



FOREST OF  
**BOWLAND**

Sustainable Tourism Partner

# Sustainable Tourism: Small Business – Big Ideas

Harry Backhouse  
Clough Bottom Farm  
UK





## Bowland Charter Assured

The Forest of Bowland is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Bowland Charter Scheme supports businesses in and around the Bowland area which are committed to:

- offering a quality product or service,
- in a manner which is sensitive to the natural environment of the area.

This is to certify that

### Clough Bottom Farm

is a member of the Bowland Charter Assured Scheme

We will strive to improve the environmental impact of our business and minimise the impact on the wider area.

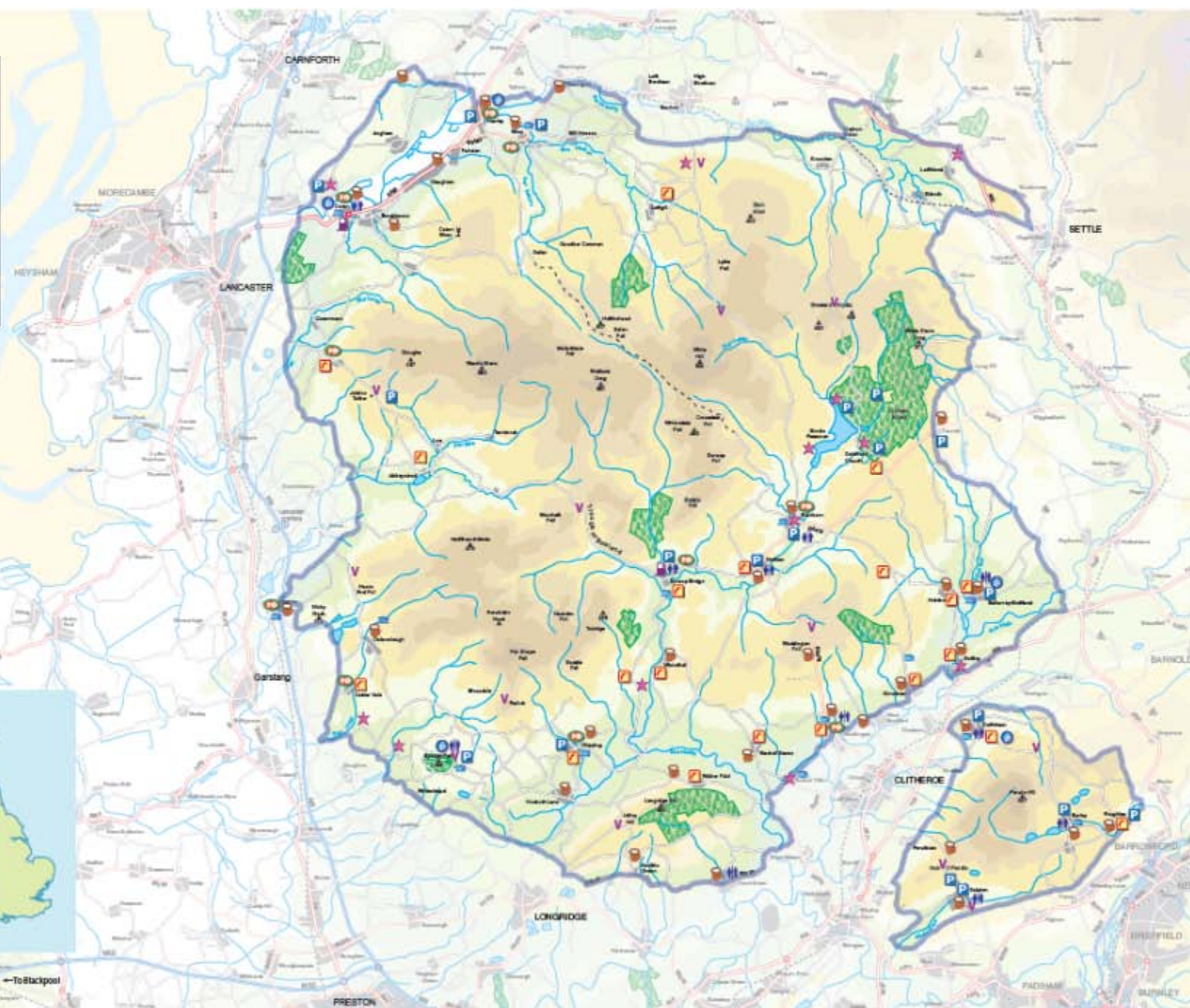
We commit to sourcing staff, services and materials from the local area wherever possible.

We commit to working together with appropriate other businesses to promote the benefits, attractions and facilities available in the local area.

We support the Bowland Tourism & Environment Fund.



-  Car Parking
-  Post Office
-  Garage (petrol)
-  Telephone
-  Public House
-  Cafe/tea rooms
-  Visitor Attraction
-  Toilet Facilities
-  Information Centre
-  View Point
-  ACM Boundary
-  Salters Fell Track
-  A Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) prevents unauthorised use by motor vehicles.
-  Woodland
- BOLD** Towns or cities with good local amenities & transport links
- TEXT**



←To Blackpool

# The first European Charter Partners October 2007





CLOUGH BOTTOM – SUMMER 1955



**Clough Bottom Farm** has come a long way since I took the farm on from my father almost 30 years ago.

- ❖ In the 1950's the farm was predominantly livestock and dairy
- ❖ Post war Britain saw 'agriculture on the up'
- ❖ Lack of investment in the farm - conservation, hedges, tree planting





ClOUGH BOTTOM – 1960's – 1970's



- ❖ In the early 1960's, my father built battery cabins for egg production
- ❖ Also in the early 1960's dairy was diminished in favour of increased sheep and beef farming (my father didn't like milking – far too restrictive)!
- ❖ An animal feeds processing plant was introduced in the late 1960's, producing hen food for the battery hens
- ❖ The processing plant also produced sheep feed, calf animal feed & dog food
- ❖ By the early 70's numbers of hens had increased towards 9000
- ❖ In the mid 70's the egg market was in decline as a result of joining of common market





CLOUGH BOTTOM - 1980's



- ❖ Edwina Curry would further worsen the egg situation, resulting in us scaling back egg production in the early 1980's
- ❖ In 1981 I returned to work at the farm after studying agricultural engineering for 2 years and agriculture for 1 year
- ❖ In 1982 my father become ill and sadly died in 1983
- ❖ Should I go back to University and study an engineering degree or stay at Clough Bottom and battle on with the farm?
- ❖ I chose the latter and never looked back
- ❖ Conservation work around the farm was intensified – 'lost' hedges were reinstated, trees were planted and ponds restored
- ❖ Shooting and conservation were key



## During the 80's and 90's...

- ❖ The hen battery cabins were dismantled and the site cleared
- ❖ Sheep buildings were erected and sheep numbers increased
- ❖ Once I found my feet I purchased the farm in 1985
- ❖ In 1986 I married Jane – a national training manager for Next
- ❖ In 1989 we launched a management development training company – Focus Experiential Training, using the landscape of the farm as a backdrop for the outdoor activities
- ❖ In 1991 our first training centre was converted and opened by the Mayor of Ribble Valley Borough Council (prior to this, the farmhouse and buildings around the farm had been used)
- ❖ Business growth resulted in converting the 'Outbarn' into a 2<sup>nd</sup> training facility and building a new office to support growing staff numbers!



- ❖ In 1991 I joined Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) as a councilor
- ❖ As former Chairman of the Environmental Committee of the RVBC (Environmental services) I was involved in projects including the introduction of the Woodland Burial Site, tree clearance around Clitheroe Castle & development and enhancement of Ribble Valley Sports Centres
- ❖ Hedgerow and woodland work continued as part of a conservation strategy throughout the years
- ❖ The next step came in 1999 to grow ornamental trees which were easy to dig up, promote and sell
- ❖ 1999 also saw the launch of our first holiday cottage (a converted Coach House). Our first cottage booking was from an Australian couple (he was an organic food importer, who specifically wanted to stay on an organic farm and research organic food whilst in the UK).





CLOUGH BOTTOM - 2009



- ❖ Two further self-catering holiday cottages were introduced in 2004
- ❖ In 2006 a water borehole was drilled to reduce water consumption. Used for irrigation, for trees and livestock it will soon yield water for the entire site
- ❖ In 2008 we introduced our recycling barn and now the entire site, including holiday cottages, office & farmhouse generate less waste than one domestic household
- ❖ In 2009 I purchased a bio-diesel plant and convert waste cooking oils into cleaner fuel for our vehicles
- ❖ We also built a poly tunnel to increase the range and growing season of 'PYO' food we offer guests (we also use all our own produce in delegates lunches & in the *Food from the Farm* range of ready meals)
- ❖ In 2010 'Give the Car a Holiday' & 'Explore from your Door' initiatives were launched to promote exploration by foot and public transport
- ❖ We also introduced two new beehives



## Our businesses today...



Organic Beef



Award-winning holiday cottages

Trees & Shrubs



Management development training



## Our sustainable living and tourism strategies...



**Bio-Fuel Processing Plant**



**Water Borehole**



## Our conservation strategies



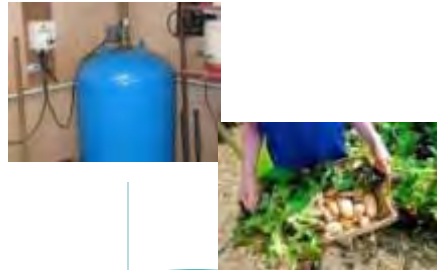
We have been part of the *Countryside Stewardship Scheme* for 20 years and *English Woodland Grant Scheme*.

We create wildlife corridors and ditches, create and restore existing ponds, maintain ancient woodland and create new woodland.

We have planted over 100,000 trees around the farm.



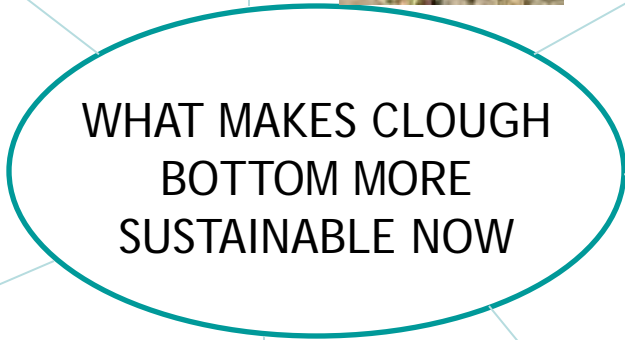
Addresses Environmental Issues



Purpose Before Profit

"To leave the place in a better place than we found it".

Shared sense of purpose, values & principles



Promotes Diverse Product Integrity



Honours and learns from the past to create an even better future



Built to last, it spreads incrementally over time



Not afraid to experiment



## What our guests say about Clough Bottom...

“Keep up the good work. Places like this, with this standard of accommodation and thought for the environment are few and far between and very appreciated. Many thanks.”

Coach House, 2010

“I am particularly impressed to read about the care of the cows and think that the eco ethics penetrate the entire operation here at Clough Bottom”

Saddle Barn, 2009

“Chrys and I thoroughly enjoyed our stay and despite the chilly weather we were enchanted by the Ribble Valley. We are not great ones at returning but your location is one that we may well consider for a repeat visit. In the meantime we shall sing your praises to all and sundry”

Coach House, 2009

“...It possesses a simple quality and what's more Jane, Harry and the team give you a very special welcome and nothing is too much trouble. Even better is the location – it's so tucked away in a pretty dell that it could almost be a secret hideaway (and wouldn't it be lovely if it stayed that way?) It's also ideally positioned for scenic tours of the Forest of Bowland...”

Saddle Barn & The Coach House, 2008, 2009, 210



## Recognition for our efforts...

**Silver Award Winner in the Sustainable Tourism Category of the Enjoy England Awards for Excellence 2011**



**Winner of England's Northwest Sustainable Tourism Award 2010**



## Recognition for our efforts...

**Winner of the Lancashire &  
Blackpool Tourist Board  
Sustainable Tourism Award 2010**



**2009/10 Award for Britain's Most  
Beautiful Farm - North West  
Region**



# Recognition for our efforts...

Winner of the Lancashire Evening Post's Green Business of the Year 2009



## Key issues...

- ❖ Tourism generates the region's biggest income, yet suffers with no overlying structure – it is all run on a very 'local' and disparate level
- ❖ Help, advice and assistance should be county- and country-wide
- ❖ Too much 'traditional' tourism can have a negative effect – people have visited and spoiled the very things they came to see!
- ❖ Responsible tourism can work in harmony with the environment – only if truly sustainable!
- ❖ Agriculture is at the heart of everything we do. Through progressive diversification Clough Bottom has developed businesses that make the most of its geography, landscape and natural assets. All compliment one another and allow us to exploit niche markets and mitigate risk.



## Risks to tourism...

- ❖ Foot & Mouth, movement restrictions
- ❖ Bird flu
- ❖ Planning control
- ❖ Food shortages, fuel shortages
- ❖ £/Euro, interest rates, common market
- ❖ Food scares (BSE, salmonella, ecoli)
- ❖ Power cuts, water bans & drought
- ❖ Travel disruption (volcanoes, terrorism, strikes, fuel)
- ❖ Carbon footprint
- ❖ Climate change
- ❖ Population growth
- ❖ Recession



Our 'eco' beliefs and sustainable ethos has been part of Clough Bottom for over 20 years and is at the heart of everything we do. We are a green business in it for the long term.

Our vision is in the detail, which is why we subscribe to continuous improvement - always evaluating what we do, and what we can do better and more responsibly. We hope our approach will help safeguard this very special environment for future generations.

My fervent personal belief system drives me to combine my passion for engineering with learning about and implementing renewable energy solutions that promote sustainability.



**“Clough Bottom Farm is an excellent ambassador for our work on sustainable tourism, and a real credit to the Forest of Bowland AONB!”**

Cathy Hopley, Mike Pugh & Hetty Byrne  
Forest of Bowland AONB  
[www.forestofbowland.com](http://www.forestofbowland.com)



**“The right action cannot happen without  
the right thinking”**

Prince Charles





# Any questions?

For more information on Clough Bottom Farm go to  
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