



TEXT TO USE IN YOUR MARKETING

Eco Escapes: Explore Lancashire's Outstanding Natural Landscapes

Sustainable short breaks on foot or by bike in the Forest of Bowland and Arnside & Silverdale Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Travel Light: leave the car at home and use public transport to get here

Tread Carefully: explore our AONBs on foot, by bike or e-bike (we also have off-road Trampers for visitors with restricted mobility)

Shop Local: support local businesses by buying food and drink and locally made products on your visit

Stay Longer: slow down, take your time and explore more by making a weekend of it!

The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a 300 square mile expanse of remote uplands in the north of Lancashire, stretching from the outskirts of Lancaster to the edge of the Yorkshire Dales and from the market town of Clitheroe to the farming hub of Bentham.

The Forest of Bowland is a place where lonely tracts of moorland are fissured by intimate valleys carved by fast-flowing streams and this overwhelmingly rural landscape has remained broadly unchanged for centuries.

Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty lies just a short hop across the M6, where Lancashire meets the foothills of the Lakeland Fells on the edge of Morecambe Bay. This area is a unique environment where limestone grassland and ancient woodlands meet the vast expanse of Morecambe Bay.

These hidden rural gems are little known outside the northwest of England and remain a well-kept secret. Word is slowly spreading and more and more visitors are discovering the unspoiled delights of these picturesque natural oases.

Both Bowland and Silverdale are paradises for wildlife and nature lovers thanks to the rare flora and fauna that make their homes here.

These two very special places for nature are joining forces to launch Eco Escapes – a campaign to encourage sustainable tourism in these delicate environments.

Eco Escapes encourages visitors to arrive by train and explore on foot, by bike or e-bike and support the rural economy by spending money with independent retailers and buying local artisan produce where possible.

The Forest of Bowland is a beautiful rural upland where a warm welcome is guaranteed. Look out for rare species like the endangered Hen Harrier and discover why less intensive farming has remained rooted in the landscape, protecting local produce and retaining a strong sense of place. Find respite from the digital noise and clutter of the 21st century in a tranquil destination where you can connect with nature on a deeper level.

From one of the largest areas of wetlands in the North to the shining sands of Morecambe Bay, Silverdale is full of natural spectacles with a surprise around every corner. The shady glades and secluded clearings are home to dozens of rare wild flowers which thrive among the limestone grasslands, where rare moths and butterflies flit about in the dappled sunlight.

The RSPB's Leighton Moss Reserve – one of the largest areas of wetland in the northwest – is just a short walk from Silverdale station. The reedbeds here are home to the rare bittern, marsh harrier and bearded tit, while the lagoons attract hunting ospreys in search of fish during the summer months.

Both Bowland and Silverdale are home to small, local businesses and have increasingly sought-after commodities in abundance: beautiful scenery, wide open spaces and plenty of fresh air to breathe it all in. Visitors will find pretty rural villages, bustling market towns and welcoming country inns where hearty menus feature local produce whose food miles are measured in single figures.

By far the best way to explore these special environments is on foot or by bike, slowing down and tuning into the slower rhythms of nature. Much of the rugged upland terrain of Bowland is open access land, which is criss-crossed with hundreds of footpaths and bridleways. For those with stout shoes, good navigational skills and a taste for adventure, the hills and valleys of Bowland are one of the last remaining places in England where you can hike for miles without encountering another soul.

The more compact and intimate landscapes of Silverdale offer a very different experience: tread quietly through the trees on the trail of rare orchids or butterflies, wander along the salt marshes or climb to a lofty viewpoint atop a rugged limestone crag and admire the views across Morecambe Bay up to the Lakeland Fells.

Whether you want to explore the Forest of Bowland or Arnside and Silverdale on foot or by bike, the Eco Escapes website is packed with ideas to make your visit more sustainable. An interactive map shows you the highlights and helps plot sustainable ways to travel between them.

Exploring from gateway stations like Clitheroe, Carnforth, Bentham or Silverdale, means you needn't worry about finding a parking space or navigating those narrow single track roads, leaving visitors free to explore at their own pace.

And if you're struggling to pack everything you'd like to do into a single day, why not linger a little longer – perhaps staying for a couple of nights in some of the area's many independently owned inns, B&Bs, hotels or campsites?

Eco Escapes short break itineraries focus on some of the best bits of Bowland and Silverdale and identify the most sustainable ways of exploring without using a car.

Our Silverdale itinerary explores the AONB on foot, visiting the Leighton Moss reserve and climbing the rugged slopes of Warton Crag before descending to catch the train back from Carnforth station.

In the Forest of Bowland, our foodie tour visits some of the best artisan food producers in Lancashire, with bolt-on options to enjoy lunch at one of the region's many outstanding gastropubs.

We look forward to extending a warm Lancashire welcome to walkers and cyclists exploring Bowland and Silverdale this summer.