

RAVENSTONEDALE PARISH HISTORY GROUP



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

Newsletter Autumn 2020

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 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 2020

Unfortunately we have not been able to hold our Annual General Meeting yet this year, because of the lockdown and social distancing restrictions required during the current Coronavirus pandemic. As not all of our members have internet access, we were not able to hold a “virtual” AGM online. We also had to postpone all our meetings from Wednesday 20th March 2020 onwards, and have not been able to welcome visitors to the Archive Room. Some committee members have however been taking care of the Archive by removing vulnerable and valuable items for storage elsewhere as the refurbishments continue at High Chapel Community and Heritage Centre. We are grateful to the Parish Clerk for supplying an electric freestanding radiator for use in the Archive Room while the heating has been turned off in the Chapel and this has kept the room warm and dry at just above the recommended minimum temperature for Archive storage.

Some Recent Acquisitions

We have been given various documents and letters relating to the management and day-to-day running of the Metcalfe-Gibson holdings in Ravenstonedale which our volunteers had begun to catalogue before the March lockdown was announced. This work remains to be completed.

We have also begun to catalogue material we have been given about the Fothergill Weekend which was held in the Parish in June 2006 to raise funds for St Oswald’s Church in Ravenstonedale.

This includes the dramatisation of the trial of Elizabeth Gaunt, neé Fothergill, who was born at Brownber and who was the last woman to be burnt at the stake at Tyburn. She is now honoured as a Protestant martyr. The dramatisation was adapted by the late Janet Barlow, one of the founder-members of the History Group, from the transcription of the trial.

The Bowderdale/Newbiggin Angle Stone

Following on from our mention of this in the 2019 Newsletter, we now have some good news!

Ravenstonedale Parish is divided into four areas known as Angles – this name for local Parish divisions is unique in the UK.

Why Angles? The late Chris Irwin, another of the founder-members of the History Group, thought that the answer lay in the roughly triangular shape of the four divisions. 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 their name to the English).

Originally, boundary stones like this one would have been placed on the main Parish roads to show which residents were responsible for maintaining each length of road. There would have been a stone near the original bridge at Coldbeck between Town and Newbiggin Angles (Coldbeck is in Newbiggin Angle), and also one near the Quaker burial ground at the boundary between Town and Fell End Angles.

Les Neal, one of our members who lives in Newbiggin-on-Lune, was anxious that this last remaining Angle Stone, which had been damaged in the past, should not disappear. The History Group decided to ask Richard Staley to repair it and make a plinth for it so it will be protected in the future from accidental damage. It is hoped that we will be able to provide a small information plaque as well.

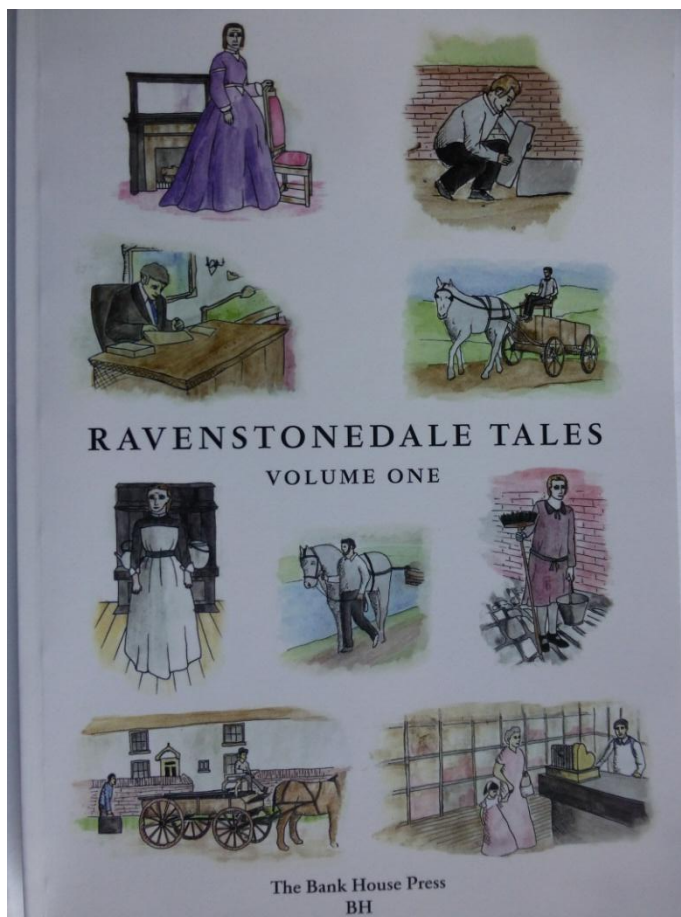


The stone is on the Kelleth road, not far from Newbiggin-on-Lune at grid reference NY694055.

Research by Members

Les Neal and his son Simon have been researching the history of Lord Thomas Wharton's Park and Walls for several years now, and their research has culminated in the submission of two papers to the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society. Simon discovered new documents in the National Archives dating from the 16th century and made a fresh translation from the Latin of another document which allows the true story of the Park's creation to be revealed for the first time. Les and Simon have kindly let us make a summary of their research for the Parish Archive.

Their research not only sheds new light on the circumstances around the creation of the Park, but also disproves a long-held local belief about the origin of the village of Newbiggin-on-Lune. Ravenstonedale Manor records show that Newbiggin village existed, with Ravenstonedale, as long ago as the 12th century when it formed part of the original gift of the Manor of Ravenstonedale to the Gilbertine Priory of Watton in Yorkshire.



Val Fermer is now working on the second volume of her **Ravenstonedale Tales**. Sarah Mossop of Cerberus Printers in Kirkby Stephen has prepared the galleys and Val is currently identifying the many illustrations to be featured, drawing once more on the wealth of the unique Parish archive documents and photographs held by RPHG.

Sales made through RPHG of *Ravenstonedale Tales Volume 1* have generated £39 towards our running costs to date, despite the enforced closure of our Talks programme, the Archives and especially the usual Thursday open afternoons at the Archive Room, popular with visitors to the Village. When visitors are able to attend once more, Volumes 1 and 2 will be available as a souvenir of their visit and a continuing source of revenue for RPHG. Thank you Val!

Some Reviews of the first volume: 'Delightful' *Anne Taylor (Upper Eden History Society)*

'I enjoyed reading the book and found it most informative' *Chris Brown (direct descendant of Elizabeth Airey)*

'Tell Val her effort was definitely not wasted, especially for the majority of us who do not have the patience to do the research.' *Robert Brown (direct descendant of John Carver)*. Apparently Robert also told his cousin in Paris 'you must buy this book'! (He has!)

Jackie Wedd, Dave Wedd, Val Fermer, Caroline Morris and Les Neal have been researching the long history of the two farms at Bowberhead, which in the sixteenth century were originally one large holding, for which Cuthbert Hunter paid the Manor Rent.

Bowberhead (North-East) has been transferred to Cumbria Wildlife Trust in lieu of Inheritance Tax as part of the settlement of the estate of the late Juliet Frankland, widow of Raven Frankland. The Trust's latest Nature Reserve features internationally important northern upland flower-rich hay meadows. Only 900 hectares remain of this unique habitat in Cumbria, West Yorkshire, Durham, Lancashire and Northumberland. Such meadows have survived because of the traditional method of farm management which involves grazing the meadows over autumn and winter and then "shutting them up" over spring and summer to allow for flowering and seed-set, after which the meadows are cut for hay to feed the livestock in winter. Such meadows support rare species of flowers, birds, insects and animals – for instance, anyone who walks along Bleaflatt Lane or Low Lane in Ravenstonedale in the summer will hear and see skylarks, lapwings and curlews, and brown hares among the meadow flowers, as well as butterflies, bumble bees and other insects.

Cumbria Vernacular Buildings Group have surveyed the house and barns for CWT and are preparing their report – it is thought the house dates from at least the mid-17th century, and maybe earlier, as according to Ravenstonedale Manor Rent records, the single holding at Bowberhead originally held by Cuthbert Hunter had been divided into two farms by 1655.

The initials RH on the porch (a later addition) and the date 1717 refer to the owner Robert Hunter (one of three who lived there over the years according to Juliet Frankland) who built the porch and possibly extended the

BOWBER HEAD FARM			
Site in the Parish of Ravenstonedale in the County of Westmorland, containing 57.079 acres of meadow and pasture land together with Dwellinghouse and Farm Buildings and together with the rights of common on Ashfell appurtenant thereto the particulars whereof are as follows:-			
No. on Ordnance Map	Name of Field	Cultivation	Acreage
988	Wood	Woodland, &c.	.433
985	Steading, &c		.684
984	Near Scarr	Meadow	2.320
983	Top Scarr	Meadow	1.407
976	Low Scarr	Meadow	2.622
964	Undergate	Meadow, Plantation and Building	8.406
978	Undergate Pasture	Pasture	3.583
960	Common Scandal Ing and Bottom Field	Meadow	7.597
965	Bottoms Pasture	Pasture	5.395
958	Scandal Ing	Meadow	2.357
944	Cleaving Close	Meadow	1.791
979	High Burn Hills	Meadow and Building	3.792
980	Low Burn Hills	Meadow	3.588
994	Horse Pasture	Pasture	1.852
993	Common Hall	Pasture, &c	2.081
1070 part	Garden and Paddock	Pasture, &c.	.125
955	Flass Field	Meadow	.657
963	Low Stintings	Meadow	2.007
977	Plantation	Woodland, &c.	.909
978	High Stintings	Pasture	1.674
	Common Right		
		Total Acres	57.079

house at the same time. The blocked round hole at the top was an “owl hole” which would have been used by Barn Owls – Juliet Frankland wrote that there was a plague of field mice recorded in 1717, so the owls would have been encouraged.

RPHG have been able to provide the Trust with an almost complete list of owners and farmers of both farms by researching the Parish archive, along with the traditional names of the meadows and pastures,

some of which have swapped ownership between the two farms over the centuries. Most of these names are descriptive and come from Old English or occasionally Old Norse. This illustration is from the Sale poster dated 1930.

Low Stintings - a Stint is an area where a certain number of livestock may be kept;

Undergate means the pasture below the gate (gate is Old English or Scots for lane and this pasture is below Low Lane)

Water Keld - Keld is the old Norse word for Spring;

Scandal Ing - Ing (Enga in Old Norse) means meadow, especially by a watercourse, in this case Scandal Beck



Bowberhead (North-East) Farmhouse c 1900, a photograph in the Ravenstonedale Parish Archive (the lady in the middle is wearing clogs, essential footwear for boggy fields...)

If anyone knows who these people are we would love to know too!

(From 1871 until 1911 according to the Censuses, the occupiers were various members of the Airey family)

Family History Research

We have done our best to help people contacting our website enquiring about family history to do with the Fothergills, the Hunters and the Wilsons.

One enquiry came from Barbara Murray who is researching the link between the Ravenstonedale Fothergills and those at Carr End, in Wensleydale. Barbara kindly offered to write the following article for us about her work.

The Fothergills – Writerly Research

Barbara Murray

For several years I have been researching for a biographical novel based on the Fothergill branch that migrated from Ravenstonedale to Wensleydale, particularly Alexander Fothergill (1710 -1788) and the Carr End branch. A few months ago, I approached Ravenstonedale Parish History Group via the website and little did I know what a mine of information and support the Ravenstonedale team were going to be!

It all started years ago, when I was out on walks in Raydale and I'd regularly stop in the Tea Room of the superb Raydale Preserves, in Stalling Busk. They have a bookshelf in there jam-packed (excuse the pun) with lots of historical material – fascinating to peruse over pots of tea and carrot cake!

I'm not of Fothergill ancestry, but we had just bought a house in Sedbusk, Wensleydale, lately owned by Alice Fothergill, much loved by her neighbours. Locals sometimes refer to me as the one "in Alice Fothergill's place" which now seems weirdly apposite! When I traced the Tea Room material back to 1660s Ravenstonedale, it truly felt as if Alexander's and Alice's ancestors were tapping me on the shoulder.

It's an amazing journey of discovery: contacting Fothergill descendants near and afar, visiting archives in Cumbria, North Yorkshire and beyond, including the splendid archives at Friends House, (the Quaker HQ in London) and the Royal College of Surgeons. The wonderful support and enthusiasm I've met all along the way keeps me going in the long winter days spent tapping the keyboard.

"My" Fothergills lived in times of pandemic and economic upheaval – but opportunity was there for the ambitious too. Many were asking of themselves deep spiritual questions. Sounds familiar?

Where there are gaps in my research, I need to make judgements as to what these characters - these *people* - would be feeling, thinking, saying and doing? "Sometimes," says Hilary Mantel, "you have a straight choice of what to believe, with no evidence to rely on."

Interestingly, I have found many of the family's letters TO Alexander throughout the 1700s, but very few FROM him, and it would be wonderful to hear more of his own voice. With the History Group's permission, I am contacting the people who attended the 2006 Fothergill Gathering in Ravenstonedale in case anyone has material they would like to share. If any readers have information pertaining to the family, or to those times, I would be most grateful to hear from you. You can contact me through my website below.

Attics and store-cupboards around the world must be full of material that can fill the gaps of all our shared history. If you have any such material, do have a look. Let their voices speak again. Hear what they have to say. By making sense of the past, we can understand the forces at play driving the choices our antecedents faced. Choices that shaped who they became - and shaped the world we have inherited.

Barbara's short story collection *The Hanging of the Wensleydale Rioters: Stories Illuminating Our Lives and Times* will be published in 2021.

Next Season's Programme of Talks 2020-2021

Most talks take place in High Chapel Community and Heritage Centre at 7.30pm on the third Wednesday of the month, but two each season are held in Newbiggin-on-Lune Public Hall.

The talks programme will not start before October, and there will be no talk in any case in January 2021, so if we do start in October the final talk would be in May 2021 (assuming we have a Christmas get-together in December).

The first talk will be Val Fermer's postponed from last March – **Who Lived in Your House?**

However, all dates are to be advised – keep an eye on the website, and Val will also send out emails in due course.

All our talks this season will be by History Group members to keep costs down...so far those who have volunteered are Steve Fermer, Diana Fothergill, Jackie Wedd, Les Neal and Maurice Hall.

And finally....

In August Jackie was delighted to be asked to meet Edward Potts who was evacuated from Newcastle to Ravenstonedale for five years during the 1939-45 War, staying at Ashfell Farm. The evacuees from the north-east went to Windermere first, then home to Newcastle, but then came here when the bombing started again. Edward is now 88 years old and was visiting the village for the first time since 1981. His family had contacted the Methodists locally as he remembered worshipping at Low Chapel and wished to see inside it again. Here he is (with suitable social distancing measures in place) showing us how his job was to sit in the corner next to the organ and pump the air for the organist.



He also attended Ravenstonedale School, and while we don't have any school photographs in the Archive from the War years, we were able to give him copies of school photos from the 1930's and the late 1940s, in which he recognised Doris Cooper (later Morphet) and Thomas Balmer. Thomas Balmer remembers Edward being at the school. Mr Potts also recalled Edwin Atkinson at Lytheside and two girls at Crooks Beck named Ella and June Rudd, and he remembered playing in the hayloft at Ashfell Farm with Nicky Glenwright. He was still absolutely certain of how to get to the farm from the village – not surprising perhaps as he must have travelled between the two very many times over the five years he was here.

The Committee hopes that you have found something of interest in the newsletter, and we look forward to seeing you either at the Archive Room or at one of the evening talks when we are able to resume the programme.

STOP PRESS: Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership are planning a series of heritage walks in the area and would like to hold one in Ravenstonedale village on Saturday 21st November at 10am (to be confirmed). We will keep you informed!