

Skipton Castle Woods

A beautiful, ancient woodland that planted a castle

Spirit of the Medieval Hunter. Artist: Anna and the Willow. Photo: Malcolm Stoney, 1979 Photography.



Skipton Castle Woods is rare, ancient woodland with over a thousand years of history. It was once part of a great hunting forest that stretched across the north of England. The woodland gave rise to a mighty castle that established a town - the rich hunting, abundant timber and water supplies influencing Baron Robert de Romille to build his castle here. Later, the wood helped to power Skipton's industrial revolution by supplying water and timber to the great cotton and wool mills nearby. Today, the woodland is a peaceful oasis to walk in miles of walking trails along the river valley and upper paths, you can immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of nature and trees.

Seasonal Highlights

Wild garlic in spring:

In spring, the whole woodland is full of heady scents. Look out for masses of wild garlic and other signs of the season, including frogspawn and pockets of bluebell, wood anemone and wild primrose.

Autumn red and gold:

Late October and throughout November is the best time to see Skipton Castle Woods in all its autumnal glory. Every path and surface is covered in amber confetti, and beech nuts and pine cones are scattered across the woodland floor.

Our top three things to try

Take the Sougha Gill Challenge

With over fifty steps from the valley floor to the paths above, this climb will get your heart pumping and your pulse racing.

Get your binoculars out

Immerse yourself in the tree canopy on the upper path on The Bailey side of the woodland. Enjoy the birdsong and get up close and personal with the wildlife.

Become a Nature Detective

Skipton Castle Woods is a natural, wild playground for kids, and becoming a Woodland Trust Nature Detective is easy. Download hundreds of activities from woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives, including games, trails, nature-spotting sheets and art ideas. Nature Detective activities are great for families who want to go wild at their own pace.



Artists: Anna and the Willow. Photo: Malcolm Stoney, 1979 Photography.

Capture wildlife on camera

The woodland attracts many species of bird. Red kites and buzzards are regular visitors over the pine and spruce, while woodpeckers are regularly heard throughout the wood.

Vagtails fly fast and low over the running water of Eller Beck, as dippers and herons take life at a slower pace around the water's edge. If you are quick enough with the camera, you may capture a flash of orange as kingfishers hunt around the river.



Dipper

northeastwildlife.co.uk



Great spotted woodpecker

Laurie Campbell/WTM



David Foley/WTML

Getting here

Skipton Castle Woods is located behind the castle, just a few minutes' walk from Skipton High Street.

The main entrance to the wood is accessed on foot via the Canal and Rivers Trust towpath located off Mill Bridge. The nearest postcode is BD23 1AW.

Pay and display car parking is available in the town at The Bailey Car Park, Skipton Castle BD23 1UA, (less than 0.5km/1/2 mile) from the wood. Skipton train station is just a 10-minute walk away. Bike racks are available in the High Street car park.

More information on access can be found at skipton.woodlandtrust.org.uk. If you would like this leaflet in another format, please contact us.



Stay in touch

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What's on 2019

- Sunday 14th April**
Ancient Woodland Flowers Guided Walk
- Saturday 20 April**
Magical Easter Eggventure
- Tuesday 23 April / Saturday 8th June**
History of Skipton Castle Woods Guided Walk
- Saturday 11 May / Sunday 21 July**
Secrets of Skipton Castle Woods Guided Walk
- Wednesday 29th May**
Nature Detectives Live
- Sunday 7th July**
Woodland Trust at Skipton Sheep Day
- Yorkshire Day, Thursday 1st August**
Nature Detectives Storytelling
- Saturday 10th August**
Bats and Beasts at Dusk
- Sunday 22 September**
The Myths of Trees Guided Walk
- Saturday 28 September**
Willow Lantern Making Workshops
- Saturday 5th October**
Autumn Fungi Hunt Guided Walk
- Saturday 12th October**
Willow Lantern Walk & Fireside Stories
- Saturday 7th December**
Christmas Wassailing & Tree Dressing Day
- Seasonal - Spring, Summer & Autumn**
Photography Workshops with an expert wildlife photographer

To find out more and book tickets, visit skipton.woodlandtrust.org.uk










Skipton Castle Woods

A natural oasis in the heart of Skipton

Share your photos or review your visit
Woodland Trust Skipton Castle Woods



- River valley route
- Upper paths extension
- Earl of Thanet Trail
- Public footpath
-  Entrance
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-  Steps
-  Toilets
-  Stone poetry seat
-  The Stalking Horse
-  Spirit of the Medieval Hunter
-  Tourist information

●●● River valley route

A pleasant, family friendly stroll from the main entrance along Eller Beck, ending at the Great Flood Bridge. This walk is great for spotting birdlife by the water, including ducks, kingfishers, wagtails and dippers. Retrace your steps to exit.

Wood access from town is via the canal towpath. Includes four steps, manageable with single pushchairs. A mainly wide, surfaced path with two short, moderate slopes. Some parts can be muddy after rain.

 **easy** | 1.4km / 1 mile | Allow 1hr

●●● Upper paths extension

Extend your river valley route by exploring the upper paths, accessed at various places in the woodland. Discover views over neighbouring farmland while getting closer to birdlife and the magnificent trees.


A mix of wide, surfaced paths and narrow, uneven sections with some steep drops. Accessed from the river valley via a choice of steps or a steep slope with handrail.

 **moderate** | 1.4km / 1 mile | Allow up to 1hr

●●● Earl of Thanet Trail (see other leaflet)

An enjoyable, active walk through the industrial history of Skipton Castle Woods. Discover the river valley and upper paths on this circular route from town to Skipton Castle, with great views through the trees below.

Mostly wide, surfaced path with some narrow, uneven sections. Includes four bridges, four sets of steps and one steep slope. Some parts can be muddy after heavy rain.

 **strenuous** | 4km / 2 1/2 miles | Allow 2 hrs



Grey wagtail

Grey wagtails are just one of the 28 species of bird recorded here.



Hornbeam

The woodland also contains a scattering of hornbeam (pictured) and sweet chestnut - some over 250 years old.