

Austwick Field and Local History Society

Spring and Summer 2026 Programme of Talks

The spring season of talks by local speakers has been well attended and the society now has more than 100 paid-up members including residents of Settle, Clapham, Giggleswick and Bentham as well as the local Parishes of Austwick and Lawkland. The two most recent evening meetings attracted over 60 members and guests.

Recent interesting talks have covered various field and local history-related topics including droving, wild Ingleborough, RSPB criminal investigations, and Geology Giants. By the time you read this, the two remaining society evening talks this spring season will be:

- On Wednesday 20th May: The work of the Craven Wildlife Rescue Centre
- On Wednesday 17th June: Fossil and Fossil Hunters of the Yorkshire Dales

All are welcome and the cost for non-members is £3 per person (cash only please) at the door. Refreshments will be available. Talks start at 7.30 pm in Austwick Village (large) Hall.

This spring/summer the society has organised two field visits: The first was a visit to the recently erected bird hide on Lawkland Hall Farm to view waders. Our group of about 20 members were supported by RSPB member Frank Osterberg and by local farmer and wildlife supporter Pete Webster. The weather was perfect, and we saw several curlews, oystercatchers, lapwing and redshank at close hand, and everyone appreciated the opportunity to observe these iconic waders. Our huge thanks to Pete and Frank for their help in making this such a worthwhile visit.



The second visit on July 3rd will be an afternoon guided tour of Giggleswick School and chapel. Details to follow shortly. Our visits are free to members. If you are not currently a member and would like know more about our talks and visits or to be included on our records for future meeting notices, please contact our membership secretary Tony Horsewill on tonyhorsewill@me.com.

Autumn 2026 and Spring 2027 Programme of Talks

Evening talks during autumn 2026 and spring 2027 will as usual be in Austwick village (large) hall on the third Wednesday (usually) of each month from September 2026.

2026

September 16th: **James Innerdale: *Look again - Reading vernacular buildings and external finishes***

October 21st: **Heather Lane: *Walter Morrison - His links to Giggleswick***

November 18th: **Tom Lord: *Traditional Hay Meadows in the Dales***

December 9th (2nd Wednesday): **David Johnson: *Ingleborough History Underfoot 2027***

January 14th: **AGM and talk by YDMT on *The Building Homes for Dales House Birds Project***

January 20th: **Angus Winchester: *Dry Stone walls***

February 17th: **Graham Cleverly and Maria Farrer: *History of Clapham Dam and the development of the Old Sawmill Café***

March 17th: **Ian Court: *Birds of the Yorkshire Dales***

April 21st: **Prof Carly Stevens: *Limestone Pavements - A secret World under Threat***

May 19th **Jonny Gios: *Wildlife Photography in the Northwest of England with an emphasis on Kendal Kingfishers and Otters***

June 16th: **Trevor Cooper: *A Half-Century of Red Squirrel Conservation in Grasmere***

Nature Recovery Schemes: Update

Below is an updated summary of the current status of several “Nature Recovery” schemes for which funding and volunteer support through AFLHS grant applications is either ongoing or planned.

Feizor hay meadow restoration scheme

The private field adjacent to the public footpath near Feizor has received multiple applications of wild flower seed as well as a variety of wild flower plug plants from various kind donors over the past few months and most if not all of the bramble roots have been removed from the Austwick end of the field by volunteers during the winter. Now the weather is improving the dead bramble roots will hopefully be either burnt or left as wild life refuges and the considerable efforts to enhance the existing hay meadow plants will hopefully bear fruit.

Meanwhile rabbit burrows have reappeared in large numbers across the field. It remains to be seen if the wild flowers will prove too much temptation to the rabbits. Only time will tell.

Sand Martin Nest Box



By now sand martins are starting to return from Africa and several have been observed in the Lune valley. It is hoped some will take advantage of the new Millenium Trust grant funded *des res* artificial nest box on the banks of the Austick Beck, just downstream of the Little Bridges. A temporary wildlife camera has recently been loaned by a kind AFLHS member and fixed to the side of the nest box and we hope to have images of nesting sand martins shortly (and maybe evidence of other

visitors too). In parallel, the Yorkshire Dales Millenium Trust are considering a grant application from AFLHS for a permanent, solar powered camera which can send live feed to the Austwick Village website so the activities at the box can be observed in real time.

Recent Otter sighting on Austick Beck

Two local residents have recently provided AFLHS with videos of a male otter in Austwick Beck. However, a camera installed near the bank where it was first sighted failed to record any

further evidence (although it did pick up mallards, an egret and a heron on the bank). If you see the otter please let one of the AFLHS committee know.

Further Schemes

All AFLHS members are invited to suggest further local Nature Recovery Schemes for consideration by the AFLHS sub-committee, especially in Wharfe, Eldroth and Lawkland.

Graham Cleverly
AFLHS Chair.