

# Quite Simply... Ribble Valley



## **WELCOME to the Ribble Valley. It's a truly special place!**

The largest district in Lancashire with more than 244 square miles, much of which is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, it also has the smallest population with some 54,000 residents.

Clitheroe and Longridge are its main market towns, with Clitheroe acknowledged as the Ribble Valley's "capital." Its Castle Keep, built in 1186, has recently enjoyed a major facelift. As a result it is again prominent from all areas of the town and further afield. Its walkways have been replaced, and stonework and the area around the Keep itself cleaned and re-planted. It was the first phase of a £3.2m scheme to turn the Castle and surrounding area into a premier all-weather attraction to compete with the best in the county. The ambitious scheme will position the Castle Keep and museum (now closed for refurbishment) as a central part of the North West's leisure and heritage experience.

When work is complete, it is hoped to attract more than 17,000 visitors a year, developing strong links to the education and specialist interest sectors.

From the Castle Keep are excellent panoramic views of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It was the first protected area in England to be awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, joining just 30 other protected areas across Europe. This is awarded to protected areas that are delivering tourism that is both nature and landscape friendly and contributes to the economic development of the region. Village life is central to the well-being of the Ribble Valley. With more than 44 villages, a number of which have changed very little over the years, names such as Downham, owned by Lord Clitheroe, who does not allow overhead electricity cables or excessive signage, Slaidburn and Bolton-by-Bowland immediately conjure up an image of England at her very best.