
@ready_steady_shoot
RABY
Autumn 2026
Forestry | Buildings | Farming | Land Management | Business Support | Leisure & Tourism

RABY



Forestry

Spotlight

Royal Forestry Society Long Service Award



Peter Archer has received a long service award recognising his 50 years of service to the Raby Estate in County Durham. Lord Barnard and Christopher Williams, Chief Executive of the Royal Forestry Society, presented him with the award at the recent Association of Professional Foresters Show in September 2026.

Peter's interest in working outdoors first brought him to Raby Estate through a work experience in 1976. After leaving school, he joined the land management team as a trainee woodman, beginning a career that spanned 50 years before his retirement in June 2026.



Peter began his time on the estate yard, learning basic forestry skills in the plantations before moving onto snedding in the wood. He progressed to a supervisor role, learning more on specialised equipment as it became available.

Peter has become an expert in felling operations across the Estate and has worked with several felling contractors in the precise care of thinning and taking down higher value stems. In more recent years, Peter's expertise has also helped forestry team members develop essential skills and progress in their roles.



While Peter's professional career on the Estate has come to an end, he still enjoys visiting the woods and occasionally helping in the Parkland and Home Farm.

Geoff Turnbull, Head Forester at Raby Estate, said: "I have worked with Peter for 17 years and he always took great pride in his work. Lord Barnard and all the forestry team congratulate him on his achievements and wish him well in retirement."

Original article featured on
https://rfs.org.uk/news-list/long-service-award-draft/

RABY



Buildings

SHROPSHIRE

White Cottage



Following the refurbishment of Bluebell, we are now delighted to turn our attention to White Cottage. Nestled on the edge of the Wrekin, the cottage has stood vacant for several years. The team at Shropshire are looking forward to bringing it back into use as a family home in the heart of the Shropshire estate.

A new water supply has been installed, and refurbishment works are now well underway. We expect the works to be completed in early 2027.

Alongside this project, the Shropshire team continues to invest in compliance and infrastructure improvements across the estate.



Community Litter Pick

The Raby Estate team in Shropshire hosted a community litter pick, helping to keep our countryside and local surroundings clean, safe and looking their best.

A big thank you to everyone who took the time to get involved. It was great to see the team working together and making a real difference, with lots of litter picked!

Protecting Wrekin for Future Generations

We are working with Natural England, Historic England and other stakeholders to protect the Wrekin's landscape and historic summit monument. Together, we are exploring a long-term approach to managing erosion, e-bike damage and visitor pressures. Following several fires during the hot summer, prompt action and close communication with the local fire service helped minimise their impact.

Education and awareness will encourage responsible visits and help safeguard this special place for future generations. Lord Barnard and Duncan Peake recently met with the Vice Chancellor of Harper Adams University in Shropshire to explore opportunities for collaboration with the student body on initiatives to protect and manage visitor pressures on the Wrekin.



COUNTY DURHAM

Whey Syke Farmhouse

The estate is working closely with the Northern Pennines National Landscape team to secure funding for the renovation of Whey Syke Farmhouse.

We hope to be able to share more news in the coming months.





Eco 04 Scheme

Over the past few months, we have worked with an insulation and heating contractor to install solar panels and air source heat pumps at various properties across the estate.

These improvements have raised the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating for several properties across the estate and provided tenants with more affordable heating options.

The projects team continue to renovate properties across the estate, with 10 properties updated so far this year. Each renovation project provides an opportunity to reduce heat loss and improve energy efficiency, making homes more comfortable for tenants.

Prolonged dry weather has kept the maintenance team busy maintaining water supplies across the estate. We continue to invest in infrastructure to strengthen resilience during extreme weather, with these improvements kept under ongoing review.

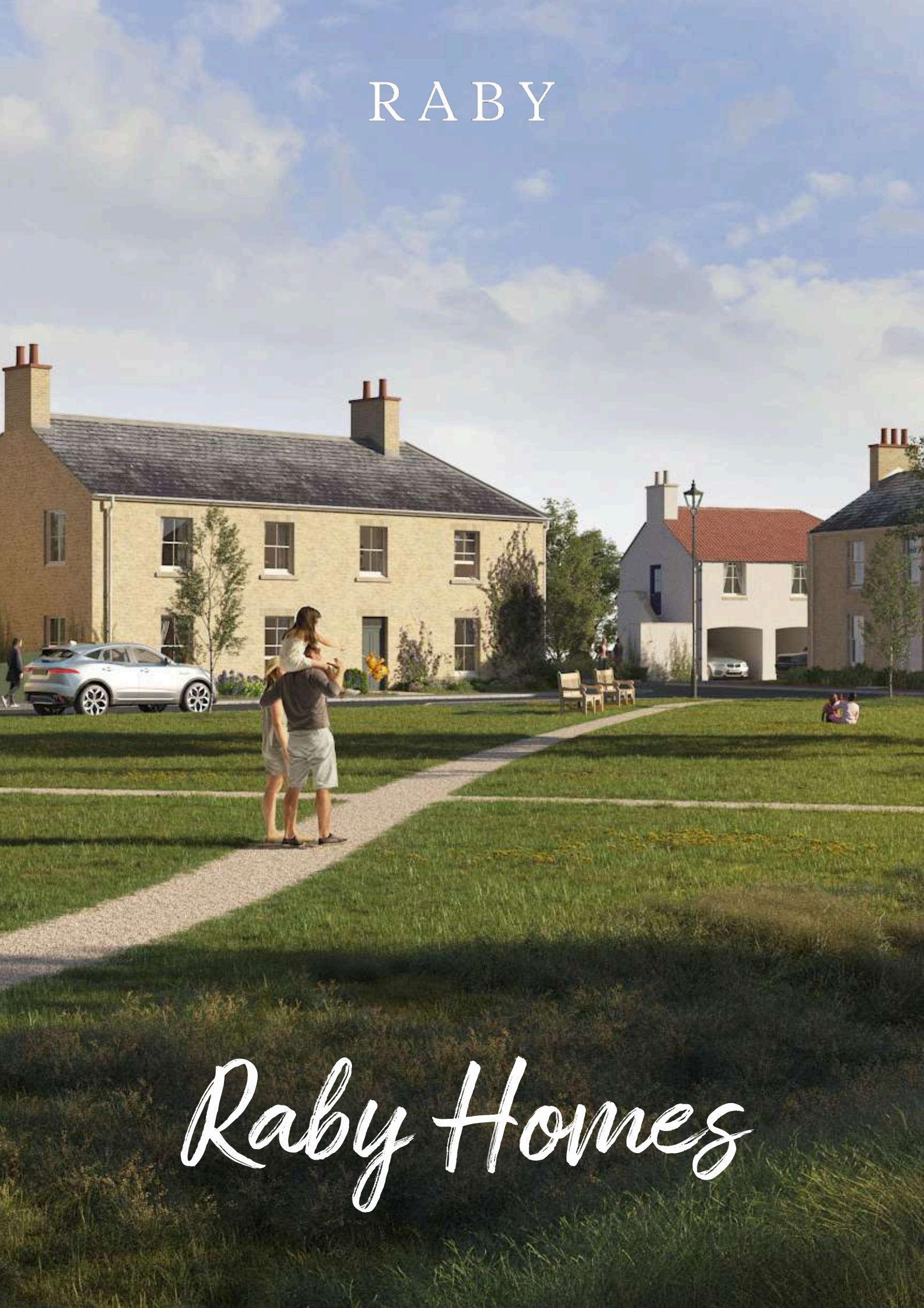
This season, we have said farewell to some members of staff but are also delighted to welcome and grow our team with new talent and expertise.







RABY



Raby Homes



First Collection of New Homes launched at East Leaze

The first collection of homes at the prestigious East Leaze site in Staindrop have now been launched, with homes available from early 2027. The development, overseen by Raby Homes, will include 72 properties, including affordable housing options.

The marketing suite is now open for prospective residents to view the plans and discuss available plots. This first collection includes twelve house types, all designed by award-winning architect Ben Pentreath, and range from £168,000 to £570,000.

The unique collection of homes exudes countryside living and heritage character, focusing on the highest principles of traditional architecture with a contemporary feel. The mix ranges from one- and two-bedroom apartments and two-bedroom bungalows to two and three bedroom terraces, three-bedroom semi-detached houses and four-bedroom detached homes. Ben Pentreath has carefully selected the use of natural stone, rendered walls, timber front doors and sliding sash windows feature across the scheme, with local suppliers including Dunhouse Quarry contributing materials.

Duncan Peake, CEO at Raby Estates, said: “The construction of the new homes at East Leaze is progressing well, with the aim of creating a sustainably designed and thoughtfully planned extension to the village and community.”

Beyond providing new homes, the development is expected to support Staindrop’s existing shops and services and contribute to the county’s housing needs. The first phase is in the north-west of the site, with all phases of the development being overseen by Raby Homes, a new venture by Raby Estates, ensuring that the high design and build quality are maintained throughout the scheme.

Details of the homes and available plots can be found at www.rabyhomes.co.uk.

RABY



Farming



Spotlight

A Farming Update from Robert Sullivan

It has been all change on the farming front at Raby over the last few months, with Philip Vickers moving on and Robert Sullivan stepping in. Robert has a significant history with the Estate, having first started working as the Agronomist for the Farming business in 1990.

Harvest was an extremely early and fast-paced affair, due to the very dry weather, with everything having been harvested by mid-August.
In general, the Harvest was good and not too badly affected by the drought, which is evidence of how well Philip Vickers and his team did in managing the crops throughout the year. The standout performers were the Winter Barley and Winter Oilseed Rape, both of which were well in excess of budget. There has been a noticeable improvement in soil health over recent years following our move to farming in a more regenerative way - reducing the level of cultivations being undertaken and having something growing in the soil every day of the year. This has clearly resulted in the arable enterprise becoming more resilient, and better able to cope with the challenges posed by climate change.

Our livestock enterprises are entering a period of significant change.
We have recruited a livestock manager to oversee the expansion of our Longhorn cattle herd and, in time, our sheep flock. We have also purchased new Longhorn heifers to enhance the herd's bloodlines, which will be due to calve in 2028. These additions, together with further planned purchases, will help us build a herd large enough to sell pedigree cattle while continuing to produce high-quality Longhorn beef.

We also recently competed in the Northern Longhorns Breeders Herd Competition. We are delighted to say that our very own Raby Rachel, won the Senior Cow award in the A Section. Our success follows Raby's return to the breeders' club and we're looking forward to getting involved with some Longhorn Classes at the Wolsingham Show in 2027.

We will also be extending the regenerative farming approach to our grassland. Larger groups of livestock will graze each area for shorter periods, followed by several weeks of rest before grazing resumes.
This not only improves soil health by allowing the plants to grow and develop but also gives the livestock regular fresh grazing, which should result in improved growth rates.

These developments mark the first steps to our new Farm to Fork offer.
We aim to process our own meat in-house and increase the range of estate-produced products available through the Vinery, High Force Hotel and Coach House Shop.

In time, we also hope to introduce exciting new visitor experiences that bring our farming activities to life. Watch this space for further updates.


RABY
Land
Management



North Pennines National Landscape

Tees Swale Naturally Connected

Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected is a unique collaboration between the North Pennines National Landscape and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, and those who manage the land. The programme has left a legacy for nature, farming and communities across Teesdale and Swaledale.

Largely funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the £8.5 million programme covered 845 square kilometres. Its work included restoring hay meadows and grasslands, creating and restoring woodland and hedgerows, improving watercourses and restoring peatland. These efforts helped connect habitats, tackle biodiversity loss and support climate change mitigation.

The programme's achievements included:

3,961 hectares of land restored or enhanced, including peatland, woodland, grassland and habitat for wading birds

200 farmers across Teesdale and Swaledale involved in the programme

- 1,607 hectares of peatland brought under restoration
- 1,841 hectares of wetland and rush habitat improved
- 110 hectares of woodland created, restored and enhanced, and 8km of hedgerows planted
- 284 hectares of grassland restored or enhanced
- 18,900 adults and 3,600 young people took part in 388 activities and events
- 450 volunteers dedicated 6,700 hours to restoring nature and improving habitats.

Raby Estates and our farm tenants helped deliver a significant proportion of the habitat improvements highlighted above, facilitating and benefiting from work across the estate.

With Tees-Swale now complete, we look forward to further opportunities to collaborate with partners and build on this shared legacy for nature, farming and local communities.

Original article sourced from the North Pennines National Landscape.

Moorland Association

Twice as Many Curlews on Managed Blanket Bog, Teesdale Survey Finds

A new survey of Upper Teesdale recorded about twice as many curlews on blanket bog managed by burning or cutting as on bog left unmanaged. Managed bog held roughly four breeding pairs per square kilometre against under two on unmanaged bog.

It also carried a disproportionate share of the dale's curlews: 23% of the birds on 21% of the land, while unmanaged bog held only 8% of the birds across 18% of the area.

Across the dale as a whole, curlews were densest not on bog at all but on rough grazing and grass moor at middle elevations. Blanket bog of either kind sat lower down the ranking, which makes the gap between managed and unmanaged bog the more striking: even among the dale's less favoured ground, active management roughly doubled the birds.

Burning and cutting create varied moorland vegetation that benefits nesting and feeding curlews, as well as golden plovers (Pearce-Higgins and Grant, 2006; Douglas et al., 2017). Although aimed at supporting red grouse, these practices also sustain habitat diversity and the wider moorland bird community.

For more information
www.moorlandassociation.org/post/twice-as-many-curlews-on-managed-blanket-bog-teesdale-survey-finds



Cameron Sharp Photography

RABY



Business Support

Raby Estates

Warm Welcome and Fond Farewells

We are delighted to welcome Thomas Bellas and Jacob Stokes to Raby as they begin their apprenticeship journeys with us.

Thomas Bellas has joined the Buildings Team as a Level 2 Carpentry and Joinery Apprentice. Having come straight from school, Thomas is already developing his skills through a combination of practical, on-site experience and classroom learning. He attends Bishop Auckland College one day each week, with the remainder of his time spent working alongside our experienced Buildings Team. Jacob Stokes has joined the Projects Team as a Property Maintenance Apprentice. He also attends Bishop Auckland College one day a week. Jacob will gain valuable hands-on experience across a variety of projects while developing the knowledge and practical skills needed for a successful career in property maintenance.

Investing in apprenticeships is an important part of developing future talent at Raby and we are proud to support both Thomas and Jacob as they take their first steps into the industry. We look forward to seeing them grow in confidence and make a positive contribution to their teams over the coming months.

We're also excited to welcome new members to the team: Dan Symonds, Multiskilled Groundsperson | Jason Mann and Mark Weldin, Painter/Decorator | Mark Bowes and Paul Eastwood, Multi Skilled Tradesperson | Amelia Bailey, Barista | Katherine Hutchinson, Senior Gardener | Steven Myers, Sous Chef.

We would like to thank all our colleagues who are leaving the Estate for their hard work, commitment and contribution, and wish them every success and happiness for the future.

Philip Vickers has moved on from the Farm, and we would like to thank him for his valuable contribution and support in developing and championing regenerative farming across the Estate. Michelle Fenwick has supported several teams during her time with us, while Owen Wharton and Tommy McManus are great examples of apprentice success stories, now moving on to exciting new opportunities. Jonathan Rogers and Ty Morgan also leave with our sincere thanks.

Nigel Chadburn, who joined the Rising team before moving to Estate Buildings, has been a valued colleague. Kevin Todd will be leaving in the coming months after an impressive 20 years of service, for which we are extremely grateful. Davina Thompson will also be leaving in the coming months, and we thank her for her valued contribution to the Castle and its collections.

Jan Biggin and Joshua Stewart have both been long-standing members of the Leisure and Tourism team, while Nicholas Ratcliffe, our Senior Guide, now heads into a well-deserved retirement after many years welcoming visitors and sharing the Castle's stories. Finally, Billy Ballantyne and Eleanor Morris leave High Force Hotel after several years of valued service.

To everyone moving on, thank you for being part of the Estate. You will be missed, and we wish you all the very best for the future.

Spotlight

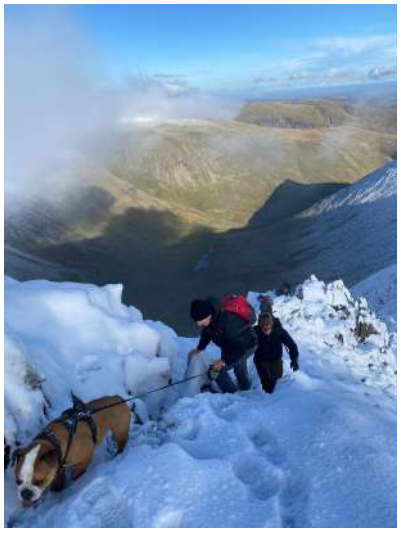
Climb of Life 2026



Once again, a team of intrepid hikers from Raby Estates will be raising money for the Institute of Cancer Research by participating in a “Human Mountain Endeavour” on the Lakeland fells.



One third of us will be touched by cancer in our lifetime. The Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) is a charitable academic working body based at the Royal Marsden Hospital. ICR employs over 300 scientists and has taken more drugs into clinical trials in the last decade than any other organisation worldwide. We are therefore proud to be supporting such a worthy cause again this year.



This annual event involves teams from businesses located across the north of England ascending Lakeland’s highest mountains in cold early winter conditions. The event has raised over £2 million for the Institute and other charities over the past 37 years. With your help we would, if possible, like to make this another record year.

This year, the team will be tackling Great Gable setting off from Seathwaite at the bottom of the Borrowdale Valley, a trip of about 8 miles. Our route will depend upon prevailing weather conditions, and it’ll be a long day in the hills.
Any assistance, however large or small, would be greatly appreciated.

Just Giving page www.justgiving.com/page/rabyestates2026




RABY
Leisure & Tourism









Christmas at one of England's most enchanting castles

This Christmas, there is even more to discover at Raby Castle, Park and Gardens.

Brimming with Christmas magic, 'Raby Castle at Christmas' returns following its debut in 2025, when the castle opened its doors during the festive season for the first time in 50 years.

Beautifully decorated rooms tell the story of Christmas Day at the castle, taking visitors on a remarkable journey through the family's festive celebrations.

This year, two new rooms on the ground-floor route will offer a magical glimpse into Christmas celebrations for those who worked at the castle. New technology and projections will bring added movement and light to the experience.

Visitors can also enjoy a candlelit version of the experience on 4, 11, 12, 18 and 19 December.

RCC20 20% off discount code exclusively for Raby newsletter subscribers on selected dates.

For more information visit:
www.raby.co.uk/events/raby-castle-at-christmas



Raby Launches New Estate Tour

A new behind-the-scenes tour at Raby Estates offers guests an exclusive opportunity to explore the dramatic landscapes of the Durham Dales.

The three-hour private Land Rover experience, available for up to six guests, takes visitors across the working estate and through the stunning scenery of Upper Teesdale, including sweeping moorland, picturesque villages and Cow Green Reservoir.

Led by expert hosts, the bespoke tours reveal the estate's rich wildlife, geology, history and conservation work. Guests can discover seasonal wildlife, including Lapwing and Curlew, rare arctic-alpine plants, the area's mining heritage and the estate's centuries-old farming traditions.

Each experience is tailored to the group, offering fascinating insights into the landscape and the people who live and work there. The journey concludes at Raby Castle with traditional 'elevenses', featuring locally sourced and estate produce served in a wicker hamper.

Priced at £179 for two people, the experience includes the three-hour tour, refreshments and complimentary access to Raby Castle, Park and Gardens. An exclusive discount is available for groups booking all six spaces.

Guests can also extend their visit with a stay at High Force Hotel, located within the North Pennines National Landscape and UNESCO Global Geopark, close to the spectacular High Force Waterfall.

For further information or to purchase the tour as a gift experience, visit www.raby.co.uk/gift-vouchers/. To book all six places at the exclusive group rate, call 01833 622336 or email highforcehotel@raby.co.uk













Where the power of the water enhances wellbeing

For those looking to unwind and reconnect with nature this autumn, High Force Waterfall on the Raby Estate offers a refreshing escape, combining spectacular scenery with the restorative benefits of spending time outdoors.

Set within the North Pennines National Landscape and UNESCO Global Geopark, the 21-metre waterfall is one of England's most powerful, with the River Tees cascading over ancient rocks.

The calming effects of being around water, often described as 'blue mind', are well recognised. Lucy Pringle, holistic counsellor and founder of wellness brand Guid-ed, explains that the sights and sounds of a waterfall can encourage relaxation, mindfulness and a sense of wellbeing.
The circular woodland walk to the base of High Force offers visitors the chance to enjoy the changing autumn colours, breathe in the fresh air and experience the waterfall at close quarters. As the sound of rushing water builds along the route, visitors can take in the spectacular cascade, feel the cool mist and enjoy the tranquillity of the surrounding landscape.

High Force is open daily from 10am to 4pm. Afterwards, visitors can relax at nearby High Force Hotel, where they can enjoy a warm drink beside the roaring fire or extend their visit with an overnight stay.

Admission costs £4 for adults and £2.50 for children over four.

For more information and to book tickets, visit www.raby.co.uk/high-force/



RABY

What's On

It's time to open the doors on a packed Autumn and Winter programme across the Raby Estate

Leisure & Tourism

Upcoming Events



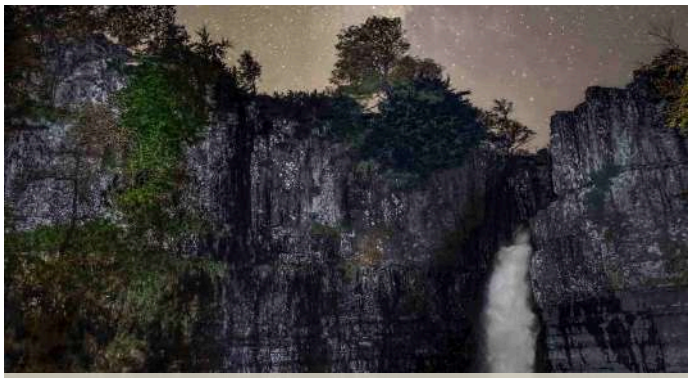
Late Night Christmas Shopping Evening

Raby Castle
Thursday 12th November



Stargazing at Raby Castle

Raby Castle
14th November | 12th December | 9th January | 13th February



Stargazing Suppers

High Force Hotel & Waterfall
November 2026 - March 2027



Christmas Family Explorer

Raby Castle
14th November - 3rd January



The Plotters' Forest Enchanted Christmas Trail

Raby Castle
Selected dates: 14th November – 3rd January



Christmas Market

Raby Castle
27th November - 29th November

Leisure & Tourism

Upcoming Events



Festive Wreath Workshop
Raby Castle
12th & 13th Decmeber



Raby Christmas Trees
Coach Yard, Raby Castle
Starting from the 19d November



Raby Castle at Christmas by Candlelight
Raby Castle
4th, 11th, 12th, 18th & 19th December



Festive Afternoon Tea in The Vinery
Raby Castle
Monday to Saturday from 14th November



Raby Castle at Christmas
Raby Castle
14th November - 3rd January



Festive Afternoon Tea at Raby Castle
Raby Castle
3rd, 4th, 5th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 16th, 17th & 18th December

Leisure & Tourism

Upcoming Events



Advent Candle Wreath with Periwinkle Barn
Raby Castle
Sunday 22nd November



Festive Afternoon Tea
High Force Hotel
Sunday 6th, 13th & 20th December



New Year's Eve Dining
High Force Hotel
31st Decmeber



Festive Stargazing Suppers
Raby Castle
4th, 5th, 11th, 12th, 18th, 19th December



Christmas Table Arrangement
Raby castle
Sunday 20th Decemeber



New Year's Charity Day
Raby Castle, Park and Gardens
1st January



Enquires

01833 660888
reception@raby.co.uk
Raby Estates, Office Square, Staindrop
Darlington, County Durham, DL2 3NF