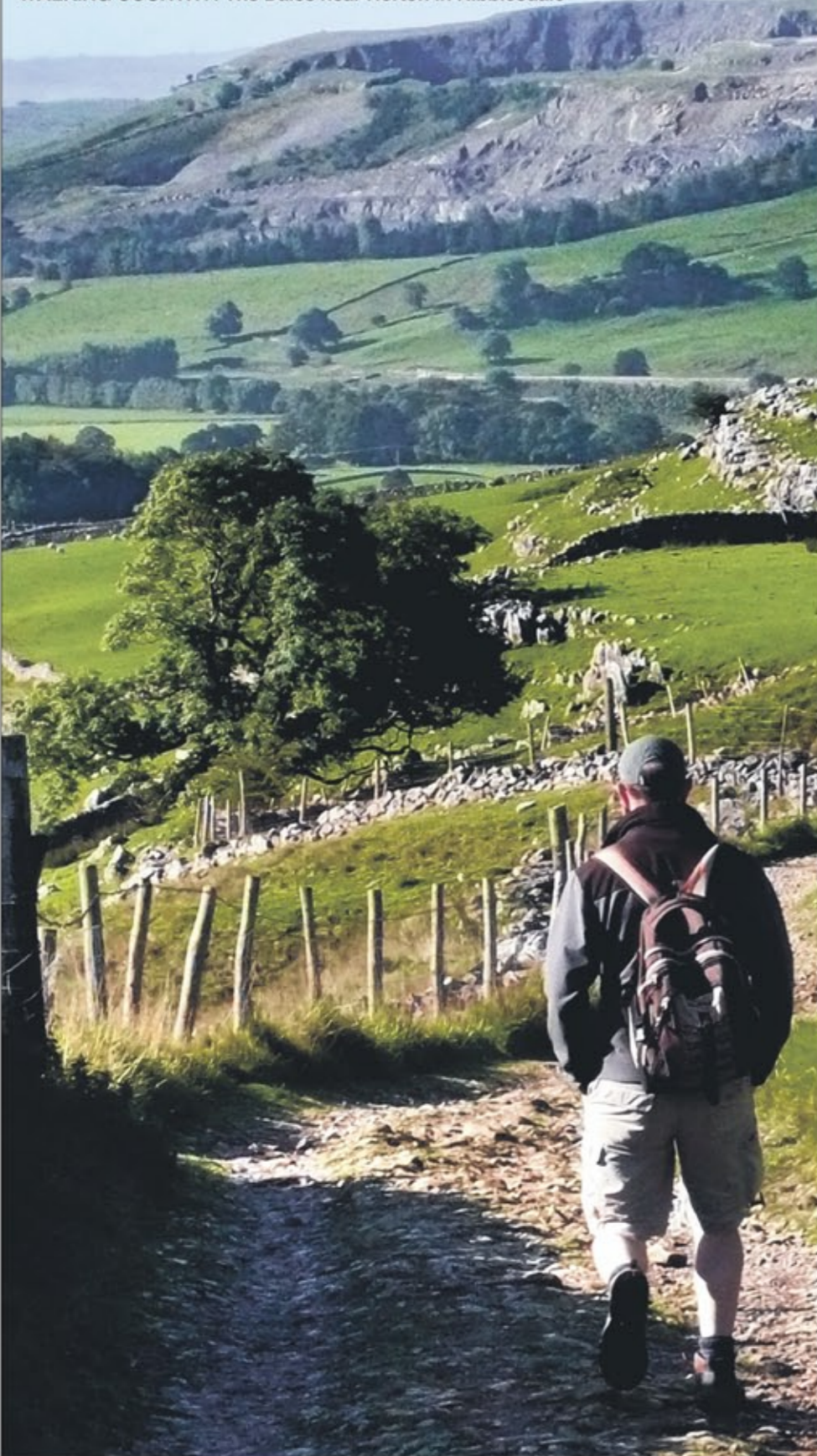


WALKING COUNTRY: The Dales near Horton in Ribblesdale



The views from here

You don't have to go far to enjoy world-class scenery.

Neil Hudson found a holiday base ideally placed between the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales

WE'VE got it lucky here in Yorkshire. Just an hour's drive and you can be amongst some of the most breathtaking scenery this side of a fantasy fiction movie.

The Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales are perhaps one of the North's most resplendent assets. But I wonder how many of us would consider them as first choice when it comes to our main summer holiday?

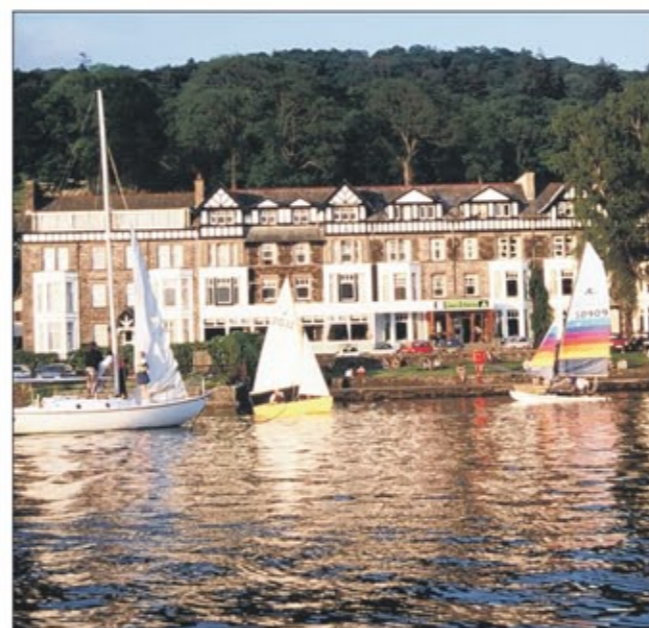
It's often the case that we fail to appreciate what is right on our doorsteps. The Lakes and the Dales both offer boundless opportunities in terms of things to do and places to see. What could be better, therefore, than a luxurious home-from-home sandwiched between these two Edens?

Exploring

Augill Beck is that bolt-hole. Just outside Brough, off the A66 near Kirby Stephen and not too far from Kendal, it is the perfect place to stay while exploring the surrounding countryside.

The holiday park has a range of luxury caravans and lodges for sale and hire. We stayed in a Hazel Cottage, one of the luxury lodges for one week (weekly hire charges range £326 - £631, depending on when you book).

The accommodation was faultless. It was everything we could have wished for on a hassle-free holiday, especially because we had our six-month-old son with us. The lodges themselves are two and six berth (ours had three bedrooms, meaning we had



A CHANCE TO AMBLE: Ambleside

ample space to dump our luggage and unpack at our leisure).

There was also a welcome pack, which included milk, bread, margarine, jam, freshly-ground coffee, tea, sugar and even a bottle of wine to help you ease straight into that holiday mood.

In terms of facilities, you couldn't ask for more. The lodges are spacious and well equipped and at least twice the width of a static caravan. Ours came with open-plan living room and kitchen, complete with gas hob, electric oven, fridge freezer, toaster, microwave, even a washer-dryer (which, I have to admit, we used several occasions to wash not only our six-month-old son's clothes, but our own, which meant we returned home with hardly any dirty laundry!) There was also an ironing

board, iron, vacuum cleaner and an array of complimentary products, like soap, washing powder and so on. In short, anything you could ever want or need. The lodge had a fireplace, central heating, widescreen TV and DVD player and let's face it, spending an evening on a comfy sofa with a bottle of wine is always better when you know you don't have to get up for work the next morning.

Plus, site caretaker Arthur was on hand to greet us as we arrived and made sure we knew he was available if we needed anything during our stay. As regards Augill Beck itself, it's in an ideal spot for some of the most glorious countryside imaginable.

We drove out from our base every day to visit a different part of the surrounding

countryside and we were never short of places to go and never displeased with what we found, even when the weather was less than perfect. The thing about the Lakes and the Dales is that, when it does rain, it has a beauty all its own.

We drove through winding single-track roads which climbed up between magnificent hills and were astounded by the huge waterfalls crashing down the slopes.

In other places, narrow hedged-in roads suddenly gave way to stunning sun-lit valleys defined by green-clad mountains, dotted with trees and riddled with tiny rivulets, with barely discernible stone-built houses nestling quietly on the valley floor.

Majestic

The landscape is nothing short of majestic, in places it rivals anything anywhere. Why Peter Jackson didn't film *The Lord of the Rings* in the Lakes, heaven only knows. If you are going to stay in the Lakes, or Dales, it's doubtful you'll see it all in one visit.

Kirby Stephen is a delightfully quaint village just a few miles outside Brough and has a number of interesting outlets, including a couple of antique shops, several cafes, a good butcher, newsagent, clothing and nicker shops. It's an ideal place to spend a couple of hours just browsing and if the sun shines, you can sit outside on the church lawn.

Another bonus for anyone doing a spot of shopping is that prices are not what they are in Leeds, so if you spot a bargain, whether it be clothing or even something like furniture, snap it up! Of course, the Lakes are renowned for being packed with walkers and if you drive into places like Windermere at peak season, it's odds on you'll be queuing to get back out again come home time, which is just what you don't want on your holidays.



WELL WORTH A VISIT: Keswick

So, if you want to avoid hordes of Japanese tourists and people in all-weather survival jackets wearing backpacks and carrying a walking stick in each hand, why not head into

Ambleside. Granted, it still has its fair share of walkers and tourists but it's bigger than Windermere and more spread out and consequently, as the name suggests, there's chance to amble around in a non-hectic manner.

There's a decent large car park and a good array of shops, pubs and cafes, easily enough for you to spend a whole day, perhaps more. During our stay, we concentrated on the Lakes and visited **Penrith, Kirby Lonsdale, Kendal and Keswick**, all of which have different things to offer in terms of scenery, shopping and eating out and exploring them is all part of the fun. On the other side, there is **Barnard Castle**, a historic market town.

Another huge advantage of staying at Augill Beck is that it's a stone's throw away from the **Settle-Carlisle Railway**, so what better to do than to

abandon the car at the delightfully deserted station at Kirby Stephen and go to Carlisle for the day, which is precisely what we did. Leaving the car was a masterstroke.

The train journey took little over an hour-and-a-half and offered some stunning views along the way. **Carlisle** is a fabulous town to spend a day in with some top class restaurants and fine architecture.

On the return journey, we paid a little extra so we could travel over the famous **Ribblehead Viaduct**, where we alighted and took refuge in the only dwelling for miles around, the Station Inn. A couple of drinks later (and it has to be said, a fair few midge bites), we sauntered down to walk under the huge viaduct itself, took some pictures and then made our way back to the station for the last train at about 7.30pm.

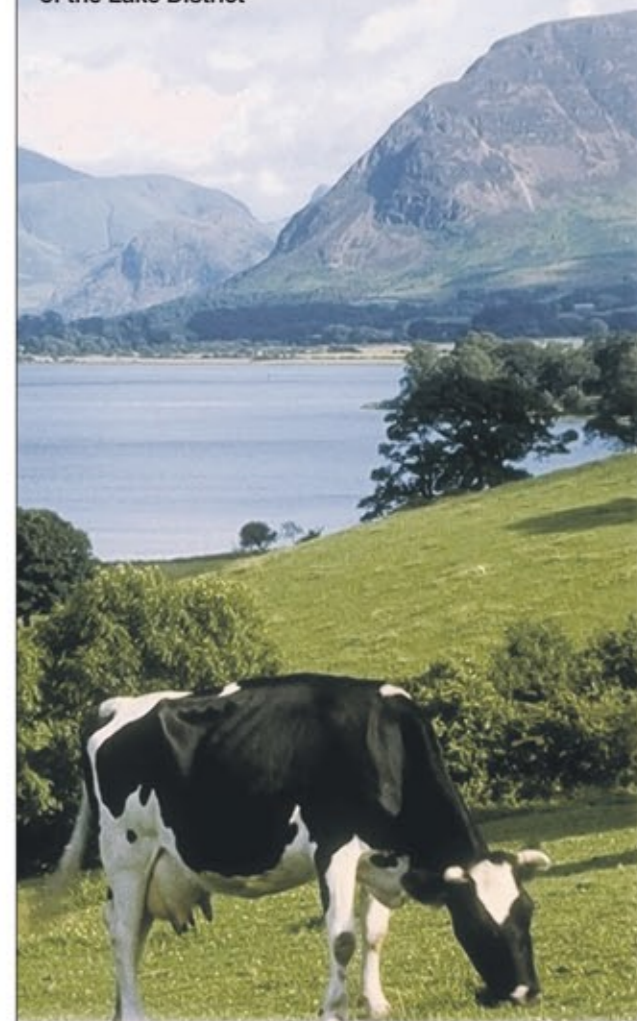
All in all, a fantastic area of our country to explore with some of the grandest vistas imaginable and Augill Beck sits right in the middle of it all.

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factfile

- Augill Beck is part of Kendal Caravans, which operates three similar sites, offering caravans and lodges for sale and rent. The other sites are: Seacroft Park, near Morecambe Bay (www.seacroftpark.co.uk); Robin Hood Park, near Keswick (www.robinhoodpark.co.uk); Village Green, near Derwent Reservoir (www.villagegreenpark.co.uk).
- Lodges cost around £85,000 to buy. Caravan holiday homes are for sale at Augill Beck from £15,000 to £50,000; or for hire from £199 a week.
- Contact www.augillbeck.co.uk or www.kendalcaravans.co.uk Tel: 01539 823659.

WATER WORLD: Two views of the Lake District



MAGNIFICENT: The Ribbleshead viaduct



LIFE OF LUXURY: An Augill Beck lodge