Austwick Field and Local History Society
Autumn Newsletter

Ralph Court

The AFLHS Committee and members of the Society who new Ralph Court, were greatly saddened to hear of his recent passing. He was an extremely popular Committee member of the Society and carried out the "meet and greet" role for several years at the Society's evening events, always with great courtesy and charm. He was a nice man through and through and will be much missed by all of us.

Autumn 2025 and Winter 2026 Programme of Evening Talks

The autumn season of talks by local speakers has been well attended with typically 50+ members and guests attending the talks.
Annual membership of the Society runs from September 2025 to end of August 2026 and from January 2026 the cost is reduced from £12 to £6 per person for the six remaining evening talks in the spring/ summer of 2026. All are welcome to our meetings and the cost for non-members is £3 per person (cash only please) at the door. Refreshments will also be available with donations welcome. Talks start at 7.30 pm in Austwick Village (large) Hall. Members wishing to renew their membership should bring cash or a cheque to one of the autumn/ spring meetings or even better pay by BACS-please see Pat Higginson our treasurer for details

The following evening talks are scheduled on the third Wednesday in the month for the Spring/ early summer of 2026

- January 21st 2026: Wild Ingleborough update
- February 18th 2026: RSPB Bird Investigations
- March 18th 2026: Geology Giants
- April 15th 2026: Common Land
- May 20th 2026: The work of the Craven Wildlife Rescue Centre
- June 17th 2026: Fossil and Fossil Hunters of the Yorkshire Dales

For anyone hard of hearing you will be pleased to know that the Parish Hall has tried and tested high quality projection and sound equipment including a hearing loop for the main Hall. This new equipment has already proved its value to everyone attending recent AFLHS evening talks.

Summer Outings in 2026

There will also be two summer walks in 2026, one in June and one in July for members. Current suggestions are a visit to Giggleswick Chapel and a visit to a local hay meadow. However, details have not been finalised yet and any suggestions are welcome-please contact the Chair or Tony Horsewill.

Annual General Meeting in January 2026 and Nature Recovery Schemes

The AGM of the Society will take place in January 2026, followed by a talk on Wild Ingleborough. The AGM will provide a review of the Society's Nature Recovery activities undertaken with the help of several generous grants over the past year. These activities comprise a) completion of an artificial Sand Martin nesting box on Austwick Beck just downstream of the Little Bridges (now complete), b) hay meadow and woodland flower restoration adjacent to the footpath passing from the bridge on Greystonber Lane to Low Street (now complete), and c) restoration of a traditional hay meadow on a steep parcel of land adjacent to the footpath running between Austwick and Feizor (now well advanced). This latter scheme is being funded by the Dry Rigg Environmental Fund and work completed so far comprises repairs to a drystone wall and erection of new fencing to the site adjacent to Oxenber SSSI wood, major clearing of brambles, planting of numerous plug plants and sowing of wild hay meadow flower seed, and most recently, the removal of numerous bramble roots.

Volunteers from within the parish as well as the local running club-Settle Harriers-have made a big contribution to the task of removing the many bramble roots and this has involved strenuous work on a very steep slope-please see images. Further work will involve planting more plug plants and sowing more hay meadow seed this autumn/ winter. Volunteers are still needed but should be fit and strong to work on the field due to its very steep incline and multitude of rabbit holes! If interested, please contact Alex Pilkington on alexpilk@msn.com

Evidence of Sand Martins occupying the nest boxes will be monitored from about late March to see if any take a fancy to their new summer homes. If they do we will be seeking sponsorship for each of the 12 nest boxes from AFLHS members. Further updates on sightings will be provided in the next Newsletter…

Graham Cleverly
AFLHS chairman