chance for the more adventurous to take on the local hills.

Adding to the village's charm, children from the local school perform traditional maypole dancing and volunteers lead guided local history walks, offering fascinating insights into Wray's past and



its people. The festivities culminate in the much-loved May Fair on the first Bank Holiday Monday in May, bringing the whole community together in celebration.

Festival spokesperson Simon Carruthers explains:

"The festival has grown from strength to strength and is organised each year by the scarecrow committee—a small but dedicated band of local volunteers. They're supported by a much larger team who help with everything from litter-picking and ice-cream selling to car parking, bunting and marquee-erecting."

He adds:

"As with many local shows and festivals, proceeds provide much-needed funds to support local charities and voluntary groups, including the Scout Group, Over 60s Club, WI, local churches and schools."

To find out more about this year's festival – running April 25th to May 4th, 2026 - visit wray scarecrows.wordpress.com or follow on Facebook at facebook.com/wray scarecrows



Treats and Traditions: The Story Behind Dunsop Bridge Sunday Teas

Nestled in the heart of the Forest of Bowland, the village of Dunsop Bridge has long been a place where tradition, community and cake come together in the most delightful way. Each summer, the village hall opens its doors for the beloved Sunday Teas—a cherished local institution that's as much about connection as it is about fundraising.

The story begins not in the current village hall, but at Root Farm, where the original hall once stood. That modest building, now a holiday cottage, served not only as a gathering place but also doubled as the local doctor's surgery. It was the heart of the community until a dedicated committee, through tireless fundraising, brought the new Dunsop Bridge Village Hall to life.

"My aunt was always involved," Janet Wells recalls. "She supported my uncle who was on the original committee."

Originally, the Sunday Teas were run solely by the village hall committee to raise funds for the hall's upkeep. Back then, lettings were fewer, and the teas were essential to keeping the hall running. Over time, the tradition evolved. Charitable groups from within the village began to take on individual Sundays, paying a small rent to the hall and keeping the profits for their causes.

Groups like the village church, school, playgroup, Young Farmers and the WI have all taken part. Even individuals working for causes like Cancer Research and Parkinson's have hosted a Sunday, provided they're part of the local community.

The season typically runs from Easter Sunday to the last Sunday in August, though the start date now varies depending on Easter's timing and the number of groups involved. *"It got too much for the committee to do every Sunday," Janet admits. "Now, it's more flexible."*

Despite the shift, the committee still hosts a few Sundays each year, and a core group of bakers remains the backbone of the operation. *"People overlap," Janet says. "You might be on the church committee, help at the school and bake for the teas. It's all interconnected."*

The menu is a nostalgic delight—salmon and cucumber sandwiches, jam and cream scones, chocolate cake and the ever-popular Eccles cakes. *"When they're available, they fly out," Janet laughs. The cakes are all homemade, a point of pride and a major draw for visitors. "It's the homemade cakes that bring people," Janet continues. "It's different every week depending on who's baking."*

Visitors come from far and wide, some returning year after year. *"I get calls from Blackburn asking when we're starting," Janet says. "It's a real draw."* Cyclists, motorcyclists, and even rally groups often pre-book, adding to the day's buzz and boosting fundraising efforts.

Beyond the cakes and camaraderie, the teas serve a deeper purpose. *"It's a social lifeline for some, especially for people who live alone".* The teas also offer a way for groups to raise funds without repeatedly asking the same small pool of supporters. *"It casts the net wider,"* explains a school fundraiser. *"And people care where the money goes—they ask."*

Even the bookstall plays a role, supplementing hall funds and encouraging a gentle cycle of giving and receiving. *"People bring back books they've read and take new ones. Anything we can't store goes to a local charity shop."*

Dunsop Bridge Sunday Teas are more than just a fundraiser—they're a celebration of community, tradition and the simple joy of sharing a slice of cake with neighbours and newcomers alike.

Janet adds: *"They say the foundations of our village hall were almost built on cakes. Countless bake sales and community events helped raise the funds to build it, and ever since its opening in the early 1970s, the tradition of selling homemade cakes and refreshments has continued—supporting local charities and bringing people together. All credit to a community that knows how to work together."*

Groups wishing to notify the village hall in advance and ensure catering for their visit to Sunday Teas are encouraged to get in touch ahead of time via the Village Hall. Visit: www.facebook.com/DunsopBridgeVillageHall



Slaidburn Silver Band: Community in Harmony

Slaidburn Silver Band has been the musical soul of the Hodder Valley since 1898. With silver-plated instruments gleaming in the sun and brass harmonies echoing through the hills, the band continues to bring people together through tradition, celebration and shared pride.

Their most famous musical connection is the iconic march "Slaidburn", composed by William Rimmer and named after the village itself. A staple in brass band repertoires across the UK, the piece has become a symbol of the band's legacy and local identity.

In 1989, the band was honoured with an invitation to perform for Her Late Majesty The Queen during her visit to the Hodder Valley—a moment that remains a proud milestone in their history.

Unlike many brass bands, Slaidburn's instruments are silver-plated, a tradition dating back to a time when silver signified prestige and success. Though the cost

difference has narrowed over time, the gleam of silver still sets them apart.

The band's commitment to community was on full display during their sponsored march over Waddington Fell in April 1988. Battling steep inclines and blazing sunshine, members carried heavy instruments from Slaidburn to Clitheroe—all in support of their shared cause.

From the joyful sounds of Brass on the Grass in Slaidburn to festive carol services in local churches, the band continues to be a musical thread through village life. Their performances in local village halls, Remembrance services and summer concerts draw audiences from across the Ribble Valley.

Musical Director John Cowking BEM, who has led the band for over 50 years, reflects:

"It's been a privilege to lead a band that means so much to our community. Slaidburn Silver Band isn't just about music—it's about bringing people together, generation after generation."

That spirit of togetherness runs through every rehearsal and performance. Band members volunteer their time, maintain their own instruments and welcome new players with open arms—keeping the tradition alive and thriving.

Whether you play, listen, or simply love the sound of brass in the countryside—Slaidburn Silver Band welcomes you.

Visit www.slaidburnsilverband.org.uk or follow on Facebook @SlaidburnBand to learn more, see upcoming events, or get in touch.

Friends of Bowland volunteers



Friends of Bowland: Volunteering with Purpose in the Heart of the Forest of Bowland

For over 15 years, the Friends of Bowland have been quietly making a big impact across the Forest of Bowland. This independent volunteer group brings together people who care deeply about the landscape, wildlife and communities of Bowland - but most of all enjoy a day out in the fresh air doing something practical.

The group carries out a wide range of practical conservation tasks throughout the year. They work for organisations, individual landowners and sometimes farmers.

Tasks have included -

- Removing tree tubes, scrub and balsam bashing for United Utilities and the Woodland Trust
- Planting hedgerows, native tree species and wildflower plugs
- Thinning spruce on Longridge Fell
- Pruning and maintaining fruit trees at the Studio Bakery community orchard in Bolton-by-Bowland

The group is entirely self-supporting - some jobs are unpaid, others paid and there is a small charge for walks which ensures they have money for their modest expenditure on replacement tools, gloves, insurance, brews and biscuits and the odd pack of sterile wipes.

They have run Apple Days celebrating local heritage and produce, and support community tree planting through The Conservation Volunteers' (TCV) I Dig Trees programme.

But it's not all work. The Friends of Bowland also organise regular walks, bringing together 6 to 10 people at a time to enjoy the landscape they help care for.

For Martin Charlesworth who organises the tasks, the benefits reach far beyond the tasks themselves:

"We enjoy working together. Every task is a different challenge. Everyone contributes to how we tackle a job - there's no shortage of opinions which is probably a good thing. Every now and then I listen, I hope! When we stop work for a cup of tea and a biscuit we often look round and say, 'Aren't we lucky to be out here doing this?'"

We take it in turns to lead walks, mostly in Bowland but last year we escaped from

Bowland to Knott End and Cumbria for a change of scene. It's always a delight meeting other walkers and swapping stories about the area.

The group attracts people from all walks of life, united by a shared love of nature and community. Volunteer Mike Hurst explains:

"I enjoy being outdoors with like-minded people. I get a sense of achievement and wellbeing from contributing to environmental tasks. I like giving back to the communities I love, and I've made new friends along the way."

For Roger Park, the group offered a way to connect with his new home in Bowland:

"I grew up in a terraced house in Rochdale, and now I live in a small village in the Forest of Bowland. When I heard about a group doing environmental tasks, I thought, 'This is a chance to make a difference.' What a good decision! We're like-minded souls who work hard, but also talk, laugh and share ideas – from Brexit to Karl Marx!"

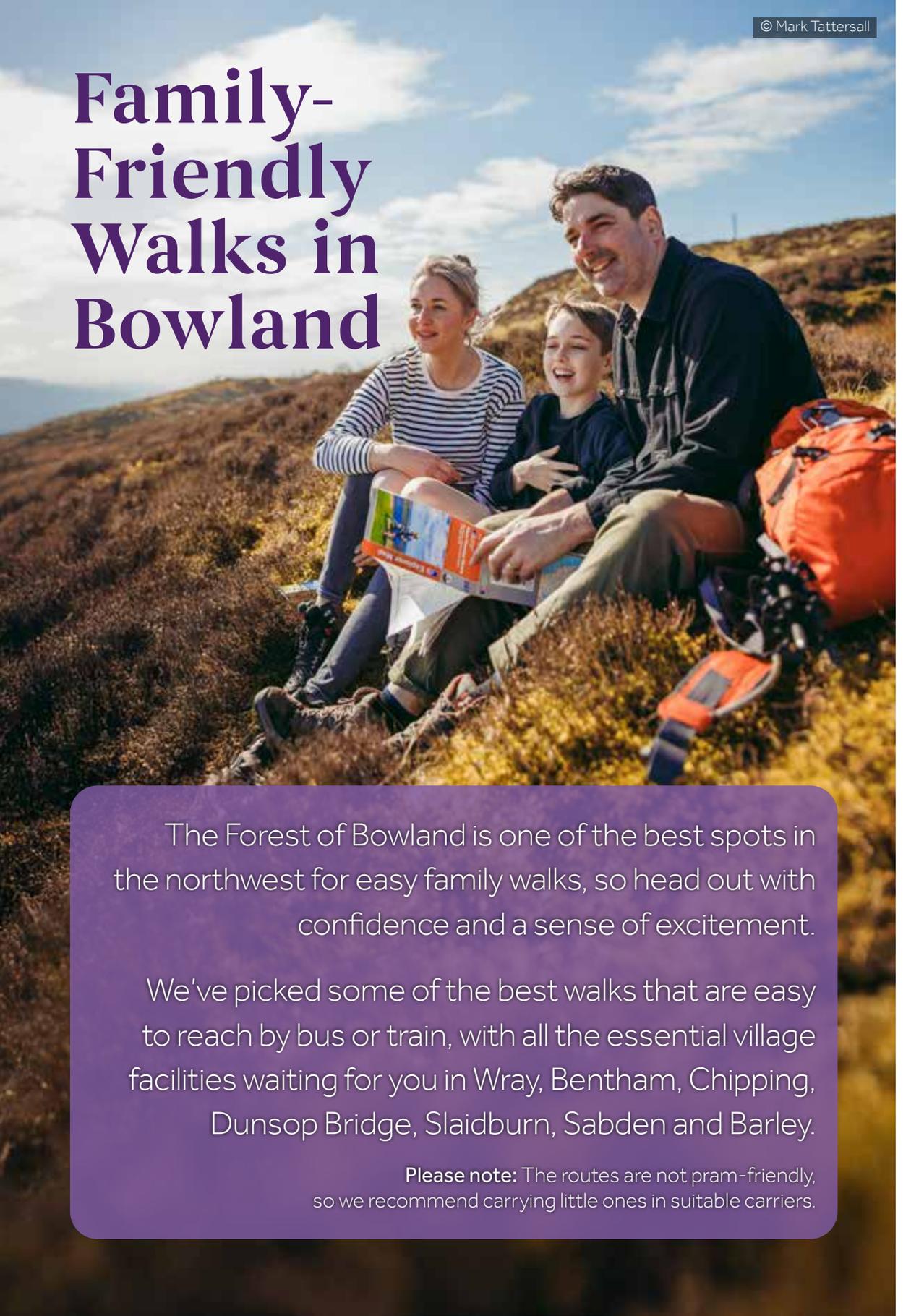
Join the Friends of Bowland

Whether you're looking to give back to nature, meet new people, or simply spend time outdoors, the Friends of Bowland offer a warm welcome. No experience is needed – just a willingness to get stuck in and enjoy the day.

"We're a friendly bunch who want to do our bit for Bowland," says Roger. "If that sounds like you, come and join us!"

Contact Martin Charlesworth for further details 01772 784692 or email friendsofbowland@gmail.com.

Family-Friendly Walks in Bowland



The Forest of Bowland is one of the best spots in the northwest for easy family walks, so head out with confidence and a sense of excitement.

We've picked some of the best walks that are easy to reach by bus or train, with all the essential village facilities waiting for you in Wray, Bentham, Chipping, Dunsop Bridge, Slaidburn, Sabden and Barley.

Please note: The routes are not pram-friendly, so we recommend carrying little ones in suitable carriers.



Distance: 2.2km / 1.4 miles

Time: 45 minutes
(1 hour with small people)

Ascent: 52 metres

Start: Barley Village Car Park
(Pay & display) £1.50 for 3 hrs /
£3 all day)

What3Words

///buying.montage.wrist

Refreshments: Barley Cabin

Toilets: In the car park

How to get there: Bus Route
66/67 – regular buses from
Clitheroe and Nelson. Check
timetable at www.bustimes.org

To view the route on the
Bowland website visit:



[www.forestofbowland.com/
walking#809660595](http://www.forestofbowland.com/walking#809660595)

Barley Woodland Wander

Barley is one of the prettiest villages on the southern flanks of Pendle Hill and is easily accessible by public transport from Burnley, Nelson, Colne and Clitheroe.

This easy circular walk follows the river to Whitehough then returns via an ancient drovers' track through the woods to Barley.

It's largely traffic-free and at less than two and half kilometres, it's very accessible for families with young children.

The famous Barley Cabin is the ideal spot for post-walk treats with plenty of outdoor seating available during the summer months.



Distance: 6.8km / 4.2 miles

Time: 2 hours

Ascent: 107 metres

Start: Bentham public car park

What3Words

///vocab.waltz.removals

Refreshments:

Several options in the town

Toilets:

Public car park in centre of town

How to get there: The Bentham Railway Line, which links Leeds in the east to Lancaster and Morecambe skirting the northern edge of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. For further information visit:

<https://communityrail Lancashire.co.uk/lines/bentham-line/>

To view the route on the Bowland website visit:



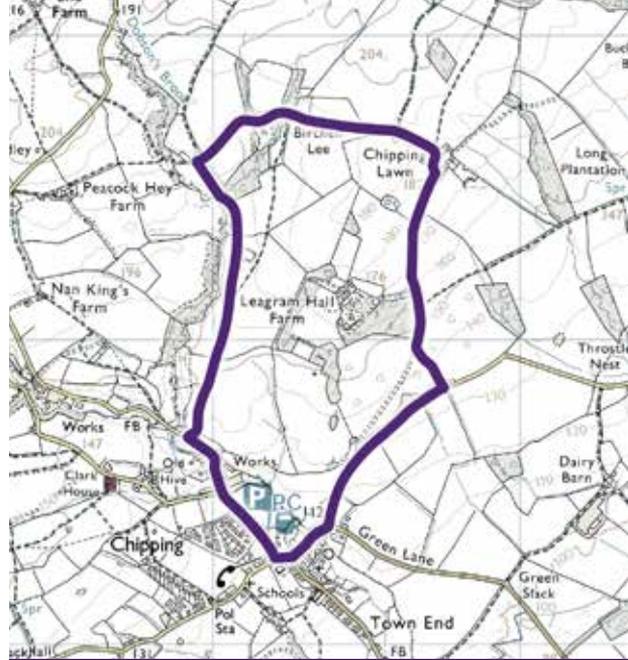
www.forestofbowland.com/walking#47400847



High Bentham Circular Walk

Based on the Bentham Heritage Trail, published by the local Market Towns Initiative, this walk takes in some of the lovely scenery along the valley of the River Wenning and affords wonderful views of the Forest of Bowland fells to the south and the hills of the Yorkshire Dales to the north.

Interpretation boards along the route provide information on everything from farming and wildlife to industrial heritage. A section through the town of High Bentham allows walkers to make the most of the facilities available in this rural town and gateway to Bowland



Leagram Circular Walk

Chipping is a pretty stone-built village nestling below the steep escarpment of the Western Bowland Fells – near to Preston and Garstang. It's home to the oldest continuously trading shop in Britain – dating back to 1668. Chipping was once a hive of rural crafts and industry, where five watermills were powered by the swiftly flowing streams which cascade from the surrounding hills.

Heading north out of the village, our recommended walk takes you through the old deer park where noblemen once hunted fallow deer, kept inside by a huge 10km long wooden fence. The fence was supplemented by a 1.2-metre deep ditch to keep deer in and poachers out. This undulating route passes through parkland around Leagram Hall, which was once a hunting lodge serving the deer park and is now an elegant family residence. On returning to the village, try the village farm shop or Cobbled Corner Café for refreshments.

Distance: 4km / 2.5 miles

Time: 1hr 40mins

Ascent: 95m

Start point:

Pay & Display Village Car Park,
Garstang Road, Chipping.

What3Words: /

//shins.titles.cassettes

How to get there: Bus Route 5
– regular service from Clitheroe.

Bus Route 1 from Preston to
Longridge links with Route 5.

Check timetable at

www.bustimes.org

Public toilets: in the village car park.

To view the route on the
Bowland website visit:



[www.forestofbowland.com/
walking#47400848](http://www.forestofbowland.com/walking#47400848)



River Dunsop and Black Brook Circular Walk

The pretty little hamlet of Dunsop Bridge is one of the most popular bases to explore the Forest of Bowland. There's ample parking in the pay & display car park in the centre of the village and a cosy café next door.

The River Dunsop flows past a pretty village green, where the local ducks are always happy to be fed by visitors both young and old. A number of footpaths head out from the village centre – including the largely traffic-free accessible riverside walk heading up the Dunsop Valley alongside the river.

Our recommended family-friendly route heads out of the village to Wood End Farm, where you might meet some friendly alpacas, then follows the edge of Black Brook Wood. Simply follow the farm track alongside the woodland into the pastures above Dunsop Bridge where, on a clear day, you have wonderful views of both the lower slopes of Beatrix Fell to the north and back down the Hodder valley to the south. The route then drops back into the Dunsop Valley and follows the track back to the village, where hot chocolate, cakes and/or ice creams -are available to purchase at Puddleducks café.

Distance: 3.2km / 2 miles

Time 1hr 30mins

Ascent: 75m

Start point:

Dunsop Bridge Car Park

What3Words:

///hoot.locked.airfields

How to get there:

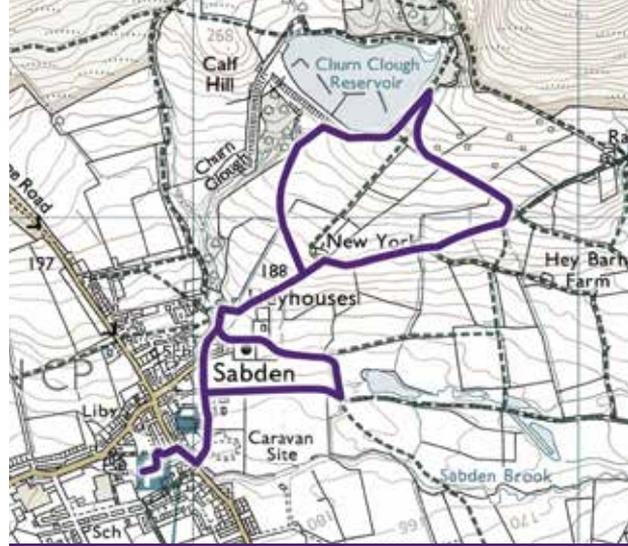
Bus Route 11: Four services a day departing Clitheroe Interchange and Settle. Check timetable at www.bustimes.org

Public toilets: in the car park.

To view the route on the Bowland website visit:



www.forestofbowland.com/walking#47400857



Churn Clough Reservoir Circular Walk

Sabden is a close-knit community nestling beneath the southern flank of Pendle Hill and quite easy to reach from Burnley, Nelson and Colne.

This easy circular walk climbs gradually out of the village towards the Nick of Pendle before taking you around Churn Clough reservoir and looping back towards the village from the east. En route, you'll pass through a family farm, The Milking Parlour, which sells fresh milkshakes made from whole, unpasteurised milk. As the path climbs steadily, the views open up encompassing Pendle Hill and – on a clear day – Darwen Tower to the south-west. The route loops around the shoreline of Churn Clough Reservoir before descending into the Sabden valley and returning to the village. Try Sandwiches Café in the Union Mill on Watt Street or the White Hart for refreshments.

Distance: 3.9km / 2.4 miles

Time 1hr 30mins

Ascent: 120m

Start point: Village Centre Pay & Display Car Park

What3Words:

///duplicity.squeezed.fonts

How to get there: Bus Route 64 – regular hourly service from Clitheroe and Burnley. Check timetable at www.bustimes.org

Public toilets: in village car park.

You can hire a Trampler – an all-terrain wheelchair – to enjoy the route. It's looked after by the local community. Further information available here:

www.forestofbowland.com/sabden-tramper

To view the route on the Bowland website visit:



www.forestofbowland.com/walking#61981607



Bell Sykes Wildflower Meadow Walk

Slaidburn is one of the prettiest villages in the Forest of Bowland and the green beside the River Hodder next to the village hall is a wonderful spot for a picnic

This short circular is lovely all-year round, but at its best in late June or July, when the wildflowers in the carefully managed traditional meadows at Bell Sykes Farm are in full bloom.

The walk starts in the car park and heads through the village with its distinctive war memorial then heads out over farmland to cross the river and into the vibrant wildflower meadows at Bell Sykes.

These meadows are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) because of the wide variety of rare species that they contain. This set of meadows is one of the most important in Lancashire and seed harvested here has been used to restore meadows elsewhere in the county. Look out for meadow buttercup and yellow rattle, meadow cranesbill and meadowsweet. On a warm summer's day, expect to see a wide variety of insects, butterflies and feeding swallows. Don't miss the delicious home-made cakes, ice creams and light refreshments at the Riverbank Tearooms.

Distance: 3.6km / 2.1 miles

Time 1hr 20mins

Ascent: 70m

Start point:

Pay & Display Car Park.

What3Words: /

//bungalows.puns.showdown

How to get there: Bus Route 11
– Four services a day departing Clitheroe Interchange and Settle. Check timetable at www.bustimes.org

Public toilets:

next to the car park.

To view the route on the Bowland website visit:



www.forestofbowland.com/walking#47400840



Rivers and Village Ramble

Wray is the Scarecrow Village of Lancashire, attracting thousands of visitors every year to its annual Scarecrow Festival and Country Fair .

This charming village boasts Wray Village Store with its delightful selection of food, drinks and arts, crafts and gifts made locally across the Lune Valley. Wray is also home to the George & Dragon pub, a thriving village institute, two churches, a children's play area, Greenfoot Garden Centre and the beautiful riverside tearooms at Bridge House Farm. Rivers Hyndburn and Roeburn flow through the village, which is surrounded by beautiful scenery and walks for all.

The walk starts in the car park next to the tea rooms and heads along the River Roeburn before returning to explore the village.

Distance: 2.2km/ 1.4miles

Time mins 1hr

Ascent: 21m

Start point: Wray village car park

What3Words:

///systems.trickles.washed

How to get there: In the Lune Valley, bus 81 runs daily between Lancaster, Caton, Hornby, Wray, Wennington, Melling and Kirkby Lonsdale. Check timetable at www.bustimes.org

Public toilets:

None – toilets available in the tea room for customers.

To view the route on the Bowland website visit:



www.forestofbowland.com/walking#47400831

Championing Change:

A Fresh Take on Farming





Holmes Farm

On a crisp March afternoon, the rolling pastures just outside Low Bentham are alive with the quiet hum of nature. Holly Story is a young farmer with a vision that blends tradition, innovation and a deep respect for the land. At Holmes Farm, nestled on the edge of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, she is rearing more than just sheep—she is nurturing a regenerative future.

Holly's journey back to the farm is both personal and purposeful. Her father once farmed this land when she was a child, but it wasn't until a few years ago that she returned to take up the reins herself. Rather than following a conventional path, she chose to start her own flock of Easy Care sheep and adopt a regenerative, nature-friendly approach to farming.

"I've always been really interested in the environment," she explains. "I wanted to bring more nature back onto the farm and create a system that was low-cost, low-labour and could work alongside my full-time job."

With support from the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)

Programme, Holly has been able to invest in essential infrastructure like electric fencing, portable water troughs and pipework. These tools have enabled her to implement rotational grazing, a key regenerative practice that allows soil and grasses to rest and recover between grazing periods.

Progress has been evident. *"We've seen a real difference in the grass cover, even coming out of winter," she says. "And the wildlife has responded too—we've had a barn owl return to the farm for the first time ever."*

Holly's commitment to biodiversity extends beyond the fields. With funding from Countryside Stewardship and FiPL, she has been restoring the farm's hedgerows—laying, coppicing and planting new hedges to fill in gaps. These living boundaries not only provide shade and shelter for livestock but also serve as wildlife corridors, helping to reconnect fragmented habitats across the landscape.

"It's not an instant transformation," she admits. "But over time, these hedges will grow into something really valuable for both the farm and the ecosystem."

One of the most powerful aspects of Holly's journey has been the support she has found through the Pasture for Life FiPL funded – Pasture and Profit Programme. The initiative offers mentorship, training and a vibrant network of like-minded farmers across the North of England and Scotland.

"There's no one-size-fits-all," she says. "It's about sharing experiences, learning from each other, and supporting one another through the challenges."

From farm walks to WhatsApp groups, the project has helped Holly build a community of peers who are all striving to farm in ways that are better for the planet—and for people.

Starting a farm from scratch is never easy, and Holly is candid about the

hurdles she has faced. From the cost of infrastructure to the steep learning curve of livestock management, the early days were demanding. But by choosing a low-input, regenerative model, she has been able to keep costs manageable and avoid the need for heavy machinery or intensive practices.

"I'm not silaging or reseeding," she explains. "I can move the sheep and fences on foot. It's a simpler system, but it works—and it's more in tune with the land."

Holly's story celebrates the potential for farming to support and coexist with nature. With thoughtful planning and a willingness to learn, it is possible to build a system that is both productive and restorative.

Meet Holly on film at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyEW7v559bM



Halsteads Farm © Tom Pooley

Halsteads Farm

Nestled in the rolling landscapes around West Bradford and Waddington, Halsteads Farm is home to Roger and Nat Marsden, two farmers who are reshaping their approach to agriculture.

Halsteads Farm is a family-run operation, managed in partnership between brothers Roger and Nat, with support from their parents. The farm is home to around 50 head of native-breed Luing cattle and approximately 500 breeding ewes. Historically, the Marsdens finished all their lambs on-site, but recent years have seen a shift in both practice and philosophy.

Faced with the phasing out of the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) and rising input costs, the Marsdens began to question the sustainability of their conventional methods. *"We relied heavily on subsidies,"* Nat explained, *"but it didn't really align with our ethos around farming and the environment."*

Inspired by regenerative farming advocates like Greg Judy, Nat began exploring alternative approaches. What started as curiosity soon evolved into a full transition. *"It all added up in my head—and financially too,"* he said. *"The farm began shifting toward a low-input, extensive outdoor system, focusing on matching livestock to the environment and reducing reliance on external inputs."*

One of the biggest challenges was adapting the farm's infrastructure to support rotational grazing. *"It took a lot of thinking,"* Nat admitted. *"We needed to be able to move stock frequently and ensure water was available wherever they went."*

With support from the FiPL Programme the Marsdens installed permanent electric fencing, water pipework and automatic electric fence lifters, enabling flexible grazing and longer recovery periods for pastures.

The Marsdens also took part in the Pasture for Life FiPL funded – Pasture and Profit Programme, which paired them with experienced regenerative farmers through a mentor-mentee model. *"It's a mindset change,"* Roger said. *"Having that support network was invaluable."*

Over time, they progressed from mentees to mentors, hosting farm visits to share their experiences and inspire others. *"It's good to be part of a group going through the same transition,"* Roger added.

The shift to regenerative farming has already yielded visible results. *"We're growing more grass and seeing greater plant variety,"* Roger noted. *"Biodiversity is improving, and input costs are significantly lower."*

While production has dipped slightly, the overall financial outlook is more stable. *"Less is more,"* Roger said. *"Reducing inputs makes the business more resilient."*

One of the farm's current projects involves winter grazing Luing cattle on bracken-covered fell land. Using bale grazing techniques, the cattle help suppress bracken naturally—without mechanical intervention or chemical sprays. *"We're laying down carbon from the hay waste, spreading seed and improving the soil,"* Roger explained. *"It's a win-win."*

For those considering a similar transition, the Marsdens encourage reaching out to others already on the journey. *"It won't happen overnight,"* Nat said. *"But connecting with like-minded farmers helps. It's about shifting your mindset and embracing a more resilient, nature-friendly way of farming."*

As Halsteads Farm continues to evolve, Roger and Nat remain committed to sharing their story and supporting others. Their journey is a testament to what's possible when tradition meets innovation.

Meet Roger and Nat on film at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=vANyq86S8h4



Wood End Farm

At Wood End Farm, a multi-generational farming family is embracing change. Led by Janet and Andrew Smalley and supported by her parents, son Tom and sister Alison—who also runs an alpaca walking business—the farm is undergoing a transformation rooted in regenerative agriculture and a willingness to explore new approaches.

Wood End Farm was one of the early farms to approach the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Programme, successfully applying in its first year. FiPL funding has played

a supportive role in helping the family transition toward regenerative farming - an approach centred on improving soil health, reducing inputs and working more closely with nature.

"We've always farmed traditionally," Janet explains, "but I developed a real interest in soil health and began learning about rotational grazing. I knew it was the direction we needed to go, but I didn't know where to start."

That changed when Janet saw an invitation to join the Pasture for Life mentoring programme, funded through

FiPL. *"I was the first to call,"* she recalls. *"We needed a mentor—and we got a fantastic one. He's been there for support all the way through."*

The transition to regenerative farming required significant changes to infrastructure. With FiPL funding, the farm installed electric fencing to subdivide fields into paddocks, allowing for controlled grazing and introducing longer resting periods for pastures. Water infrastructure was also critical. *"As soon as you start managing smaller areas, you need water access,"* Janet explains. *"We received support for a header tank, water bowsers and pipework, which have been essential."*

The farm also invested in a Güttler minimum tillage machine, enabling them to introduce herbal leys and improve existing swards with clovers and grasses—another step toward building healthier, more resilient soils.

This year marked a milestone: the farm began outwintering cattle for the first time. Traditionally, their breeds weren't suited to year-round outdoor living, but the introduction of Belted Galloways—a hardy native breed—has allowed them to graze rushy areas and improve pasture condition naturally.

"We've been growing grass since August with no inputs," Janet says. *"The cattle came onto it in December, and we've been moving them weekly across paddocks. It's*

our first attempt, and it's very exciting."

The journey hasn't been without its challenges. Managing sheep within a rotational system has proven tricky. *"They anticipate the move and sometimes jump walls,"* Janet laughs. *"Cattle are much easier—one wire is enough. Sheep need three or four."*

Adapting infrastructure around stone walls and managing water access in remote areas has also required effort and creativity. But perhaps the most delicate challenge has been navigating generational change. *"My dad has farmed here all his life and done a great job,"* Janet reflects. *"But farming used to be about producing more and using fertilisers. We're learning that isn't always best for the land. Change is necessary—and we're all learning together."*

With support from FiPL and Pasture for Life, Wood End Farm is now part of a growing network of farmers committed to regenerative practices. *"It's exciting to see how the soils and grasses improve,"* Janet says. *"We've moved from set stocking to rotational grazing, and the difference is already visible. The key is rest during the growing period."*

As the farm continues its journey, Janet and her family remain enthusiastic about sharing their experiences and inspiring others. *"You're never too old to learn,"* she says. *"And if you don't make a change, you don't move forward."*

Meet Janet on film at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgEYIOLCY6A



Restoring Bowland's Heritage: *Bringing Historic Features Back to Life*

Restoring heritage features such as traditional barns and distinctive kissing gates is vital to preserving Bowland's unique character and cultural identity for future generations.

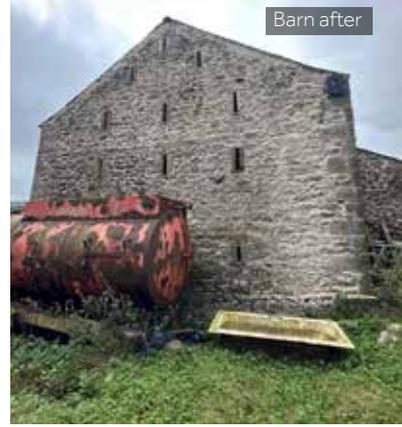
Across our protected landscape, traditional farm buildings are being restored and repurposed thanks to the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme. Among the standout successes is a Grade II listed barn that was once on the brink of collapse—now restored and proudly contributing to our working rural heritage.

FiPL funding has supported vital structural work, sensitive roof replacements, and the use of traditional materials such as lime mortar and stone slate. These measures ensure that each building retains its historic character while meeting modern conservation standards.

Barn before



Barn after



But the benefits go beyond preservation. These projects champion local craftsmanship and sustainable building practices, helping to keep rural skills alive. Restored barns now serve a variety of roles—from farm storage and livestock housing to educational visits and diversification projects—blending history with practicality and innovation.

Every barn saved tells a story of stewardship, identity and the enduring value of farming within our protected landscapes. FiPL has also enabled the restoration of a Victorian kissing gate along a popular public footpath in Sabden. Tenant farmer, Paul Dewhurst, had long hoped to improve this access point but wasn't sure how to proceed. With advice from FiPL Officer Nichola Gill, Paul approached Carter & Duck Blacksmiths—specialists in heritage

restoration—to explore what was needed to bring the gate back to its former glory.

Paul explained what was needed:

"The kissing gate is very heavy and no longer swings correctly. It catches on the cobbles and relies on a heavy weight—an addition that isn't original—to close. The metal rails need repair and redesign to make the field stockproof. We know this is a heritage feature and want to restore it as it once looked. Villagers and walkers will appreciate the improvement, and it will make this well-used path far more accessible."

Carter & Duck Blacksmiths completed the restoration beautifully, ensuring the gate remains a historic feature, improves public access and provides a secure boundary for livestock.

Kissing Gate before



Kissing Gate after





Celebrating Conservation Excellence:

Bowland's Tye Trophy Winners

The Tye Trophy Awards – organised by the Yorkshire Agriculture Society – celebrate the North of England's leading farms in environmental excellence. This annual competition recognises those who successfully blend wildlife conservation and sustainable land management with productive farming.

Winning the Tye Trophy not only brings regional acclaim but also secures a place in the following year's national Silver Lapwing Award, a further mark of distinction in sustainable agriculture.

In 2025, the spirit of harmony between farming and nature was proudly showcased in the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, as Bowland farmers took the spotlight at the prestigious Tye Trophy Competition, held at the Great Yorkshire Show.

Colin and Alan Price of Long Bank Farm, Keasden, were crowned overall winners for the North of England, a remarkable achievement that highlights their dedication to wildlife-friendly farming.

Long Bank Farm: Leading the Way

Long Bank Farm, an organic dairy farm in Keasden, has been part of agri-environment schemes since 2001, undertaking hedgerow restoration across the farm and working with the Bowland Hay time project. Farmers Colin and Alan Price are dedicated Dalesbred breeders and respected members of the Dalesbred Sheep Breeders Association, regularly judging at local agricultural shows.

Their commitment to wildlife-friendly farming has transformed 50 acres of meadows into a haven for breeding curlews and lapwings under an Organic Higher Level Stewardship agreement. A long-standing partnership with the RSPB has been key to protecting these iconic species.

"For years, we've worked closely with the RSPB on breeding wader management

and surveys—it's something we're really passionate about," said Colin. "Winning this award is a huge honour and highlights the importance of conservation and sustainable farming, which are central to our approach."



Carter Fold Farm: A Model of Environmental Innovation

Carter Fold Farm has been named the Lancashire winner of the Tye Award. Sarah and Graham Whitwell have been recognised for their exceptional commitment to environmental innovation and landscape stewardship. As a working commercial farm, Carter Fold is a good example of how modern farming businesses can integrate environmental delivery into day-to-day operations without compromising productivity.

The Whitwell's have undertaken extensive hedge planting, riparian habitat creation, ancient woodland management and developed a thriving network of nest-boxes that support farmland biodiversity.

Working closely with the Ribble Rivers Trust and the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, Sarah and Graham have delivered significant environmental improvements across their holding. Their work not only enhances wildlife habitats but also strengthens natural resilience across the wider landscape. Sarah's passion for community involvement and educational access is central to the farm's ethos, helping to connect young learners with nature, farming and sustainable land management.

"It was an honour to attend the awards ceremony at the Great Yorkshire Show to receive our award alongside the other shortlisted farmers," said Sarah. "We all farm in the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, and it's great to be recognised for the hard work and graft that we put in to make Bowland such a special place."



Botton Head Farm: A Legacy of Stewardship

Stephen and Andrew Taylor, recognised as Lancashire finalists, have shown outstanding enthusiasm and commitment to wader conservation through their nine years of support for the RSPB Bowland wader project. Their upland farm, managed under a Higher Level Stewardship agreement, encompasses species-rich grasslands and SSSI-designated moorland, providing a mosaic of habitats—from grazed pastures that attract lapwing to upland blocks ideal for breeding curlew.

They dedicate considerable time and utilise modern technology to aid nest finding, chick monitoring, rush management and grazing to create the best conditions for these birds. In 2024, they played a key role in monitoring three broods as part of the curlew chick radio-tagging project. Having wildlife conservation work in harmony with commercial farming is an integral part of the vision at Botton Head. Active in local groups, Stephen and Andrew champion wader conservation and inspire others to get involved.



Lawkland Hall Farm: Advocates for Curlew Conservation

Pete and Rona Webster, North Yorkshire finalists, are passionate advocates for curlew-friendly farming. They host visits for farmers and the public, sharing practical conservation methods alongside a productive dairy farm. Their work includes reedbed creation, management of land through a Mid Tier Countryside Stewardship agreement and pioneering unmown areas around nests. They monitor breeding territories, assist with predator-exclusion fencing and manage wet grassland for waders through conservation grazing. Currently developing a re-wetting project, they also support initiatives like curlew chick radio tagging as key members of the Clapham Curlew Cluster.

Tarja Wilson, Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme Lead Officer for the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, praised the winners: *"The Tye Trophy Awards are a vital recognition of the dedication and innovation within the farming community. They highlight the exceptional efforts of farmers who balance productive agriculture with environmental stewardship."*

She added, *"By highlighting successful sustainable farming practices, the awards can inspire other farmers to adopt similar approaches. We wish the Price family all the best as they progress to the national Silver Lapwing Awards."*

For further information about the awards visit:

www.yas.co.uk/farming-awards/

Bowland's Champion Species Inspire Conservation Through Creativity



In 2025, the Forest of Bowland National Landscape launched its imaginative Champion Species initiative at a gathering of the Sustainable Tourism Business Network. This creative campaign shines a spotlight on 14 rare, threatened or indicator species that call Bowland home—inviting locals, visitors and businesses to play a part in their protection.

The initiative is part of Bowland's wider Nature Recovery Plan, which aims to restore and enhance the area's rich mosaic of habitats. From curlews to green hairstreak butterfly, each species represents a vital thread in the ecological fabric of the landscape.



To bring the campaign to life, the Forest of Bowland team have partnered with Salt Marsh Studio to create a stunning collection of illustrated pin badges and complementary products. Each badge is a miniature work of art, sustainably made in the UK using recycled eco-metals—offering a greener alternative to traditional enamel pins. Proceeds from badge sales and linked products – including postcards and posters - go directly to Champion Bowland’s small grants fund, supporting grassroots conservation projects across the National Landscape.

But the campaign doesn’t stop there. Local businesses are invited to take part through the ‘Sponsor a Species’ scheme, aligning themselves with a species that reflects their values. It’s a chance to show commitment to nature recovery, build positive brand recognition and become part of a growing network of nature-friendly organisations.

Whether you’re a visitor collecting badges, a business sponsoring a species, or a local championing conservation, the Champion Species initiative offers a fresh and creative way to connect with Bowland’s wild heart—and help protect it for generations to come.

Spotlight on Our Local Champion Species Sponsors

Joanne Collinge from **Little Oakhurst Glamping** who sponsor the Curlew said: *‘At Little Oakhurst Boutique Glamping, the curlew has long been a cherished symbol of our commitment to nature and conservation. This year, as we celebrate Farmer Jim’s remarkable 90th Birthday, we proudly sponsor the curlew, a species that holds a special place on our farm. Jim has tirelessly advocated for curlew conservation, ensuring that our land remains a safe haven for these beautiful birds.*

Each year, before silaging, he meticulously checks the fields for curlew nests and chicks, guiding our farming practices to protect their habitats. By aligning our business with the curlew, we not only honour Jim’s legacy but also contribute to the preservation of this iconic species, fostering biodiversity and promoting sustainable practices that resonate with our values and those of our guests.





Matt Donnelly of **Bowland Fitness**, a passionate advocate for the hen harrier, said:

"At Bowland Fitness, the Hen Harrier is a species we look to for inspiration. In one of our Story Time Movements, we embody all the Champion Species because it's important to understand the stories unfolding around us. Regenerative health is about supporting our environment, and this gives us a chance to do just that."

Matt also shared a stanza reflecting his thoughts on the hen harrier:

A Spirit of Bowland

We belong to the wild; our movement is our essence.

We stay strong to stay connected with our environment.

To be free, to be agile, to endure with grace—

To move as if dancing across the sky.

Ian Steel - owner of **Atkinson's Coffee Roasters**, Lancaster - was inspired to write a short poem to highlight their connection to the swift.



A swift return

Aloof and aloft

We hear them before we see them.

Their triumphant screams mark the end of their long journey that heralds the start of summer, the end of our own hibernation and the promise of longer days.

Our hearts lifted up by the joyful arc in the sky that they describe with their perfectly designed boomerang shapes that scythe through their ethereal realm.

Where once there were squadrons, are we now witnessing the last pair of visitors from an origin in Africa where they fly in abundance over the forests of coffee?

Four million miles they travel in the course of a lifetime. A feathered miracle of motion hardly ever touching the ground.

So, we put up a nest box under the eaves to entice them to return and stay awhile.

And we plant up our gardens with pollinator-friendly planting.

And our urban patches with wildflower corridors to give them breakfast, lunch and tea on the wing in the hopes that we can make their yearly commute worthwhile.

Are they a species barometer that we are at a tipping point in our stewardship of the planet?

I'll tell you next year, in late spring, if the last pair have brought their progeny with them on their summer holiday to the Rainforest of Bowland...



© Peter Gravett

Elouise Townsend from **Bowland Retreat Lodges**, talks about their connection to the champion species, Juniper: *"As a business, we're proud to be a supporter of this initiative. We love the area that surrounds us, and we actively want to do what we can to raise awareness of the challenges it faces and ways in which ourselves and our guests can protect and champion the area including its species and vital habitats. We are proud to be sponsors of the juniper species and so have dedicated our brand-new lodge to this cause, naming it Juniper. It's great to see our lodge guests engaging with the project by purchasing the beautiful Juniper pin badges and showing an interest, asking questions about the Champion Species Project."*

Katie Wilson from **Bowland & Bay** who sponsors the bilberry bumble bee said: *'Bowland and Bay is buzzing to sponsor the bilberry bumble bee. As a food tour guide, guests travel with me between the finest artisan honey pots. These little creatures work as part of the hive, pollinating food crops and wild flowers across the Forest of Bowland and beyond. The bilberry bumble bee brings special memories of bilberry picking on Beacon Fell and homemade pies & jams. So, for me it was the Champion Species perfect for artisan food tours, the very start of our journey from field to fork.'*



Champion Species badges, postcards and prints are available to purchase from the Platform Gallery & Visitor Information Centre in Clitheroe, Pendle Heritage Centre in Barrowford, and Cuerden Valley Park Visitor Information Centre, Bamber Bridge.

Swifts in the Forest of Bowland: Champions of the Skies

Welcoming One of Nature's Most Dazzling Summer Visitors



Each May, the skies above Bowland's villages erupt with the exhilarating cries and high-speed aerobatics of swifts—extraordinary birds that spend nearly their entire lives in flight. These aerial masters link our communities to Africa through one of the planet's most astonishing migrations.

But swifts are facing a crisis. In the UK, their population has plummeted by over 60% in just a quarter of a century. Modern building practices have sealed off the tiny crevices they depend on for nesting, leaving them with fewer safe places to raise their young.

With your support, Bowland can once again become a sanctuary for these remarkable birds.

The Remarkable Journey of a Swift

- **Arrival in Bowland:** May
- **Breeding Season:** June–July
- **Departure for Africa:** August
- **Wintering Grounds:** Central & Southern Africa
- **Annual Migration:** Up to 14,000 km round-trip!

Swifts nest in roof eaves, church towers and specially designed nest boxes. They feed exclusively on flying insects—devouring up to 20,000 a day!





How You Can Help Swifts Soar

Install a Swift Nest Box

- Perfect for homes, schools and community buildings.
- Mount 4–6 metres high, in shaded areas away from windows and wires.
- Play recorded swift calls during May–June to attract them.



Protect Existing Nest Sites

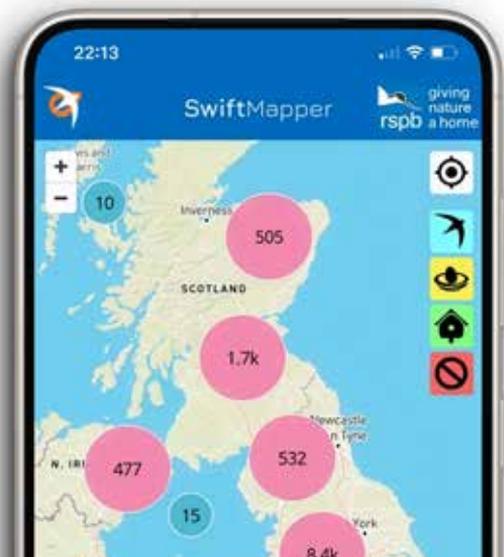
- Before carrying out roof repairs, check for nesting swifts.
- Don't block old nest holes—consider installing swift bricks in new builds.
- Swifts and their nests are legally protected from late April to September.
- Avoid netting or scaffolding during breeding season—it can be fatal.



Log Your Sightings

Use the RSPB's Swift Mapper app to record swift activity and nest locations:

www.swiftmapper.org.uk





Swift-Friendly Events in Bowland

- Welcome Back Swifts Walk – May
- Nest Box Building Workshop – June
- Screaming Party Watch – June

Full listings at:
www.forestofbowland.com

Get Involved in Your Community

- Watch & Listen: Spot “screaming parties” over rooftops on warm summer evenings.
- Spread the Word: Encourage neighbours to look up and join in.
- In Schools: Request a free resource pack from the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

Email us to get your copy.

Community Action

- Support local nest box initiatives (www.swift-conservation.org).
- Celebrate Swift Awareness Week each July.
- Join or start a local swift group www.swift-conservation.org/Local_Swift_Groups.htm.



Together, We Can Make a Difference

By protecting existing nest sites and creating new ones, we can help every Bowland village become a haven for swifts. Their epic journey—from our rooftops to the heart of Africa—is a powerful reminder of our connection to the natural world.

Summer just wouldn't be the same without the cheerful swoop of swifts. Let's work together to keep them flying high!



Restoring Peatlands for People and Rivers

Why peatlands matter

Peatlands are among the UK's most extensive semi-natural habitats, covering roughly a tenth of the land surface and dominating many upland headwaters that feed communities downstream. Healthy bogs and fens are naturally waterlogged; they slow rainfall as it crosses the landscape, storing it within micro-depressions and the peat mass itself, and release it gradually into streams. In doing so, they help moderate floods, sustain baseflows in dry spells, and provide clean water. They also support biodiversity and, at a high level, climate resilience by protecting long-term carbon stores and supporting nature-based solutions to a changing climate.

An Insight from Dom Hartley, Development & Funding Officer for Lancashire Peatlands

The Forest of Bowland National Landscape comprises extensive areas of blanket bog on gritstone fells and plateaux - key headwaters for the Wyre, Ribble, Hodder and Lune systems. Locally, peat restoration is a strategic priority, with programmes such as Bowland Priority Peat in partnership with the Lancashire Peat Partnership, Great North Bog and other key partners delivering hydrological, ecological and community benefits. In Bowland, multi-site programmes

have secured millions of pounds to restore hundreds of hectares over the past two decades; reprofiling eroding edges, installing chains of peat, timber and stone sediment traps, and re-establishing nurse vegetation to cover bare peat and rebuild surface

roughness. As hydrological function of the peatlands in Bowland improves, existing and introduced populations of sphagnum moss will thrive, retaining water and contributing to the acidic, low-nutrient conditions that promote peat formation and carbon storage.



Flooding and Peatlands

Upland peatlands are often the source of major watercourses. Rain falls at the top of the catchment and flows into streams and rivers as it travels across moorland slopes and gully bottoms. Historically, peatlands were deliberately drained to boost agriculture and forestry, particularly in post-WWII Britain as governments pursued food security and timber stocks. This dramatically reduced their water storage function, so when severe rainfall occurs on degraded peatlands - especially if coinciding with an incoming tide at the estuary - communities along major watercourses face significantly increased flood risk. In late 2015, storms Desmond, Eva and Frank battered northern Britain, with the Environment Agency estimating combined economic costs of the

2015–16 winter floods at £1.6 billion, while insurers paid out around £1.3 billion.

In the Forest of Bowland, major peatland restoration has been underway since the mid-2000s through programmes such as Pennine PeatLIFE and Nature for Climate, led by the National Landscape team and Great North Bog, with partners and landowners. Additional works have been delivered via agri-environment schemes and private funding. Interventions include thousands of kilometres of reprofiling, thousands of peat dams and bunds, timber dams, stone sediment traps, and hundreds of thousands of plant plugs (including Sphagnum). These measures increase surface storage and roughness in headwaters, reducing flood risk downstream, with hundreds of hectares restored annually.



Natural Flood Management

Natural Flood Management (NFM) reduces flood risk by reinstating or emulating natural hydrological processes. In peatland catchments, restoration achieves this primarily through four mechanisms.

1) Surface storage: Blocking grips and gullies, reprofiling eroded hagsgs and gully sides, and creating shallow pools increases on-site water storage capacity, particularly useful during severe storms. Storage gains are often dominated by surface features (pools and hollows) rather than water held within the peat mass itself. However, retaining water on the surface for longer also allows for more infiltration of water into the peat mass and surrounding vegetation.

2) Slowing overland flow: Re-vegetation (encouraging nurse crop cover over bare peat, reintroduction of specialised bog plants and especially inoculation of Sphagnum mosses) roughens the peat

surface, reducing flow velocities and delaying runoff arrival in streams further down the catchment. This slows the hydrograph rise and can lower flood peaks in small to medium upland catchments.

3) Restoring water tables: Raising and stabilising the water table reduces rate of flow in grips, reduces stream energy, and limits sediment loss - delivering benefits for both flood risk and downstream water quality.

4) Diffusion: Bunds and baffles in gullies slow and deflect water, helping it spread more evenly across peat surfaces. This re-engages slower flow pathways rather than fast, scoured routes which, if unchecked, also leads to further erosion elsewhere which results in peat sediment being carried off site, lowering water quality whilst also accelerating water movement further down the catchment.

Designing restoration for flood benefits

A successful peatland restoration project starts with survey work; mapping grips, gullies, hags, bare peat and artificial drains is crucial to understand what is required on site. Hydrological works are always planned and undertaken from the top of the catchment down – in most cases the deepest peat and narrowest gullies are located at the highest altitude in the Bowland Fells. Starting from the bottom up would put significant pressure on reprofiling work and dam creation as those interventions would be dealing with uninhibited volumes of water coming from the top of the catchment at speed and in high volume, which could lead to dams blowing out and newly reprofiled slopes being eroded again. Reprofiling and creating sediment traps from the top of a catchment downward means these measures can only cope with relatively small amounts and speeds of water. As flows join together, the increased volume and velocity can threaten the restoration work. Even though restoration areas can cover hundreds of hectares, the combined effect of hundreds or thousands of sediment traps across the site significantly increases the overall natural flood management benefit each structure provides.

Where channels aren't too wide and have a deep peat substrate, experienced excavator operators create peat dams which are cost-efficient, time-efficient and blend into the landscape. They are typically created 7.5–12m in 'chains', depending on slope, all the way down gullies. They effectively trap sediment that would otherwise be washed downstream whilst allowing water to continue to flow, albeit

slower and in a more measured way. Where gullies have shallower peat, untreated larch planks or coir logs can be fashioned into leaky dams. As with peat counterparts, they regulate flow whilst trapping sediment that would otherwise be lost off site.

In some cases, channels are very wide and/or have almost no remaining peat substrate due to years of erosion yet still convey vast quantities of water at high speed. Here, peat and timber dams would be unsuitable as they would be undermined quickly, representing poor value for money and failure of restoration objectives. In these cases, assorted pieces of gritstone are airlifted to site and arranged into low dams. The principle is the same; they take the sting out of the water, slowing flow and trapping sediment.





Peatland projects in Bowland are often undertaken on SSSI/SAC designated sites so it is important to work with regulators and key stakeholders to avoid any disturbance to the habitat and key breeding bird species in the Bowland Fells assemblage. It is also important to plan with historic environment in mind. Over the last few years, the team has been working closely with various chartered archaeologists prior to undertaking capital works so that we can mitigate any potential disturbance to areas marked as having high archaeological potential.

Working with key project partners is crucial to the planning and successful delivery of a peatland restoration project. Organisations across Bowland with a keen interest in watercourses (such as the Lune, Wyre and Ribble Rivers Trusts, United Utilities, Environment Agency) monitor water quality and flood risk across all catchments and their information is key in targeting restoration areas, particularly when funding for certain drivers (water quality, natural flood management, bare peat reduction) is available.

The wider NFM picture in and around Bowland

Undertaking peatland restoration on the Bowland Fells influences multiple downstream communities in quick-response catchments.

Wyre catchment: The Wyre Catchment is considered a 'short' catchment, only 28 miles from source to sea. Headwaters in the Forest of Bowland (such as the Marshaw Wyre and Tarnbrook Wyre) drain towards Churchtown, Garstang, St Michael's-on-Wyre and beyond. Slowing and holding water at and immediately around the source supports the Wyre Rivers Trust's natural flood management work below the moorland line. The Trust have undertaken extensive catchment modelling and estimate that more than 7,500 properties across the Wyre are at risk of flooding. Amongst other initiatives the Trust are very active with river bank stabilisation, in-stream leaky dam creation, wetland restoration and reconnecting temporary flood plains across the Wyre, all of which contributes towards reducing flood peaks. You can find out more about the Wyre NFM project here: <https://wyriverstrust.org/wyre-nfm>

Ribble catchment: Peatland works around Pendle Hill and the Hodder headwaters contribute to attenuating flash upland responses affecting communities at risk such as Ribchester, Clitheroe and other areas along the course of the river. The Ribble Rivers Trust have undertaken (and continue to undertake) extensive NFM work in places such as Wrea Green, Clitheroe and Darwen over the years and carefully follow this work with extensive monitoring to build long-term datasets.



You can learn more about the work of the Ribble Rivers Trust, NFM and otherwise, by visiting <https://ribbletrust.org.uk/>

Lune catchment: The north and western Bowland fells (such as Clougha, Ward's Stone and Wolfhole Crag) feed into the Lune catchment and there are extensive NFM benefits to be gained by undertaking peatland restoration work in these areas. Upstream storage and slower pathways will aid the Lancaster area's flood resilience when combined with the valuable work of the Lune Rivers Trust, including floodplain reconnection, riparian planting and urban sustainable drainage systems.

Peatland restoration around headwaters is a natural-based backbone that helps existing engineered defences

and NFM networks to work better in concert, lowering and lagging peaks so downstream assets operate more effectively within safer ranges, ultimately benefiting communities at risk.

Looking ahead

Peatland restoration is central to modern catchment management, slowing water, reducing flood peaks, improving river quality, and creating resilient habitats. Evidence strongly links these techniques to measurable hydrological benefits. In Bowland, large-scale peatland restoration and complementary NFM across the catchment delivers cost effective flood risk reduction, alongside wider gains like biodiversity, water quality, and wildfire resilience.

For further information about the awards visit:

www.forestofbowland.com/peatland-restoration



The Forgotten Fungi:

*Why CHEGD Grasslands
Hold the Key to Our
Ecological Future*

When people picture the UK countryside, they often imagine rolling hills, wildflowers and grazing sheep. Yet beneath the grass lies a hidden world that tells a centuries-old story of ecological continuity—a world of rare fungi so vital they're considered indicators of habitat health. These are the CHEGD grasslands, and they are quietly disappearing.

What Makes CHEGD Grasslands Special?

CHEGD is an acronym for five groups of fungi that thrive in low-nutrient, unimproved grasslands: Clavarioid fungi (fairy clubs), Hygrocybe (waxcaps), Entoloma (pinkgills), Geoglossaceae (earthtongues) and Dermoloma (cracked caps). These fungi are not just quirky names on a checklist—they are ecological sentinels. Their presence signals grasslands that have escaped the grip of modern agriculture, remaining largely untouched by fertilizers, reseeding or ploughing.

"When you find waxcaps in a meadow, you know you're looking at something special," says Carol Edmondson, Project Officer for the Forest of Bowland's Hay Time initiative. *"They tell us this land has been cared for in a low-intensity way—managed gently over time."*

Waxcaps alone can number over 20 species on a single site, including pink ballerina waxcap (*Porpolomopsis calyptriformis*) and crimson waxcap (*Hygrocybe punicea*), both listed as globally "vulnerable" on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

"People often ask, 'Why fungi?'"

Carol explains. *"The truth is, they're fundamental to how these ecosystems work. They're part of the soil web that supports everything else—plants, insects, birds. Lose the fungi, and you lose the integrity of the whole system."*

Despite their value, CHEGD grasslands are disappearing fast. Agricultural intensification, land abandonment and even well-intentioned tree planting schemes threaten these irreplaceable habitats. Unlike wildflowers or charismatic fauna, fungi lack visibility in conservation planning, leaving these ecosystems vulnerable.

"In recent years, there's been growing local and national recognition of the importance of fungi-rich (CHEGD) grassland," says Ben Deed, Biological Heritage Sites Project Officer at Lancashire County Council. *"Current evidence suggests that Britain supports a significant proportion of this global resource."*

Recent work by the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UKCEH) indicates that there may be large areas of grassland with high fungal diversity in the Northwest of England that remain undiscovered. Lancashire, in particular, is known for its extensive permanent pasture, especially along the moorland fringe, that may not have been subject to significant addition of nutrients.

"Available evidence suggests Lancashire may hold a substantial resource of fungi-rich grassland," Ben adds. "However, these grasslands are largely unsurveyed for fungi, and we have very little information on their distribution in the county."



Restoring Bowland's Meadows and Fungi

In the Forest of Bowland, the Hay Time Project has been restoring traditional hay meadows and pastures since 2012. These meadows and pastures share the same low-intensity management that CHEGD fungi need to thrive. By integrating fungal conservation into existing restoration efforts, Bowland can lead the way in protecting these hidden habitats—supporting biodiversity, sustainable farming and climate goals.

"Hay Time began with a focus on wildflowers, and fungi are becoming just as important to our work," Carol says. "We're realising that the same careful management that benefits plants also creates the right conditions for fungi to flourish."

Why This Matters Now

The UK has committed to protecting 30% of land for nature by 2030—the '30x30' target. CHEGD grasslands, though small in area, are of exceptional ecological value. They are irreplaceable habitats that meet Natural England's criteria for long-term continuity, yet they often slip through the cracks of statutory protection.

"These grasslands are like living museums," Carol reflects. "They hold centuries of ecological history. If we lose them, we lose something that can't be recreated in our lifetime."

The Hay Time Project plans to expand its work to include fungal surveys, farmer engagement and public education. By building on existing relationships with landowners and conservation partners, the project aims to safeguard CHEGD grasslands alongside traditional hay meadows.

In collaboration with the Lancashire County Council Biological Heritage Sites (BHS) team, efforts focus on ground-truthing modelling data through field

surveys and promoting BHS work within the Forest of Bowland. Citizen science will play a key role: volunteers are encouraged to use Plantlife's Waxcap App to record any waxcaps they find, helping identify sites that would benefit from further survey.

"Farmers are key," Carol emphasises. "They're the custodians of these landscapes. If we can support them to keep managing land in the traditional way—without heavy inputs—we protect not just fungi, but the whole web of life that depends on these grasslands."

Public engagement will also be central to the next phase of the Hay Time Project. By weaving fungi into events and outreach—such as seasonal meadow walks, farmer-led talks and citizen science events—the project can inspire communities to value low-intensity land management. These activities don't just raise awareness; they build a sense of shared responsibility for landscapes that depend on traditional practices to thrive.

- Biodiversity: CHEGD fungi are indicators of ancient, species-rich grasslands.
- Climate: Low-intensity grasslands store carbon and support soil health.
- Culture: Traditional hay meadows and pastures are part of our rural heritage.

As Carol puts it:

"This is about more than fungi. It's about the future of our landscapes, our wildlife and our communities. If we get it right, we leave a legacy that lasts for generations."

For further information visit:

www.forestofbowland.com/grassland-fungi

JOIN THE BUZZ

**Become a Bee Walk Volunteer
and help protect our pollinators!**

**TRAINING DATE: 28TH MAY
GISBURN FOREST**



**Carry out BeeWalk transects in the
beautiful Bowland & Yorkshire Dales
Hay Meadows between June & July**

VISIT THE WEBSITE TO REGISTER

www.forestofbowland.com/hay-time

or email: carol.edmondson@lancashire.gov.uk



Days to Remember



Connecting to nature can be great for our wellbeing - and provides endless opportunities for memory-making. Research shows that time spent in nature can have a positive impact on both our physical health and mental wellbeing; but what happens when getting out and about becomes more of a challenge?



Almost one million people in the UK are currently living with dementia, and whilst the condition doesn't inevitably prevent people from making the most of the outdoors, it can sometimes be a limiting factor.

The Days to Remember project aims to support and encourage older people, including those living with dementia, their family members and carers, to enjoy the Forest of Bowland National Landscape; helping to unlock past experiences and create new memories.

The Bowland programme grew organically; inspiration coming from similar projects being delivered by fellow National Landscape teams, along with the pioneering dementia-focused work of the Leeds Morecambe Community Rail Partnership (aka The Bentham Line).

In the early stages came a Great Outdoors Memory Box designed to spark conversations on a countryside theme. Working with Lancashire County Council's Heritage Learning Team, the resource was available for groups to loan

from their local library. From conkers and pine cones to binoculars and singing bird soft toys, the box was packed full of sensory objects encouraging interaction and reminiscences.

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic inevitably restricted face to face interaction, so the focus during this time turned digital, with a suite of online resources brought together on the Forest of Bowland National Landscape website.

A Defra-funded programme starting in September 2024 provided a fantastic opportunity to invite groups to try out a range of nature connection activities and, importantly, ask participants what they would like to get involved in. Fortunately, the programme then continued beyond the pilot phase.

Where possible, groups have physically accessed either the Forest of Bowland National Landscape or



a local countryside site closer to home. Transport, venue costs and refreshments have been covered through funding available via the programme and partners, opening up forest walks, farm visits, bird watching – and even a scenic rail journey, thanks to The Bentham Line and Northern. Where mobility or other factors make a trip into Bowland more difficult, the programme has supported settings-based, nature-themed creative activities like storytelling, ceramics,

printing, water colour painting and autumn crafts.

Key to the success of the project have been the staff and volunteers supporting each of the groups.

Members of Preston-based Blue Flamingo Café and Community Hub have visited Beacon Fell Country Park twice as part of the Days to Remember project. Founder of the group, Erin Singleton, said, *"I love the outdoors and I'm always looking for opportunities to*



extend this to other people who find it difficult to get outside." Erin explained that restricted mobility can be a barrier and could discourage some of their members from making a similar trip independently. "Support from the project helped us understand that Beacon Fell can be accessible for us."

Angela Bennett is Lead Participation and Engagement Officer with Carers Link Lancashire and has taken part in two visits to Gisburn Forest, where participants have enjoyed sound bathing in the yurt at the Hub. *"As a group, (participants) are all caring for someone living with dementia so you can imagine they have very little quiet time and are often under an awful lot of pressure."* Getting their own minibus has been a game changer, explained Angela, *"Even the journey into Bowland was a breath of fresh air. Being higher up in the minibus and able to see over the hedges took peoples' breath away."*

Lancashire County Council's Strategic and Integrated Commissioning service played an invaluable role through sharing information about the activities available. Contract Monitoring Officer, Joanne Hoole, said, *"I wanted to take a moment to share how much of a pleasure and real joy it has been to help spread the word and promote the Days to Remember programme among our residential care homes in Lancashire. By reconnecting with nature, participants experience reduced stress and an enhanced quality of life. For care staff and family members accompanying them, these beautiful natural spaces provide precious opportunities for reflection and calm. Integrating access to such settings into care planning not only fosters holistic health but also strengthens the*

connection between nature and wellbeing for both groups."

Equally important are the activity providers and venues unlocking such a wide range of memorable opportunities. Individual artists, local businesses and charities, land managers and council services have all been involved. Their support, knowledge and enthusiasm have helped more people keep connected to nature, whether on their own doorstep ,or here in the beautiful Forest of Bowland.



“ A completely new experience – very enjoyable. Lots to learn. Keep it coming!

“ The workshop was very well explained so when we were left to our own devices we knew what to do.

“ Very relaxing, a real benefit for a carer to spend time away from caring role.

“ Mindful, very relaxing and socially good.....

“ This was an excellent experience, something totally different and something you wouldn't think of doing yourself, so thank you.

“ Thank you very much. A lovely exciting afternoon reminding me of a lovely time in the Forest of Bowland where I have spent many hours of my life.

For further information visit:

<https://www.forestofbowland.com/days-remember>



A Festival of Inclusion:

*Families Celebrate
Adventure at
Gisburn Forest*



A reflection by Debbie North, Access the Dales

In September 2025, more than 250 people gathered beneath the trees of Gisburn Forest – a Forestry England managed site - for a day that celebrated nature, inclusion and family adventure. The Festival for Children, a partnership between Access the Dales and the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, brought families with disabled children together to share laughter, discovery and the joy of the outdoors.

If you happened to wander into Gisburn Forest one early September morning, you might have thought you'd stumbled into something rather magical. The scent of woodsmoke mingled with laughter. Kites danced against a blue sky. Children toasted marshmallows over a campfire while donkeys, alpacas and wheelchairs of every shape and size shared the same paths beneath the trees.

Access the Dales: Opening the Outdoors for All

At the heart of this festival is a charity with a simple but powerful mission: to make the outdoors accessible for everyone, regardless of ability.

Access the Dales, founded in memory of the late Andy North, a passionate advocate for inclusive adventure, provides opportunities for people with disabilities to enjoy the landscapes many take for granted. Through a network of hubs across northern England, the charity loans all-terrain wheelchairs, organises accessible walks and works with landowners to remove barriers to outdoor spaces.



Its ethos is rooted in a belief that adventure and belonging are not privileges, they are rights. As founder Debbie North explains, *"We want to make sure that no one is left on the sidelines of adventure. Everyone deserves to experience the joy, the peace and the sense of freedom that comes from being outdoors."*

Planting the Seeds of an Inclusive Festival

The idea began as a conversation. How could we create an event where every child, regardless of ability, could enjoy being in nature together? How could we show that inclusion doesn't have to mean separation or compromise, but rather, connection and creativity?

Working in partnership with the Forest of Bowland National Landscape team,

the charity set out to create a day that celebrated diversity, nature and fun. The goal wasn't to create a "special" event for disabled families, it was to create a shared space where everyone belonged.

And on that bright September morning, as cars began to fill the car park and the forest buzzed with excitement, it was clear that something special was about to unfold.

A Forest Full of Adventure

The day's activities reflected the diversity of the families attending, from gentle, sensory experiences to thrilling physical challenges.

For some, the forest bathing sessions were a chance to slow down and breathe. Guided by trained facilitators,

families were invited to connect with nature through mindfulness, listening to the rustle of leaves, the whisper of the wind and the song of birds. For many parents of disabled children, these moments of calm were deeply moving.

Nearby, a sound bath added a touch of magic to the day. As soothing vibrations from gongs and singing bowls rippled through the trees, children lay quietly on mats, absorbing the sounds. Some dozed. Some giggled. Some simply listened; a rare chance to feel peace in a busy world.

A short walk away, another group was discovering the forest's edible treasures during a foraging session. Led by a local expert, families learned about wild herbs, berries and fungi, and how to enjoy them safely. For many children, it was the first time they'd realised that the forest floor could be a supermarket too.

A Taste of the Wild

At the day camp, the smell of woodsmoke and toasting marshmallows drifted through the air. Children gathered around the campfire, skewers in hand, eyes wide with delight as gooey treats turned golden brown. For families who rarely have access to outdoor experiences like camping, this was something extraordinary. Some children set up tents for the first time, unzipping the flaps to reveal sleeping bags and torches. Others simply sat with their parents, soaking up the warmth of the fire and the laughter that surrounded it.

There was even a quiet space for those who needed a moment of calm; a shaded, sensory-friendly area designed to provide respite from the excitement. *"It made such a difference,"* one parent shared. *"My son*

could take a break when he needed it, then go back to join in. It meant we could stay all day instead of leaving early."

Inclusion in Action

At every turn, the festival showed that accessibility isn't about compromise, it's about creativity and care.

The Revolootion team provided Changing Places facilities on site, ensuring that families who need specialist equipment had a safe, dignified space to use. This might seem like a small detail, but for many families, it's the difference between staying for an hour and staying for the whole day.

Throughout the forest, children and adults tried out adaptive bicycles and a range of all-terrain wheelchairs supplied by different mobility companies. These weren't static displays — they were invitations to play. Children who had never been able to cycle before were suddenly pedalling down forest paths, beaming with pride. Parents joined in too, racing (and often losing) with laughter.

Five Hours of Freedom

One of the most powerful moments of the day came from a family who approached us near the end of the festival. They explained that they usually have to leave events within thirty minutes because their son, who is autistic, struggles to stay in one place or cope with noise and crowds.

But on this day, something was different.

"Five and a half hours later," the mother said, *"he was still here, smiling, joining in and relaxed. He didn't want to leave."*

That story captured exactly why this festival mattered. It wasn't about ticking a box for accessibility. It was about creating an environment where families could simply be, without judgment, without limits and without the need to rush away.

Adventure for All Ages

The activities weren't just for the children. Adults were encouraged to join in too, blurring the line between play and participation.

Archery and axe throwing proved to be surprisingly popular, with queues of eager participants of all ages waiting to test their skills. Laughter echoed through the trees as parents and children competed side by side, cheering, teasing and celebrating each other's successes.

Elsewhere, families worked together to fly kites, each one soaring above the

canopy in bright colours. Others joined the donkey and alpaca experiences, a gentle, sensory experience that brought smiles to everyone involved.

It was heartwarming to see parents and children sharing the same adventures, exploring together as equals, each person supported and included.

A Day of Firsts

For many of the attendees, the festival offered "firsts" they'll never forget.

The first time a child in a wheelchair felt the thrill of gliding through the forest on an all-terrain chair.

The first time a non-verbal child joined a group activity without fear.

The first time a family felt they could relax at a public event without being stared at or excluded.

Those moments, small, simple, and joyful, are the foundation of inclusion.

© Tom Pooley





A Forest of Belonging

As the day drew to a close, the last marshmallows were toasted, the final kites reeled in, and the laughter slowly faded into the rustle of evening leaves. Families headed home, tired but happy, carrying memories that would last long after the embers of the campfire died down.

The Festival for Children at Gisburn Forest was far more than a day out, it was a declaration: that inclusion and adventure belong together. With thoughtful planning and open hearts, the outdoors can welcome everyone.

One family summed it up best as they packed their car to leave:

"We didn't come here to feel different. We came here to feel free. And that's exactly what we found."

In a world that often forgets the power of simple kindness and connection, this festival reminded us of something essential: the outdoors belongs to all of us. And when we open its paths to everyone, no matter how they walk, roll, or wander, we make space for something truly beautiful to grow.

The Forest of Bowland National Landscape, in partnership with Access the Dales, is transforming access to the countryside with a network of all-terrain wheelchair hubs.

To find out more visit:

<https://www.forestofbowland.com/access-bowland>

Writing Your Way to Wellbeing



Regular immersion in natural environments has a positive impact on health and wellbeing – and writing about these experiences can take the long-term benefits to another level. Mark Sutcliffe investigates.

Regular exposure to nature and natural landscapes is integral to positive mental health and wellbeing.

A UK study of 20,000 people in 2019 found that those who spent at least a total of 120 minutes every week in green spaces were significantly more likely to report good health and higher psychological well-being.

Social prescribing is now established within the mainstream health service as an effective treatment for mild to moderate depression and anxiety and regular contact with the natural world is recognised as a vital component for wellbeing.

Yet according to the State of Nature Report, Britain is one of the most nature-depleted nations in the developed world, making it difficult for many people to access the natural world.

With accelerating rates of stress and burnout, perhaps the ultimate irony is that – at least in the more populated parts of the country – relaxing and recharging the batteries actually requires significant effort.

Sometimes, especially during the winter months when daylight hours are at a premium, it's difficult to find the time to get more than a few minutes outdoors on a regular basis – especially for those who work full time and also have caring commitments.

Against this backdrop, it's important to make the most of every minute spent in nature and one of the best ways to maximise the benefits is to make a few notes. Simply soaking up the sights, sounds, smells and textures of the natural world is a tonic in itself, but writing, sketching or taking photos is a proven way to deepen the immersive experience and concentrate the benefits.

Unlike more reflective styles of journaling, nature journaling is about focusing deeply on what is happening in the natural world right now and capturing the moment without overthinking it.

Writing helps focus the brain and retain information by imposing sense and structure, making it easier for us to process and internalise that information for more durable benefits. The process of journaling encourages us to observe more deeply, keeps us present and in the moment and less susceptible to distractions.

Making sketches or taking pictures – particularly very detailed close-ups or 'macro' photography – means we quickly become immersed in the details right in front of us while the constant 'chatter' of to-do lists, status updates and push alerts fades into the background.

Without these distractions, we enter a flow state where we remain deeply



Nature Journaling at Gisburn Forest © Mark Sutcliffe

focused on a single task. The barrage of thoughts slows down and we begin to lose track of time and slip into an altogether more relaxed state of mind.

To practice nature journaling requires no special skills – anyone can do it. Obsessing over the quality of the writing, sketches or photos misses the point. Journaling is 80 per cent observation and 20 per cent writing. The practice simply encourages participants to pay attention and look more deeply over a sustained period.

When we revisit and review the notes, sketches and images, over weeks,

months or even years, they can help us make sense of the bigger picture and we become more aware of what's happening out there in the real world and a little less fixated upon our internal monologues and preoccupations.

In May last year, through the Festival Bowland programme, I hosted a nature writing and journaling workshop in Gisburn Forest. After some classroom-based technique sessions and a morning spent on fieldwork each participant produced a short piece of nature writing. We are proud to publish some of these pieces on the following pages.

Nature Journaling at Gisburn Forest © Mark Sutcliffe



Writing in the Wild

Kieran Desoer

The Forest of Bowland, in all its grandeur, never fails to soothe my otherwise chaotic mind. Its sweeping moorlands, edged with patchwork fields and pasture, are threaded with brooks and streams – many feeding into the rivers Hodder and Ribble. It's a landscape so rich and varied, it feels almost designed to stir the imagination of writers and poets alike.

We already know that creatives such as Suzanne Snow, Jane Huddleston and even rapper OneDa drew inspiration from their visits to Bowland when crafting 'Connections' for the Nature Calling project. This place has sparked creativity for generations and I wouldn't be surprised if Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and J.R.R. Tolkien were similarly moved by its quiet majesty, just as Wordsworth and Ruskin were by the neighbouring Lake District. Bowland inspires. That much is certain.

The Forest of Bowland National Landscape team hosted its first-ever Nature Writing and Journalling event in May 2025 at the Gisburn Forest Hub. The day was designed to support aspiring writers of all levels – myself included – with practical advice on developing a writing habit, nurturing creative skills and drawing inspiration from the natural world around us.

Throughout the day, we were offered guidance on finding your voice, observing the world with intention, shaping your writing with pace and structure and – most importantly – getting started. We also explored different platforms for sharing your work; from blogging and social media to writing simply for your own pleasure.



It was a truly enjoyable day spent with a small, welcoming group of kindred spirits, some of whom clearly had a remarkable gift for words, as you'll see in the pages that follow. If you're a budding writer, or simply someone who loves the outdoors and wants to capture your thoughts in a journal, why not come along next time? You won't regret it.

The Flow of the Forest

Helen Dawson

We had gathered as a group of strangers, all with a quiet hope of experiencing something unique and special. We skirted hedges, fields and forest edges, peering and hearing all sorts of life that would normally escape our senses. We were introduced to the forgotten worlds within the cracks of the drystone walls surrounding Stephen Park, where our walk began.

Peeping into the crevices I saw shapes like miniature gargoyles smiling out cheekily from crumbling stone. Dots of yellow lichen merged like little sunflowers decorating the wall. My favourite find: a thick cobweb-covered hole, hiding something scuttling behind.

Our walk continued, discovering more microhabitats underfoot, sharing our finds with childlike enthusiasm. With every step we were acclimatising to the landscape around, absorbing it deeply through our senses.

We continued down into the forest, breathing in the cool conifer air. In no time I felt immersed in the woods, with crunches underfoot and birdsong in the canopy. I was drawn from tree to tree, following these mossy way-markers with earthy perfumed bark.

A male blackbird hopped in the softly needled forest floor, watching my moves carefully. I stopped, letting him watch me in return – an exchange drawing me further into the forest system. I was shifting gear, resting deeply.

I could feel a growing inner voice guiding me... *"move just as you are, see what you see, hear what you hear. Follow the sounds that call you and touch what invites."*

I slowed my pace, breathed deeply and felt the comfort and connection of the cushions of land beneath my feet.

We returned to base, writing from the flow of the forest within us. We shared with each other our heartfelt words, each unique voice released by the power and magic of the landscape.



Raw Materials: An Encounter with a Small Copper Butterfly

Sarah Wordsworth

Around 2400 BC, man decided to take the blue-green ore which ran like bright veins through the brown rock and see what would happen when he added fire.

It was a secret that only the Earth knew. Its disguise was removed by processes of refinement. And what was revealed was copper.

Is that what happened inside the chrysalis which hung, hidden amongst the soft edge of the woodland?

Inside this crucible the ore of a caterpillar was rearranged at a molecular level until we could no longer recognise it as this tender, wriggling form with sticky feet and a comical sway. Now, freed by its own smelting process, it sits brightly.

It basks.

A quiet ripple, like a breath, runs through its wings as though it is inhaling the sunshine.

This tiny flying thing.

Wings flash and glint in flight, but when at rest - there it sits, open.

It sits still on this overcast day which carries more of a chill than it has this past fortnight. The grasses are dry. Parched brown... and in May too!



Even at this altitude, on the moors of Lancashire, everything is thirsty and carries the languid exhaustion of late August.

The upper wings are speckled and framed in chocolate, but on the lower two, that seam of copper runs along its bottom edge. And as if to ensure our eyes take notice, Mother Nature wielded her finest brush to paint the most delicate border, in buttermilk, around its whole.

Then it is gone.

It has pulled on its cloak of invisibility and vanished back into the protective hues of the grassland. It has returned to ore, to browns with a hint of blue streaking through.

Verdigris.

Mark's nature writing and journaling workshop will return in spring.
For further details and to book a place, scan the QR code.



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Towards a Regenerative Tourism Model in Bowland



As the Forest of Bowland National Landscape prepares to launch its new Management Plan for 2026 and beyond, a fresh vision for tourism is taking shape — one that goes beyond sustainability and embraces regeneration.

For over two decades, sustainable tourism has been a cornerstone of Bowland's approach, championed through a dynamic partnership with local tourism businesses. But as global challenges evolve, so too must our response. The next chapter is about regenerative tourism — a model that not only protects but actively restores and enriches the places we love.

Regenerative tourism is about more than reducing harm—it's about caring for nature and ensuring its resilience for generations to come. It means reinvesting in local communities, creating meaningful jobs and strengthening local businesses. It celebrates and safeguards cultural heritage, offering visitors authentic experiences that respect local traditions and deepen their connection to place. Ultimately, it's about leaving Bowland better than we found it—ecologically, culturally and economically.



Eco Escapes: A Foundation for Regeneration

One of the key stepping stones toward this new model is the Eco Escapes project — developed over recent years and now expanded in partnership with Community Rail Lancashire. Eco Escapes is designed to inspire low-impact travel and deepen connections between people and place.

Recently, two new Eco Escapes itineraries were launched, beautifully curated to showcase Bowland's stunning landscapes, rich heritage and warm hospitality — all while encouraging visitors to explore and give the car a break.

These routes connect directly to bus and rail services, with walking and cycling trails that make it easy to enjoy Bowland at your own pace. With downloadable guides, transport links and suggestions for places to stay and eat, Eco Escapes makes sustainable travel both simple and rewarding.

Itinerary Highlights Include:

- **Chipping Circular Walk** –
Discover the charm of this historic mill village and its scenic surroundings.
- **Little Bowland Linear Walk** –
A 4-mile route from Chipping to Whitewell, featuring limestone outcrops, ancient woodland, and river crossings.
- **Spring Wood Walk** –
A gentle woodland stroll near Whalley.
- **Pendle Hill Summit Routes** –
Challenging hikes from Whalley or Clitheroe with breathtaking views.
- **Accessible Trails** –
Tramper mobility scooters available in Sabden for exploring Churn Clough Reservoir.
- **Ribble Valley Jubilee Trail** –
A three-day hiking adventure through picturesque countryside.

Public transport links — including Route 11 and Route 5 — now make it easier than ever to explore circular and linear walks along the Hodder Valley, connecting places like Slaidburn, Dunsop Bridge, Whitewell, Wigglesworth, Pendle Hill, Hurst Green and Chipping.

Funded by the Community Rail Network and the DfT Community Rail Development Fund, these two itineraries include fully mapped walking and cycling routes, accessible via public transport.

They're available to download as PDFs or follow via GPS apps on your smartphone.



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Bowland's Tracks to Trails



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more



ecoescapes.org.uk

Artwork by creative-council.net

DAY 1: ARRIVE BY TRAIN IN CLITHEROE

Whilst waiting for the bus at Clitheroe Interchange, have a look around Clitheroe's independent shops and thriving market (open Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday), and if time permits, take a quick tour of the Norman Castle keep just a short walk from the station. Catch the Number 5 bus from Clitheroe Interchange.

MORNING: VISIT STONYHURST MUSEUM

From the pretty village of Hurst Green, the options for exploring range from a short walk through the village to reach the spectacular avenue leading up to historic Stonyhurst College. The college isn't open to the public, but the adjacent Museum is open on selected days during the summer months and is home to an eclectic collection of priceless treasures. Lunch at the Shireburn Arms, Hurst Green – eat al fresco in the beer garden to the rear for expansive views over the Ribble Valley.



AFTERNOON: WALK THE TOLKIEN TRAIL

A variety of walking options to choose from either from Hurst Green or Chipping - accessible by hopping back on the Number 5 bus.

The Tolkien Trail circular walk is one of the most popular hikes in Lancashire, exploring the picturesque landscapes of the Ribble and Hodder Valleys – thought to have provided J R R Tolkien – who taught at the college during WW2 – with inspiration for the 'The Shire' in his Lord of Rings Trilogy. Click below for a downloadable route guide. If you'd like to stay locally, a great base from which to explore for a few days is the fantastic Little Oakhurst Glamping – which is right beside the route of the Tolkien Trail.

There are plenty of other walking options from Hurst Green – including Hurst Green Woods & Water. Just keep in mind that the last bus back to Clitheroe leaves at 19.48.

forestofbowland.com/walking#807432603



CHIPPING AND LITTLE BOWLAND

For a change of scenery, head for the former mill village of Chipping at the far northwestern edge of the Ribble Valley. The rustic stone-built village nestles under the steep flanks of the western Bowland Fells and it's the swift-flowing upland streams which cascade off the hills that made Chipping a hive of activity in the 19th Century. At one point, at least seven mills were operating in the village – the looms powered by waterwheels located in the steep-sided river valleys. Today, Chipping remains a bustling village with a pub, cafe, farm shop and pretty local walks.

If you're spending a few days in the area, Bowland Escapes, a home to Bowland Wild Boar park, offers luxury lodges and whole array of glamping options.

CHIPPING CIRCULAR WALK

This short circular walk explores the undulating landscape in the foothills of the Bowland Fells. In the middle ages, this area was part of an ancient deer park while in the 18th century, the fast-flowing streams provided power for the many water wheels that drove the rural cotton mills which flourished in Chipping.

forestofbowland.com/walking#47400848

LITTLE BOWLAND LINEAR WALK

For a slightly more adventurous hike, head out of Chipping village into the tranquil countryside between Chipping and Whitewell. Known locally as 'Little Bowland', because it encapsulates all the distinct characteristics of the area in miniature: ancient woodland, green hills and swift-flowing rivers. This 4-mile linear route provides outstanding views from the craggy limestone outcrops of New Laund Hill before descending steeply to cross the River Hodder on a set of stepping stones to reach the hamlet of Whitewell, with its famous coaching inn, where you can catch the Number 11 bus back to Clitheroe.

forestofbowland.com/walking#807264011

DAY 2: WALKS AND RIDES AROUND WHALLEY AND WISWELL

Leave Clitheroe for the 12-minute journey to Whalley by train. Check Timetables [here](#).

The bustling little town of Whalley is famous for its cafés and shops and the remains of a 14th Century Cistercian Abbey standing in its own gardens beside the River Calder and including a rather grand gatehouse. Grab a table at one of the town centre's many cafés and plan your day. Try Deux Amis on George St or Holden's & Co on King Street.

A WOODLAND WALK

Just a short way from the town centre lies Spring Wood, popular walk for locals and visitors alike. Wander along the River Calder into this pretty patch of native woodland and enjoy the birdsong and wild woodland flowers. Spring wood is especially attractive in spring, when the understorey is studded with fragrant stands of bluebells.

forestofbowland.com/walking#806506114



Bluebells Spring Wood © Mark Sutcliffe

LUNCH AT THE FREEMASONS

From Spring Wood, it's just a short walk to the Freemasons Arms in the pretty village of Wiswell in the foothills of Pendle. Regularly featured in the UK's top 50 gastropubs and winner of multiple awards, the Freemasons is a village local with a difference: outstanding, locally sourced food. Booking is essential. From Wiswell, it's just a leisurely 25-minute amble downhill to Whalley.

FOR MORE ADVENTUROUS SOULS

For the more energetically inclined, tackle iconic Pendle Hill from either Whalley or Clitheroe. The Forest of Bowland's 'Summit Else' routes start direct from Whalley or Clitheroe. These are both challenging routes with some steep and sustained climbs. Walking boots, waterproofs, drinks and some snacks are essential.

Whalley: forestofbowland.com/walking#65818175 and Clitheroe: forestofbowland.com/walking#65237630

We've also plotted a challenging 20-mile mountain bike tour of Pendle Hill. While this demanding ride doesn't go right to the summit of Pendle, it does feature some very steep climbs and descents in a mixture of on and off-road riding on quiet country lanes, bridleways and gravel tracks. With almost 2000ft of climbing, allow at least three hours to complete the entire circuit – more if you are planning to rehydrate at the multiple inviting pubs en route. For the less athletic, consider hiring an e-bike for the day from Icycle in Clitheroe.

forestofbowland.com/walking#806505846



Whalley © Mark Sutcliffe



Churn Clough Trumper Trail © Mark Sutcliffe

ACCESS FOR ALL: TRAMPER FOR HIRE IN SABDEN

A Trumper - all-terrain mobility scooter - is available for hire in Sabden, opening up access to a delightful Access for All trail up the Sabden Valley to Churn Clough Reservoir. The service in Sabden is run by local volunteers and links directly to the easy access trail. The Trumper is free to hire, although donations to Champion Bowland are appreciated to help cover the running costs.

forestofbowland.com/walking#61981607

forestofbowland.com/sabden-tramper

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Explore the Ribble Valley Jubilee Trail



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in partnership with Community Rail Lancashire
and funded by the Community Rail Network





River Hodder at Whitewell © John Eveson

In an unguarded moment, Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II confessed that, were she ever to 'retire', she would like to spend her dotage in a quiet cottage in the Hodder Valley near Whitewell. This three-day walking itinerary follows some of the most scenic sections of the Ribble Valley Jubilee Trail – a circular long distance hiking route which explores some of the very best bits of the Ribble Valley and Forest of Bowland.

The total mileage over the three days of this itinerary is a relatively modest 22 miles, but don't worry if the legs fail you, these sections loosely follow the route of the Number 11 bus service, so you're never more than a couple of miles away from a lift to your next destination.

DAY 1: CLITHEROE TO BOLTON BY BOWLAND

Arrive in Clitheroe by train and from the station, walk along the River Ribble, following the Ribble Way to Sawley. Explore the ruins of the Cistercian Abbey standing beside the Ribble at Sawley and pop into the Spread Eagle for a drink and snack.

Continue along the Ribble Way upstream to Bolton by Bowland, passing through the grounds of Bolton Hall, where King Henry VI was given sanctuary after his defeat at the decisive Battle of Hexham in 1464 during the Wars of the Roses. Accommodation at the Coach & Horses in the delightful village of Bolton by Bowland.

forestofbowland.com/walking#806482942



Sawley Abbey © Mark Sutcliffe

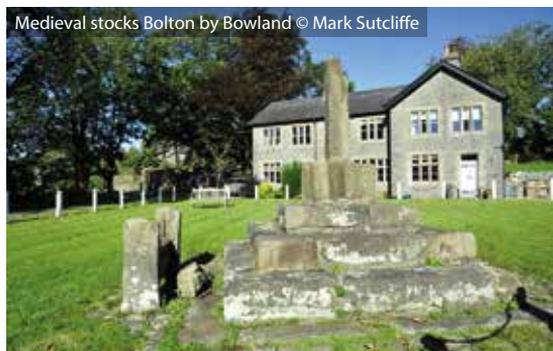
DAY 2: BOLTON BY BOWLAND TO SLAIDBURN

From Bolton by Bowland, head north on the Ribble Valley Jubilee Trail, climbing steadily to the hilltop village of Tosside, right on the Lancashire/Yorkshire border. From this elevated perch, admire the views over the Bowland Fells and the Yorkshire Dales while enjoying lunch at the Old Vicarage Tearooms. If the legs are flagging catch the Number 11 bus to Slaidburn.

Continue into Gisburn Forest – the largest area of woodland in Lancashire, descending through the pines to Stocks Reservoir. Walk along the shoreline, looking out for rare birds on the water, before following the River Hodder downstream to Slaidburn – the perfect place for a picnic or refreshments at Riverbank Tearooms.

Slaidburn is a beautiful stone village nestling beside the River Hodder: the perfect place for a picnic and a gentle ramble through traditional hay meadows studded with wildflowers during summertime. Stay at Laythams Holiday Lets Retreat overnight.

forestofbowland.com/walking#806482928



Medieval stocks Bolton by Bowland © Mark Sutcliffe

DAY 3: SLAIDBURN TO WHITEWELL

Continue on the Ribble Valley Jubilee Trail to Newton, home to the Parker's Arms – consistently one of the best gastropubs in Britain – recently ranked number 4 in the UK: Check opening hours. Booking is essential.

Another short stretch of riverside walking along the River Hodder brings you to the pretty village of Dunsop Bridge: the geographical centre of Great Britain.

ACCESSIBLE ADVENTURES

An all-terrain wheelchair is available to hire alongside an alpaca experience at Wood End Farm. Also, a Trampler is available to hire for use on the Dunsop Bridge Access for All Trail. Pop into Wood End Farm and say hello to the friendly herd of alpacas who live there. Short walks with the alpacas can be booked in advance via Access the Dales website.

Find out more about trampler hire and accessible routes in the Forest of Bowland: forestofbowland.com/access-bowland access-the-dales.com/wood-end-farm-hub

CENTRE OF THE KINGDOM

According to Ordnance Survey, the geographical centre of Great Britain is located near Whitendale Hanging Stones, perched high upon a remote hillside above Dunsop Bridge in the heart of the Forest of Bowland. Reaching the centre of Great Britain itself is a demanding undertaking which can be incorporated within a more challenging 10-mile circular walk. Enigmatically, the centre point remains unmarked, but head northwest of Whitendale Hanging Stones for Grid Reference SD 642565 to reach the dead centre of Great Britain. If you're planning to visit the Centre of the Kingdom as part of this itinerary, you'll need to add another day to incorporate this into your itinerary.

Fortify yourself with coffee and home-made cakes or scones at Puddleducks Tearooms then continue downstream along the River Hodder for the final leg of your walk.

THE LAST LEG: DUNSOP BRIDGE TO WHITEWELL

Continue along the Ribble Valley Jubilee Trail through one of the prettiest stretches of Hodder Valley – flanked by the high Bowland Fells – to the iconic Inn at Whitewell an elegant old coaching inn standing right beside the River.

forestofbowland.com/walking#806482919

The Inn at Whitewell has been frequented by the great and the good for centuries. It's an elegant building in an outstandingly beautiful location overlooking the River Hodder with magnificent views up to the high Bowland Fells.

The Whitewell featured in the first episode of Steve Coogan and Rob Brydon's hit TV series 'The Trip' and dining at the Inn is always a memorable occasion. Catch the number 11 bus from Whitewell back to Clitheroe.

To extend your stay, there are several circular walking route options from the villages along the Service 11 bus route, further information can be found on the Forest of Bowland National Landscape website.

forestofbowland.com/bus-service-11-walks



DISCOVER

- 1 Alternative Adventure & Outdoor Activities Service**
altadv.co.uk | 01254 704 898
- 2 Bentham Golf Course & Wenningdale Escapes**
benthamgolfclub.co.uk | 01524 262 455
- 3 Bowland and Bay Artisan Foodie Adventures**
bowlandandbay.co.uk | 07476 001 539
- 4 Bowland Wild Boar Park**
www.wildboarpark.co.uk | 01995 61075
- 5 Browsholme**
browsholme.com | 01254 827 160
- 6 Carla Gebhard Design** (watercolour artist)
carlagebhard.com | 07872 567 824
- 7 Farm on the Fell**
facebook.com/cowwithcalfdairy | 07720 290 045
- 8 Goosnargh Gin**
goosnarghgin.co.uk | 01995 641001
- 9 Land and Sea Lancaster and Patty's Barn**
pattysbarn.co.uk | 01524 751 285
- 10 Wild Bowland Walks**
https://shorturl.at/xDxFA | 01200 407093
- 11 Wood End Alpaca Experience and B&B**
visitwoodendfarm.co.uk | 01200 448 223

STAY

- 22 Brickhouse Touring Caravan Site**
www.brickhouseccs.co.uk | 01995 61747
- 23 Cuthbert Hill Farm**
cuthberthillfarm.co.uk | 07300 833332
- 24 Hartley's Huts**
stuarthartley47.wixsite.com/hartleyshuts | 07908 614 736
- 25 Lakewood Cottages**
lakewoodcottages.co.uk | 01524 751 053
- 26 Laythams Holiday Lets Retreat**
laythams.co.uk | 01200 446 677
- 27 Little Oakhurst Boutique Glamping**
www.littleoakhurst.com | 07908 614736
- 28 Moss Wood Caravan Park**
mosswood.co.uk | 01524 791 041
- 29 Orchard Glamping**
orchardglamping.com | 07725 185 366

EAT

- 12 Bowland Social**
holmesmill.co.uk | 01200 407120
- 13 Bowland Beer Hall**
holmesmill.co.uk | 01200 401 035
- 14 The Emporium**
theemporiumclitheroe.co.uk | 01200 444 174

EAT & STAY

- 15 Coach and Horses**
coachandhorsesribblevalley.co.uk | 01200 447 331
- 16 Falcon Manor**
falconmanor.co.uk | 01729 823 814
- 17 Shireburn Arms**
shireburnarmshotel.co.uk | 01254 826678
- 18 The Assheton Arms**
jamesplaces.com/assheton-arms | 01200 439699
- 19 The Fleece Inn**
fleeceinn.co.uk | 01524 791233
- 20 The Traddock**
thetraddock.co.uk | 01524 251 224
- 21 Waddington Arms**
waddingtonarms.co.uk | 01200 423 262

- 30 Peaks and Pods**
peaksandpods.co.uk | 07724 940 709
- 31 Ribble Valley Holiday Homes**
ribblevalleyholidayhomes.co.uk | 01254 820 444
- 32 Riverside Caravan Park**
riversidecaravanpark.co.uk | 01524 261 272
- 33 Shireburne Park**
shireburnepark.co.uk | 01200 423 422
- 34 Smelt Mill Residential Centre**
smeltmill.org.uk

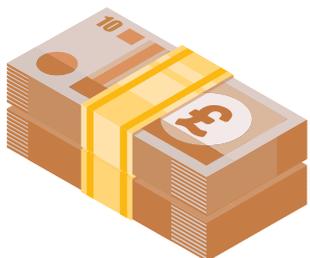
FIND YOUR ESCAPE



Find out more about sustainable ways to travel at:
discoverbowland.uk/map

Champion Bowland provides accessible small grants for local projects which benefit the environment, local communities and visitors within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

Since 2009 Champion Bowland Has Provided:



£31,185

benefiting & supporting:



An archaeological dig for Roman remains



stone walling training



a bee keeping group

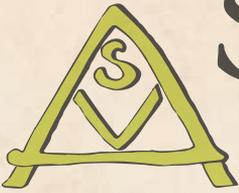


the Bowland Scrapbook

For further information about small grants or to support Champion Bowland visit:
www.championbowland.org.uk



SLAIDBURN ARCHIVE



Since opening in 2005, the Slaidburn Archive has gone from strength to strength, not only as a place for people to deposit local information and photos for safe keeping or to be copied, but also as an essential resource for people to research their families and the surrounding areas.

Winner of the Forest of Bowland AONB 'Vibrant Community Award' in 2014, the Slaidburn Archive is housed in one of Slaidburn's oldest buildings and is a treasure trove of documents, photographs and information relating to the history of the upper Hodder Valley and its inhabitants.

The display room tells about the history of the area and is free to visit during opening hours. Donations are welcomed.

The Archive has also produced a range of local history books based on research done by staff and volunteers, please check out the website for more information.

Open Wednesday and Friday
11.00-3.00 Please contact prior to
your visit to confirm availability.



Slaidburn Archive
25 Church Street
Slaidburn
Clitheroe
BB7 3ER

Tel 01200 446161
enquiries@slaidburnarchive.org
www.slaidburnarchive.org

Discover Bowland

Relax, reset and reconnect with nature in the
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Where to stay | Food & Drink |
Activities & Experiences | Festivals & Events

Plan your perfect escape!

www.discoverbowland.uk



Local Village Shows, Festivals and Fairs in 2026



- **Wray Scarecrow Festival**
25th April to 4th May
facebook.com/wray scarecrow
 - **Garstang Walking Festival**
2nd to 10th May
wyre.gov.uk/garstang walking festival
 - **Chipping Steam Fair**
23rd to 25th May
chipping steam fair.com
 - **Slaidburn Steam Fair**
13th to 14th June
www.slaidburn steam.co.uk
 - **Waddington Scarecrow Festival**
26th to 28th June
facebook.com/waddy ducks
 - **Forest of Bowland National Meadows Day**
4th July
www.forest of bowland.com
 - **Goosnargh and Longridge Show**
11th July
glashow.org
 - **Royal Lancashire Show**
3rd to 5th July
royal lancashire show.co.uk
 - **Seek Out Festival**
24th to 26th July
seek out festival.co.uk
 - **Clitheroe Food Festival**
8th August
clitheroe food festival.com
 - **Garstang Show**
1st August
garstang show.org
 - **Chipping Show**
23rd August
chipping show.co.uk
 - **Bentham Show**
5th September
facebook.com/100063526064952
 - **Hodder Valley Show**
12th September
hoddervalleys show.co.uk
 - **Lancashire Game & Country Festival**
12th to 13th September
lancashire game festival.co.uk
 - **Ribble Valley Scooter Rally**
25th to 27th September
facebook.com/groups/7540893082619219
- Also look out for Slaidburn Silver Band performances taking place throughout the year during 2026:
slaidburn silver band.org

Festival Bowland Events 2026

*Celebrating the nature, landscape,
culture and heritage of the
Forest of Bowland National Landscape*



Discover some truly "champion" species, enjoy night sky wonders and make the most of Bowland's more accessible routes.

Whether it's ballerina waxcap or black grouse, green hairstreak butterfly or globe flower, you may not be familiar with all fourteen of Bowland's Champion Species yet, but we hope this year's Festival Bowland programme will help to change that!

Whilst the National Landscape is rich in plant and animal species, the "champion" species identified in Bowland's Nature

Recovery Plan represent those which are rare, those which are inspirational, or those which show the health of an ecosystem or habitat.

Whether they be bird, mammal, insect, amphibian, plant or fungus, a series of special events throughout 2026 will reveal the champions in all their glory. Just look for the Champion Species tag in the online listings.

Moorland safaris, evening bat walks, botanical and bumblebee ID skills and river life explorations all add to the opportunities available to discover Bowland's wilder side.

We're shaking things up a little with Bowland's Dark Sky Week this year and moving the main events to spring, to coincide with the International Dark Skies Festival from the 13th to the 20th of April. Whilst this may mean staying out a little later compared with our traditional February half-term slot, we hope it makes for a great opportunity to explore the atmospheric evening and night-time world of the National Landscape.

The highlight of early May is Wyre's annual Garstang Walking Festival, running from the 2nd to the 10th of the month. Delving into landscapes from the coastline to the high fells (and everything in between) this packed programme is co-ordinated by the Friends of Garstang Walking Festival and has proved to be a perennial favourite.

Also popular are weekly short walks from Garstang. These relaxing walks, which take place most Mondays, are graded "access

for all" and don't need to be booked ahead. To complement these, this year we're introducing a series of "Welcoming Walks", exploring stile-free routes around the Forest of Bowland. Weekly walks in April, and again in July, offer the chance to enjoy short, seasonal, easy access walks, with the opportunity to chat over tea and cake afterwards as an optional extra.

And don't forget to look out for Trammer treks in April, May, June and September. These guided sessions offer the perfect chance to pre-book an all-terrain wheelchair and explore selected routes alongside fellow countryside-lovers.

We'll be shining a spotlight on history during September's Heritage Open Days and paying our annual visit to Browsholme Hall's beautiful Tithe Barn for the latest Bowland Lecture in October.

If you fancy rolling your sleeves up and getting stuck in, regular tree planting sessions throughout November and December will round this year's Festival Bowland programme up nicely.

We hope the handy month by month Festival Bowland listings on the following pages will help you plan ahead, but don't forget to regularly check the online listings at www.forestofbowland.com/festival-bowland

Here you'll discover events which aren't shown in the guide and also find full event details, including any costs and how to book

Festival Bowland wouldn't be possible without all the fantastic organisers, volunteers, land managers and local businesses who make it happen. We hope the events help you enjoy your time in this beautiful part of Lancashire and North Yorkshire to the full, and if there is something you'd particularly like to see, why not let us know? If it's about the nature, landscape, culture or heritage of the National Landscape, we might be able to include it in a future programme. Just email bowland@lancashire.gov.uk

At a Glance Events Listings

Bowland Champion Species events are highlighted in blue.

February

Mondays in February

- Garstang Short Walk**
11am – 12 noon, Garstang

Tuesdays in February

- Woodland Planting with Wyre Rivers Trust**
9.30am – 2.30pm, venues TBC

March

Mondays in February

- Garstang Short Walk**
11am – 12 noon, Garstang

Tuesdays in February

- Woodland Planting with Wyre Rivers Trust**
9.30am – 2.30pm, venues TBC

Thursday 26th

- Calder Vale Short Walk**
1pm – 3pm, Calder Vale

April

Wednesday 8th April

- Welcoming Spring Walk**
10am – 12 noon, Browsholme
- Scorton Legstretcher**
10.30am – 12.30pm, Scorton

Thursday 9th April

- Brushstrokes of the Brock**
6.30pm – 9pm, Claughton on Brock

Friday 10th April

- Abbeystead Spring Walk**
9.30am – 12 noon, Abbeystead

Monday 13th to Friday 17th April

- Bowland Dark Skies Week**

Monday 13th April

- Garstang Short Walk**
11am – 12 noon, Garstang (recurring)
- Bowland Dark Skies: Alston Observatory Visit**
7.30pm – 9.30pm, Alston

Wednesday 15th April

- Welcoming Spring Walk**
10am – 12 noon, Gisburn Forest
- Bleasdale Circuit Trumper Trek and Ramble**
10.30am – 1pm, Bleasdale

Thursday 16th April

- Introduction to River Flies**
10am – 3pm, Claughton on Brock
- Bowland Champion Species: The “Whispering” Bat**
7.30–9pm, Whalley

Friday 17th April

- Bowland Dark Skies: Evening Forest Bathe**
6.30–8.30pm, Gisburn Forest

Sunday 19th April

- Bowland Champion Species: Ground Nest Fest**
10am – 4.30pm, Lawkland

Wednesday 22nd April

- Bowland Champion Species: Hard Fern Photography**
9.30am – 1.30pm, Scorton

- Welcoming Spring Walk**
10am – 12 noon, Sabden

Friday 24th April

- RSPB Moorland Safari**
9.30am – 2pm, Slaidburn
- Garstang Legstretcher**
10.30am – 12.30pm, Garstang

Sunday 26th April

- Whimbrel Walk**
6.30pm – 8.30pm, Barnacre

Wednesday 29th April

- Welcoming Spring Walk**
10am – 12 noon, Barley

May

Saturday 2nd to Sunday 10th May

- Garstang Walking Festival**
(various dates and locations)

Please see www.wyre.gov.uk/garstangwalkingfestival for full listings

Monday 4th May

- Bowland Champion Species: RSPB Moorland Safari**
9.30am – 2pm, Slaidburn

Wednesday 6th May

- Bowland Champion Species: Spring Butterfly Walk**
11.30am – 2pm, Trough of Bowland

Monday 11th May

- Garstang Short Walk**
11am – 12 noon, Garstang (recurring)

Friday 22nd May

- Grizedale Bridge Legstretcher
10.30am – 12.30pm, Scorton

Wednesday 27th May

- Bowland Champion Species: The Secret World of Rivers**
10am – 12 noon or 1pm – 3pm, Claughton on Brock

Thursday 28th May

- Bumblebee ID and BeeWalk Training Workshop
10am – 1pm, Gisburn Forest

Friday 29th May

- RSPB Moorland Safari
9.30am – 2pm, Slaidburn
- Botanical ID for Beginners
10am – 4.30pm, Gisburn Forest
- Scorton Short Walk
2pm – 3pm, Scorton

June

Monday 1st June

- Garstang Short Walk
11am – 12 noon, Garstang (recurring)

Thursday 4th and Friday 5th June

- Intermediate Botanical ID
9am – 4.30pm, Over Wyresdale

Saturday 6th June

- Dunsop Valley Trumper Trek and Ramble
11am – 2pm, Dunsop Bridge

Wednesday 10th June

- Species Rich Grassland Walk
1pm – 3.30pm, Claughton on Brock

Friday 12th June

- Abbeystead Summer Walk
9.30am – 12.30pm, Abbeystead

Saturday 13th June

- RSPB Moorland Safari
9.30am – 2pm, Slaidburn
- Bowland Champion Species: Globeflower Day**
10am – 4pm, Abbeystead

Wednesday 17th June

- Bleasdale Nature Trail
10am – 12.30pm, Bleasdale

July

Saturday 4th July

- National Meadows Day
2pm – 4pm, Crook o' Lune

Monday 6th July

- Garstang Short Walk
11am – 12 noon, Garstang (recurring)

Wednesday 8th July

- Welcoming Summer Walk
10am – 12 noon, Crook o' Lune

Green Hairstreak © D Oyston





- The Abbeystead Two Rivers Super Legstretcher**
10.30am – 3.30pm, Abbeystead

Thursday 9th July

- Calder Vale Short Walk**
1pm – 3pm, Calder Vale

Friday 10th July

- Scorton Short Walk**
2pm – 3pm, Scorton

Tuesday 14th July

- Balsam Bash – Wyre Rivers Trust**
10am – 1pm, Scorton

Wednesday 15th July

- Welcoming Summer Walk**
10am – 12 noon, Beacon Fell

Thursday 16th July

- Hazelhurst and Fair Snape Fell Hike**
9.30am – 2.30pm, Bleasdale

Wednesday 22nd July

- Welcoming Summer Walk**
10am – 12 noon, Scorton

Friday 24th July

- Calder Vale Legstretcher**
10.30am – 12.30pm, Calder Vale

Wednesday 29th July

- Welcoming Summer Walk**
10am – 12 noon, Browsholme

Thursday 30th July

- The Secret World of Rivers**
10am – 12 noon or 1pm – 3pm, Scorton

August

Monday 3rd August

- Garstang Short Walk**
11am – 12 noon, Garstang (recurring)

Friday 7th August

- Scorton Hilly Walk**
10.30am – 1.30pm, Scorton

- Bowland Champion Species: Champion Species Party**
1pm – 4pm, Gisburn Forest

Saturday 8th August

- Garstang Library – Family Nature Activities**
10am – 11am, Garstang

Thursday 13th August

- Brock Valley Bat Walk**
8pm – 9.30pm, Claugton on Brock

Wednesday 19th August

- Scorton Bat Walk**
8pm – 9.30pm, Scorton

Thursday 20th August

- Grizedale Brook and Reservoir Amble**
9.30am – 12.30pm, Scorton

September

Tuesday 1st September

- The Secret World of Rivers**
10am – 12 noon or 1pm – 3pm, Claugton on Brock

Thursday 3rd September

- Calder Vale Bat Walk**
8pm – 9pm, Calder Vale

Saturday 5th September

- Garstang and Lancaster Canal Trampler Trek and Ramble
10.30am – 2.30pm, Garstang

Monday 7th September

- Garstang Short Walk
11am – 12 noon, Garstang (recurring)

Wednesday 9th September

- Garstang Legstretcher
10.30am – 12.30pm, Garstang

Monday 14th September

- 500 Years of Garstang Heritage Trail
10am – 12 noon, Garstang

Thursday 17th September

- Abbeystead Autumn Walk
9.30am – 12 noon, Abbeystead

Bowland Champion Species: Introduction to River Flies

10am – 3pm, Catterall

Saturday 19th September

- Bleasdale – From the Past to the Present
10.30am – 1pm, Bleasdale

- Bleasdale Parish Hall Heritage Afternoon
2pm – 4pm, Bleasdale

Friday 25th September

- Scorton Legstretcher
10.30am – 12.30pm, Scorton

October

Thursday 1st October

- Brock Valley Ramble
9.30am – 1.30pm, Claughton on Brock

Monday 5th October

- Garstang Short Walk
11am – 12 noon, Garstang (recurring)

Tuesday 6th October

- Bowland Lecture
7.30 – 9pm, Cow Ark – Clitheroe

Thursday 22nd October

- Bowland Champion Species: Waxcap Watch Training
10am – 3pm, Wycoller Country Park

Thursday 29th October

- Let's Paint the Brock Rocks
10am – 12.30pm, Claughton on Brock

Friday 30th October

- Scorton Short Walk
2pm – 3pm, Scorton

November

Mondays in November

- Garstang Short Walk
11am – 12 noon, Garstang

Tuesdays in November

- Woodland Planting with Wyre Rivers Trust
9.30am – 2.30pm, venues TBC

December

Tuesday (1st, 8th, 15th) December

- Woodland Planting with Wyre Rivers Trust
9.30am – 2.30pm, venues TBC

Mondays in December

- Garstang Short Walk
11am – 12 noon, Garstang



All Terrain Trampler

A Walk Through Bowland's Living Landscape



Walking in the countryside is never just a walk—it is an experience that shifts with the seasons and moods of the sky. Some days greet you with golden light, warmth on your shoulders and a sense of deep contentment. Other days arrive cloaked in mist and drizzle, demanding a little grit and determination to embrace the fresh air. Yet, every step tells a story.

For generations, visitors to the Forest of Bowland have wandered its web of public rights of way and explored its open access land. Each journey reveals something new—a glimpse of wildlife, a working farm, or the quiet rhythm of rural life.

Many of us know the Countryside Code—a gentle reminder that these rolling hills are both a home and a workplace. Since 1951, it has guided people on how to enjoy the countryside responsibly. Today, its message is as vital as ever, though the way we share it has evolved—from leaflets to Shaun the Sheep campaigns, and now to fresh signage highlighting the importance of care throughout the year.

Spring brings the joyful sight of lambs

skipping in the fields, but behind that charm lies months of nurturing. Our new signs remind visitors that every season matters in the life cycle of farm animals. A careless moment can cause stress or harm—something we all want to avoid.

And it's not just sheep. The countryside is full of quiet details that deserve respect. That inviting gateway that you are tempted to park in? It might block a farmer's access for machinery far bigger than your car. And those wide, open moorlands? They hide the nests of ground-nesting birds—curlew, lapwing, oystercatcher—species whose numbers are dwindling. A dog off the lead or even a footstep too close can mean broken eggs or unfed chicks.

So, when you visit, walk with awareness. Notice the signs, the sounds and the unseen lives that share this space. The Forest of Bowland is not just a destination; it is a community—a place where people live and work and where visitors are warmly welcomed.

Step lightly. Look closely. And let every walk remind you that beauty and responsibility go hand in hand.

For further information visit:

www.forestofbowland.com/walking-information

Please Respect Sheep Year-round

Keep your dog on a lead



Forest of
Bowland
National
Landscape



www.forestofbowland.com

www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code



BARK



CHASE



BITE

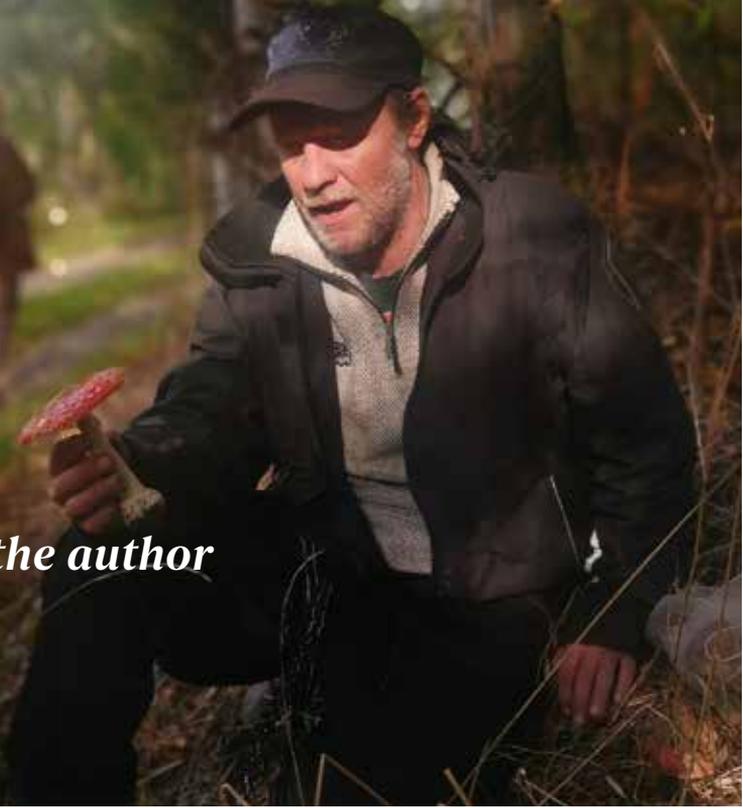


KILL

Sheep worrying by dogs can come in many forms

Thirteen Cycles Toward Nature's Wisdom

*A reflection from the author
Pete Compston*



Pete Compston is a forager, facilitator, and founder of Pendle Plant Craft, where he leads community walks, workshops and creative projects grounded in connection with local landscapes.

In the dappled light of a woodland edge, where the shifting seasons write their stories in leaf and bloom, there exists an unspoken relationship between the land and those who take the time to listen. Our new book is an attempt to honour that relationship; a guide, yes, but more than that, an invitation. A way to meet the plants we so often pass by, not merely as names in a field guide, but as living beings with whom we can form a quiet, reciprocal connection.

Foraging, at its heart, is not simply an act of gathering but of noticing. It is the deep inhale of a hedgerow's scent on an autumn afternoon, the memory of a

childhood spent picking nettle stems with hesitant fingers, the reverence in pruning a leaf with care, knowing that the plant, in its abundance, has chosen to give.

Through these pages, we explore the stories of plants that have long accompanied us: Meadowsweet, whose vanilla-scented flowers once sweetened medieval halls; Oak Moss Lichen, a slow-growing lichen whose presence speaks of clean air and ancient woodlands; Birch Polypore, a mushroom once carried by ancient travellers for its medicinal and practical uses. Each plant carries a history, a gift, a place in the great tapestry of life.

But beyond their utility, beyond the teas and tinctures, the meals made richer by wild flavours, there is something deeper to be gained. To know these plants is to step outside of time, to move at a

different rhythm, one set not by industry or urgency but by frost and thaw, bud and decay. It is an act of resistance in a world that moves ever faster, to slow down enough to truly see.

A record of the biodiversity at Lomeshaye Marsh, only to be built on and learned from, and learning the lessons that come with each new species we meet, deepening our connection.

In writing this book, I have reflected on the profound role that nature has played in my own life; how it has been both a refuge and a source of resilience in times of struggle. I know I am not alone in this. Many of us carry unseen burdens, but in the stillness of wild spaces, we find solace. We find purpose. We find ourselves.

My journey in writing *Thirteen Cycles* would not have unfolded the way it has without the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. Their gentle presence and steady guidance helped shape not only my understanding of the land, but also my place within it.

I first met the team while delivering People Enjoying Nature (PEN) sessions through the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership. What began as leading walks soon became something deeper; a shared practice of slowing down, noticing, and listening.

Hetty, Cathy, and the wider team welcomed me not as an instructor but as a collaborator in curiosity, a fellow wanderer learning alongside others how to meet the land with humility and care.

Forest of Bowland National Landscape's influence has been woven through every stage of this work. Through PEN, where so many people first rediscovered their confidence outdoors.

Through community gatherings where the simple act of sharing tea and time opened conversations about belonging. Through quiet afternoons in the woods where someone held a leaf or mushroom for the first time and felt that spark of recognition, a gentle "Oh... I know you."

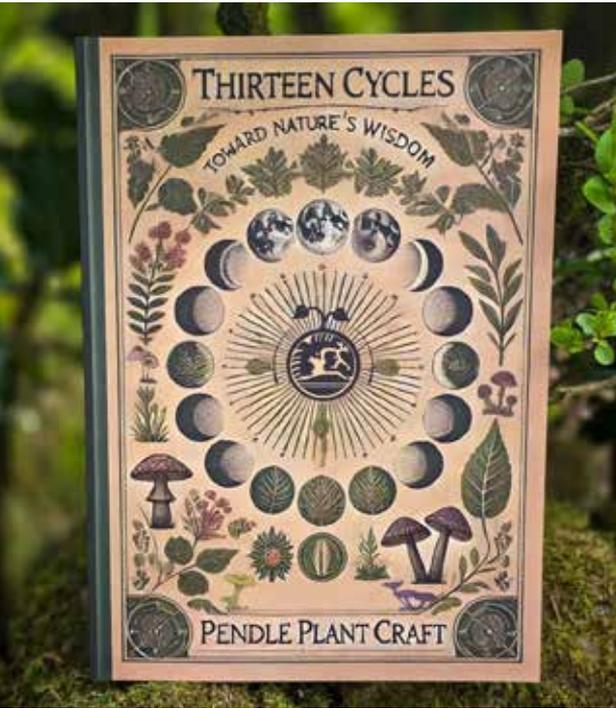
Their approach to conservation is never about keeping people out, but about helping people in, guiding them gently toward the understanding that to care for a place is to be in relationship with it. Knowing the name of a tree, recognising a bird's call, or tasting a hedgerow leaf is the beginning of stewardship.

Pendle Plant Craft would not exist without this influence. Nor would this book. The values that underpin *Thirteen Cycles*; reciprocity, patience, attention, community, were nurtured in the peat, woodland, and rivers. They were strengthened by the generosity of the organisation that stewards these landscapes so thoughtfully. For that, I am deeply grateful.

More than a collection of recipes and remedies, the tinctures, tonics, and salves crafted at our cabin are not just practical applications of nature's gifts. They are expressions of gratitude, of care, of participation in an ongoing conversation between human and habitat.

We hope that this book will serve as both a companion and a catalyst; for learning, for remembering, for deepening the bond between ourselves and the landscapes we call home.

Whether you are a seasoned forager or simply curious to see the world through fresh eyes, we hope these pages bring you closer to the quiet wonders waiting just off the beaten path.



Thirteen Cycles Toward Nature's Wisdom is a gentle record of a year spent in deepening relationship with the plants, trees, fungi, and landscapes of our home. Part field journal, part love letter to place, it traces the rhythms of the moon from one cycle to the next, noting what appears, what fades, and what returns. Rather than instructing, it invites the reader to slow down and witness the small moments that stitch us back into belonging; a patch of chickweed after rain, the first song of blackbird at dusk, or the quiet companionship of beech and elder. It is a book for anyone seeking to return to the land with curiosity and care.

Copies are available directly through Pendle Plant Craft via Facebook, Instagram, or by email at pendleplantcraft@gmail.com, and can also be collected from our woodland cabin at Lomeshaye Marsh Nature Reserve, Pendle.

Poem

By river's bend where kingfishers dive,
We stepped in quiet, hearts alive.
Through Lomeshaye's marsh, so wild, untamed,
We walked, we listened, we learned its name.
The first frost whispered through sedge and reed,
Skeleton leaves on the cold earth freed.
Ice-laced branches, hawthorn bright,
Holding red jewels in the silver light.
Then Meadowsweet in summer's air,
Softly swayed, a healer's prayer.
Nettle stood, both fierce and kind,
A tonic brewed for heart and mind.
Wood Ear clung to elder's grace,
A velvet shank, a ghostly face.
Oak Moss Lichen clung where time stood still,
Breathing secrets into the chill.
Sorrel's bite and bramble's feast,
A banquet laid for man and beast.
Fungi rising, dark and deep,
Breaking down what others keep.
Foxglove bells and thistle spines,
Warning hands yet drawing minds.
The marsh held stories, soft and slow,
If only we would kneel to know.
Through thirteen moons, through shifting air,
We learned to watch, to tend, to care.
The land stood patient, old yet free,
It shaped our hands, it taught our feet.
And still it calls, in root and wing,
A cycle's end, a song to sing.

Further Information

Getting to the Forest of Bowland

There are several train lines which surround the Forest of Bowland and which act as perfect gateways into the National Landscape. Stations often display information about walking and cycling and other opportunities in the area.

The Clitheroe Line terminates at Clitheroe Interchange and is the most central train station for Bowland. Other stations on this line from Manchester and Blackburn include Whalley and Langho. To the north there are several smaller stations along the Bentham Line, which runs from Leeds to Lancaster and Morecambe: Long Preston, Giggleswick, Clapham, Bentham and Wennington. The west coast mainline skirts Bowland, stopping at Lancaster and Preston.

For further information visit www.nationalrail.co.uk

Getting around the Forest of Bowland

The main bus service through the Forest of Bowland National Landscape is **bus service 11**, linking Clitheroe (connecting with Clitheroe Line trains from/to Manchester), Bashall Eaves, Dunsop Bridge, Newton-in-Bowland, Slaidburn, Tosside and Settle on Monday to Saturday.

Bus 5 runs between Clitheroe, Whalley, Ribchester, Longridge and Chipping, with buses every hour on Monday to Saturday and every two hours on Sundays.

Buses 66, 66S and 67 together provide a daily service skirting Pendle Hill, running between Clitheroe, Waddington, Grindleton, Chatburn, Barley, Barrowford and Nelson.

In the Lune Valley, **bus 81** runs daily between Lancaster, Caton, Hornby, Wray, Wennington, Melling and Kirkby Lonsdale.

For a journey planner visit: www.traveline.info

Visitor Information Centres

- **Bentham Tourist Information Point**
Town Hall, Station Road, Bentham, LA2 7LF
Tel: **015242 62549**
- **Bowland Visitor Centre**
Beacon Fell Country Park, PR3 2NL
Tel: **01995 640557**
- **Clitheroe Visitor Information Centre**
Platform Gallery & Visitor Information Centre, Station Rd, Clitheroe, BB7 2JT
Tel: **01200 425566**
- **Garstang Tourism Information Point**
Library, Windsor Road, Garstang, PR3 1EX
Tel: **01995 602125**
- **Longridge Heritage and Visitor Centre**
Old Station Buildings, Berry Lane, Longridge, PR33JP
Tel: **01772 437958**
- **Pendle Heritage Centre**
Colne Rd, Barrowford, Burnley BB9 6JQ
Tel: **01282 677150**
- **Preston Visitor Information Point**
Town Hall, Preston, PR1 2RL
Tel: **01772 906900**
- **Settle Tourist Information Centre**
Town Hall, Cheapside, Settle, BD24 9EJ
Tel: **01729 825192**

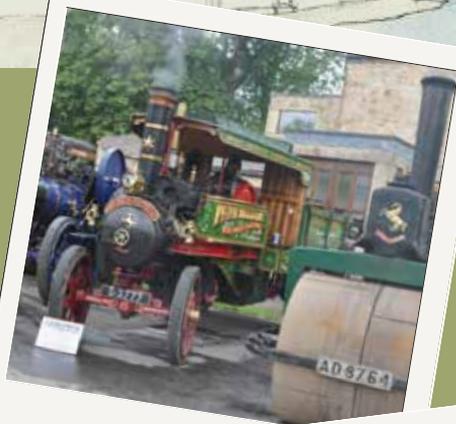
SLAIDBURN VILLAGE HALL

Wedding & Events Venue

Situated at the heart of the Forest of Bowland in the picturesque village of Slaidburn overlooking the River Hodder

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- ✓ Civil ceremony licensed venue
- ✓ Seating capacity up to 120
- ✓ Fully fitted kitchen
- ✓ Various sized meeting rooms
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www.slaidburnvillagehall.co.uk



01200 446555

info@slaidburnvillagehall.com

create HODDER

The Hodder Valley is not only rich in beauty and character, but also in creative talent. Local artist Karin Pinder established a collective of artisans to highlight and support local businesses that create handmade and bespoke goods.

Lorikeet Studios - Karin Pinder Artist

Karin captures the charm of rural Bowland through oil paintings, lino prints and pastel drawings. Alongside selling original pieces, she produces fine art prints, cards and gifts featuring her work. These are displayed and available to purchase from her website and Slaidburn Central Stores & Post Office.

Visit: www.lorikeetstudios.com

Bowland Pottery

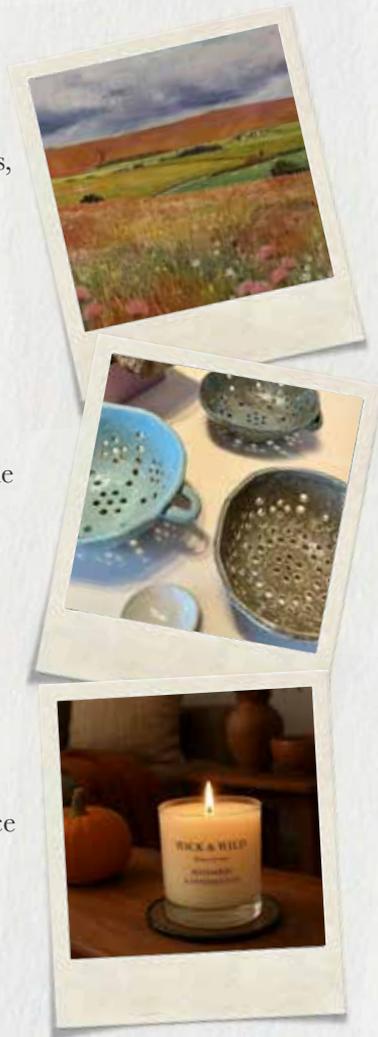
Bowland Pottery offers high-quality, unique ceramics for your home and garden. Justine's creations are inspired by her love of the sea, sailing, and nature. Each piece is hand-painted with glazes chosen to reflect the natural environment. Workshops available.

Visit: www.facebook.com/p/Bowland-Pottery-100063976758177/

Wick and Wild

At Wick & Wild, their candles and diffusers are crafted using only natural coconut and rapeseed wax, phthalate-free fragrance oils and lead-free cotton wicks. Each scent is blended with care — to lift a mood, spark a memory, or simply make your home feel more like you.

Visit: www.wick-wild.sumupstore.com





Hodder Valley Soap

Fiona crafts beautiful soaps from scratch in small batches, using only natural, sustainably sourced ingredients. Each soap is naturally fragranced with pure essential oils. Fiona sells her soaps and handmade gifts at local fairs.

Visit: www.createhodder.co.uk/hoddervalleysoap



Julie Harrison Artist

Julie's artwork is inspired by the animals and wildlife on her farm. She offers a variety of greeting cards and prints, all derived from her coloured pencil drawings. These items can be purchased directly.

Visit: www.createhodder.co.uk/julieharrisonart



Mission Room Furniture Resurrection

Mission Room Furniture Resurrection saves both cherished and neglected furniture, giving them a new lease on life. This can involve respectful restoration that honours the piece's history, or a bold reimagining with paint and other finishes to create statement pieces suitable for various settings.

Visit: www.etsy.com/uk/shop/MissionRoomFurniture



Margaret Robinson Artist

Margaret started painting with watercolours nearly 40 years ago. Her love of animals, combined with life on the family farm, provides the perfect inspiration to capture their essence. She now also creates beautiful animal portraits using pastels, acrylics, and pencils.

Visit: www.createhodder.co.uk/margaretrobinson



Nichola Claire Paints

Nichola, who lives on a farm near Tosside, balances raising two active boys and her primary school teaching duties with adding her unique painting style to various beautiful items, including boxes, baubles, planters, and pen pots.

Visit: www.createhodder.co.uk/nicholaclairepaints



Hodder Woodcraft

Paul is a craftsman specialising in wooden products. Whether you need a repair, a polish, an alteration, or a unique gift for a loved one or yourself, Paul can help. Contact him for any wooden item you need.

Visit: www.hodderwoodcraft.co.uk

High Ginger

Sarah, an artist residing in the picturesque Forest of Bowland, draws inspiration from the local wildlife and landscapes. She creates high-quality cards for any occasion, with her hand-drawn designs meticulously reproduced on folding cards by specialist fine art printers.

Visit: www.etsy.com/uk/shop/HighGingerUK

Two Aprons Bakery

We are a small rural business based in Slaidburn offering a range of homebaked sweets, savoury goods, and outside catering for any occasion large or small. You'll see us at local markets and fairs.

Visit: www.facebook.com/people/Two-Aprons-Bakery/61580893916228/

Lady-Jayne Creative Crafts

Bespoke, personalised items for every occasion. Anything from designing greeting cards with a difference, to making unique necklaces, earrings, keyrings with charms and keepsakes.

Visit: www.etsy.com/uk/shop/LadyJayne152

HookWytch

Bry, known as the HookWytch, creates unique and beautiful crochet pieces inspired by the natural world—especially enchanting woodlands and wild fells. She also loves to add a playful twist, experimenting with designs that are delightfully spooky yet still cosy and cute.

Visit: www.folksy.com/shops/thehookwytch



For further information about all the Create Hodder artists, creators and makers visit:
www.createhodder.co.uk

EXPERIENCE THE BEST AND MOST UNIQUE PLACES TO STAY IN BOWLAND



Lower Gill Holiday Cottages

Ideally located near to Gisburn Forest, Lower Gill offers 4 cosy self-catering holiday cottages (sleeping 12, 12, 6 and 4 people), dogs are welcome too.

On site there is an indoor heated swimming pool, games room as well as an outdoor tennis court and football field.



www.lowergill.co.uk

Mob Lesley Wilson: 07920 815727

info@lowergill.co.uk

Lower Gill Farm, Tosside, Skipton, BD23 4SJ

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Get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life with a glamping holiday and unwind in our cosy and luxurious Yurts or Shepherds huts. Set within a friendly working Farm in the heart of the Ribble Valley.

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www.littleoakhurst.com

07908614736

overhackingfarm@googlemail.com

Overhacking Farm, Stonyhurst, Nr Clitheroe, BB7 9PY



Orchard Glamping is the perfect retreat in which to explore the great outdoors. Located on a beautiful patch of land we have 3 luxury self-contained glamping pods.

Positioned next to the canal, the river and a small woodland, the site offers a multitude of activities for families and couples who just want to get out and immerse themselves in the countryside.



We are partners with Visit Lancashire and Forest of Bowland. We have our Good to Go certification.



www.orchardglamping.com

07725185366

Sturzaker House Farm, Catterall, Preston, PR3 1QB

Lakewood Cottages



Located on the edge of the Forest of Bowland, Lakewood Cottages are a family run self-catering cottage business providing high quality accommodation, nestled within the beautiful Lancashire countryside. Lakewood Cottages stands in its own rural idyll positioned in a private lakeside/woodland setting and are designed to offer our guests the maximum in peace and relaxation.

www.lakewoodcottages.co.uk
01524 751053

info@lakewoodcottages.co.uk
Cragg Hall Farm, Galgate, Lancaster, LA2 0HN

Smelt Mill Residential Centre

Smelt Mill provides accommodation for groups in the Trough of Bowland. It is ideally located for outdoor activities such as walking, mountain biking and bird watching. Offering:

- Comfortable lounge with log fire
- Accommodation for up to 28 people in 9 bedrooms
- Professionally equipped kitchen



www.smeltmill.org.uk
07966719904

smeltmillbookings@bpmrt.org.uk
Trough Road, Dunsop Bridge, BB7 3BH

Fell View Park



Beautiful location on a working hill farm outside the popular village of Scorton on the western edge of Bowland. Facilities include toilets and showers, disabled / family shower room, kitchen/ information point and laundry. With an on-site fishing lake and popular walks and cycle routes accessed directly from the site.



www.fellviewparkandfishing.co.uk
07981204943

susan_atkinson@btconnect.com
Sykes Farm, Scorton, PR3 1DA

Lodges at Parsonage



Lodges at Parsonage is situated in the heart of the Forest of Bowland with views stretching from Longridge Fell to Pendle Hill.

The perfect stay for anyone wanting to relax and recharge or explore the local walking routes. Set on a working sheep farm, it gives you the opportunity to see nature at its source

airbnb.com/h/lodgesatparsonage
parsonagepods@gmail.com
07856889637

Parsonage Farm, Chipping, Preston, PR3 2NS
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Gisburn Forest and Stocks



Photo Credit: Jerry Tatton



Explore

Immerse yourself in dramatic scenery on our award winning cycling and walking trails, go on an adventure with the Gruffalo or visit after dusk to soak up starlight in an accredited Dark Sky Discovery Site.

Event Hire

Our 15th century built farmhouse, Stephen Park, is available for hire (including overnight stays), as well as our 24ft Mongolian yurt.

For event hire and permit enquiries email: enquiries.northengland@forestryengland.uk



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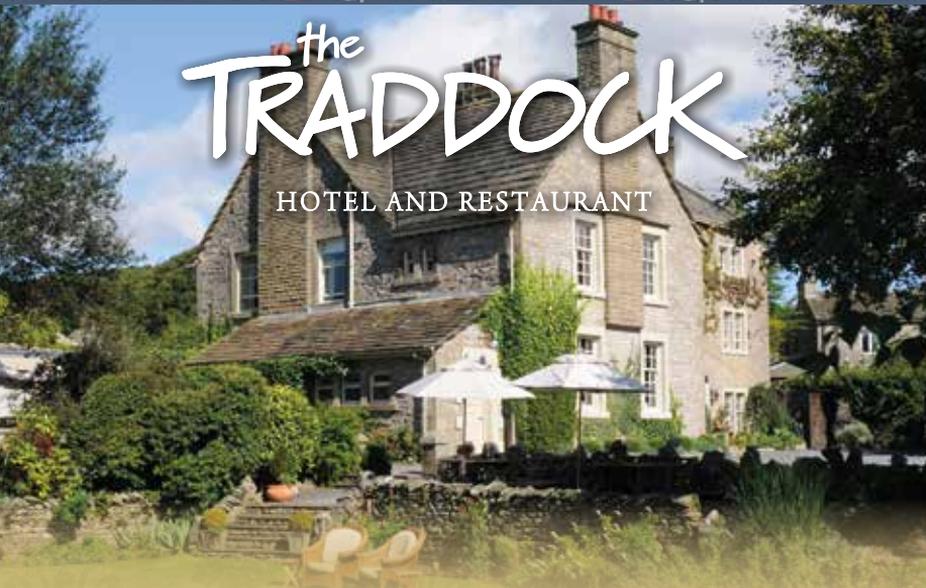
Website: www.peaksandpods.co.uk

Email: hello@peaksandpods.co.uk

Peaks and Pods, Boustagill Farm, Rathmell, Settle, North Yorkshire, BD24 0LS

the TRADDOCK

HOTEL AND RESTAURANT



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- We have facilities for private dining, and welcome bookings for birthdays, events and private parties.

Our award winning restaurant offers first class food using the best locally sourced ingredients with simple flair, clean flavours, and a touch of imagination.

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Tel: 015242 51224 Fax: 015242 51796

www.thetraddock.co.uk info@thetraddock.co.uk





Cover painting:

© Ellis Gray Designs - In 2023, illustrator and designer Dr. Selina Ellis Gray from Ellis Gray Designs Ltd was commissioned to create digital illustrations for the Forest of Bowland National Landscape's Nature Recovery Plan. The cover image has been adapted from one of these original illustrations. This plan, which outlines conservation priorities until 2040, aims to expand, enhance, and connect Bowland's valuable habitats.