



LAKE DISTRICT HONEY COMPANY



Honey, I'm home.
Jim Lowther doing
bee business on
Shap Fell





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Jim Lowther – owner of Lowther Castle & Gardens in Cumbria – is a passionate bee-keeper and in 2018, he set up the Lake District Honey Company to sell his home-produced honey from his home-grown bees.

Lowther bees live in hives on upland and lowland sites – on the lovely and historic Shap Fell, in the glowing curves of the Bampton Valley, alongside the small but perfectly formed River Lowther and around the grounds of Lowther Castle itself.

Not only does Jim harvest and bottle the honey himself but he also makes the hives, in his workshop at his Lakeland farmhouse. A queen-breeding programme has been under way since 2020.



BAMPTON VALLEY WILDFLOWER HONEY

As a consequence of an extensive wilding programme, the Lowther Estate is now home to a number of wildflower meadows. Vipers' Bugloss, Campion, Corn Poppy, Corn Marigold – these are just a few of the wildflowers that carpet parts of the Bampton Valley and nearby Setterah Park.

In addition, more natural hay and grassland meadows have been sown – less showy perhaps but equally important in terms of diversity of seeds, plant pollination and varied diet for stock and of course bees.



Setterah Park,
captured in full bloom
by Val Corbett





Looking west from
above, near Shap,
pictured by Tony Rumsey



SHAP FELL HEATHER HONEY

Bell heather and ling heather proliferate on Shap Fell, which is broken by the River Lowther and overlooked by the famous Lakeland hills. During the flowering season – late July and August – the fell hums with the foraging of hundreds of thousands of Lowther bees.

The origin of the word Shap may be hep, Old Norse for heap of stones. This probably refers to the huge megalithic stone pavement that lay alongside the River Lowther. Only traces today remain.





LOWTHER CASTLE BLOSSOM HONEY

Sitting as it does on a long limestone scar, Lowther Castle is surrounded by a rich variety of plant life – wild and tamed. The gardens, which have been in place for centuries, are a treasure trove of woodland, lawns and borders, some highly planted and some left to their own devices.

Across the 130 acres of the gardens around Lowther Castle, Lake District Honey Company hives are scattered. Many too sit around the outskirts, along the so-called Emperor's Drive and in and out of parts of the ancient Lowther Park.





Lowther Castle with
its famous Rose Garden
in the foreground



The River Lowther,
in dreamy mode,
captured by Val Corbett



RIVER LOWTHER BLENDED HONEY

The River Lowther is just 9.5 miles long but every inch of its journey is heart-stoppingly beautiful. It flows from Keld, just outside Shap, past the long-ruined Shap Abbey, round the western edge of Knipe Scar and into the River Eamont. It skirts through woodland and meadows, through land that is tended and land that is not.

This honey is a blend, making the most of the bees' journeys along the river as they gather from wildflowers and trees alike.



LOWTHER ESTATE REGENERATIVE LAND-MANAGEMENT

Eight hundred and fifty years ago, the earliest known member of the Lowther family established himself in the corner of Cumbria that is now known as the Lowther Estate. Three principal dwellings have come and gone since that first settlement and today, the Estate is presided over by the ruined Lowther Castle – a thriving visitor attraction.

While the Estate has grown and fluctuated, Lowther has been guided over the past centuries by an abiding will to stay ahead of the times. The benefits of forestry were foreseen during the reign of Edward I. Vegetarianism was embraced by Viscount Lonsdale in the late 17th century. Lowther Castle may have been partly demolished in the 1950s but in the long-term, the removal of its roof ensured the future security of the Estate at large.

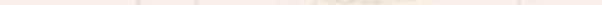




Looking forward, Lowther continues to be ambitious – with a regenerative agricultural strategy driving the machine of the Estate. The medieval Deer Park may still be as it was hundreds of years ago but its management, along with the husbandry of much of the park, is being substantially de-intensified. Fences are coming down, small graziers are being replaced by large ones, stock is being managed in an entirely different, more sustainable way.

All this is to promote a more natural environment where biodiversity and species richness increases.

Bees are at the heart of this ambitious endeavour.



To find out more about Lake District Honey
or to make wholesale enquiries,

www.lakedistricthoney.buzz



The Lake District Honey Company is
based at Lowther Castle in Cumbria.

For more information on Lowther Castle,
visit www.lowthercastle.org



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