



# Landmarks in The Landscape

## An ambitious new tree-planting programme is aiming to safeguard the legacy of the veteran trees that are such important features in the fabric of the Forest of Bowland

Many of Bowland's beautiful old trees are nearing the end of their lives and in order to safeguard the unique character of the Bowland landscape, Champion Bowland and the Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership are acting now to ensure successor trees are ready.

These 'Landmark Trees' might be found in hedgerows, parkland, farmland or on a village green and may be native or non-native species. Wherever they are, they are important to people as well as to the landscape and provide a living link to the 'forest' of Bowland in the AONB's name.

Britain is almost unique in terms of its population of ancient trees owing to the continuity that stems from continuous ownership of landholdings and Bowland is especially important because the estates' land management practices have remained broadly unchanged for much of the last 1,000 years.

The rich ecosystems created in and around these trees make a huge contribution to local biodiversity and these broader networks can extend for hundreds of metres around the tree.

Last year, members of the Ancient Tree Forum visited Bowland to conduct an audit of some of the most significant trees in the area and, early this year, Luke Steer led a workshop which equipped volunteers with the skills to identify and catalogue Bowland's most important trees.

*“These local landmarks won't last forever. We've already lost dozens of these distinctive trees to damaging storms and some of our native species are threatened by diseases such as ash dieback ”*

In 2020, Champion Bowland wants to enlist the help of local residents and corporate sponsors to protect the legacy of Bowland's most iconic trees and plant their successors before their predecessors succumb to old age.

The organisation wants to identify six landmark trees across the Forest in 2020 and invite sponsors to assist with the costs of introducing their

replacements during the winter planting season.

Sponsors can nominate Landmark Trees in their neighbourhood and also opt to plant and safeguard new trees and by supporting this scheme, sponsors are making an investment that will pay dividends for decades to come.



Bowland AONB development and funding officer Robin Gray explained the thinking behind the scheme: “Veteran trees are an essential element of the ancient Forest of Bowland. Often centuries old, these venerable old oaks, beeches, sycamores and ashes are as rooted in the landscape as the fells and the rivers that flow between them.

*“But these local landmarks won’t last forever. We’ve already lost dozens of these distinctive trees to damaging storms and some of our native species are threatened by diseases such as ash dieback (chalara).*

*“The Landmark Trees scheme is our way of planning a woodland succession for the Forest of Bowland and ensuring the next generation of mature trees are already established before their forbears are lost through old age, disease or storm damage.”*

The Seafood Pub Company – owners of the Assheton Arms in Downham – was the first official sponsor of the Landmark Trees initiative. The company contributed to the planting of a field maple in the centre of the village to replace a wonderful old beech tree in the grounds of Downham Hall, which was lost in the ‘Beast from the East’ storm.

Lord and Lady Clitheroe joined members of Champion Bowland to plant a tree in the centre of Downham to launch Champion Bowland's Landmark Trees initiative.

Lord Clitheroe said: "These ancient trees are such an important feature in the character of the village. We lost the majestic Trafalgar

Beech – planted by William Assheton to commemorate the famous naval battle in 1805 – to the 'Beast from the East' in 2018, so it's wonderful that Champion Bowland and the Seafood Pub Company have committed to invest in planting the next generation of landmark trees on the Downham Estate."



If you would like to nominate a prominent tree in your area for the Landmark Trees initiative, please contact Sandra Silk at the Forest of Bowland AONB Office on **01200 448000**. Potential sponsors can also get in touch with Sandra for an informal chat about the scheme.

You can also nominate Landmark Trees via our social media feeds: simply post an image of the tree you'd like to nominate along with its location (ideally a Grid Reference) with the hashtag **#LandmarkTrees**. Don't forget to tag **@ForestofBowland** in your post!