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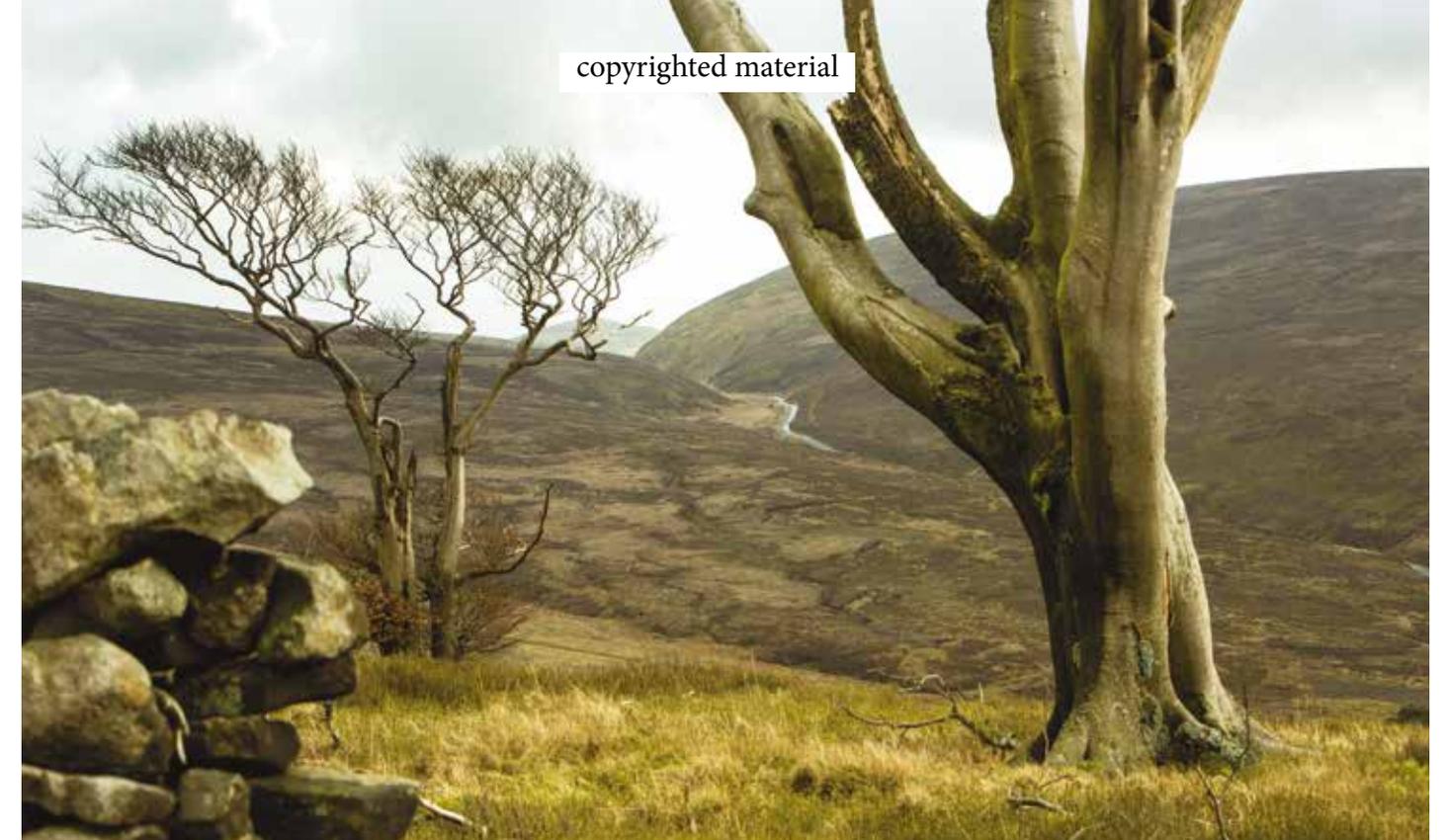


*Langden Brook, near Hareden*

## *Southern Bowland*

The southern aspect of Bowland is arguably the least known of all, though it contains very attractive scenery and interesting history. The village of Chipping is the natural centre for exploring southern Bowland: it is a fascinating old settlement and deserving of more detailed coverage later. The Bleasdale pastures offer a pleasant, sheltered basin in the south, with fine wooded areas especially around Bleasdale Tower. Among the Bleasdale pastures lies one of Bowland's most interesting antiquities, the Bleasdale stone circle, which dates from the Bronze Age. North of Chipping, the land rises again to Parlick Pike, one of Bowland's most distinctive fells, then the huge mass of Fair Snape Fell.

The high places of Bowland occupy the heart of the district. It is these particularly dramatic Bowland fells that both define the framework of the area and contribute to the unique sense of mystery which sets Bowland apart from other tracts of upland Britain. As recently as the 1980s, authors including Wainwright, Mitchell and Freethy wrote of the Bowland fells as a near-primeval, wild terrain from which the walker and explorer were largely excluded. Today, with freedom to roam the fells access is available to all; yet even in high summer you may wander for hours among the hills and see hardly another soul along the way. We hope that this book will persuade readers to explore the distinctive character of Bowland and its soaring fells: one of the last true wilderness areas of England.



## THE HIGH PLACES

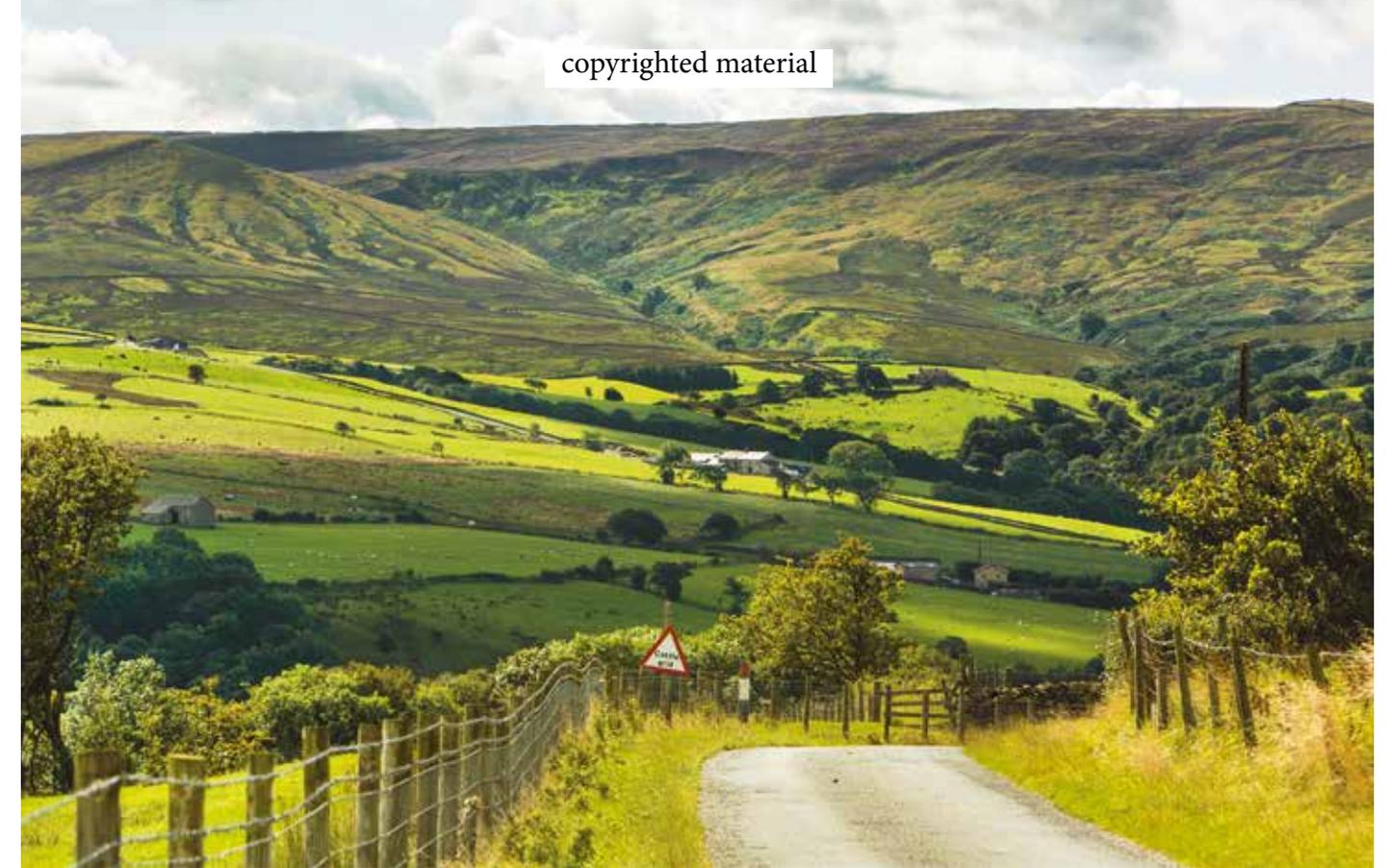
At the heart of the Forest of Bowland are its high fells: sweeping, untamed, distinctive and lonely. In these high places are many inspiring viewpoints, unique habitats and rare birds of prey. Walkers can wander for hours in near-isolation on Bowland's fells, swept up in a landscape that is all its own. These high fells cover roughly half of the Forest of Bowland's total area of about 300 square miles. A considerable part of the fells is open moorland over 1,000ft in height, and much of that is over 1,500ft, reaching its summit at Ward's Stone (1,841ft, or 561m), seven miles south-east of Lancaster.

Superficially, the fells of Bowland appear similar in character to the Yorkshire Dales or the south Pennines. The main underlying rock is millstone grit, with a number of limestone intrusions, for example around Whitewell and east of Dunsop Bridge. Substantial beds of peat cover many summits, reminiscent of the Peak District. But there is a distinctly different character to Bowland's fells, especially in harsh weather, which is often more akin

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## THE ROADS OF BOWLAND

### *Getting around the district*

Without a doubt, one of Bowland's great assets is its quietness: most of its roads are minor roads. The A683, in its north-west corner, and the B6478 across Waddington Fell are the only classified roads making serious incursions into the AONB. Yet some of its roads, including one ancient track, have considerable history and traverse some of Bowland's most beautiful scenery. It says much about the character of Bowland that, of the four roads we describe in more detail, none is an A or B road, one has only been a through road since the 1950s and one is actually an ancient track incorporating several miles of Roman road. All of them cross important watersheds and pass through suddenly-reached, dramatic viewpoints which, when seen in the right conditions, will deeply impress themselves on the visitor's memory.

*The Forest of Bowland*

heyday: for centuries it was the administrative centre of the district, under the De Lacys of Clitheroe Castle. The *Hark to Bounty* inn, in the village centre, includes an old courtroom dating from 1590.

The parish church, St. Andrew's, makes an excellent start for a tour of Slaidburn. The present building is largely 15<sup>th</sup> century, rebuilt by the Hammerton family, but there was almost certainly a Saxon church on the site. The raised graveyard is characteristic of the Saxon pattern, and excavations have uncovered a Bronze Age burial site adjacent to the present church.

Perhaps the most striking feature within the church, is the unusual three-deck pulpit – for verger, parson and preacher! The font is Norman, restored after being thrown out by Puritan zealots. Outside the church wall are stone steps, formerly used by riders on horseback to dismount. Until recently, the village had a flourishing Methodist church too, by the green near the river. Dwindling attendance led to its closure in 1999, but the old building has now been given a new lease of life as a village hall.

The village reached its highest population, of around 800, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and it was at this time that its school, endowed by John Brennand, was built near the church. The foundation stone dates from 1717.

Perhaps Slaidburn's most famous building, however, is the *Hark to Bounty* inn, at the T-junction in the village

*Right: Slaidburn from The Skaithe*  
(‘Skaithe’ means racecourse in Old Norse)

