

Austwick Field and Local History Society

Spring and Summer 2026 Programme of Talks and Walks

The spring/ summer season of talks by local speakers has been well attended with typically 50-60 members and guests attending the talks.

Recent evening events in the Austwick Parish large Hall have covered:

- A talk by Prof Angus Winchester on Common Land
- A talk by Dr Rebecca Bennion on Fossils and Fossil Hunters of the Yorkshire Dales

The Society's members have also enjoyed two excellent guided visits:

- A visit to the bird hide on Lawkland Hall farm to see waders led by Frank Osterberg (RSPB)
- A tour of Giggleswick School** led by Jim Bellis

**A visit to see Giggleswick School's impressive Victorian chapel is also planned in the autumn following our successful visit to the School, again led by Jim Bellis-date still TBC. This tour is planned to take place shortly after the talk in October on Walter Morrison by Heather Lane.



If you are not a member and would like to know more about our season of talks this autumn 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

Annual membership of the Society runs from September 2026 and costs £15 per person. All are welcome to our meetings and the cost for non-members is £5 per person (cash only please) at the door. Refreshments will also be available. Talks start at 7.30 pm in Austwick Village (large) Hall. Members wishing to renew their membership for the new autumn 26/ spring 27 season of talks and guided walks should send their fee to the Society's bank account by BACS or bring cash (no cheques please) to one of the autumn evening meetings. *If possible please pay*

membership fees for 26/27 season by BACS to Austwick Field and Local History Society, Lloyds Bank, Sort code 30-14-60, Account No 01521471 (Lloyds Bank). Please include your full name in the BACS payment details. Please pay several days before the following monthly evening talk so we can register your details.

The evening talks programme for autumn 2026 and spring 2027 is now finalised and a free printed programme will be available at the autumn meetings from September 2026. Details of all the summer 2026/ spring 2027 evening programme talks are also displayed on the Austwick Village website and the notice board next to Cross Leigh Stores in Austwick and elsewhere in Settle and surrounding villages on posters.

The talks will as usual be in Austwick village (large) hall and are normally held on the third Wednesday of each month from September 2026. (Please note the altered timing of the December 2026 talk which is on the second Wednesday of December).

The topics of the forthcoming Wednesday evening talks during autumn 2026/ spring 2027 are as follows: The first autumn talk is by **James Innerdale** entitled **“Look again-reading vernacular buildings and external finishes”** and will take place on Wednesday 16th September 2026 from 7.30 pm. The talk is expected to be very interesting and informative, so do come along if you can, and enjoy the evening. Further talks cover the following varied field and local history topics: **Walter Morrison and his links to Giggleswick, Traditional Hay Meadows in the Dales, Ingleborough History underfoot, AGM followed by a talk on the Building Homes for Dales House Birds Project, Dry-stone walls, History of Clapham Dam and the development of the Saw Mill Café, Birds of the Yorkshire Dales, Limestone Pavements-A secret world under threat, Wildlife Photography in the NW of England with an emphasis on Kendal’s kingfishers and otters, and Half a century of red squirrel conservation in Grasmere.**

Possible Speakers for the 2026/2027 Season of Evening Talks

Would anyone with a suggestion for an interesting speaker-ideally someone in the North Craven area-to give a talk to the Society in the autumn 2027/spring 2028 season on a suitable field or local history topic kindly contact me at graham.cleverly1@gmail.com. Please include contact details of the speaker and where you found out about them.

Nature Recovery Update

The Society has undertaken several conservation schemes over the past year in line with its revised constitution.

The sand martin artificial nest on the banks of Austwick Beck is still awaiting its first occupants but several flocks of sand martins have been observed in the vicinity and we are hopeful the box will be occupied next spring.

The hay meadow adjacent to the public footpath cutting through from Greystonber Lane near the bridge to Low Street has produced some spectacular wild flowers this summer including red campion, knapweed, yellow rattle and meadow cranesbill and further planting with plug plants is planned in the autumn

The restoration of the Feizor hay meadow is the biggest ongoing project and a recent flower and grass survey by Kirsti Ashworth identified a number of typical hay meadow plants in the field. Her summary is reproduced below:

A botanical survey of Feizor Community Meadow was conducted in late July, as part of the Hay Time Project's ongoing commitment to the restoration. Although the northwest corner and western edge of the meadow are heavily overgrown with bracken and bramble, there are few areas of injurious weeds within the meadow itself. The majority of the, rather vertiginous, site is dominated by grasses but there are substantial areas of wildflowers, including a number of key species indicative of good hay meadow health. These include betony, lady's bedstraw, common mouse ear, meadow cranesbill, knapweed and vetch. The presence of mature trees and wooded areas to the north and east of the land has resulted in a number of plants more usually associated with woodland, such as wood cranesbill and English bluebells, which provide a vivid addition. It will be extremely interesting to see how the balance of species changes over time as the bracken and bramble are subdued and further marginalised.

Strimming of the hay meadow will take place shortly.

The Society received a generous grant from the Austwick Open Gardens event last year and the money has gone towards funding current nature recovery schemes and some remaining funds are unspent. Some of the grant has recently been spent on new hedgehog hazard warning signs and

posts and these have been erected on Greystonber Lane near the bridge to warn motorists. If you have identified a possible nature recovery scheme in your neighbourhood please let me know.



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