

The village looks over its shoulder

A BLAST on a cow horn — the traditional method of summoning men from the fields — opened a parish exhibition at Austwick on Saturday. The sound was effective. Some 220 people passed through the doors of the parish hall on the first day.

The exhibition marked the 75th anniversary of the local "community centre," which was created out of a

cottage and barn bought in 1899 and given the name Pretoria. When the hall was enlarged to its present size in 1926, it was renamed Parish Hall. In the context of this community's story, presented so imaginatively over the holiday weekend, the making of the hall was a very recent event.

The exhibition was, in every sense, a village effort. So much fascinating material was assembled that for several days the village had a folk museum of quality.

Austwick was already well

established as a community at the time the Domesday Book was compiled. As Oustewic, it was the head of an honour or barony of 12 dependent villages. Its early story was traced in maps through colourful illustrations that recalled the most formative events — and by an array of old documents, many written in elegant copperplate. A range of exhibits made available by Austwick church included parochial records, silver and photographs.

The agricultural exhibits alone formed the most comprehensive selection of equipment seen in the area. They had a room to themselves, and no aspect of local farming practice seemed to have been overlooked.

Objects from the day-before-yesterday included a hay mow borer, a measure for cart hoops and a driving shaft for a horse-drawn mowing machine. Gearing for horses and objects borrowed from the local smithy formed a centre-piece. Days when the farmer's wife made butter and cheese were recalled by a milk lead, cheese vat and grinder. The sheer hard work demanded in the old days was evidenced by such objects as dolly sticks for washing day. One specimen had wooden legs, another legs of iron.

The sporting life was included, with early guns, the first type of trap used for shooting live pigeons at

competitive events and, succeeding it when pigeon shooting was banned, a trap that hurled into the air a glass ball filled with feathers!

Among the photographs was one of "boon day" at the Wash Dub, showing the washing of sheep, a practise that ceased locally in the 1930s. The tenant of Low House, Wharfe, was allowed to use the folds associated with the Wash Dub on condition that he maintained all the walls. From the archives of the local joiner in 1905 came an invoice on which was featured the supply of a polished oak coffin with brass fittings for £4.5s.

Two set pieces — one featuring a typical old-time kitchen, the other a bedroom — were arranged to give an insight into domestic life and showed equipment of the pre-plastic age. The kitchen exhibit included a fireplace (made by Fred Manby of Skipton) of the type that called for regular and liberal applications of black lead. Clock and pot dogs adorned the high mantelpiece.

The model of a woman in period clothes had been placed in a chair near a spinning wheel. Objects on view included a wool-winder, a bread crumbler — and what looked like a hollow glass rolling pin but was stated to be a cucumber straightener! A brass bedframe and patchwork quilt were featured in the bedroom (another quilt in the exhibition had been begun in 1776 and added to by later generations, as proclaimed by initials and dates).

A wide collection of photographs showed the village and its people — the Ingilbys of Lawkland Hall, then Harden; the Claphams of Austwick Hall and, appropriately, Henry Shepherd, who originally converted the old barn into a hall of use for social events in the parish.

A host of local people contributed exhibits or manned the exhibition, indicating a deep local pride on the part of old residents and newcomers alike.

29th May - 1st June incl. 1976

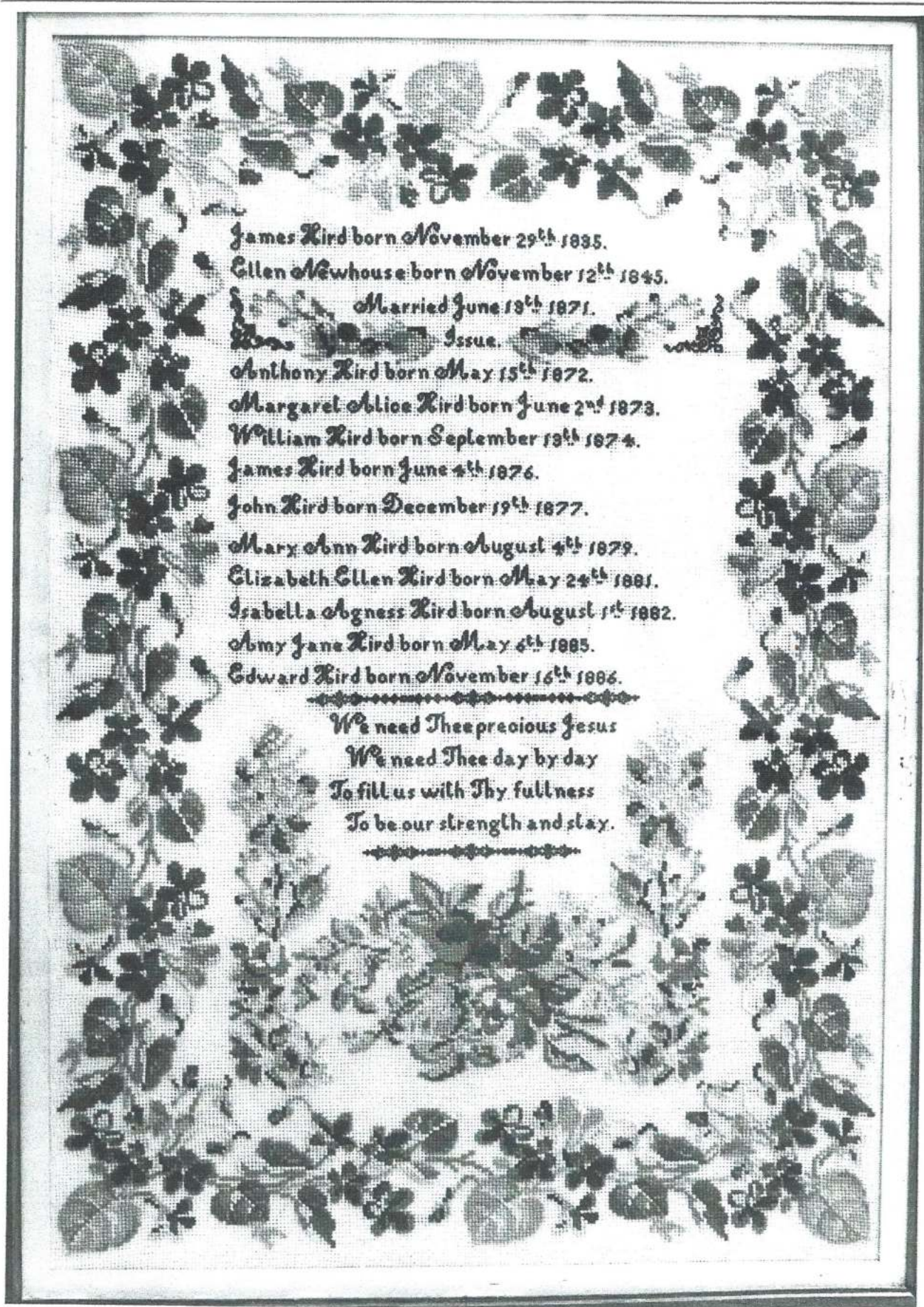
It was early 1975 when Mr Brocklehurst Sec Austwick Parish Hall, first asked me if I ass. Sec. would organise a Historical Exhibition of Austwick in the Parish Hall. After much thought, and willing support from people I asked if interested in helping, I finally agreed, and the first of what turned out to be seven meetings, was arranged for 26 November.

Wood View.

The enthusiasm and support was great as you can tell from the report. So many people to thank for their help etc, one could not start to mention names. There was a full rota of stewards day and night, from opening at 11-00 a.m Saturday 29th May until closing 8-00 p.m Tuesday 1st June 1976.

The visitors book showed over 1,200 people visited this Exhibition and a comment in the book reads an excellent and interesting exhibition. The organisers are to be complimented. (a visitor from Southport.)

Most of what is in this folder was in the Exhibition, and the next 6 photographs were taken at it. (Ellen Chapman.)



James Hird born November 29th 1835.

Ellen Newhouse born November 12th 1845.

Married June 19th 1871.

Issue.

Anthony Hird born May 15th 1872.

Margaret Ablice Hird born June 2nd 1873.

William Hird born September 19th 1874.

James Hird born June 4th 1876.

John Hird born December 19th 1877.

Mary Ann Hird born August 4th 1879.

Elizabeth Ellen Hird born May 24th 1881.

Isabella Agness Hird born August 1st 1882.

Amy Jane Hird born May 4th 1885.

Edward Hird born November 16th 1886.

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We need Thee precious Jesus

We need Thee day by day

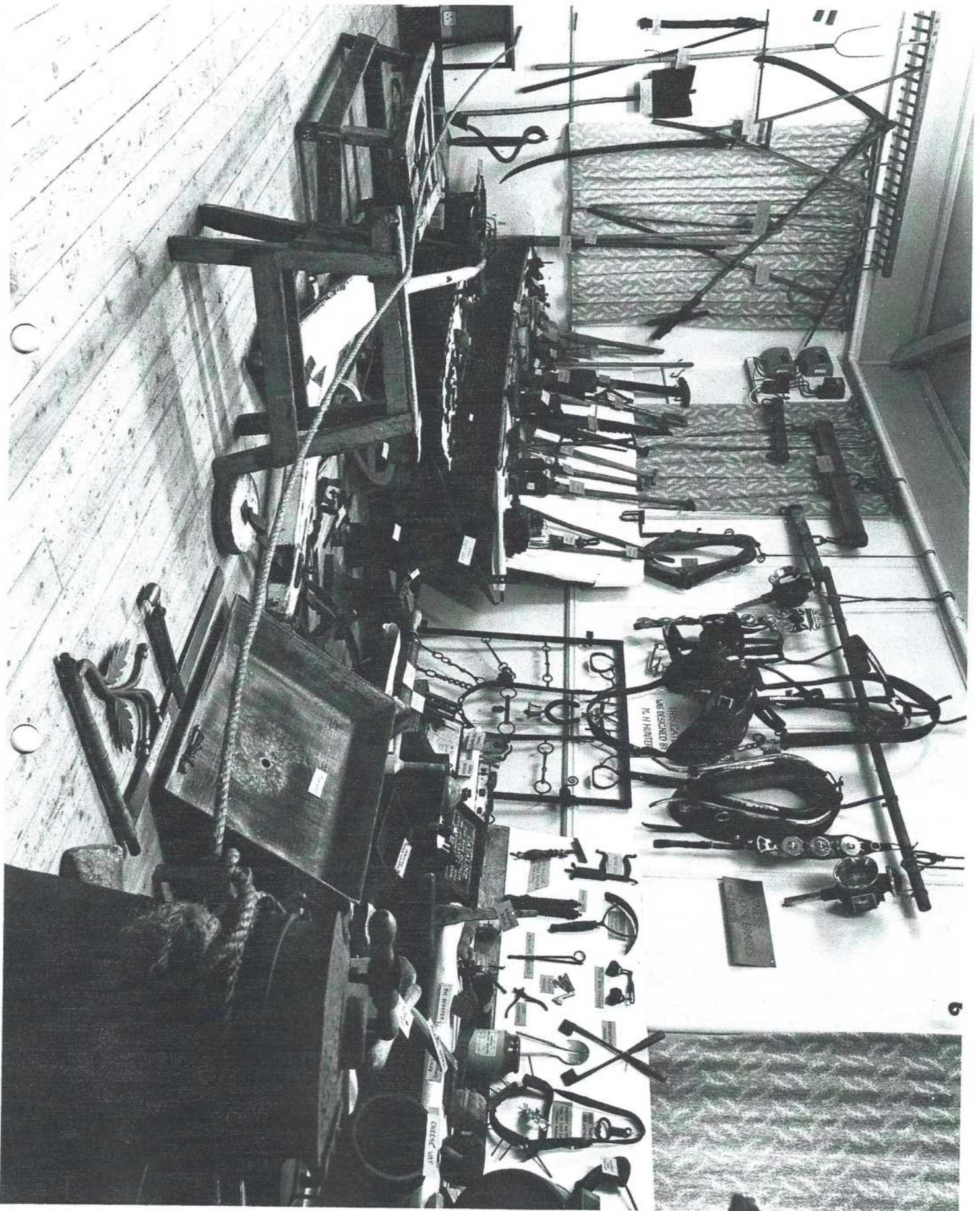
To fill us with Thy fullness

To be our strength and stay.

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This Family canvas sampler, with purple violet border was designed and worked by the Amy Jane Hird when in her early teens (late 1890's) no electric light then. The actual size is 33 inches X 45 inches

Horse
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A game fauc pen
original
requirements



THIS IS AUSTWICK (FOLK 'LORE)

Austwick has lang had the reputation of being the source of many a humorous yarn dealing with Dales folk, and many a person still knows Austwick better by the name of Cuckoo Town. I have heard said that when an Austwick man goes to Settle or Clapham for his beer peevish folks, inclined to 'trot', ask 'who tried, to lift bull over t' gate',; the tradition being that, in days of yore, an Austwick farmer, wanting to get a bull out of a field, got nine of his neighbours to assist him to lift t' animal over t' gate. They struggled for five hours, but found themselves not strong enough, so one of them would go t' village for more help. He open't gate and went through. After he had been gone a while, one of t' remaining nine, likely fed up a-waiting, scratched his head for an idea, then suddenly exclaimed, 'er well wouldn't it do as well if we open't gate and drive t'bull through instead a lifting it ower!' After mature consideration, the counsels of the Austwick philosopher prevailed, the gate was open'd and the animal driven quietly out of the field into the lane, non't worse for having hed to walk.

Many a battle as resulted fra such chaffing, for folk at Austwick don't allus relish in being reminded at deeds attributed to the wisdom a their ancestors. Many a person 'as had assigned to them the credit of havin' tried to wall't cuckoo in. Austwick allus had good growy weather when't cuckoo were here, and t' farmers thowt that if they could only keep t'cuckoo all t' year round, it would be a glorious time for t'farmers. So thei'd set about to build a woe and enclose the bird. The woe was started and it got to a good height, in fact it was just about to be covered in, when t'bird flew away. 'Aye well', says one chap to his mates, 'if obbutt we'd had one mare stahe a there, we'd a kept 'im in.'

Another tale is told of an Austwick person finding a watch, with a chain attached, in a lane. Never having seen a watch afore, he didn't know what it wore, and judged it must be some kind of a reptile, and his fears were confirmed when he heard it tick. Upon this he returned to the village and told his neighbours of havin' seen summat alive, with a lang tail, that kept saying 'tick tick'. Under the impression that it was something dangerous, he got the assistance of a posse of stout men, armed with pick-axes, spades, forks, rakes etc. One of the most adventurous, and cleverest of t' party, went forward, eyed the monster, heard it tick, and pronounced it to be a most dangerous reptile, with eyes all round its head. Raising his pick-axe, he aimed a mighty blow which smashed the watch to atoms, and when he announced that he had killed the brute, his brave companions githered round to survey the squashed remains. Its remains were githered up and preserved for some time in the village, at least so say the inhabitants of the 'neighbourhood of Austwick' until someone possessed of more than Austwick wit, disclosed the true nature of the conquest that had been achieved.

When knives and forks were somewhat more of a luxury than at present, and their use had not penetrated into such out of the way places as the Northern Dales, it is said that Austwick only possessed one knife among them, and that was a whittle. Everyone around knew of this knife, and it was common knowledge that after use it had to be put back where it had been taken from, and that was the gurt tree agen't Church, 'cos that was where it wore kept, so's every Yan knew where it wore. Well, if someone went for it, and it wern't there, they would shout "Whittle to t' tree, Whittle to t' tree." One day a party of workmen decided they could do with this knife on Swarthmoor, to cut their pies for dinner, so they took it with 'em. "Well, this is tebble useful" said yan of um, "and it's a bit of a bother havin' to tek it back, to bring agen tomorrow, let's hid it." Well, they looked all around fer a likely spot they'd all know next day, and as fer trees on Swarthmoor, well they were a rarity then, as they are now. They talked it owver and lucked around, and yan on em looked up in

t' sky, and the only obvious thing was a gurt black cloud. This was the only remarkable object in sight. "That's it" says one of em, "we'll stick it in't grund under here, it'll be easy to find tomorrer." Well, next day cemm, off goes men to work, pies an' all, but come dinner time, an wanting t' knife, well it were a lovely day, there were no black clouds, so well, you don't need me to tell ya, do ye, they didn't know where thid put it, so that was the end of Austwick's whittle.

There is an old Craven proverb "the best at the bottom, as the Austwick carles say." Well Austwick people were usually spoken of as Austwick carles 'carle' being the Old English, or Anglo-Saxon name for a country clown. The origin of this was that when an Austwick man went one day into a pond to get summat out, he got overheed and began to gurgle. A stander-by thowt he was saying "Good, good", thinking he had found summat good down in't bottom at t'pond. But t'poor chap was saying his last few words. He'd drowned.

Ye know Austwick Hall. It had a grand owd thatch on it at one time. So good that aye, by gum it did use to grow a good crop a grass. And well, you know what t' farmers are like around here, if they do see a good field a grass they mun be putting summat in. Well, they puzzled and puzzled their brains, wondering how to git three or four cows on't this roof to eat this grass.

But yan old chap did come up with a bright idea one right fine day. He'd get his wheel-barrow and he tried to wheel t' sunshine int' barn, he'd have no more haytime worries.

Did you hear about the folk who kept a calf upstairs in yan o't bedrooms. Do you know it got so big, they couldn't git it downstairs. They'd to take t' window out to get t' calf down onto terra firma

Not too long ago an Austwick farmer had to tak his wheel-barrow to Clapham Station. Well, he thowt about this, it's a fair way to Clapham Station, now, thinks he to himself, if a go across t' fields a can save miself two hundred yards to what I would if I went be t'road. So, off he went across t' fields, he'd only to lift his barrow over eleven stiles, but it cut two hundred yards off t' distance to if he'd gone all't way round bi t' road.

But, come to think of it though, I reckon us Austwick folk 'appen aren't quite as daft as we're made out to be, 'cos if you just stop to think about it a cuckoo isn't daft. He doesn't bother to make his own nest, he goes and uses some other lile bird's nest and lets them do t' work.

I don't know whether you know the origin of the name Austwick, but I have heard it said, that it all started when an old chap dropped his walking stick and bent down to pick it up and he was heard to say "Ah, stick."

These Tales of Old Austwick were recorded and could be heard at the Exhibition via a Tape-recorder.