

Bill Heald comes ... Down your way Pictures by Harry Hodgson

AUSTWICK

THEY tell the same sort of stories about the villagers of Austwick as are told about Lancashire tacklers. Calling at a village on our way to Austwick we were twitted about visiting Cuckoo Town and in Austwick itself we found many raconteurs of those delightful nonsensical stories which have been handed down for generations.

The most famous of them all is perhaps the one of the people of Austwick building a wall around a cuckoo to prevent it getting away but we heard also about whittle to a tree when there was only one life in the village. It was hung on a tree and when it was missing the call for it to be returned was "whittle to tree." One day a man using it for cutting bedding on the fells put it under a cloud so he could find it later but other clouds came down and the knife was lost for ever.

Some writers have attributed such stories to village rivalry and local jealousies but I think Austwick people enjoy them and I have an idea that the majority probably originated in Austwick in much the same way as the majority of jokes about Scotland are said to be born in Aberdeen. Even that as it may these yarns amusing though they might be bear no relationship in fact to the character of the inhabitants. On the contrary I found the people not only friendly and most helpful but knowledgeable and extremely interesting in conversation.

Charm

Austwick was a strange village as far as I was concerned. I had passed through but never stopped to explore. That made the visit all the more enjoyable for it is as delightful a place as its old world appearance and its lovely situation suggests. The surrounding countryside has a beauty and grandeur difficult to rival anywhere and in the village itself we were often charmed by a 16th century cottage or by the lovely well kept gardens of the neat and trim village houses.

Austwick is old but its actual age is immaterial. It has survived sufficient centuries to have mellowed into a lovely old English village of the type which enriches this rugged Craven district.

We had pleasure from visiting the Church and the old Wesleyan Chapel and from a visit to the village school and we saw Austwick's famous parish hall. It was built—as the name Pretoria Hall suggests—to commemorate the Boer War but in my view is much more of a memorial to the civic conscious and hard-working enthusiasts who conceived the idea of a community centre and were quick to put the idea into practice.



Mr. W. K. Mattinson who has a fine record of public service in Austwick.

At Austwick's centuries old Church school which has just over 52 happy children on the roll we were shown round by the head-mistress, Miss G. A. Macdonald and by her two assistants, Mrs. D. Swales who we were told had been married during the summer holidays and Mrs. C. Wilson. As we might have expected rural studies play a big part in the curriculum at Austwick although other subjects are not neglected and we saw Mrs. Swales instructing the older boys in gardening.

Time after time in the villages we have toured I have been impressed by the part school teachers are playing in the life of the villages and Austwick is no exception. Mrs. Swales besides being a leading figure in the Folk Dancing Group which is very popular is secretary of the Austwick and District Field Club. Her colleague Mrs. Wilson has been secretary of the Parochial Council for a number of years. Both were scholars at the school where they are now teachers.

Influence

The first person we met as we drove into Austwick was Mr. W. K. Mattinson and it was a fortunate meeting for few men know more about the village or have had greater influence there. For over 30 years he was parish representative on the Settle Rural District Council, is a life member of the Bowling Club, president of the Ingleton Clapham and Austwick British Legion and a former Section Leader in the West Riding Constabulary.

He took us to his house and we saw his beautiful gardens where he keeps the instruments on which are recorded the rainfall for the River Board. He gave us the depressing news that in Austwick in August there were 13 inches of rain.

We were joined by his daughter Miss Kathleen Mattinson, once a lecturer on the staff

has her own laboratory at Austwick where she makes botanical slides which are used in colleges throughout the British Isles and in many places abroad. Miss Mattinson is president of the Austwick Field Club and both she and her father told us of the botanical and archeological resources of the district which draw into the village students from every part of the British Isles.

Valuable archeological finds made at Austwick are now in the British Museum and Mr. Mattinson must be one of the few men in the country to have a pothole named after him. It is the now well known "Kinsey Hole"—Kinsey being Mr. Mattinson's second name. He was responsible for excavating and opening up the hole which had hitherto not been known.

The Austwick countryside is a paradise for the bird watcher and the naturalist and we heard from Mr. Mattinson of the exploits of the Yorkshire Archeological Society and similar bodies of which he is in membership.

We could fill the space allotted for this feature with all we heard about Austwick's bird life and its fauna and flora of the mysteries of Austwick Moss, the Northern Boulders, the extensive flinted collection of limestone boulders piled one on top of another in a crazy pattern.



Miss Kathleen Mattinson from whose laboratory botanical slides go to colleges throughout the British Isles and places abroad.

Social centre

There were other things to claim our interests. The parish hall for instance which once was a large barn and is now the centre of Austwick's social and cultural life. Perhaps the social events lack some of the colour of former years when country folk came on horseback or in horse and trap to

dance until the small hours to the music of the fiddle and concertina but it is adequately fulfilling the purpose for which it was designed and for which generations of Austwick people have worked. Improvements have been made through the years, electricity introduced to replace

been extended to its present spacious capacity.

Austwick is essentially a rural village and although there it seems doubtful if ever it boasted a country market there was until the beginning of the century a fair on the village green each Whitsuntide when pigs and cattle were driven into the village and sold in the street. The majority of Austwick residents are engaged in agriculture or in occupations closely allied to it and it was good to see that Austwick still has its village smithy. When a village loses its smithy it seems to lose something of its rural character. Of course the functions of the smithy have changed since the days when the sight of 12 horses patiently waiting in a queue to be shod was commonplace.

In charge of the smithy when we called was Mr. John Holmes, junior, following in the family tradition and using the anvil his grandfather used. Mr. John Holmes senior, the father looks after the smithy at Clapham. There are occasionally racehorses and hunters for shoeing but the speciality at the smithy these days is the making of ornamental iron gates. There are some excellent examples of this rural craftsmanship at Lawkland Hall and at other places in the locality but much of the work has gone far afield.

There is no record of Austwick ever having industry on a large scale but there was weaving there until towards the end of the last century and to hear about this we called on Mr. Charlie Lord who at 86 is Austwick's oldest man and still keeps his garden in a manner which would put many younger men to shame. He took pride in showing us his lovely fernery.



Mr. Charles Lord at 86 keeps his garden in a manner which would put many younger men to shame.

Mr. Lord remembers handloom weaving in Austwick. "There used to be handlooms in nearly every house," he told me, and the cloth was collected and taken to the Yorkshire towns by road. When weaving ceased because of the building of factories elsewhere there was a general exodus from Austwick and the village's population

Mr. A. Foster was the steward at a whist drive, organised by the women's section of the local British Legion branch, in aid of the Royal Institute for the Blind. Mrs. A. Foster presented prizes to Mrs. P. Metcalfe, Mrs. R. Johnson, Mrs. Helm, Mrs. J. Chapman, Mr. R. Brown, Miss M. Bale, Mr. T. Roberts, Mr. C. Whitfield. Competitions were won by Mesdames J. Hargreaves, Helm, J. Chapman, Metcalfe, W. Booth, D. Cross, Dryden, Messrs A. Foster, W. Newhouse, Glyn Jones, L. Bartlett, W. Booth, A. Preston and Miss Ellison. Supper was served by Mrs. C. M. West, Mrs. Ward, Mrs. W. Truelove and Mrs. Foster.

SEVEN MONTHS LATE!

Mr. Norman Robinson, an Austwick butcher, has a goose which has just laid two eggs. And the traditional date for egg-laying is February 12. An old rhyme says: "On Candlemas Day a good goose should lay."

FOOTBALL REVIVAL.

Two teams of lads, representing Austwick and Settle, played football in a local croft on Saturday. Goal posts had been hurriedly repaired and a pitch marked out, for football has never taken a real hold on local life until now. The Rev. J. Townsend (vicar) was referee, and the match was hard fought. The local lads triumphed with a score of 7-0.

This → was in the same paper under District News.

also the picture on the opposite page of J. Holme.

The same enthusiasm which inspires the League of Friends of the Hospital can be seen in other village activities like the very successful horticultural show and the British Legion fete which is held alternate years at Austwick and Clapham. It can be seen also in the industry of the womenfolk who throughout the winter keep going at least three evening classes per week—a fine record for a small village.

We had intended to visit those charming hamlets which are really part and parcel of Austwick—Lawkland, Feizor and Wharfe but time had gone quickly though very pleasantly. There was no opportunity either of enjoying any of the lovely walks which abound in Austwick. That must be a pleasure deferred.

The trip to Austwick was the furthest in our present series but the most rewarding. My early impression of a lovely old English village was enhanced by a very long day there.



Mr. Dick Young for many years licensee of the Gamecock Inn now kept by his son-in-law and daughter.

with its distinctive cluster of Tudor style chimneys on the outside and its oak beamed rooms within.

As I have said, we found many instances of a rich community life in Austwick and we found also a generous and warm-hearted spirit which is exemplified in the League of Friends of the Hospital. What was formerly an isolation hospital built in 1907 is now a 22 bedded hospital for the chronically sick administered by the hospital management committee. The hospital has been adopted by the League who by staging a number of efforts have been responsible for providing a number of extra comforts for the patients. They render a great service too in providing tea to visitors on visiting days.

The League is comprised of people in all walks of life, including the Vicar (Rev. J. Townsend), the school headmistress, housewives and tradespeople. We were shown round the hospital by the matron who was very appreciative of what is being done and we spoke too to some of the patients.

One old lady who although unable to see well, knits toys for the sale of work by the League told us how happy and grateful the patients were for the help received from the League and for the consideration and kindness of the staff.

but when the Settle-Carlisle Railway was built the houses filled again quickly and have been occupied ever since. Charles, when he was first married paid a weekly rent of 1s. 3d. with no rates and even that was dear when cottages were being let for as little as 6d. a week.

at Mr. Lord does not yearn for the old days. "They were not always good old days and plenty of people knew poverty" he said. He recalled how in his younger days as a mason, plasterer and slater he used to set off for a week's work carrying with him boiled bacon and bread for his rations and a nightly allowance of 4d. for a day's lodging. He helped to build the village hall and he also built Austwick's bus shelter which merges so pleasantly with its rural surroundings. "It will last 1,000 years if no-one pulls it down" he claimed. By the look of it, it will.

his lively old conversationalist who has very definite views on a number of subjects and does not hesitate to express them, has electricity in his lovely house with its spacious gardens but always keeps a stock of candles at hand "just in case." This is perhaps understandable in a man who remembers when country people made their own tallow candles.

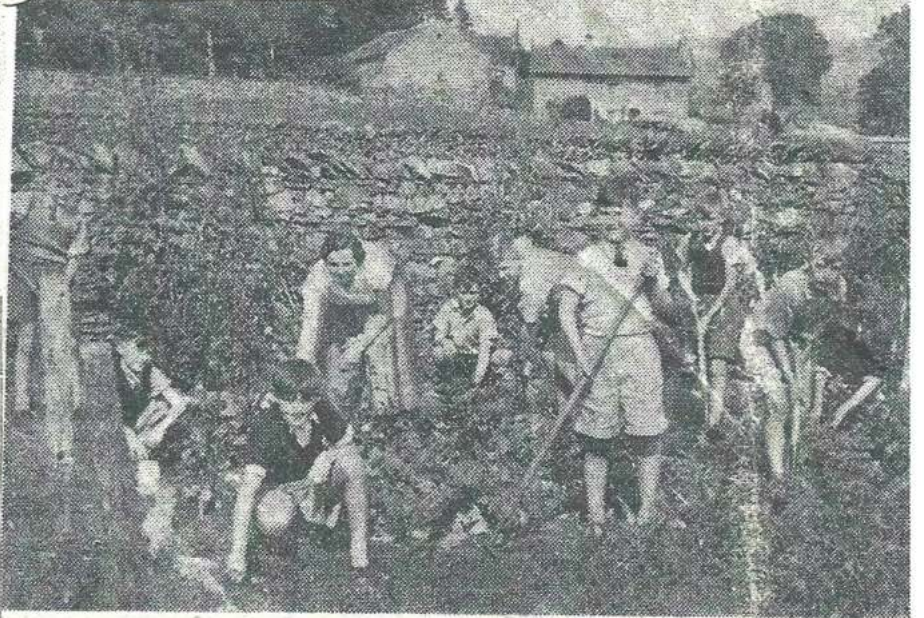
here are many fine old characters in Austwick. One of them, a relative of Mr. Lord is Mr. William Pritchard now 82 but still hearty and active.

Factotum

before he started work on his own account as a builder Mr. Pritchard had worked as a journeyman for 6d. an hour. Since then using mostly local limestone he has been responsible for building many of Austwick's fine houses. Like Mr. Lord he is a native of the village and known to everyone in the locality is perhaps best known as verger and grave-digger for 45 years. Before the cemetery was built something over half a century ago coffins were taken by horse drawn hearse the two miles journey to Clapham. In his early days as verger dozens of candles were lit in the church before winter services could be held and Mr. Pritchard has seen the progressive evolution from candles to gas and eventually the modern electricity. Incidentally his early remuneration as grave-digger, verger, bellringer and organ blower was £6 a year. Men like him have served the village well and fortunately throughout the years Austwick has not lacked such men to give service and the leadership of men like Mr. Matinson. Small wonder there seems on every side an air of co-operation and public spirit.

talked to men in the fields and in the gardens and to women at the doors of their cottages. Many of them were not born in Austwick but they all share a deep love of the village. We met for instance Mr. William R. Mitchell, a journalist who in a few years in Austwick has become an authority on local men and matters and who helped me considerably in making contacts. We had a chat with Mr. Dick Young who for many years was licensee of the Gamecock Inn and still lives there although his son-in-law and daughter have charge of it.

Austwick has always been a favourite spot for tourists and Mr. Young has many stories to tell of the visitors by horse drawn wagonettes



Senior boys of Austwick Church School in their garden. With them is one of the mistresses, Mrs. D. Swales.



Children of the Church School with the headmistress, Miss G. A. Macdonald (left) and one of her assistants, Mrs. D. Swales.