# Longshaw Estate celebrates 20 years of Springwatch amid conservation challenges



Nestled within the Peak District National Park, Longshaw Estate stands as a testament to the diverse beauty of England’s landscapes and the intricate relationship between humans and nature. Michaela Strachan, renowned for her connection to wildlife programmes, vividly expressed its allure, praising the estate's intricate ecosystems, ranging from serene streams to flourishing grasslands bustling with life, including hares and herds of deer. The estate has been selected as a focal point for the BBC's Springwatch, commemorating its 20th anniversary—a decision reflecting the site's ecological significance and popularity.

To fully appreciate the history of the Longshaw Estate, one must journey beyond its picturesque views to the moody moors of Burbage and the ancient remnants of Carl Wark, an Iron Age hillfort that hints at millennia of human activity. The area boasts a rich tapestry of historical narratives and natural wonders. The striking Burbage Edge and its crags attract climbers, while fell runners traverse paths once reserved for the Duke of Rutland and his social circle on hunting trips.

Historically, the moors served various functions, from agricultural use by ancient communities to leisure pursuits by landed gentry. Local historian Thelma Griffiths recounted troubling incidents from the past, including events where local residents faced physical ejection for foraging from shooting lands. By the latter part of the 20th century, shifting social and economic circumstances necessitated a change in land ownership. As the Duke of Rutland sought to divest from his estates during the post-war period, the land came under public scrutiny.

In a notable turn of events facilitated by community effort, the estate was purchased in 1927 through a public appeal, spearheaded by ardent advocates including Ethel Gallimore and GHB Ward, who envisioned Longshaw as a sanctuary for the city's working class. Their collective action raised funds—an impressive £14,000 at the time—transforming the land into an accessible refuge for outdoor enthusiasts, far removed from the industrial smoke of Sheffield.

Longshaw now serves as a vital recreational space, fostering a strong connection between people and nature. As factory workers sought respite, climbers and walkers began to frequent its varied terrains. Nowadays, the National Trust oversees its management, striving for a balanced coexistence among the region’s wildlife, its historical significance, and the influx of visitors. Conservation efforts underway aim to restore the ecological integrity of the area, particularly addressing the impacts of overgrazing and pollution, while also combating dramatic climate changes.

In recent years, the estate has faced challenges from environmental degradation alongside a surge in visitor numbers post-COVID-19. Craig Best, General Manager at the National Trust, expressed hopes that features like Springwatch will galvanize public interest in conservation and responsible visitation. The landscape, while flourishing in the wake of increased human presence, grapples with the dual-edged sword of rising visitor numbers and diminishing resources for effective management. Questions surrounding responsible tourism have arisen, as rangers raise concerns about the impact of unrestrained outdoor activities on fragile ecosystems.

With the potential for increased media attention to further draw crowds, the need for sustainable management has never been more pressing. Measures that encourage visitors to engage with the land responsibly, such as adhering to the countryside code and understanding wildlife sensitivities, are paramount. Yet, as the estate navigates the complexities of modern land management, balancing the joys of access with the preservation of its rich biodiversity remains a precarious task.

The Longshaw Estate stands not only as a vital ecological resource but also as an emblem of collective action and care for nature. It is a place where the past meets the present, inviting future generations to appreciate and protect its unique heritage.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.sheffieldtribune.co.uk/animals-of-all-kinds-love-the-longshaw-estate/), [[2]](https://www.visitderbyshire.co.uk/places-to-visit/parks-and-gardens/longshaw-estate/15371)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.sheffieldtribune.co.uk/animals-of-all-kinds-love-the-longshaw-estate/), [[3]](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/peak-district-derbyshire/longshaw-burbage-and-the-eastern-moors/our-work-at-longshaw-burbage-and-the-eastern-moors), [[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longshaw_Estate)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://vipauk.org/enter/poi/ne/n98.html), [[6]](https://derbyshireheritage.co.uk/buildings/others/longshaw-lodge/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.sheffieldtribune.co.uk/animals-of-all-kinds-love-the-longshaw-estate/), [[3]](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/peak-district-derbyshire/longshaw-burbage-and-the-eastern-moors/our-work-at-longshaw-burbage-and-the-eastern-moors), [[7]](https://www.countrywalks.uk/walks/derbyshire/longshaw-and-totley-moor)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.sheffieldtribune.co.uk/animals-of-all-kinds-love-the-longshaw-estate/), [[6]](https://derbyshireheritage.co.uk/buildings/others/longshaw-lodge/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.sheffieldtribune.co.uk/animals-of-all-kinds-love-the-longshaw-estate/), [[7]](https://www.countrywalks.uk/walks/derbyshire/longshaw-and-totley-moor)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.sheffieldtribune.co.uk/animals-of-all-kinds-love-the-longshaw-estate/), [[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longshaw_Estate)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.sheffieldtribune.co.uk/animals-of-all-kinds-love-the-longshaw-estate/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.visitderbyshire.co.uk/places-to-visit/parks-and-gardens/longshaw-estate/15371> - The Longshaw Estate, located within the Peak District National Park, encompasses a diverse landscape of moorland, woodland, and farmland. This area has been inhabited for over 8,000 years, with evidence of ancient oak woodlands and a rich history of human activity, including farming, hunting, and quarrying. The estate is home to various wildlife species, such as the nationally important pied flycatcher, and features picturesque streams and diverse grasslands. Its proximity to Sheffield makes it a popular destination for those seeking respite from urban life.
3. <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/peak-district-derbyshire/longshaw-burbage-and-the-eastern-moors/our-work-at-longshaw-burbage-and-the-eastern-moors> - The National Trust's Longshaw, Burbage, and the Eastern Moors project focuses on preserving and enhancing the estate's diverse habitats. Efforts include woodland restoration, such as thinning Scots pine plantations and planting native species, to support wildlife like kestrels and redstarts. The creation of a native tree nursery aims to bolster woodland resilience against climate change. Additionally, the project manages hay meadows to support rare plant and insect species and monitors the estate's varied landscapes to ensure their health and accessibility for visitors.
4. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longshaw_Estate> - Longshaw Estate, situated within the Peak District National Park in Derbyshire, England, is a significant area of moorland, woodland, and farmland. The estate's name is believed to derive from the long wood in Padley Gorge. It has a rich history, with evidence of Bronze Age and medieval settlements. The Duke of Rutland acquired the estate in 1855, building Longshaw Lodge as a shooting lodge. In 1927, the estate was sold to Sheffield Corporation, and in 1931, it was gifted to the National Trust, ensuring its preservation for public enjoyment.
5. <https://vipauk.org/enter/poi/ne/n98.html> - The Eastern Moors, including Longshaw, are home to a herd of approximately 170 red deer, the UK's largest land mammal. These deer roam widely, with sightings as far as Dore, Totley, Froggat, and Calver. The rutting season, occurring from mid-September to mid-October, is a notable event where stags compete for mates, their bellows resonating across the moors. This spectacle offers a unique opportunity to observe these majestic creatures in their natural habitat.
6. <https://derbyshireheritage.co.uk/buildings/others/longshaw-lodge/> - Longshaw Lodge, built in 1827 for the Duke of Rutland, served as a shooting lodge for his 11,533-acre estate. The lodge's architecture is distinctive, featuring five different gables and a tall four-storey square tower with an embattled parapet. Adjacent to the lodge is a chapel made of regularly coursed gritstone with ashlar dressings and a stone slate roof. The estate, including the lodge, was sold in 1927 and later gifted to the National Trust in 1931, ensuring its preservation for public enjoyment.
7. <https://www.countrywalks.uk/walks/derbyshire/longshaw-and-totley-moor> - Longshaw and Totley Moor offer a rich tapestry of walking trails, from leisurely strolls through woodlands and meadows to more challenging hikes across open moorland. Wildlife thrives in both areas, with Longshaw being home to a herd of red deer. Both estates provide habitats for various bird species, including willow warblers, blackcaps, cuckoos, wheatears, stonechats, and whinchats. The fascinating northern hairy wood ants at Longshaw are also a notable sight, diligently repairing their nests in early spring.