

RAVENSTONEDALE PARISH HISTORY GROUP



Our website header: A view over Ravenstonedale Parish from Bents Hill on Crosby Garrett Fell

Newsletter Autumn 2019

As in previous years we will be emailing this newsletter to most of our members to save postage. Those without access to email will of course still receive a copy in the post. If you receive the monthly Parish newsletter *The Link*, details of our meetings are also listed in that, and please remember that if you have access to the internet you can keep up to date with History Group news and events by checking our website <https://www.ravenstonedalehistory.org.uk> on a regular basis (our website can also be reached via a link from the Ravenstonedale Community website).

If you wish to contact the History Group, please leave a comment on one of the forms on our website. Your email address will NOT be shown online – it is only visible to you and to our website admin, who will endeavour to contact you within a week or so. Comments are all reviewed before they are published on the website, and then answered either privately or on the website as appropriate. If you wish to telephone the History Group, please call either 015396 23308 or 07798 688057.

Annual General Meeting 2019

The Committee would like to thank those members who attended the AGM held in May 2019. Sadly we had to report the death of one of our long-serving committee members in April, Chris Harrison-Beck. Chris was a loyal supporter of the History Group, and we are grateful for all he did, not least the construction of the new storage shelves in the History Room with Bill Wappett.



The shelves (some seen here soon after completion) are now numbered individually and there is a shelf plan so that individual items can be located easily. As funds permit, we buy museum-standard acid-free storage boxes and transparent folders so that paper items do not degrade over time in the atmosphere in the High Chapel. This is on average too cold (and sometimes too damp) for long-term storage. For this reason, unique items (such as handwritten school logbooks for example) are scanned and then offered to the County Archive at either Carlisle or Kendal.



Some Recent Acquisitions

Sadie Wilson's granddaughter Tracey Meloni, who was born at The Chantry, very kindly gave us Edward Jeffrey's 1947 portrait of Sadie (who was his landlady at The Chantry.) Tracey knew Edward Jeffrey when she was a young child. Jane Jackson (née Capstick) gave us a prodded rug made by her grandmother - and a frame, with a prodder and a partly-made rug on it. Frank Hunter has added to our *Toby Twirl* book collection with his father's 1947 Sunday School prize.

Next Season's Programme of Talks 2019-2020

Most talks take place in High Chapel Community and Heritage Centre at 7.30pm, but two each season are held in Newbiggin-on-Lune Public Hall – see below.



Weds 18th September: Diana Fothergill: Tower House – History, Mysteries and Stories

This talk will be in **Newbiggin-on-Lune Public Hall**

drawing of Tower House by Jonathan Marrow

Weds 16th October: June Hall: Lady Anne Clifford's Route from Skipton to Brougham

Weds 20th November: Harry Hawkins: Monks, Shepherds and Wool

Weds 11th December: Christmas get-together for members and friends – there will be a Quiz as usual....

Weds 15th January: Steve Fermer: If These Walls Could Talk...

Weds 20th February: Jackie Wedd: Mary's Memories – of her early childhood in Newbiggin-on-Lune 1908-1919 - this talk will be in **Newbiggin-on-Lune Public Hall**

Weds 20th March: Val Fermer: Who Lived in Your House?

This season's evening talks and "summer" outdoor evening walk

Evening talks have again been well supported by both members and non-members, with an average attendance of around 27 people. We are very grateful to Steve Fermer who now submits a report on each talk to both the *Cumberland and Westmorland Herald* and *The Link*.



In July Val and Steve led a walk round Ravenstonedale village, which featured stories of some of the houses and their former occupants. Although the weather was not exactly summery, seventeen people enjoyed a stroll round the village, beginning in St Oswald's graveyard to



highlight some of the memorials with connections to the forthcoming walk, and then continuing past the Black Swan, learning some of its history including the rebuilding in 1899 by John Carver. Some of John Carver's other contributions to the village street were noted on the way to High Chapel - refurbished by John and his brother Thomas in 1895 in memory of their mother, a native of the village. If you wish to know more, there will be a book of Val's research published (hopefully) in time for Christmas! Meanwhile we heard stories about Bank House (below right - formerly Martins Bank and then Barclays Bank), High Chapel House (formerly The Manse) and The Chantry. The Chantry was built by John Carver, and the illustrations for the Toby Twirl books were created by Edward Jeffrey in his studio there



in the late 1940's and early 1950's, We returned down Back Lane to Manor House, once known as Back Lane Farm, which dates from the 1700's and finally reached The King's Head for a chance to dry off!



Autumn Exhibition 2018

Our annual History exhibition was held in St Oswald's Church for the first time, over the weekend following the performance on 9th November by Friends of St Oswald's of their play entitled *From Westmorland to the Western Front*. We then revised and relocated the exhibition to High Chapel for the evening of Val's talk about the soldiers who returned to the Parish after the War. The aim of the play and the exhibition was to document not only life on the battlefields but also life in the Parish at the time.



Several History Group members and friends allowed us to exhibit photographs of their relatives who fought in the War, along with their medals and uniforms, and we were also able to feature extracts from a diary kept at the time which explained something of what was going on here in the Parish during the Great War.

Although before the exhibition we were unable to track down an example of the medal given in 1919 to each Ravenstonedale returning soldier (or posthumously to the family of those who fell), again we are indebted to Frank Hunter who has since given us the medal which belonged to his grandfather William Hunter. The inscription on the reverse reads **Ravenstonedale Great War 1914-18 Pte William Hunter 2nd LNL Regt** and the front bears his initials as a monogram. We have had the medal mounted and framed so that both sides can be seen, and alongside it are William Hunter's regimental shoulder flashes and cap badge.



Frank has also given us a collection of books of local interest, including *Two Old Towns: Kirkby Stephen and Ravenstonedale* by Michael Ffinch, the poet and author who lived at Bowderdale during the 1970's, as well as various documents and ephemera relating to the Hunter family's time at Garshill. Last but not least, we now have six watercolour landscapes by Edward Jeffrey on long loan, which belong to Frank's family, and we hope to hang these in High Chapel for everyone to enjoy, once the renovations are complete. We are very grateful to everyone who has donated documents, artefacts (and cash!) to further one of the aims of the History Group in providing and maintaining the Parish archive.

Family History Research

Fothergill, Hunter, Fawcett, Akrigg, Atkinson – these are just some of the local families about whom we have received enquiries this year. We were also pleased to meet another former pupil of Fell End School, Mary Stewart née Akrigg, who remembers the fireguard which went round the stove in the schoolroom, where the children used to huddle during those cold winter days. She was also able to identify herself and her two brothers Alan and George as the children mentioned in the Fell End School logbook entry dated 19th October 1945 who were unable to get to school from High Stennerskeugh because the school car had broken down.

One of our ongoing projects is to match local families to their dwellings in the Parish over the years, and it was good to be able to show some of our visitors photographs of the farms where their ancestors lived and worked.



Friends of the Lake District Open Day and AGM

This was held in June at Newbiggin-on-Lune Public Hall – but why would Friends of the Lake District hold their AGM outside their area? Well, confusingly, although the Parish is now part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, most of the Parish falls within the Westmorland Dales area – and this is administered by FLD – so they chose to highlight some of the upcoming projects which the Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership will be running locally, funded by their Heritage Lottery Fund grant. RPHG was asked if one of our members would be able to help guide a local walk and give information on local history – Les Neal was happy to do this. We also provided a small exhibition about some of Newbiggin's history, using material from our archive – some also featured in the Autumn exhibition, and some will feature in next year's exhibition too.



And finally....

How many of our members will have seen this stone we're not sure, but it is the only surviving Angle Stone in the Parish and is situated on the old road from Kelleth to Newbiggin, almost opposite the track leading to Dubbs on the boundary between Bowderdale and Newbiggin Angles. Ravenstonedale is unique in the UK for having four historic Parish divisions known as Angles.



their name to the English.

Why Angles? The late Chris Irwin, one of the founder-members of the History Group, thought that the answer lay in their roughly triangular shape. He pointed out that the term Anglo-Saxon derives from a particular triangle-shaped area, Angul, near Holstein in what is now Germany, where the tribe referred to as the Angles who settled Anglia came from and who ultimately gave

One of our members who lives in Newbiggin asked us if the stone could be repaired and relocated slightly to a less vulnerable position, and hopefully with the agreement of Cumbria County Council Highways - and some grant aid - this will be done.