

5 Where is the source of the Ribble? And the mouth?

6 What part of the river system does Settle mark the beginning of?

10 Explain the formation of Stainforth Force.



1 Where is the River Ribble located?

2 What is the primary land use of land in the Ribble watershed?

3 Why do you think the Romans chose Ribchester as a site for a fort?

4 What efforts are being made to protect the Ribble's environment?

River Ribble

The River Ribble rises 246m above sea level in the Yorkshire Dales, close to Ribblehead Viaduct and flows SW for 75 miles to the Irish Sea at Lytham. Human activity is evident along the entire course of the Ribble, including Ribblehead Viaduct on the Settle-Carlisle Railway. This area is largely sheep farming, moving into the middle course the land is given over to cattle farming, becoming urban at Preston before ending between the arable farms of Tarleton and the tourist resort of Lytham, on the Fylde coast.

The medieval market town of Settle, is the first along the Ribble, and marks the change in features from upper to middle course. Sinuous, looping meanders can be found in Rathmell Bottoms to the SW of Settle, along with meander scars and ox-bow lakes created by meander migration across this wide valley floor. The area is undeveloped, due to regular winter flooding, leading to the formation of extensive natural levees along the river.

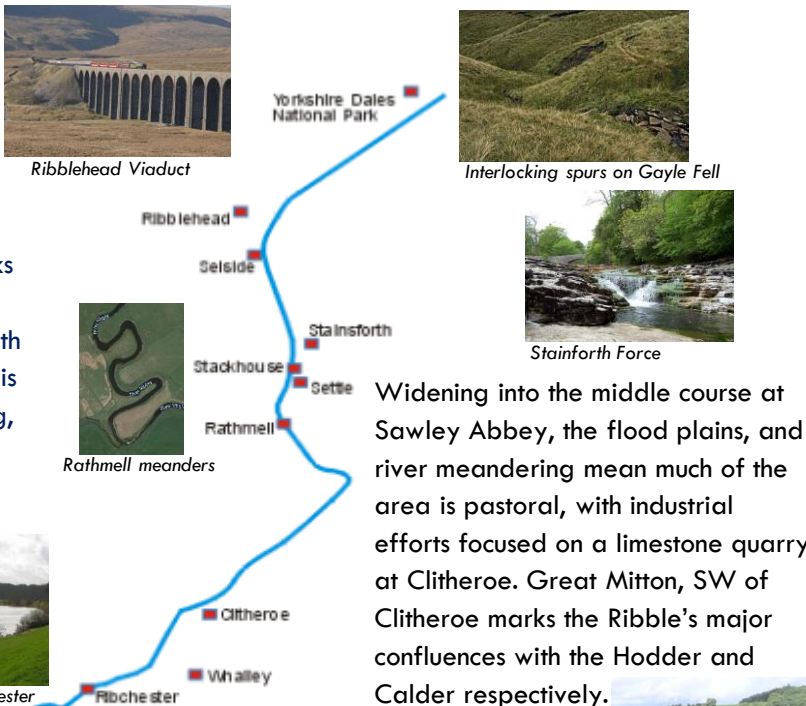
At Ribchester, the Ribble is large, powerful and historically strategically important for the Romans, who established the fort of Bremetennacum here. The Ribble winds across the valley floor in a sinuous, sweeping pattern towards the M6. Here the Ribble sweeps around the edge of Brockholes Nature Reserve, where the visitor centre sits on floating pontoons to protect the buildings during flooding.


The River Douglas, the last tributary of the Ribble, joins just before Hesketh Marsh, the site of a canal lock between the Leeds-Liverpool canal and the Ribble estuary. This opens out into the Irish Sea, to the south of the coastal seaside resort of Lytham. Sedimentation in the area led to land reclamation, especially on the southern banks of the Ribble, where the fertile alluviums are turned over to arable farming.

Close to the source on Gayle Fell, the Ribble winds around the interlocking spurs of the Dales, through the area known as Ribblesdale. At the edge of the dale, sits Stainforth Force, the Ribble's only significant waterfall has formed because softer sandstone beneath the limestone has been eroded away.

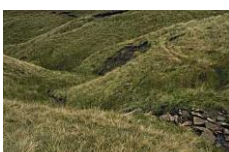
Widening into the middle course at Sawley Abbey, the flood plains, and river meandering mean much of the area is pastoral, with industrial efforts focused on a limestone quarry at Clitheroe. Great Mitton, SW of Clitheroe marks the Ribble's major confluences with the Hodder and Calder respectively.

Fishwick Bottoms mark the beginning of the tidal Ribble. The river meanders along the southern edge of Preston to Penwortham, where the river been heavily managed. Levees along the channel, which shows evidence of straightening to give access to Preston Docks. The wide flat flood plains of the lower Ribble were utilized as a WW2 aerodrome at Warton, still in use today by BAE Systems.







Ribblehead Viaduct




Interlocking spurs on Gayle Fell




Stainforth Force




Rathmell meanders




Ribchester




Preston Docks




Brockholes Nature Reserve




Sawley Bridge




Lytham




Ribble Estuary




Arable farming



BAE Warton



Tarleton Lock



Hesketh Marsh

11 What middle course features are found in Rathmell Bottoms? Why are they found here?

12 What industries can be found here? Why are they important?

9 Where does tidal River Ribble begin?

7 Which man-made water feature joins the Ribble estuary? Why does this link exist?

8 Why is the management of the lower Ribble important?