



The Royal Oak
HOTEL

Borrowdale, Keswick

WELCOME TO OUR
AUGUST NEWSLETTER

Don't skip the summer!

WE NEED YOUR HELP! 🙌

We're up for another award! This time it's the Cumbria Life Awards and we would really appreciate you taking the time to vote for us. The category we've been entered for is the Best Casual Dining Venue. These awards are definitive accolades to recognise individuals and businesses as a symbol of their outstanding contribution to the experience of visitors to Cumbria.

This is what is important to us – our restaurant full of eager diners, a non-fussy, relaxed atmosphere, staff who take pride in serving Chef's delectable dishes and where the food and service speak for itself, it's called real Cumbrian hospitality.

We have a focus on healthy food but recognise that you're here to indulge a little as well. Daily changing menu, local quality produce, cooked fresh every day by creative Head Chef David Lee and his team.

Please scan the QR Code or Click this page to vote for the Royal Oak.

Finalist

cumbrialife

AWARDS 2026

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THE BORROWDALE VALLEY, WHERE NATURE PUTS ON A SHOW

There are places in England that simply stop you in your tracks. Borrowdale is one of them.

Tucked into the heart of the Lake District, this ten-mile valley runs south from the shimmering shores of Derwentwater up into the high fells, Scafell Pike, England's highest peak, standing sentinel at its head. Along the way, pastures enclosed by dry stone walls give way to ancient woodland, the woodland thins into open fellside, and everywhere there is water, cascading down rock faces, threading through valley floors, running beneath stone bridges with the easy confidence of something that has always been here.

That water defines Borrowdale more than anything else. The valley receives twice the rainfall of its lower reaches, making it the wettest inhabited place in England, and the effect on the landscape is startling. The surrounding woodlands qualify as temperate rainforest, ancient Atlantic oaks receiving around eleven feet of rain a year, their branches and boulders buried under mosses, liverworts and lichens in colours that catch you off guard. In 2024, 721 hectares of this woodland were formally declared a National Nature Reserve. Standing inside it, you immediately understand why.

There are bigger moments too. Above Grange Bridge, the valley is constricted between the steep slopes of Kings How and Castle Crag, a narrowing carved by ice over thousands of years, known as the Jaws of Borrowdale. Road and river squeeze through together, the crags rising sheer above, before the valley opens again into something wide and pastoral. It shifts the scale of things in a way that lingers.

For walkers, Borrowdale is among the finest places in the country, with routes for every level, from quiet riverside paths to ridge lines with views that go on and on. But the valley has just as much to offer those with no particular agenda. A slow drive along the B5289, a detour to the Bowder Stone, a house-sized boulder balanced on one edge that has been stopping people in their tracks since the Georgian era, an hour watching the light change over Derwentwater, the place doesn't require effort to get under your skin.

At the Royal Oak, you are right in the heart of it. Rosthwaite sits in the upper valley, beyond the Jaws, where the fells rise close on every side. Step outside and Borrowdale is already asking you to stay a little longer.



THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF BORROWDALE'S VIKING SETTLERS

When visitors arrive in Borrowdale, they are often captivated by the dramatic fells, ancient woodlands and peaceful valleys. Few realise, however, that they are walking through a landscape shaped more than a thousand years ago by Viking settlers whose influence can still be seen today.

The story begins in the 9th and 10th centuries, when Norse settlers travelled from Scandinavia, often via Ireland and the Isle of Man, seeking new land and opportunities. While the popular image of Vikings is of fierce warriors arriving in longships, many were also farmers, craftsmen and traders looking to establish permanent homes.

Borrowdale's remote valleys would have felt surprisingly familiar to these settlers. The steep-sided landscape, abundant water and grazing land closely resembled parts of their Scandinavian homeland. As a result, many chose to settle throughout Cumbria, leaving behind a lasting legacy that survives in the names of places we know today.

Perhaps the most obvious clue is right here in Rosthwaite itself. The ending "thwaite" comes from the Old Norse word *þveit*, meaning a clearing in a forest. Across the Lake District, there are dozens of villages and hamlets ending in "thwaite", each marking a place where Norse settlers cleared woodland to create farms and communities.

Many of the surrounding landscape features also have Viking origins. Place names such as "beck" for a stream, "fell" for a mountain, and "dale" for a valley all derive from Old Norse words. Visitors walking around Borrowdale are unknowingly using Viking vocabulary every day.

Life for these settlers was far from easy. The valley would have been heavily wooded, with only small areas suitable for farming. Families kept sheep, cattle and goats, while carefully cultivating the land they had cleared. The foundations of many of the farming traditions that continue in Borrowdale today can be traced back to this period.

The Vikings also brought their own customs, beliefs and legal traditions. Over time, they integrated with the existing population, creating a distinctive culture that helped shape medieval Cumbria. Although little physical evidence remains in Borrowdale itself, archaeological discoveries across the region continue to reveal details of Norse life and settlement.

Today, the Viking settlers may be long gone, but their presence remains woven into the landscape. Every time we refer to a beck, climb a fell, or visit Rosthwaite, we are using words left behind by those early Norse pioneers. The Vikings may have disappeared from history, but their story remains hidden in plain sight throughout the valley.

Did you know? The name Rosthwaite is thought to mean "the clearing belonging to Hrosti" or "Hrosti's clearing", combining a Norse personal name with the Old Norse word "thwaite".



EXPERIENTIAL TRAVEL – ENGAGE DIRECTLY WITH YOUR ENVIRONMENT

There is something quietly powerful about Borrowdale that you only begin to understand when you slow down enough to truly experience it. Tucked away in the heart of the Lake District, this valley is not just a place to visit—it is a place to feel, notice, and connect with on a deeper level.

In a world where travel is often about ticking off sights and moving quickly from one attraction to the next, Borrowdale encourages a different approach. Here, the experience is not found in rushing between viewpoints, but in engaging directly with your surroundings and allowing the landscape to become part of your journey.

Experiential travel is about being present. It is about stepping outside, feeling the crisp air on your face, hearing the River Derwent as it winds through the valley, and noticing how the light changes across the fells throughout the day. It is about pausing—not just to see Borrowdale, but to truly experience it.

A walk here is never just a walk. It is the crunch of leaves underfoot in autumn, the scent of rain on stone, and the sight of mist rising slowly from the hills in the morning. Even simple moments— a quiet bench overlooking the valley or a still reflection in a roadside pool can become the most memorable when you take the time to notice them.

This is what makes experiential travel so meaningful. It is not about how many places you visit, but how deeply you connect with the place you are in. In Borrowdale, that connection feels effortless. The valley invites you in quietly and rewards you with moments of calm, clarity, and perspective.

At the Royal Oak, we see this every day, guests returning from the fells not just talking about where they went, but what they noticed along the way: the colours of the trees, the sound of sheep on the hillside, or the way the clouds moved across the peaks.

Experiencing Borrowdale does not require a plan. It might simply be sitting by the river for a while, enjoying a quiet drink after a day outdoors, or stepping outside early in the morning when the valley is still and peaceful.

So, as you explore Borrowdale, we encourage you to embrace experiential travel. Slow down. Look closer. Listen more carefully. Allow yourself to be part of the landscape rather than just passing through it.

Because here in Borrowdale, it is never just about the destination—it is about how you experience the journey.



IS SCAFELL ON YOUR BUCKET LIST?

Officially the highest mountain in England, Scafell Pike towers over the surrounding landscape at an impressive 3,209 feet high. It's a magnet for stalwart hikers and sightseers alike and has been a draw to people from all walks of life and corners of the globe for generations.

While Scafell Pike is actually the smallest of the national three peaks (Ben Nevis 4,413 ft and Snowdon, 3560 ft) it is far from an easy climb and can be difficult to navigate but for those who undertake the challenge and reach the summit, the sense of achievement is very satisfying and the effort rewarded with magnificent 360 panoramic views, on a clear day you can see other peaks as far away as Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

Time for completion depends on fitness level, route taken, the time of year and how many break stops. The most popular and shortest route from Wasdale should take a reasonably fit hiker around 3-4 hours in reasonable weather conditions. Alternative trails from Borrowdale, Eskdale and Great Langdale could take upwards of 6 hours.

For the more recreational rambler and sightseer, Scafell Pike provides a spectacular backdrop for leisurely walks around the valleys of Borrowdale and Wasdale, and for those who don't want to stray too far from the car, it is possible to get close enough to feel the imposing presence of the iconic mountain.

There's still time to take on this challenge before winter sets in; the Royal Oak is ideally situated for walking Scafell Pike; many guests have stayed at the hotel whilst they completed this adventure.

FUN FACTS

The record for the fastest ascent and descent is 47 minutes.

More than 250,000 walkers climb Scafell every year.

The first recorded ascent was made at the start of the 19th century by the romantic poet Samuel Coleridge. In 1802, he wrote a letter from the summit.

This mountain in the Lake District receives the most mountain rescue calls, with over 100 a year from walkers underestimating the challenge.

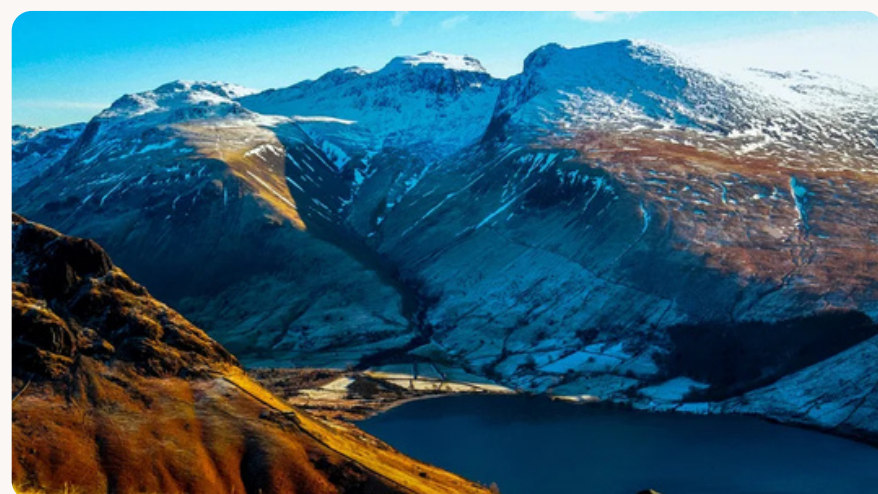
Scafell is a remnant of an extinct volcano that erupted over 400 million years ago.

The National Trust own Scafell Pike, it was donated to them in 1920 by Lord Leconfield, giving the freedom of access. The gesture was to honour the men of the Lake District who lost their lives fighting in the First World War.

The deepest lake in England lies at the foot of Scafell Pike; Wast Water is 258 feet deep.

Birds of prey, buzzards, kestrels and golden eagles can be found on Scafell Pike.

Scafell Pike is 3 times the height of the London Shard.



HOW WILL YOU COSY UP THIS OCTOBER?

There's probably no better time than October to walk in the North Lakes, with breathtaking landscapes and incredible displays of colour that Autumn yields. Whether you want to climb the highest peaks, seek out the best views, walk along the lakeshore or explore the forests and woodlands, the Royal Oak is perfectly situated with doorstep walks also available.

The Royal Oak invites you to experience a warm and welcoming escape in October for only £189: Offer includes:

Overnight stay: Relax and unwind in a classic room.

Hearty breakfast: Fuel up for your day with a delicious breakfast.

Two-course evening dinner: Indulge in a delightful meal prepared with fresh, local ingredients.

Plus complimentary afternoon tea and homemade scones.

Book directly with the hotel and receive this special offer for just £189 per night for two in a classic double/twin room.



The Royal Oak
HOTEL
Borrowdale, Keswick

How will you cosy up
This October

Standard Double or Twin Room
Including Breakfast & Two Course
Evening Meal For Two
Just £189 per night!

 www.royaloakhotel.co.uk  017687 77214

NIFTY NOVEMBER BREAKS AT THE ROYAL OAK

As the chilly days of November approach, the Royal Oak invites you to experience a warm and welcoming escape. Upon arrival, treat yourself to a complimentary drink of your choice:

Lakeland Gin and Tonic: A refreshing and aromatic cocktail perfect for warming up.

Pint of Tyrrells Real Ale: A classic ale brewed locally for a taste of the region.

Our Nifty November Offer includes:

Overnight stay: Relax and unwind in a classic room.

Hearty breakfast: Fuel up for your day with a delicious breakfast.

Two-course evening dinner: Indulge in a delightful meal prepared with fresh, local ingredients.

Complimentary afternoon tea and scones: the perfect afternoon treat

Book directly with the hotel and receive this special offer for just £149 per night for two guests in a standard double/twin room throughout November.

The Royal Oak
HOTEL

Borrowdale, Keswick

Nifty
November

Standard Double or Twin Room
Including Breakfast & Two Course
Evening Meal for Two & Free
Welcome Drink

Just £149 per night!

Offer Valid Throughout November



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WINTER WEEKENDS AT THE ROYAL OAK

Imagine snowy peaks and winter fells, the scenery here is just unique and picturesque, days like these are the perfect excuse to throw on those fleeces and scarves, explore the great outdoors right here on our doorstep and immerse yourself in the beauty of the North Lake District.

As the chilly days of January approach, the Royal Oak invites you to experience a warm and welcoming escape. Upon arrival, get toasty by the log fire, treat yourself to a complimentary drink of your choice: G&T or a pint of real ale plus afternoon tea and homemade scones.

The package includes an overnight stay, indulgent two-course evening dinner, hearty Cumbrian breakfast for two guests in a classic double/twin room. Only £160 a night



The Royal Oak
HOTEL
Borrowdale, Keswick

Winter Weekends

Standard Double or Twin Room Including
Breakfast & Two Course Evening Meal for
Two, Free Welcome Drink and Afternoon
Tea & Scones

Just £160 per night!

Our Winter Warmer Fri & Sat Weekend deal is
back during December and January.



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