

Bowland Hay Time

The meadows of Bowland are now a rare treasure found in just a few places. Once commonplace, these flower rich meadows, full of colour and buzzing with life, still evoke memories of hay times past.

The Hay Time project aims to help farmers restore meadows across Bowland to foster interest in traditional skills, to record hay time recollections and to improve public access to meadows where possible.



Hay meadows are one of our rarest habitats and a priority for conservation and enhancement in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Largely lost from the rest of the country, these meadows survive thanks to traditional farming practices, in particular the late cutting of the crop in July or August. During spring and summer the array of colourful flowers and grasses in hay meadows make not only a wonderful sight but create important places for other species such as bats and birds to feed and nest in. The AONB contains a significant number of the UK's remaining upland hay meadows and as such it is an important area for this stunning habitat. The Hay Time project will run over the next two years and aims to restore 40 hectares of meadow.

Hay Time at Height Top

The methods we use to restore meadows are really very simple, seed from species rich meadows is transferred to the restoration site which has been already prepared. Site selection and site matching is very important, the species rich 'donor' site needs to have the same soil type, aspect, altitude and rainfall patterns as the site to be restored, and needs to be as geographically close as possible. We have several different methods of transferring the seed, depending on the size and general conditions of the two sites and the proximity of the donor to the restoration site.



Seed from species rich sites is hoovered up and spread by hand on small scarified plots in the restoration site.

This seed spreading will be taking place here at Height Top in September 2013, all with a little help from some local school children!



The outcome - which we hope to see over the next few years - is a meadow with an increasingly valuable habitat, providing new homes for bees, butterflies and other pollinators. Helping to secure our wild flower heritage for many years to come!