

Aerial image



The field layout for organised sports can be seen on the image. This shows the extent of well-established and broad hedgerows and trees especially along the eastern boundary; also, the mainly dry stone walls and hedges along the northern boundary. All are important habitats for wildlife. The large size of the area and hence suitability for Caton Gala can also be appreciated.

Dimensions

Area Hectares 1.764 Acres 4.358

(note that the size of the field is important for the role of hosting large scale events such as Caton Gala.

Perimeter 0.642 km 0.4 miles

Location and Boundaries

Station field is bounded to the north by a stone wall, much of it dry stone built, and centuries old, which marks the end of gardens of the back of the row of stone built houses along the A683 Hornby Road. To the west it is bounded by the walled Bowling Green, and then the stone wall marking the end of the gardens of the stone built houses, Methodist church, terraced cottages and more stone built houses along Brookhouse Road. To the south and east it is bounded by the back of bungalows and their gardens, but on the eastern side wide well established hedgerow which include a number of single trees and undergrowth provides a habitat for wildlife and birds.

The centrality of the location, at the heart of Caton, with access from the main thoroughfare of the A683 and from Brookhouse Road for the villages of Brookhouse and Caton Green, has contributed towards the strong community commitment to the field as important for the identity of Caton and as the established venue for the annual Gala and other events requiring a level field of this size.

Access to the field: there are two well used paths leading into the field from the bungalows towards the corners at the eastern end. The main entrance is across the parking area of Station Hotel and through a gate onto a free standing area used by those attending football matches and other events, and through which vehicles of all sizes gain entry for Caton Gala.

In the south western corner, is a large hut belonging to the Caton Sports Association, with changing and other facilities.

Maps printed in 1847 (top left), 1895 (top right), 1919 (bottom left) show that the stone buildings on Brookhouse Road predated the twentieth century, houses along Hornby Road were built by 1919. By 1952 the bungalows on the east and south had not been built. The 1960's maps both OS and aerial, show that the new Artlebeck estate had been built (bottom right). (maps from National library of Scotland)





Ownership and maintenance

The field is owned by the owners of Station Inn and Caton Sports Club hold a lease for use.

Station field is local in character, not an extensive tract of land

It is in very close proximity to the community it serves

At the centre of Caton and within walking distance from Brookhouse (from a quarter to just over half a mile)

Station Field is 'Demonstrably special for local community' NPPF Criteria

a) Beauty

The location of Station field provides panoramic views over the countryside of the local area of the Forest of Bowland AONB, and an especially fine long distance view to Caton Moor. Because of the size of the field; the stone walls; vernacular materials used for the buildings to the north and west; the dense hedgerow with trees to the east, the surrounding buildings do not detract from the views beyond. The views are important for making this a special location for the community events that take place here.



(above) view to the east; (below) to Caton moor unfortunately in mist.



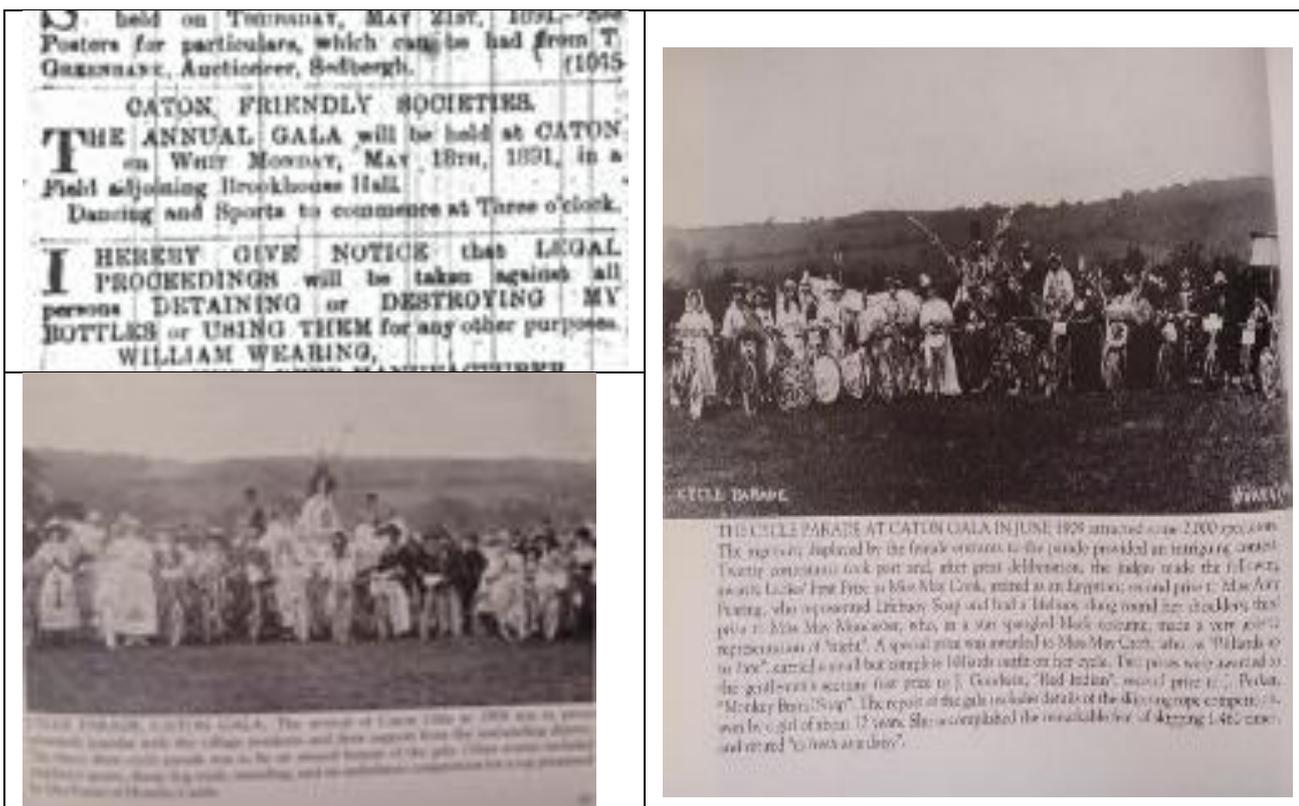
(above) traditional gritstone dry stone wall; (below) overgrown hedge along east of field



(b) Historic significance

Station field was farmed until it became a football field. Post second world war maps show station field as a football field. Two residents, one in his eighties wrote to say that his father had farmed the field.

Caton Gala has a history stretching back into the nineteenth century (see Lancaster Guardian advert from 9th May 1891), and pictures for the 1908 and 1909 galas. Originally the Gala was held in 'Jowett's field' next to the vicarage - when the villages had fewer dwellings and a choice of venue. Station field has been used for the annual event for decades, since the villages of Caton and Brookhouse expanded dramatically in the post war years and alternative locations were built on.



(left) The cycle parade at Caton Gala in 1908 was to prove extremely popular with the village residents and drew support from the surrounding district. The fancy dress cycle parade was to be an annual feature of the gala. Other events included children's sports, sheep dog trials, wrestling, and an ambulance competition.

(right) The cycle parade at Caton in June 1909 attracted some 2000 spectators. The ingenuity displayed by the female entrants to the parade provided an intriguing contest. 20 contestants

took part. The report of the gala includes details of the skipping rope competition won by a girl of about 12 years. She accomplished the remarkable feat of skipping 1460 times and retired 'as fresh as a daisy'.

No-one has yet uncovered the year of the first Caton Gala, but it was an extraordinary event, given the population of the villages in the nineteenth century. It may have been associated with the many mills, but the history has yet to be written. The Caton Gala has had fallow years, but has always been resurrected and continued, although whether there were actually 2000 spectators on 1909 remains a mystery. We know that it was hosted on a field belonging to the Jowett family of Moor Platt.

(c) Recreational value

Formal recreational activities

Station field is the home of Caton Sports Association, and Caton United football team. Cricket and football matches, practice sessions, and coaching, have been popular since before the second world war.



Informal recreational activities

At the centre of housing on all sides, and safely accessed away from the busy and dangerous main roads, the local community nearby use the field all the time for walks, dog walks, family games and children's outdoor play with their friends. The field is highly valued by everyone who lives around it or nearby. Families enjoy watching the birds which frequent the trees and bushes around the field and looking for other wildlife.

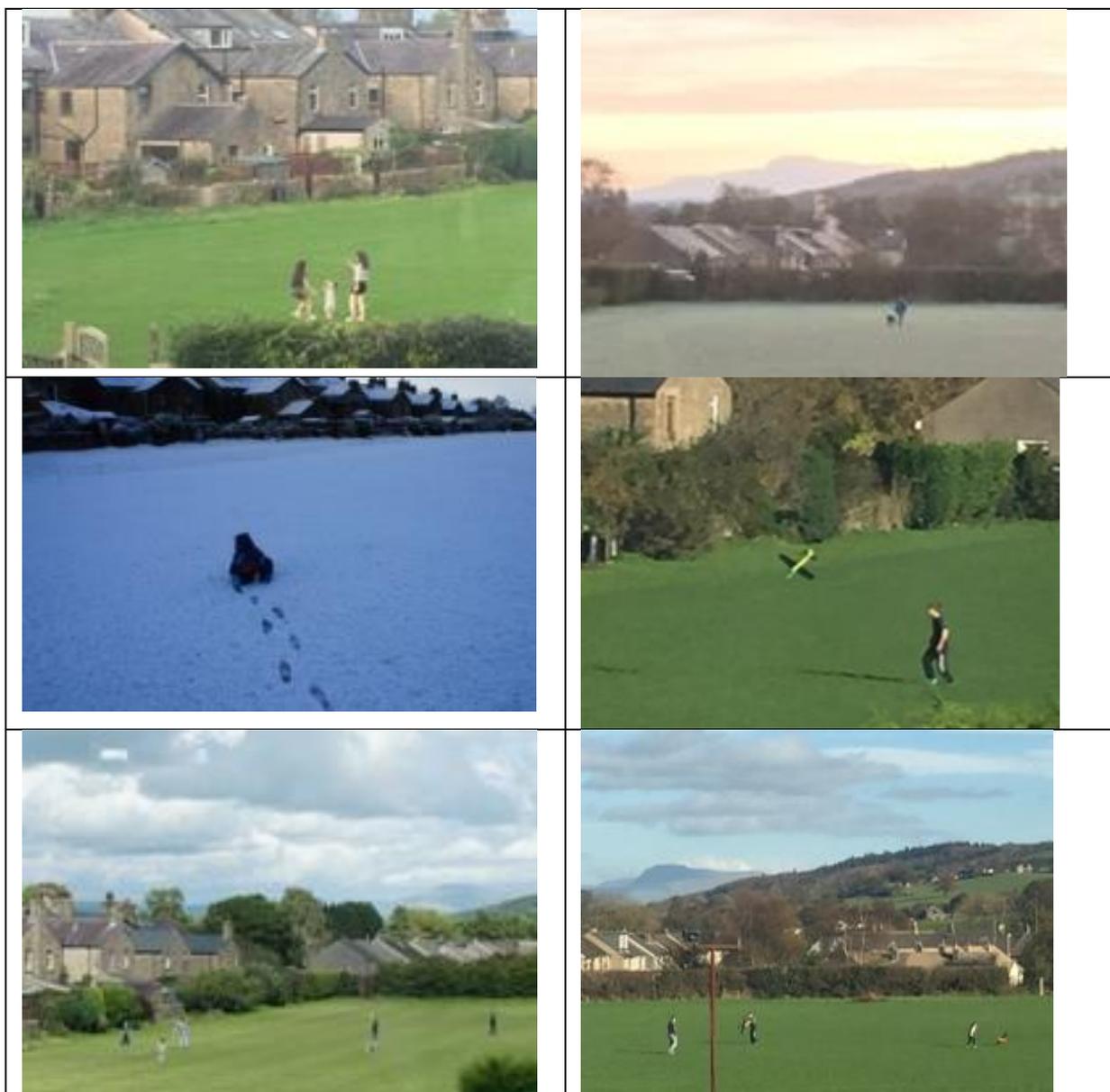
Local residents wrote:

' As somebody who overlooks the field and with young children, I feel it is one of the most valuable spaces we have as a community in that it is in regular use by lots of families from both villages. Children play on the field and families let their toddlers toddle around without fear of traffic and accidents due to the lack of roads and cars adjacent to this space.'

' My rear garden accesses the field from a gate from to the bottom which I believe is historical....

I use the field daily to visit friends and family who are located on Hornby Road and Artlebeck Close. My nieces and nephews often play on the field and use it as a safe, car-free journey to their grandparents on Hornby Road. In addition, they use it to visit the Co-Op shop without being on a pavement so close to a busy road where lorries are often less than a meter from you.

My children aged 4 and 6 enjoy playing football, riding bikes and flying kites on windy days without fear of losing their kites in trees on it! I can afford to let them run with the safety of knowing there is no traffic concerns for their safety. They also love popping to their grandparents on Hornby Road and "walking" their dogs.'





30 Hornby Road
 Caton
 Lancaster
 LA2 9QS

Station Field

I have lived at 30 Hornby Road Caton backing on to the Station Field for over 30 years. I use the field on a daily basis and enjoy playing with my grandchildren on it now. It is nice and safe for them to run about. I also enjoyed letting my children who are now grown up with children of their own so feel it is an asset to the community and the villages of Caton and Brookhouse especially.

There are frequently children playing and “hanging out” on it and because there is a good amount of space, older children don’t disturb the neighbouring properties so it is useful for all ages.

Although I walk my dogs daily on the cycle track, I use the access to get to the cycle track safely. Hornby road is such a busy road for children and animals. This reduces their contact with it.

I have also enjoyed many years being involved with as Chairman of the Caton Gala and would hate to see an important community event compromised by the potential development of the village space.

John Hall  20/10/2017

Station field is used by the whole community for special events.

Caton is widely renowned for the annual Caton Gala, which is extensively featured every year in the local media. It is central to village identity and marks out our parish as a thriving community.

' Albeit blighted by poor weather for the past couple of years, the spirit of the villagers in their support this has been so apparent in the attendance. It is such a valuable village event which results in local groups/societies and charities benefiting from the donations not to mention the children and the village schools and preschools.'

Bunting and banners the week before ensuring that all traffic on the A683 knows about the Gala. Many larger activities are set up well before the day. On the day of the gala from first thing a

hive of activity ensures that marquees, displays, activities, stages etc are ready. The event uses the entire field.

Activities vary each year, with new attractions and innovations, but always include:

- ❖ Caton Gala Queen entries and awards.
- ❖ The procession of floats from Brookhouse to Caton. There are regulars such as schools and after school and pre-school groups; clubs and associations, and anyone local is welcome to add to the procession. In recent years the procession has been led by drummers.
- ❖ Stalls from most of the village organisations and activities, displaying what they do, selling products, organising games, ready to talk about with newcomers. There are also village entertainers such as jugglers. These stalls take up most of the periphery of the field and are a useful attraction for anyone who has recently arrived in the village.
- ❖ Novelty displays which are a big attraction, eg cycling stunts; unusual animals; a helicopter ride.
- ❖ Many children's 'fun fair' type activities, such a huge bouncy activities.
- ❖ Sports competitions and fell races.
- ❖ Comedy acts and live music.

and much more







Caton Gala is organised by a hard working group of volunteers, with planning for the next year beginning as soon as the current Gala has happened. Each year a local celebrity is selected to be 'president' who makes all the announcements, including all the winners of the many races and competitions and who chooses the three prize winning floats.



Despite a long history of bad weather on the day, the Gala makes a profit each year, and local organisations are the grateful beneficiaries, with the Gala committee choosing who to donate to, and how much should be given.

Station Field is used for other large scale events such as a Family Fun weekend in the summer of 2018.

(d) Tranquillity

(e) Richness of wildlife

Not evidence has been sought about the enthusiasm of children for wildlife in the parish, but in the workshops for the Real survey, and the Birds of Caton with Littledale project, this emerges strongly.



(above) image taken by parent and found by children exploring the overgrown edges of Station field for wildlife

A local resident commented on the attractiveness of Station field for birds:

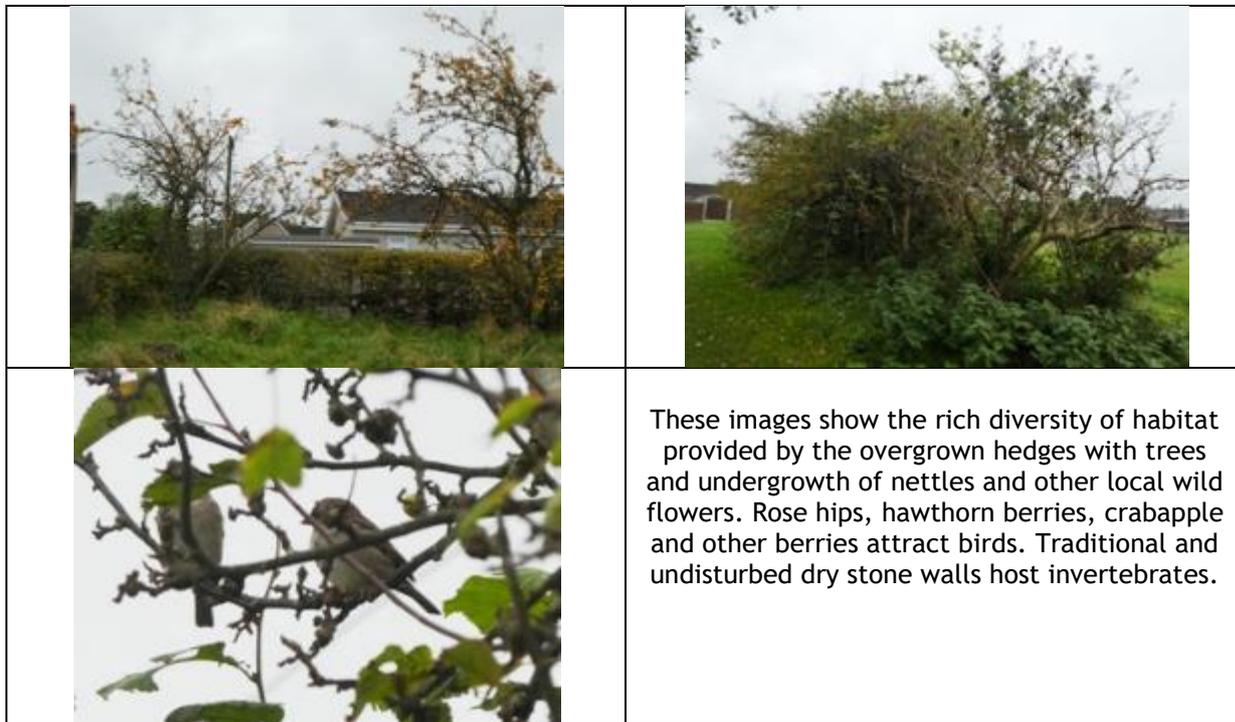
'House sparrows are Red Listed, and they make good use of the big thick hedges around parts of this site. These provide feeding areas and they give good shelter from patrolling Sparrowhawks. You can hear them chattering away near the entrance from Artle Beck Rd for example. The Amber Listed Dunnock feed along the hedge bottoms.'

Song Thrush and Mistle Thrush (Red Listed) feed on the short grass and along the hedges.

Also, the House Martins (Amber Listed) and Swallows use the big puddles near the vehicle entrance at Station Hotel to collect nest building material - a good sign of spring advancing! They, and the Swifts (Amber Listed), nesting in the nearby Methodist Chapel, swoop across the field, feeding on insects on warm summer evenings.'

The images below illustrate the wild habitats on the east of the field.





One resident added a comment on the attractiveness of the wild hedgerows for hedgehogs:

'There seems to be a good population of hedgehogs around Caton & Brookhouse. Paradoxically, it seems that seeing them dead on local roads actually shows that there is a high local population. Our villages seem to be a hotspot for what is another threatened species. They can journey a couple of kilometres a night, and they make ready use of untidy areas, and those wide hedge bottoms that can be found in the area. The green spaces help promote this wider habitat and create conditions that suit hedgehogs.'

Summary

Station field is demonstrably special to our local community because of the location in the centre of Caton, where it hosts Caton Gala, a longstanding and historically documented whole community event; and as football and cricket field for Caton Sports Association matches and practice. It also serves as an important safe haven for informal play for children and families and for exercise and outdoor hobbies for others from the surrounding houses and estate. It is bounded by wildlife rich wide overgrown hedges, trees, and undergrowth, and is on record as a habitat for rare birds. There are views of Caton Moor, and up the Lune Valley to Ingleborough and the dales.

Contribution to community sustainability

Fell View, Caton Community School Field, and Station Field each provide:

- ❖ very local accessible green space, at the heart of a residential estate or historical building cluster within Caton, to which young and older children can walk safely and very close to home for informal play along a footpath, pavement, track, and away from main traffic routes.

- ❖ large enough 'field' areas of mowed grass to encourage a wide variety of informal games and other activities to be enjoyed by children with their friends, and with their families, and for residents to exercise their dogs.
- ❖ a row of houses on at least two sides, from which local people say they can 'keep an eye' on activities in the green space, to ensure safety.
- ❖ a social place for all local people to meet on a day to day, casual basis strengthening feelings of being part of the local community.

Almost all Caton families are immediately served by one of these local green spaces. Almost all Caton families are immediately served by one of these local green spaces. Brookhouse is accessible on foot from between a few hundred metres to half a mile away.

One of the basic conditions for neighbourhood plans is achieving sustainable development. The social, community, economic and environmental benefits of green spaces help to make local places sustainable. From Locality toolkit

Station Field contributes to quality of place. Quality of place is a key factor in attracting investment, jobs and growth to an area. Station Field is also important in making our parish an attractive place to live, work and spend leisure time. So, Station Field has real economic value to the surrounding area, in addition to creating community well-being.