

# NEW FOREST HOTELS

## **The Story of Alice in Wonderland and Its Connection to the New Forest**

The timeless story of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, written by Lewis Carroll in 1865, has enchanted generations of readers. What many don't know is that the inspiration for this beloved tale has strong ties to the stunning landscapes of the New Forest. The whimsical world of Wonderland, with its eccentric characters and bizarre adventures, can trace its roots back to the enchanting, mysterious world of the New Forest, a place that captured Carroll's imagination.

## **The Inspiration Behind Alice's Story**

Lewis Carroll, born Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, was a mathematics lecturer at Oxford University. His most famous creation, Alice, was inspired by Alice Liddell, the daughter of one of his close friends, Henry Liddell, the Dean of Christ Church College. Alice Liddell's curiosity and free spirit captivated Carroll, leading to the creation of the character of Alice, who would wander through a world full of strange creatures and bizarre happenings. But while the story itself was shaped by Carroll's experiences in Oxford, much of the inspiration for Wonderland's landscapes and themes can be found in the New Forest, a place that Carroll frequently visited.

## **The New Forest: A Place of Whimsy and Mystery**

The New Forest, with its ancient woodlands, winding paths, and secretive corners, is an ideal setting for any fantastical tale. In the mid-19th century, Carroll was known to have spent time in the area, drawn by its natural beauty and the serenity it offered. At the time, the New Forest was a place of great intrigue, full of mysteries, legends, and untold stories. Its rich, untamed landscape—with ancient trees, mist-filled glades, and deep, hidden hollows—provided the perfect environment for the kind of vivid imagination that Carroll possessed.

It is said that Carroll would have taken long walks through the forest during his visits, using the landscape as inspiration for his writings. The labyrinthine pathways, dense forests, and secluded spots could easily be the setting for Alice's encounters with strange creatures, talking flowers, and perplexing puzzles. The forest's sense of mystery and its sense of being lost in time could easily have contributed to the sense of disorientation and adventure that Alice experiences in Wonderland.

## **The Real Alice and the Dreamlike World of Wonderland**

Many elements of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* can be linked to the New Forest's enchanting character. Just as Alice wandered through a fantastical world full of oddities, the New Forest has a similar air of mystery, where one can easily find themselves lost in its sprawling woodlands. Carroll's characters, such as the White Rabbit, the Cheshire Cat, and the Mad Hatter, reflect a world that exists in the margins of reality, much like the New Forest itself, where legend, folklore, and nature come together to create a sense of wonder and possibility.

The New Forest's connection to Alice also goes beyond mere inspiration. Local legends and stories, particularly the tales of woodland creatures, magical beings, and mysterious occurrences, mirror many of the oddities that Alice encounters in Wonderland. It's easy to imagine the mischievous Cheshire Cat perched on one of the many ancient oak trees, or the White Rabbit darting in and out of the underbrush, his pocket watch ticking away. The playful, elusive nature of the New Forest's wildlife, from its wild ponies to its hidden owls and creatures of the night, echoes the unpredictable world of Wonderland that Alice finds herself in.

## **Carroll's Love for the Outdoors and the New Forest's Influence**

Carroll was not only a writer but a keen outdoorsman, often seeking solace and inspiration in nature. His time spent in the New Forest allowed him to connect with the landscape in a deeply personal way, and it is believed that his visits to the area influenced the dreamlike world he created for Alice. The idea of a world full of puzzles and riddles, where the rules of logic do not apply, could very well have been inspired by the forest itself—its winding paths, hidden nooks, and sense of the unknown all contributed to the sense of wonder and curiosity that permeates *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

There are also some more direct connections. For example, many scholars and fans of Carroll have pointed to specific locations within the New Forest as possible inspirations for scenes in Wonderland. The forest's vast, uncharted spaces may have influenced the sense of adventure and exploration Alice experiences. Some even speculate that the imagery of the Mad Hatter's Tea Party could have been inspired by Carroll's time in the New Forest, where he would have encountered similar gatherings of people in outdoor settings, perhaps even picnics or woodland tea parties, with the forest's ever-changing landscape creating the perfect backdrop for such events.

## **The New Forest Today: A Wonderland of Its Own**

Today, the New Forest remains as magical as ever, drawing visitors from all over the world who seek to experience the same enchantment that once inspired Lewis Carroll. The park's stunning natural beauty, winding trails, and sense of wonder invite modern-day explorers to discover the same adventure and mystery that Carroll captured in his writing. With **New Forest Hotels** offering a range of charming

venues, including our Lyndhurst Forest Lodge hotel where Alice Liddell is buried in the Holy Trinity Church in Lyndhurst. Her grave can be found in the churchyard, a place that has become a point of interest for fans of the famous tale and visitors to the area., there's no better place to immerse yourself in the magic of the area. Enjoy an afternoon tea inspired by the whimsical world of Alice at **Bartley Lodge**, and take the time to explore the tranquil woodlands, making it the perfect base for your own adventure.