

AUSTWICK (in not more than 1,000 words) Copy of what
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in the book.

AUSTWICK

The name AUSTWICK is of Norse origin and means "eastern settlement".

This settlement was recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1085 under the name of Oustewick and Heldetune (Austwick and Eldroth), at which time Austwick was the head of an Honour of 12 manors. The ancient base of a market cross is to be found on one of the greens. Records show that an annual cattle fair took place here on the Thursday before Whit Sunday until the end of the last century.

Austwick parish is an agricultural area of some 12,000 acres; it includes the hamlets of Wharfe and Feizor, with Lawkland and Eldroth on the opposite side of the A65. An attractive village, Austwick nestles between limestone hills, one of which - Oxenber - is conspicuously wooded.

Austwick is the home of some 317 people, the age range extending to over 90 years. The character of the village has changed little despite recent house building. The most venerable building, Austwick Hall, is mentioned in a document of 1573 as being a small fortified manor house. The other old houses easily recognised, having Tudor style chimneys, mullion windows and, a great boon to the historian, dates over the doorways.

A number are of 17th century date, Battle Hill, which was originally a farmhouse, has 1673 ILM over the porch, above a studded front door, and Bonnie Prince Charlie is said to have slept here! The Cuddy (1712) is a most attractive property, built like many another of silvery-grey stone.

The Parish Church was consecrated as "Church of the Epiphany" by the Bishop of Ripon in 1841. Originally, there was a gallery - a feature that was removed when an Eastern extension took place in 1883.

A Methodist Chapel proving too small for the congregation of about 1900, a new chapel - with a prominent red roof - was constructed.

Austwick has its own Church School, for juniors. The Parish Hall, meeting place of many local organisations, came into being when the Pretoria Hall was enlarged in 1926. That earlier hall was made from a cottage and adjacent barn by one Henry Foster. At the Parish Hall meet the play-group, Youth Club, Young Farmer's Club and Woman's Institute to mention a few. Each February, the Parish Hall is the meeting place of the stint-holders of three local pastures, they gather here to discuss matters of mutual interest. A 'stint' represents the pasturage of a sheep and stints were awarded to neighbouring farms to control the rate of stocking. This February meeting, the Herd-Letting, is so called because at one time shepherds were appointed. The minute book, bound in calf, was begun in 1814.

At Austwick is a Post Office and shop combined; a garage, two residential guest houses and the well known Game Cock Inn. A well-used playing field incorporates a play area, tennis courts, crown green bowling, football and cricket pitches. The stone pavilion is a more modern addition.

Austwick lies just off the A65, from which no less than three roads approach it. A regular bus service and visits from a travelling library are much appreciated facilities. Doctors from

practice at Bentham hold a morning surgery in the village each week. Prescriptions from the Settle doctors are collected and delivered to individual houses by a team of voluntary helpers working to a rota. Volunteers also operate a Meals on Wheels service to the elderly and housebound.

The amalgamation of many small farms into larger holdings has greatly reduced the number of workers in agriculture. The remaining farmers benefit from mechanisation, though it does reduce the scope for employment locally. Austwick is, in past, a village of commuters. Many young people, when their school days are over, leave for university or to seek employment elsewhere.

The geology, flora and fauna of the Austwick district have long attracted scientists and educational groups. The village lies at the edge of the largest outcrop of limestone in Britain. On ~~Noth~~ (the north hill) are "erratics" - Silurian boulders perched on pedestals of limestone - which are illustrated in geological text books the world over. Kinsey Cave, on Giggleswick Scar, which has yielded remains of early human and animal life, was named after the middle name of William K. Mattinson of Austwick, for he was the man responsible for excavating and opening up the previously unknown hole. Mr Charles Lord was an authority on ferns.

Between Austwick and Eldroth is mossland famous for its plants and insect life. In recent times, roe deer have moved into quiet wooded area.

For many years, Austwick has been called "cuckoo town", from a daft story about local people who believed that they could enjoy perpetual Spring-like weather if they could retain the cuckoo,

harbinger of spring. They tried to do this by building a wall around a roosting bird which, of course, simply spread its wings and flew over the top. Yet some were sure that if they had only put another course of stone on the wall they would have held it captive.

It is a story which the old Austwick folk told against themselves. It indicated originality of mind and sense of fun. Much is the folklore of Austwick, in 1954 a lady wrote "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 the tales ridiculing them had no justification". Some lads from Austwick once visited an orchard at Feizor, stripped an apple tree of its fruit and returned next night, to tie the apple cores back on the branches!

An annual Street Market is held on the bank holiday Monday, proceeds shared equally between the playing field and the Parish Hall for maintenance, and alternate years, second weekend in July there has been an open garden weekend which raises money for NSPCC and local charities.