

RAVENSTONEDALE PARISH HISTORY GROUP

History Group's successful first year 2010-2011

Ravenstonedale Parish History Group has completed its first year and set out its programme of speakers for the coming season 2011-2012. Since its inception in September 2010, more than fifty members have joined plus many more who attend the monthly meetings, when guest speakers inform and entertain us with local history topics. To date our speakers have included Val and Steve Fermer demonstrating their research into Generations of the Milner Family in Ravenstonedale, Chris Read on Growing Up in Ravenstonedale in the 1950s and Dr Helga Frankland, a lifelong resident, now ninety, on Farming in Ravenstonedale. Each has included many old pictures of the parish and been well-received by an audience of fifty or more. Audience participation, particularly by older residents, has made for lively presentations.

The Group is housed in the Grade II listed former High Chapel building, now owned by Ravenstonedale Parish Council. Informal meetings for cataloguing, information exchange (along with chat and refreshments) are held every Thursday afternoon between 2 and 4pm. Visitors are always welcome and may browse the history of the Chapel (built 1726) or the archives which include transcripts of the Parish Registers, Censuses, photographs, newspaper cuttings and much more. Family research plays a significant part in our activities. The Group has also visited the Weardale Local History Museum and has received visits from other local history organisations. We have recently received a grant from Cumbria County Council's Neighbourhood Forum which will enable the acquisition of computer equipment, projector etc instead of having to rely on the goodwill of members.

The 2011-2012 season of monthly talks will commence on 21st September with a talk by Margaret Gowling from the Upper Eden History Society on John Thompson in Ravenstonedale. Evening meetings are held in High Chapel (currently being upgraded to become a Community and Heritage Centre) starting at 7.30pm.

C.J. Elphick, Treasurer/Membership Secretary