

THIS MONTH'S SITES



1. BORROWDALE  
See p159 of the *Sites Directory* & *Handbook 2013/14*



2. KENDAL  
See p166 of the *Directory*.  
Facilities include a playground and games room.



3. BLACKPOOL SOUTH  
See p158 of the *Directory*.  
Facilities include a playground.



4. ROYAL VALE AS  
See p168 of the *Directory*.



# Bright lights and BIG LAKES

From the stunning scenery of the Lake District to the bustling beaches of Blackpool and the tranquil countryside of Cheshire, the North West has something for everyone, says Mark Sutcliffe

You can book your pitch online at [caravanclub.co.uk/searchandbook](http://caravanclub.co.uk/searchandbook) or by calling our Advance Booking Service on **01342 327490**. Please call Affiliated Sites directly.



## FOOD + DRINK

### The Flock-In

This tearoom at Rosthwaite in Borrowdale is set on Yew Tree working farm and serves home-made lunches, cakes and scones, with hot drinks by the pint mug.



**Contact:** 01768 777675, borrowdaleyewtreefarm.co.uk  
**Nearest featured site:** Borrowdale

### The Bells of Peover

This popular dining pub in the village of Lower Peover offers an imaginative menu based on top local produce.

**Contact:** 01565 722269, thebellslopeover.com  
**Nearest featured site:** Royal Vale



### Yorkshire Fisheries

Fish and chips are a seaside tradition and Yorkshire Fisheries on Topping Street is one of Blackpool's oldest and best.

**Contact:** 01253 627739, yorkshirefisheries.co.uk  
**Nearest featured site:** Blackpool South



### Low Sizergh Barn

One of Britain's best farm shops where you can buy fresh bread and milk for breakfast or pick up some goodies for a picnic.

**Contact:** 01539 560426, lowsizerghbarn.co.uk  
**Nearest featured site:** Kendal



Derwentwater is approximately three miles long and one mile wide

Photo: Dave Willis

Few regions in England can match the diverse and spectacular attractions of the North West. Stretching from Cumbria in the north to Cheshire in the south, this part of the country takes in the vibrant cities of Manchester and Liverpool, Lancashire's sweeping sandy beaches and Britain's best-loved seaside resort. You'll travel through peaceful farmland dotted with grand country houses and step into the largest national park in England – the stunning Lake District.

Our first site, Borrowdale, is tucked away in a beautiful valley in the Lake District's northern fells. Formerly known as Low Manesty, the site enjoys a spectacular setting in Manesty Park, a National Trust woodland close to the southern shore of Derwentwater. Sixty hardstanding pitches are arranged in small clearings to give a secluded feel and, while there's no toilet block, this site is ideal for families seeking a peaceful Cumbrian countryside break.

Paths lead directly from the site to Derwentwater, where you can walk along the shore or take to the lake courtesy of the Keswick Launch Company. The nearest

landing stage is High Brandelhow and you can either soak up views on a cruise right round the water or hop on and off to explore. Alternatively, adventurous families may want to hire canoes in Keswick and paddle across the lake and along the River Derwent under their own steam.

#### PEAK VIEWING

For those on foot, the options are endless. One of the most popular fells in the Lake District, Cat Bells, is right on the site's doorstep. Offering fantastic views across Derwentwater, it makes an excellent half-day outing for walkers of all ages and abilities.

Alternatively, a low-level walk south past the village of Grange will lead you to Castle Crag and the Jaws of Borrowdale, described by guidebook writer Alfred Wainwright as "the loveliest square mile in the Lake District". If the weather is set fair and you're feeling energetic, then the spectacular Corridor Route to the top of Scafell Pike, the highest peak in England, begins from nearby Seathwaite.

However, when the forecast is less kind – Borrowdale is famously the wettest place in England – then the bustling market town of

## "Borrowdale Club site is tucked away in a beautiful valley in the Lake District's northern fells"

Keswick, just five miles away, beckons. There are museums to explore, a theatre on the lake shore and plenty of tempting cafés and shops. Whatever the weather, children will love a scoop or two of English Lakes Ice Cream – Thunder and Lightning flavour is a perennial favourite.

Our next site, Kendal, sits on the other side of the Lake District, just beyond the national park's south-eastern boundary. Previously known as Low Park Wood, it has 141 hardstanding pitches dotted among the trees of a National Trust woodland beside the River Kent. Wild flowers including orchids grow here and, thanks to recent coppicing work, the site is sunny and bright. The toilet block is sparklingly clean, as are

the parent and baby facilities, and there's a play area and well-stocked shop, too.

You'll find many attractions within a mile of the site, including the working farm and shop at Low Sizergh Barn, impressive Sizergh Castle and the highly-rated Strickland Arms pub. Anglers may prefer to settle down for some peaceful fishing on the Kent (subject to permit).

Kendal, known as the 'Auld Grey Town' because of the colour of its handsome limestone buildings, is just three miles away. It has an atmospheric ruined castle and many museums and galleries but, on a sunny day, the surrounding countryside is hard to resist and the famous Kendal Mint Cake is the perfect fuel for some walking.

Nearby Whitbarrow is a National Nature Reserve and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. A short hike to Lord's Seat takes in impressive limestone pavements and was described by Wainwright as "beautiful... every step of the way". Or you can head south to the wide, golden stretch of Morecambe Bay. The bay crossing is popular but, due to the unpredictable and shifting sands, it's only possible in the company of the Queen's Guide, Cedric Robinson. >>

## FOR THE FAMILY

### Lakeland Climbing Centre

Located in Kendal, this centre means you can go climbing whatever the weather. The main wall is 25m high and there are bouldering and training rooms suited to beginners and children, too.

**Contact:** 01539 721766, kendalwall.co.uk  
**Nearest featured site:** Kendal



### Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre

Adults and kids alike will enjoy a day here. Learn about the mysteries of space, listen to the Big Bang, try out the whispering dishes and find out about the 76m diameter Lovell Telescope.

**Contact:** 01477 571766, jodrellbank.net  
**Nearest featured site:** Royal Vale



### Cumberland Pencil Museum

This Keswick museum traces pencil history from the first Seathwaite graphite mines 350 years ago to today. There's an art studio for kids, free drawing demonstrations and the world's longest pencil.

**Contact:** 01768 773626, pencilmuseum.co.uk  
**Nearest featured site:** Borrowdale

### Blackpool Pleasure Beach

The Big One roller coaster is the main attraction here, but there are lots of rides for younger children too, including the new Wallace & Gromit Thrill-O-Matic.

**Contact:** 0871 222 1234, blackpoolpleasurebeach.com  
**Nearest featured site:** Blackpool South





Jetty at Brandelhow Park beside Derwentwater

Photo: Tony West

“Voted the nation’s favourite resort, Blackpool has plenty to keep the entire family entertained”

**SEASIDE SPECIAL**

Further south along the coast – an hour’s drive into Lancashire from Kendal – is our third site, Blackpool South. Situated just a mile from the M55, it’s easy to find and there are 96 generously-sized hardstanding pitches. It’s screened from the road to improve privacy and reduce traffic noise, and there’s a spotless toilet and shower block, plus a parent and toddler washroom. A new playground opened last summer too, making it a popular place for families.

The site is just three miles from Blackpool’s famous seafront – close enough to be easily accessible but far enough that it’s quiet at night. The town has been voted the nation’s favourite seaside resort and there’s plenty to keep the entire family entertained. The long beach is a cheerful mix of swimmers and sandcastles, dodgems and donkey rides, and three piers stretch



Blackpool Pleasure Beach

out into the waves, while above it all soars the iconic ironwork of the Blackpool Tower. Inspired by the Eiffel Tower and completed in 1894, it is 158m high – the view from the Eye at the top pulls out to sea and drops straight down through the glass-floored SkyWalk. (*Strictly*) *Come Dancing* fans can practise their waltz on the famous sprung floor of the opulent Tower Ballroom.

**LIGHT FANTASTIC**

Thrillseekers will want to make a beeline for Blackpool Pleasure Beach, home to nearly 40 rides including the Big One, Britain’s tallest (235ft) and fastest (87mph) roller coaster. Visitors after 29 August can also see the resort lit with ‘electric sunshine’ as the one million bulbs of the famed Illuminations are switched on.

For a quieter day beside the sea, head a short way south to Lytham St Anne’s, where Lytham and St-Anne’s-On-The-Sea have merged to form a single town of tree-lined streets and well-kept greens, rich with independent shops and boutiques, and home to four golf courses. Bounded on one side by the Irish Sea and on another by the River Ribble, the town’s dunes and estuary teem with birdlife, and its wide, sandy beach is a tranquil spot to spend the day.

Those seeking tranquillity will enjoy our fourth site, Royal Vale, south down the >>

CULTURE



Photo: Stuart Holmes

Theatre by the Lake

Sitting on the shore of Derwentwater, this theatre has a vibrant line-up of classic and modern plays, music, literature and film festivals as well as family-friendly shows.

**Contact:** 01768 774411, [theatrebythelake.com](http://theatrebythelake.com)  
**Nearest featured site:** Borrowdale



Photo: James Millington

Traditional trams

Britain’s first electric tramway opened on Blackpool Promenade in 1885 and you can still ride heritage trams up to Fleetwood on special summer weekends.

**Contact:** 01253 473001, [blackpooltransport.com](http://blackpooltransport.com)  
**Nearest featured site:** Blackpool South



Photo: National Trust Images, Joe Wainwright

Sizergh Castle

Home to the Strickland family for 800 years, this imposing fortress’s original medieval tower has been extended many times and the beautiful grounds include an impressive rock garden.

**Contact:** 01539 560951, [nationaltrust.org.uk/sizergh](http://nationaltrust.org.uk/sizergh)  
**Nearest featured site:** Kendal

Lyme Park

The largest house in Cheshire and familiar to millions as ‘Pemberley’ in the BBC’s television adaptation of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*.

**Contact:** 01663 762023, [nationaltrust.org.uk/lyme-park](http://nationaltrust.org.uk/lyme-park)  
**Nearest featured site:** Royal Vale



Photo: National Trust Images, Joe Wainwright

# OUTDOOR FUN



## Honister Slate Mine

This slate mine is home to the UK's first *via ferrata* – from the Latin meaning 'iron way', it's a system of cables, rungs and wire bridges that lets you climb safely high above the valley. There are two routes to choose from – the Classic and the Xtreme. Minimum age 10 years.

**Contact:** 01768 777714, honister-slate-mine.co.uk  
**Nearest featured site:** Borrowdale

## Tatton Park

To the north of Knutsford, this historic Cheshire estate boasts a mansion, a manor house dating from medieval times, stunning gardens, a farm and a deer park.

**Contact:** 01625 374400, tattonpark.org.uk  
**Nearest featured site:** Royal Vale



## Cycling

There are some fantastic cycling routes in the North West, but be prepared to tackle some hills. The westerly section of the Trans Pennine Trail travels between Southport and Penistone, via Liverpool and is mostly traffic-free. Another gem is the Walney to Wear route, National Cycle Network Route 70, which traverses the Lake District Peninsulas.

**Contact:** [sustrans.org.uk](http://sustrans.org.uk)

## RSPB Leighton Moss

Just a few miles south of Kendal is RSPB Leighton Moss, the largest reed bed in the North West and a top place for spotting some of Britain's rarest birds, including marsh harriers and bitterns.

**Contact:** 01524 701601, [rspb.org.uk/leightonmoss](http://rspb.org.uk/leightonmoss)  
**Nearest featured site:** Kendal



M6 into the pretty Cheshire countryside. This luxurious five-star Affiliated Site has 52 hardstanding pitches situated beside the winding brook of Peover Eye, and is adult-only (which makes it a peaceful choice during school holiday periods).

Footpaths lead in all directions through picturesque farmland and woods, and it's just a short drive to historic Knutsford. This well-heeled market town is one corner of the county's famous Golden Triangle, an area of the Cheshire Plain known for its expensive houses and celebrity residents, and you'll find boutiques and wine bars galore. It has literary pedigree too, as the basis for Elizabeth Gaskell's classic novel, *Cranford*.

North of town, you'll find the National Trust-owned Tatton Park, where a Tudor Old Hall and Neo-Classical Mansion are surrounded by 50 acres of formal gardens and a 1,000-acre deer park. The Head Gardener's Cottage has recently been converted into a tea room and there's a rare-breed farm too, making this attraction one of the most popular in the region.

It's not far to the western edge of the Peak District National Park and a leg-stretching walk up to the top of Shining Tor. At 559m, this is the highest point in Cheshire and its sweeping summit views make a fitting finale to your tour of the beautiful North West.

## MEMBERS' VIEWS



**The Thackers** (Tim, Sarah, six-year-old Jack, four-year-old Katie and Tink the Border Collie) from Heversham were staying at Borrowdale. "It's the third time we've been here and it's just nice to get away from work. We like to keep active and there are loads of things to do here. We went for a walk up Castle Crag this morning and the kids have been whizzing round on their bikes this afternoon. They love it here – it's completely safe and they spend most of their time exploring the woods and building dens."

**Jim and Mavis Wellington** from Cornwall said Blackpool South was one of the best sites they've ever stayed on. "The facilities are superb



– especially if you're disabled – and the wardens couldn't do enough for us. The pitches are nice and generous, so you can keep the car close by and they are all nice and level and very well drained."

**Michael and Donna Riley** from Preston have been to Borrowdale several times. "The pitches are wonderfully spaced out and we like the seclusion in among these lovely little glades. We mainly come here for the walking. We walk around the lake or sometimes go up Cat Bells, which isn't too demanding, but has brilliant views from the top."



**Terry Colclough** from Stoke-on-Trent was enjoying a stay at Blackpool South with his West Highland Terriers Rose and Dolly. "We come here about four times a year. The facilities and pitches are always maintained to the same high standards and there's plenty to keep us occupied. The site is nice and peaceful if you just want to relax in the caravan, but we also enjoy a walk along the prom and sometimes take in a couple of shows. We usually stay

## Club Together

The online community that just keeps growing

To read even more member views, see our fantastic online forum at [caravanclub.co.uk/together](http://caravanclub.co.uk/together)



here for New Year's Eve because there's always a bit of a social – everyone brings a bottle and the wardens put on a few sandwiches and we all end up dancing round the car park."