

AUSTWICK RECORD

1956

A MISCELLANY OF HISTORY AND FOLK TALES

SIXPENCE

Originally a barn, it became known as Pretoria Hall

HAY ONCE STOOD IN AUSTWICK'S PARISH HALL

LIKE so many social centres in the district, Austwick's Parish Hall started out life as a barn, built on the grand scale, with thick walls and sturdy oak beams supporting heavy slates. John Ingleby, the owner, rented it to Jack Calverley, a local joiner, but eventually the property, with three cottages, came into the possession of the Craven Bank.

The barn and stable were being used by Robert Camm in July, 1899, when the Bank disposed of the property to Henry Shepherd for £160. The three cottages were occupied at that time by Miss Agnes Wilson, Mr. Edward Harrison, and Mr. Albert Pritchard.

Henry Knowles Shepherd lived at Town Head, and he was gardener for T. R. Clapham, Esq., of Austwick Hall. He invited Mr. W. K. Mattinson to plan extensions to the north end, giving more floor space and a small room to serve as kitchen. The barn and stable became Pretoria Hall, for the chief national topic at the time was the Boer War.

DOZENS of local folk remember Pretoria Hall and the gay events which took place there in winter. Messrs. Hird and Wiseman were in great demand to accompany dancing, the former playing the fiddle and the latter a concertina. William Hird was postman. The chief thing remembered about Mr. Wiseman was his moustache, of which he was very proud. It was trained back over his ears!

Harry Wilson's band turned up from Settle. One night, when the violinist had travelled to Austwick on horseback, Mr. Wilson had to open the local smithy and frost-nail the animal's shoes before it was safe to ride it on the icy roads. This work was performed at 4 a.m.

Supper and dance cost half-a-crown, and the supper was of the knife-and-fork variety, with beef and ham that fell to pieces at a glance and all kinds of cakes, trifles and jellies. The food was given by local folk.

One person, for instance, would bake a stone of bread. Another provided a round of beef. A lady made fancy cakes which were promptly christened "Russian baskets."

For small dances a curtain was drawn across one end of the hall to divide dancing from dining, but larger events—Conservative Ball and Reading Room Ball—overtaxed the little kitchen, and food was served at the School.

DIED IN 1917

HENRY SHEPHERD died on April 15, 1917, and the property passed to his nephew, Robert Kitchen. It was not long, however, before Pretoria Hall became a matter for the whole village. In December, 1919, the hall and a cottage (later pulled down) were taken over by a village committee, who paid £260 and raised the money immediately by donations (£120) and loans (£212).



Austwick sixty years ago. Note the lamp standard on the left (fuel was paraffin) and the old mounting steps outside the "Gamecock Inn." Both have now gone.

There were kind hearts in Austwick and some of the money which was provided as a loan became a gift. The rest was repaid in annual sums of £40, the names being drawn from the total number placed in a hat.

The Committee in 1919 comprised Rev. A. C. Sutcliffe (vicar), Robert Stockdale, Joseph Holme, John Halton Handby, John Moss (schoolmaster), Robert James Foster and Arthur Camm, proprietor of the Gamecock Inn.

It was this Committee which did away with paraffin illumination. A small building was constructed at the bottom of the garden to house an acetylene plant in 1926, and at the same time a boiler house and men's cloak-room were built.

MARCHING SONG

THEN, in November, 1930, came the opening of what is now the supper room, with money raised locally and a grant of £120 from the Carnegie Trust. Before the key was turned in the shiny new lock, there was a grand procession through the village. Miss Harriet Byles had composed a song for the occasion, and it went to the tune *Marching Through Georgia*.

One of the greatest social events in recent Austwick history took place in May, 1933, to raise money for the Parish Hall and Reading Room. It was *Ye Olde English Fayre*, venue *The Traddock*, a two-day event which included a baby show, sports, a pastoral play entitled *Peeps of Bygone Austwick*, and a fairground.

1936 was an important year for the Parish Hall. It was vested in the Official Trustee of Charitable Lands, and the Declaration of Trust was drawn up.

FIRST COUNCIL

THIS document declares that the general management and control

of the Trust premises and the arrangements for their use "shall be vested in a Council of Management," and the following organisations each had the right to appoint one member of the Council:

Austwick Parish Council (then the Rev. A. R. Godfrey); Austwick Parochial Church Council (C. I. Kirkbright), Wesleyan Chapel Trustees (Robert Ewbank), Women's Institute (Alice Drinkall), Field Club (W. K. Mattinson), Village Library (Harriet Byles), Austwick Sick and Benefit Club (John Middleton), British Women's Temperance Association (Agnes Straker), Austwick Badminton Club (George Whitfield), Girl Guides' Association (Mary Butler), Girls' Friendly Society (Mary Agnes Cash), Austwick Reading Room (Thomas Bradley).

SUPPORT THE—
Parish Hall Fete
SATURDAY, JUNE 2nd
AT THE TRADDOCK

Fancy Dress Sports
Stalls Sideshows Dancing
Torchlight Procession

AUSTWICK'S FIRST UMBRELLA

Adapted from an account by Harry Speight

WHEN umbrellas were not common, at any rate in the Craven Dales, an Austwick man went to a doctor's at Settle. It was raining very hard when he left, and the doctor generously offered him an open umbrella, saying that it would be all right if he returned it the next time he was in the town.

On reaching home, comparatively dry, the man astonished his wife who had never seen such an article before. An unsuccessful attempt was made to get the open umbrella through the doorway.

People crowded round. The wife grew angry and chastised her husband for coming home with such an awkward machine.

At length a wiseacre in the crowd suggested that they should try the chamber window, which was above the ordinary size, and so the expanded umbrella was tied to a piece of cart-rope and hauled up to the second storey. It was too big.

The wife became furious: "Take her, ye cauf hecad, an' tether her to t' bull stoop i' t' pastur," and looking very sheepish he did as he was bid.

A week later the man walked into Settle with the umbrella still up, although the day was gloriously fine!

LIFE AT AUSTWICK HALL

THE early history of Austwick manor is connected with the families of D'Arcy and York. In Elizabeth's reign, the manor changed hands for a consideration from John Yorke to Sir Richard Shuttleworth of Gawthorpe, in Lancashire, Chief Justice of Chester.

In this family the manor of Austwick remained until 1782, when it was purchased by James Farrer, of Clapham.

In 1573 the manor house and demesne had been acquired by the Ingleby family, who had also come into possession of Lawkland.

The Inglebys lived for many generations at Austwick Hall. Sir Charles, who was the son of John Ingleby, Lord of the Manor of Lawkland, was a Colonel in the army of Charles Second.

The Austwick Hall estate was bequeathed in 1846 by the late Thomas Clapham of Stackhouse, son of the Rev. William Clapham, Vicar of Giggleswick, to Richard Clapham, of Feizor.

The entrance to Austwick Hall appears to have been an old Norman pele or fortified manor house. Additions were made probably when the Inglebys took possession in 1573.

A Little Cuckoo Told Me

Austwick cuckoo
Whittle to t' tree,
Bull ower t' gate,
An' pig through t' stee.

—traditional

DID the folk of Austwick ever try to wall in the cuckoo? Or barrow sunshine into a barn? Or hang a whittle on a tree? In fact, has our village any more cause to be called the Gotham of Yorkshire than the dozens of other villages of the Pennines? Dig deeply enough into the history of any community, and you will find tales of daftness. We share our cuckoo story with Borrowdale, in the Lake District, though up there men actually built a wall across the bottom of the valley, not just round a tree. And the whittle story is also claimed by Thornton-in-Craven.

As long ago as 1896, the Rev. G. H. Brown, Congregational minister at Settle, who wrote extensively about our district, stated: "We do not here repeat the absurdities that have so long sheltered themselves under the name of this village. They have done their duty in almost every book that has had occasion to speak of Austwick. They might now be left to breathe their last."

"The best of these stories are told of some other villages in the north of England, as well as of Austwick—

the cuckoo story, for instance; but the singular thing is that Austwick, of all the villages of Craven, should have been fathered with these stories and that they should have stuck to it so long."

Miss Jessica Lofthouse wrote of Austwick in 1954: "I was sorely disappointed when I first visited the place and found the villagers behaving in a perfectly sane and normal way. I realised that old tales ridiculing them had no more justification than the tackler tales we enjoyed in the Lancashire cotton towns. They were the outcome of village rivalry, and local jealousies, Clapham being prime mover in the spreading of them."

AUSTWICK CARLES

BUT here, for the sake of historical record, are some of the tales:

An Austwick farmer tried to lift a bull out of one of his fields. Nine friends helped him. After five hours of struggle one of the men set off for reinforcements. It was only then that the farmer thought of opening the gate.

A carle (Old English name for country clown!) found a watch in a lane. He heard it ticking and thought it was a venomous reptile. Neighbours were called. The bravest killed the "reptile" with a pick-axe.

There is a saying that "the best's at the bottom." One day a carle fell into a pond and was drowning. He made gurgling noises which were interpreted by his friends as "good, good, good."

A farmer found that his cow had its head firmly fast between the bars of a gate. To free it, he cut off its head.

When the bridge was built local folk thought it was grand. But why had it been placed in such a damp spot? They had an idea it was a shelter!

When Austwick Hall was thatched a farmer noticed that grass was sprouting on top. He hoisted up two or three cows to pasture it off.

A man had to take a wheelbarrow regularly to Clapham railway station. He found the field paths shorter than the road. So he cheerfully took his barrow by the fields—and lifted it over eleven stiles.

BLOOD FOR MONEY

CHAT with some of the older end at Austwick, and you hear of the days when work had a capital "W."

Joseph Holme, blacksmith from 1900 to 1930, remembers when a dozen horses stood in a queue outside Austwick smithy waiting to be reshod. He once shod 19 by himself in

one day and was up at three the following morning ready to tackle some more.

William Pritchard was verger and gravedigger at Austwick for 45 years in addition to following a career as a builder. During his first years of service as verger he had to light scores of candles in the Church before the services could be held in winter, and he also rang the bell and pumped air into the organ for £6 a year.

When "Will Pritch" worked on building jobs in Littondale he set off from Austwick at 6 a.m. on Mondays, walked 12 miles over green lanes, and returned to the village at 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

Harrison Hodgson, now 70 years old, has been connected with the limestone industry since he left school—and still cycles to work at Helwith Bridge every day. He helped his father after school hours, receiving 2d. an hour for his labours.

Born at Wood House, Austwick, in 1876, Harry Holden spent most of his working life shepherding and walling on a Ribblesdale farm. He worked for Thomas Redman, of Brackenbottom, who had a stock of 350 to 400 lambing sheep. For the first year he was paid £24, plus board and lodging. The second year his wage rose to £28. You could buy a top quality lamb in those days for 14/3d.

Chris. Cheetham, who died in 1954, cycled regularly for 64 years, from the time when, as a lad, he was given one of the first safety cycles. He thought nothing of travelling over 50 miles a day, and at one time averaged between 6,000 and 8,000 miles a year.

FLAIL AND STRICKLE

MECHANISATION made life easier for farmers and their men, but there are still many traces in Austwick of the older way of life.

Harry Hunter has a farming implement, called a "stick of misery" by farm labourers. It is a flail. Mr. Hunter's specimen has a shaft made from hickory, and the business end is of hazel. The two pieces are bound together by leather thongs. Sheaves of corn were laid on threshing stands to be beaten by the flail.

Frank Lambert recalls when a meadow grass was mown by scythes over five feet long. He has a strickle, piece of willow fastened to the scythe, used to

In Search of Rabbits



Jack Foster, the pig killer, enjoys an afternoon's rabbiting. He sold meat to the navvies building the railway in nearby Ribblesdale.

sharpen the blades. A strickle has four sides, and two sides were liberally plastered with bacon fat and then coated with a special sand.

RENT WAS FIVEPENCE

WAGES have improved—and the cost of living has shot up. When George Truelove came to the village in 1909, taking over a grocery shop, eggs were 2s for a shilling, currants 3d. a lb., Woodbines five for a penny, and you could buy an ounce of twist for 3d.—and have a box of matches "thrown in."

Butter cost around 8d. a lb., though butter made at Crummack Farm by the Middletons—it was generally regarded as top grade—cost about 10d a lb.

Charles Lord, oldest man in the village, paid 1s. 3d. a week rent (with no rates) for the first house he lived in after marriage. There were rents in Austwick as low as 5d. a week. One man paid 5d. and then left the house indignantly when the rent was raised to 8d.

But Austwick folk have always been thrifty. Another man who happily paid 9d. a week gave his notice when the landlord raised the rent to 10d.

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IN THE OPEN AIR

A ROUND-UP OF OUTDOOR INTERESTS

WINGS OVER AUSTWICK

Local Bird Life Reviewed by D. B. Byles

THE country round Austwick is never dull to the bird-watcher. To the west and south the low-lying country consists of "mosses" and flat pastures through which becks meander. Austwick Moss, a tract of boggy land covered with scrub and some patches of taller trees, is the breeding place of such species as the reed bunting, lesser redpoll and sedge warbler.

The grasshopper warbler used to be a regular visitor, but in recent years its characteristic song has been rarely heard. On the pastures, the nests of curlew, lapwing, snipe and redshank are to be found, and in and around the banks of the becks dipper and sand martin, sand piper and oyster catcher nest, as well as moorhen and duck (mallard and teal).

There is usually at least one cornerake reported in the district each year.

On the wooded slopes of Oxenber and Wharfe Wood noteworthy birds include the redstarts, which have shown a most welcome increase in numbers in recent years. Woodpeckers also seem to be on the increase. The commonest is the green woodpecker, but there are also a few greater spotted woodpeckers. Occasional woodcocks and nightjars are to be seen in this area.

HILLTOP FAUNA

ON the higher ground of the limestone plateau on the top of Norber and Moughton nest ring ouzel and golden plover, as well as curlew and lapwing, but it is a notable fact that the last two birds are tending more and more to nest on the cultivated ground at a lower level.

Ravens are often to be found in this area, and among the birds of prey, little owls, merlins, buzzards and peregrine falcons are sometimes seen.

There is usually a colony of black headed gulls nesting on Austwick Common, on the hills toward the Lancashire boundary.

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and SELF-SERVICE CAFETERIA

The Date above the Door

Austwick's 17th Century Buildings
by S. Crompton

SEVERAL Austwick houses have above their doors a date from the late 1600's or early in the 1700's. The whole Pennine area, from Peak to Cumberland, is rich in this type of building. The low pitch of the roof compares strikingly with the roofs of houses further south. But the windows may be considered the main feature of these houses, divided by a stone mullion or mullions into two or more lights.

Seventeenth century chimneys were often built of large stones and were bold, square erections on the outside of a gable, but a cluster of chimneys in the Tudor style may also be found. These are usually square with a flat, moulded cap, sometimes set diagonally to the roof line.

The *Gamecock* has two such chimneys, and there is a fine set of six on Austwick Hall.

It is in the doorways that there is great diversity of style in different areas. Each district had its own building vernacular. In Craven we generally find a square-headed doorway with its lintel richly carved.

The usual initials of man and wife and the date are included in the design, and some are very effective. Good examples in Austwick are The Cuddy, Battle Hill and Harden Cottage.

Down on the Moss

AUSTWICK Moss is a combination of a valley and raised bog, as distinct from the great peaty blanket bogs which cover many of our upland moors. Some 2,500 years ago a shallow lake existed here with a shingly bottom, round the margin of which were out-lying colonies of marl forming molluscs, the remains of which can still be seen in places. Gradually this lake filled up with peat - forming vegetation, growing year after year upon itself. The peat here is almost entirely built up of cotton grass and is still accumulating, but the extensive digging of peat for fuel in the past has more or less checked its transition to a pure raised bog.



The old post office at Austwick, long since demolished. The Calverley family were associated with the Royal Mail for many years.

Romance of Austwick Mill

The local stream turned an overshot wheel which kept the grindstones spinning.

by Frederic Riley

AUSTWICK Beck was not overlooked as a potential source of power. A mill which had probably served as a manor corn mill stood to the left of the highway, a little further beyond the present Mill Bridge on the way to Wharfe, but only a few traces of its foundations now remain.

The water for power was diverted from the main stream at a point about fifty yards above the old ivy-clad Mill Dam Bridge at Wharfe, whence it was carried forward to the mill pond.

From the pond the water was conveyed along a wooden trough set on stone pillars to an overshot wheel working the mill.

Following the break up of the manorial system, many of the old corn mills which became derelict from lack of custom were eventually adapted for cotton spinning. The possibilities of Austwick Mill in this direction appear to have impressed the owner of the property. An interesting poster advertisement of over a hundred years ago announces the forthcoming sale by auction of the mills as follows - "Lot IX. Situate at Wharfe within the township of Austwick - Austwick Mill, with a powerful stream of water from 30 to 40 feet fall. These premises are worthy of the attention of

any person desirous of entering on the Spinning and Manufacturing Business."

Not long afterwards, the property was burnt down, the stone utilised for building.

At a later date, on the opposite side of the road, a mill for the sawing of flag stones began operations, the same source of water supply being used for power. The silurian flags, used extensively for cisterns and floor covering, came chiefly from Dry Rigg Quarry on Swarthmoor.

Early Naturalists

AUSTWICK has long been known to naturalists, the earliest notes being those of John Ray, who visited the area round 1660. Evidently the earliest naturalists were botanists, and it was not until around 1820 that William Smith drew attention to the various geological strata and Philips published his "Rivers, Mountains and Sea Coast of Yorkshire" in 1853. Then we find visitors being drawn to the Austwick area to study its geological features; later on its glacial history drew their attention to the perched blocks on Norber.

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A Parish Church for only Seventy-seven Years

WHEN SHEPHERDS ROAMED THE STINTED PASTURES

THE annual meeting of the holders of stints or gaits, on the pastures of Long Scar (Ingleborough), Moughton and Oxenber, held in February, is one of the oldest customs in the Craven sheep country. The existing minute book, which is calf-bound, dates back to 1814.

The meeting is called "herd-letting," for at one time it was customary to appoint shepherds, but several years have gone by since the last shepherd put in a tender for the work, and now the farmers do the work themselves.

ONE DAY OFF

The owners of the sheep had the right of walking round the pastures, but the shepherd was in control of the flock. He had to visit his charges each day for six days a week, and he could select which was his off-day.

From the time of clipping until the lambs were taken from the ewes he had to journey along the steep hill-sides twice a day, for that was the time when the blow flies and similar pests attacked the sheep.

Four sheep gaits are equal to one cow, and eight to a horse, though only sheep are generally grazed. There are 579 gaits on Long Scar, 568 on Moughton and 120 on Oxenber.

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Austwick Was Once Part of Clapham Parish

SILVER plate belonging to Church of the Epiphany, Austwick, bears the words "Austwick Chapel," from the days when it was merely a chapel-of-ease to Clapham.

The Rev. B. W. Simpson, now Vicar of Thornton-in-Lonsdale, says there was a church building in the village prior to 1650. He has seen a document of that date in the Library of Lambeth Palace reporting that in Clapham, besides the Parish Church, there are "two chappells for the said parish, viz.: Austwicke and Eldrith . . . Austwicke chappell hath neither mynister nor mayntenance belongs it, and but a myle from the parish church, and good waye. We think fit it should be dissolved."

THE same document says also that whereas from "Eldrith Chappell" in Clapham parish church "the waye is very badd and waters troublesome," and "butt seventeen shillings per ann. belonging to it towards mayntenance of a mynister, we thinke fit Eldrith Chappell be made a parish church," and the maintenance augmented.

Mr. Simpson adds: "As Eldroth Chapel (which then had no minister) never became a parish church, it is probable that the other scheme to

'dissolve' Austwick Chapel was also not carried through."

In 1879 Austwick was taken out of the parish of Clapham, of which it had always been part, and the boundaries of the new parish were fixed by an Order in Council signed by Queen Victoria. In 1883 the church was restored and extended.

The present Vicar is the Rev. Joseph Townsend.

STABLING AT CROSS STREETS



Cross Streets Hotel, photographed at the turn of the century.

Kitty Knowles made Gingerbread

EARLY this century a fair was held on Austwick Green on the Thursday preceding Whitsuntide. Farmers brought in their pigs and cattle for sale. Willie Carr turned up with pigs he had reared at his home at Westhouse.

Kitty Knowles made gingerbread and "swaggering dick" — a commodity largely composed of treacle — and sports were held, including Cumberland and Westmorland style wrestling at which men like Charlie Speddy and Jack Pritchard excelled.

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150 Years of Methodism

JUST 150 years have gone by since the first Methodists met in Austwick. There were five members, and by 1815 the number had risen to 13. The Manor Court, meeting at the Gamecock in 1824, noted that a Methodist "preaching house" had been erected (the previous year). The first leader was William Baynes.

THE first chapel is now a dwelling occupied by Mrs. C. Wilson. It was very small, yet possessed a gallery. Someone said "it is for all the world like a box with a gallery round it, and one can easily conceive that the preacher standing in the rostrum would be able to lean forward and shake hands with one of his auditors in the gallery." It was overcrowded when sixty people attended.

A new chapel was needed. The scheme was inaugurated by a Congregationalist—Mr. A. R. Byles,

of Bradford. The site was bought for £30, and the new premises were opened in 1901. The plans were prepared by a Bradford architect, Mr. James Hedingham. The chapel's red roof, one of very few in the Dales, can be seen for miles. The organ was installed in 1906, but was electrified only recently.

Austwick contributes seven preachers to the Circuit. The name Handby has been associated with local Methodism since 1827.

The present minister is Dr. O. A. Beckerlegge.

THE PEN-Y-GHENT BEAGLES

Written in 1884

COME all ye lads in Ribblesdale,
From Ribbleshead to Litton Vale,
Ye Austwick carries, and Clapham tykes;
Come everyone, whoever likes,
And see the Pen-y-ghent Beagles.

A huntsman bold, is Horton Jack,
When scent is cold, to lift a pack,
To crack a whip, or wind a horn,
A tighter lad was never born,
Than hunts the Pen-y-ghent Beagles.

'Twas he could puzzle out a scent,
He knew each hare on Pen-y-ghent
By sight; and those he did not know,
And couldn't catch, he let them go,
And so did the Pen-y-ghent Beagles.

One day he had arranged the meet
Should be at Austwick Cross-o'-Street,
A better place there could not be,
For hares are there in great plenty-e,
To blood the Pen-y-ghent Beagles.

The little Inn was soon choke full,
All struggling the bell to pull;
And calling loud for glasses round,
To drink the health of every hound,
Among the Pen-y-ghent Beagles.

But when the time arrived to trudge,
Jack couldn't get the "Field" to budge;
All snugly seated in the Inn,
And everyone imbibing gin,
Enough to drown the Beagles.

He wound his horn, 'twas all in vain,
A following he could not gain,
For nought was heard amidst the din,
But shouts for Whiskey, Rum or Gin
To drink—"The Pen-y-ghent Beagles."

Now morning waned in afternoon,
Down sank the sun, up rose the moon,
But not a soul of them had stirred,
And still the loud hurrahs were heard—
"Three cheers for the Pen-y-ghent Beagles."

Then Huntsman Jack drew off the pack,
To Ribblesdale he took the track,
And swore that not another meet
Should e'er be held at Cross-o'-Street,
And so did the Pen-y-ghent Beagles.

IF IT GROWS, WE CAN GET IT!

ANTHONY BURTT

NURSERYMAN, NEWBY

(Clapham 321)

If we've got it—it grows.
COME AND SEE.