

## AUSTWICK BRIDGE

Ken Pearce

The bridge conforms to the style of that in the West Riding in the late 18th C. There was a significant increase in road traffic as a result of road improvements stimulated by the introduction of the turnpike trusts. The increase in traffic demanded bridge improvements.

The typical West Riding bridge of that era has outwardly curved ends to the parapet walls, each ending in a cylindrical stone pillar with a domed cap of larger diameter – as seen in Austwick, Church Bridge in Clapham, Keasden, Ripon, Kirkby Malzeard etc.

A list of West Riding bridges and of Staincliffe and Ewcross Wapontake bridges can be found in the West Riding Archives (QD3 1-13). Decisions to widen or repair were made by magistrates at Quarter Sessions and costs were borne by either West Riding or the appropriate wapontake. This extended to a length of the approach road at each end of the bridge. Sometimes the start of this length is marked by a cast iron marker intialled WR.

Bridge Surveyor's field books have sketches of bridges, calculations of costs and details of contractors. The West Riding surveyor 1797-1853 or later was Bernard Hartley and the contractors for local bridges were John or Richard Thorpe and Richard Atkinson.

There was a stone bridge over the beck in 1675 when Ogilby published his *Britannia*.

### Clapper Bridges



