

North Craven Heritage Trust

Summer Outing 2019

Asby: Westmorland's Limestone Country

The Summer Outing for 2019 – David's seventeenth – is scheduled for Wednesday 12 June. There will be four venues: Asby Hall, The Old Rectory and the Church of St. Peter in the village of Great Asby, and Gaythorne Hall in the western part of the enormous parish of Asby.

Bookings for the Outing will remain open until 30 March, though early booking is recommended and preferred, especially if you wish to book a seat in the minibus.

Great Asby is centred on NY680 133.

The outbound journey

The minibus will depart from Whitefriars car park at the filling station in Settle at 8.45.

The shortest route for car drivers, and I would argue the most interesting, is via Ribbleshead, Hawes and Kirkby Stephen. From Settle to Asby by this route is 46 miles. Assuming you take this option, when in Kirkby Stephen go along the main street past the parish church and turn **left** at the mini-roundabout after the church – when you get to the school be careful to take the **far right** signposted to Soulby and not the half-right route which will take you way off route. In Soulby take the first **left** after Scandal Beck, signposted to Great Asby. On that road, look out for the clapper bridge on the left at Water Houses farm across Waterhouses Beck. The bridge is a scheduled monument, and rightly so. After the farm there is a rather wonderfully preserved lime kiln, built in the 1860s. Half a mile or so further on, turn **right** at the cross-roads. From here to Asby you will pass through a classic parliamentary enclosure landscape, enclosed and parcelled up in 1855 – squared fields, broad and sometimes dead-straight roads and scattered copses ... with, hopefully, fantastic views of the North Pennines including Cross Fell.

As you begin the drop down to Great Asby village, you are presented with a much older landscape, medieval in origin. The village has well-preserved examples of medieval ploughlands – strip lynchets and narrow, aratral (reverse S-shaped) strips running back from the toft sites on both sides of Asby Beck that bisects the village, the strips now fossilised by later walls or hedges.



*St Helen's Well, with the Alms Houses built in 1811
in the background*

Take the **first turn** into the village and park alongside the stream opposite the village hall, primary school and pub. If you arrive early, do have a look at the Grade II-listed, walled St Helen's Well on the north bank. (The parish has twenty-two listed buildings.) We will congregate here at 10.30.

Asby Hall

This three-storey hall – originally two-storey – has a wealth of architectural features in its external fabric, including several blocked-in windows, Tuscan pilasters to the front entrance and a massive plinth at the rear suggesting a great age for the first building on this footprint. It is listed Grade II*, as are the gateposts and front railings. It was refronted and heightened in the 18th century but has a datestone over the front door “EM 1694” – the great Musgrave dynasty of Hartley Castle (demolished), Edenhall (demolished) and Kempton Park (yes, you guessed it). By the early 20th century it was owned by Lord and Lady Henry Bentinck whose family owned Underley Hall for a while ('David', aka Timothy Bentinck, in *The Archers*, is the 12th Earl of Portland). We have permission to roam at will externally and the current owners will allow us inside if they happen to be at home, but I will be happy if it is just external access.



Asby Hall

It is not open to the public so we should be very grateful to Mr and Mrs Wylde for allowing us to visit.

Hopefully (!) at around 11.00 we will take the short walk along the beck, past the pub, to the Old Rectory, opposite the old bridge.

The Old Rectory

Also listed at Grade II*, this isn't open to the public either, unless you book it as a holiday venue. It is a rare example of a parson's pele, thought to have been erected in the mid 14th century as a small three-storey tower house (10x 7m in plan with walls 1.5m wide) to provide protection against those pesky raiders from the north. The east window is said to be original and there is a splendid vaulted room on the ground floor, the kitchen range until 1878 when the then rector added a southern wing, though the central section is actually from the 17th century. The rectory (tower and demolished hall range) probably stands on the site of a grange belonging to Byland Abbey which owned vast estates in this part of Westmorland.

The redoubtable Lady Anne Clifford took shelter in the rectory during a 'mighty storm' in 1670 and she did what she was wont to do – she gave the rector one of her famous locks (which she bought at a guinea each from locksmith George Dent of Appleby).



The Old Rectory

We are grateful to Mr and Mrs Lambert for granting us permission to visit the old rectory.

Church of St Peter

I intend that we will leave the rectory to walk across the bridge to St Peter's Church to meet church warden John Bevan around noon. Though there has been a church on this spot since at least 1160, the present building was almost completely rebuilt in Gothic revival style in 1865-66, though there are a few tantalising bits of the older church still here. John will show us the famous lock which is kept in the church, and local historian Keith Cooper will give us a short introduction to the history of Asby. I am indebted to them both. The church and lychgate are both listed at Grade II. The intention is to end the formal visit to the church at the latest at 13.00.



The Church of St Peter

Lunchtime

Unless you bring a packed lunch, the only option is The Three Greyhounds which has a studded door said to be from the old church. I have to say it is a good option. As the 2018 pub lunch arrangement worked so well, I propose to do the same for 2019 **so if you wish to have a sandwich lunch here, tell me when you book and I will let you know nearer the time what the sandwich choices are.**

After lunch, at 14.00, we will head off in convoy through the village and then along Sayle Lane. At the western end of the village, just to the right of the road, look out for the rather nice old packhorse bridge over Dale Beck. It is locally known as the Roman Bridge. Our short journey will hopefully give

us wonderful views of Great Asby Scar (a NNR) and Asby Winderwath Common as we climb up onto Gaythorne Plain. After just over 4 miles from Great Asby we will reach Gaythorne Cottages where we will turn right down a narrow lane to ...

Gaythorne Hall

It will probably be necessary for car drivers and passengers to cram into as few cars as possible for the last (700m section) as space at the hall is limited – I will know by the time of the outing what's what.

Gaythorne Hall is by any definition a stunning building and deserves its Grade II* listing. It is not open to the public so, yet again, I must formally register our gratitude to Stephen and Brenda Lord, its occupants and tenant farmers.

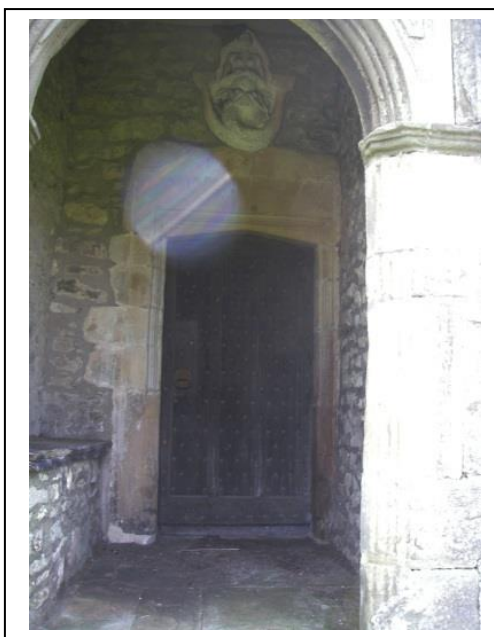


Gaythorne Hall, front elevation

Gaythorne is a five-bay, double-pile building with two projecting stair turrets, and it has seen considerable alterations over the centuries. It is thought to date from around 1485 and was given a major makeover in 1602 with further remodelling at the rear in the 18th century. A datestone on rainwater goods on the south wing has "IS 1702". It has cellars and a loft at the rear with a wooden crane still in situ; several moulded fireplaces, and a vine-leaf frieze on the ground floor on the south side. The fine front doorway bears the coat of arms of the Bellingham family who owned the hall from the (I think) late sixteenth century.



Gaythorne Hall rear elevation



*Gaythorne Hall front entry.
Look closely at the figure above the door, ahem*

Homebound

You can either retrace your steps or, at the top of Gaythorne lane, turn right then left at the T-junction and follow the B6260 via Orton to join the M6 at Tebay.

Costs

For the first time in seventeen years I have managed to organise a Summer Outing with a major difference, and I cannot quite believe it: Asby Hall do not want payment, The Old Rectory do not want payment, the church do not want payment, and Gaythorne Hall do not want payment. Obviously, if you go on the minibus, the costs will have to be shared between the passengers – hire charge, fuel costs – so if you wish to book a seat, please give me a cheque (not cash please), payable to “Dr DS Johnson”, for £20. After the Outing, once I have settled the bill, there may be a refund.

Because everyone in Asby has been so welcoming and generous with their privacy and time, I think it would be a good idea if we gave each of the three households a gift in lieu – a nice bottle of wine and a box of chocolates perhaps – and I have invited Keith Cooper to join us for lunch as he has been so helpful. After running this past John Asher, when you book please let me have £7 in cash to go into the kitty to cover the cost of these gifts. I will also have a bag into which I hope you will drop a generous donation for the work and upkeep of the church.

Enquiries to David Johnson 27 Ingfield Lane, Settle BD24 9BA.

01729 822915 (evenings only please but, please, no answerphone messages)

Previous Summer Outings, led by DSJ

- 2003 Great Asby and Maulds Meaburn Hall
- 2004 Coverdale and Jervaulx Abbey
- 2005 Slaidburn and Whalley Abbey
- 2006 Penrith pele towers
- 2007 Kiplin Hall and Bedale
- 2008 West Tanfield and Markenfield Hall
- 2009 Aske Hall, Easby Abbey and Richmond Castle
- 2010 Preston Patrick Hall, Beetham Hall and Leighton Hall
- 2011 Appleby and Howgill Castle
- 2012 Barnard Castle castle and Kirby Hill
- 2013 Little Salkeld and Yanwath Hall
- 2014 Dacre and Norton Conyers
- 2015 Lancashire Gems – Great Mitton, Ribchester and Stydd
- 2016 Lanercost Priory and Naworth Castle
- 2017 Clifton Hall, Dacre Church and Johnby Hall
- 2018 Along the A59