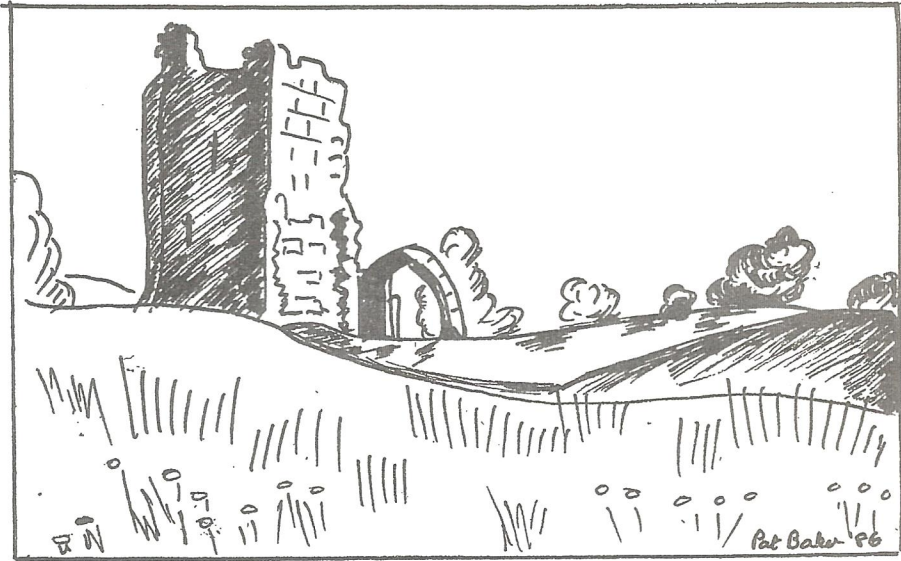


HOLMEDALE

A GUIDED WALK ROUND RAVENSWORTH, WHASHTON AND KIRKBY HILL (two to three hours)

Please respect privacy and rights of way



Ravensworth Castle—N.W. Tower.

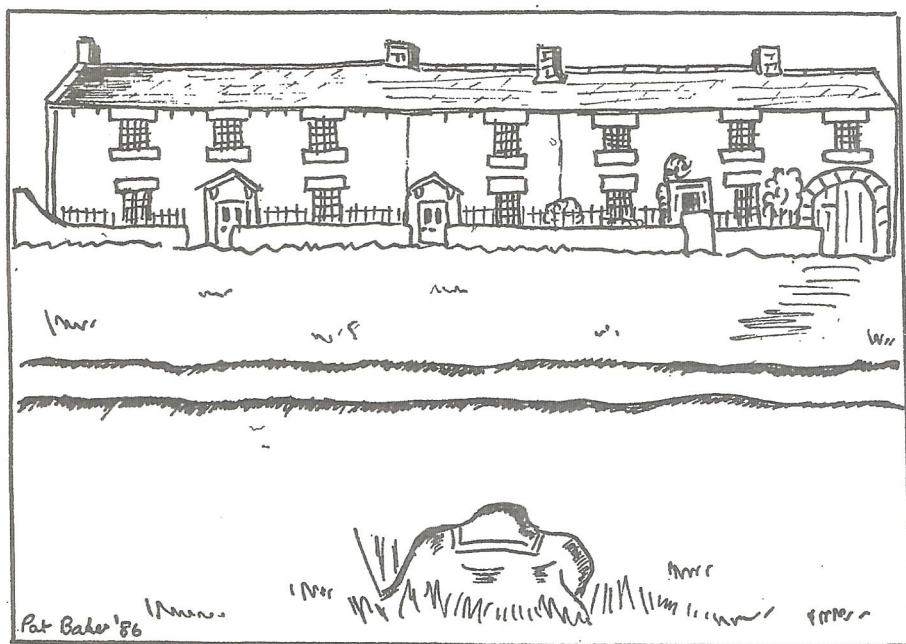
Many travellers along the A66 must drive past this tranquil, gently hilly area. Little do they know its hidden charms. Turning left about five miles from Scotch Corner, the visitor arrives in Ravensworth, the largest of the three villages and is struck by the beauty of the broad, pleasant green surrounded by houses dating mostly from the 18th century. Looking South East across the green one sees the ruins of the Fitzhughs' Norman Castle set on a rise above marshy ground. The eye is drawn upwards to the parish church of Kirkby Hill hidden from view by a line of trees. It is by contrast a settlement built tightly round a small village green with many notable buildings. Up here we are made aware of the hills behind rising still further and the extensive view of the dale below, the borders of North Yorkshire, thence to Durham and Teesdale beyond. Our third village may be reached with ease on foot. Whashton may not attract immediate interest but the guided tour will reveal its many secrets! You may rest awhile amid the charms of any of these delightful villages, sampling refreshments at comfortable inns in all three. There is accommodation to be had at Kirkby Hill and Ravensworth.

RAVENSWORTH

The name Ravensworth is said to originate from "Hrafensworth." "Hrafen" was a Viking who claimed "Hrafensworth" as his possession. "Worth" is the Old English word for an enclosure.

1. The village green was once grazed by a variety of domestic animals happily sharing the green with the school children, who used it as a playground and games field. Elderly villagers recall the yearly Gala when Newsom's Fair was erected on the Lower Green in early September.
2. In the centre of the green grows a sycamore tree transplanted from the fishponds at Park Farm to replace the old Cross Tree which blew down in a gale. Nearby, all that remains of the village market cross is the base stone.
3. The Church of England school (1841—1967) was acquired by the Village Hall Trust in 1983 and converted for use as a community centre. Note the Gothic windows, bell turret and imported Welsh slate roof. The porch was built in 1984. The new school is built South of the village.
4. The Methodist Chapel, built in 1822, is the oldest chapel in the Richmond Circuit. It is an early example of Nonconformist architecture and retains its original flagstone roof.
5. Next to the Chapel is the white-washed dwelling, 43 West View. Deeds show that there was a house in this site in 1643. From 1745 until the early 1800's it was an inn known as 'The Sportsman.' Stylish architectural features show an unusual foundation course, kneelers and quoins. The adjoining corner cottage was known as "The Ranter's Chapel."
6. Thirty-nine Ravensworth is an 18th century house built of different stone from that of most of the other buildings—an indication of wealth. Note the stubs of stone mullions, stressed quoins, kneelers and gable coping.
7. Park Farm is an attractive house with a good stone door case. Note the flat stone arches over the windows, two rows of stone flags below the pantiles, kneelers and gable coping.
8. Park House is much altered but retains an elegant door case, stone mullioned windows at the side of the house and moulded stone caps on two of its chimneys.
9. Bay Horse Inn—the earliest recorded date for this inn is 1857. The stone door case, almost certainly from the castle, is 17th century or earlier.
10. Opposite is 18 High Row which in 1909 was an inn called the 'Two Greyhounds,' in later years known as the 'Hare and Hounds.' The old brewery, visible from the gate, has a fine example of a Yorkshire sliding sash window. In front of the adjoining cottages, 16, 14 and 12, is the only remaining example of flagstone paving in the village. Note the fine tooling with drafted border on window lintels.

11. Twenty-nine Mill Close is on the site of the "Cruck House" which was dismantled in the late 1970's. Some of the timbers were salvaged and may be seen in the extension at Richmondshire Museum.
12. Ash Cottage has a date stone J.E. 1786. Above the door, with its fine hood mould is an interesting inscription, possibly from the castle. The garage building was the village butcher's shop and slaughter-house.
13. The cottages 5 and 7 were probably built for farm workers. These have been converted into one house and feature a grand, high walled garth. Just behind lies the Blacksmith's Shop, sited here since 1841. (The present family came in 1919.)
14. Mill Farm Cottage is a single storey building previously used as a cobbler's shop. Above the door is the inscription DRM 1699 but the style of the figures indicates that this is a later insertion.
15. Mill Farm House—notice a fine 'Ravensworth' door hood with moulding and pantiled roof. Behind and not visible from the road are the old mill buildings, now in ruins. A former owner recalls the mill being used circa 1910.
16. Sunset Cottage has lugless sash windows retaining the old glass panes. Notice the Welsh slate roof and gable coping.
17. Holme Beck and Bridge—the name Holme is from the Norse "Holmr" meaning water meadow and is repeated in Holme Farm and Holme Cottage further up the road. The old ford ran where the new bridge is. Kingfishers and dippers have been seen here and the occasional visiting heron.
18. From the bridge can be seen the earthworks of tofts and crofts. The field through which the footpath runs is known locally as Calf Garth and is used for sledging in winter.
19. Numbers 24, 26 and 28 High Row retain their iron railings, flagstone porch hoods and sash windows; 24 has an exceptionally finely decorated hood and flat arched lintels. A carter lived at 28 where there is a fine carriage archway. Fifty years ago one could hire a horse and cart for 12s. (60p) a day. Number 30, once the village drapers, is an elegant mid-18th century house. Notice the stone architraves, delicately moulded porch hood and well dressed quoins. Numbers 32, 34 and 36 are all on old dwelling sites much rebuilt but retaining some original features. Cuthbert Shaw (1739—1771) poet and actor, the son of a Ravensworth shoemaker, possibly lived in one of these dwellings.
20. Post Office Row is a happy group of dwellings with grey, lichen covered roofs, fine lintels and fragments of decorative stonework from the castle.
21. Tofta House is a 17th century farmhouse its original mullioned windows now blocked up. It has a good Welsh slate roof and Victorian windows. Fine dressed stone has been used to build the garden wall.
22. Returning to the village on the left is an exceptionally large pinfold. Just in front of this is an old farm building which could have been a single storey cottage of the style of an ancient croft.



Old Cross Stump and High Row, Ravensworth.

23. Low Row has been considerably altered. Number 53, although modernised, is the original farm house whereas number 51 and 49 have been built on the site of three dwellings. The deeds of 51 show that in 1940 it was used as a village hall and reading room. The high ridges of numbers 45 and 47 suggest original thatched roofs.

24. The Castle—privately owned, *no public access*. Documentary evidence implies there was a castle at Ravensworth in 1180. Architectural features remaining suggest a building of the 14th century. At this time it was the stronghold of the Fitzhugh family whose forbears were at Ravensworth. The castle occupied the whole of a raised platform surrounded by a moat. One gable, traces of the wall of the great hall and portions of three towers remain, that at the NW angle was three storeys high. There is a shouldered doorway at base level, traces of a stairwell and the remains of a fireplace on each storey. Cusped trefoil lights provided narrow windows in the five feet thick walls. In the tower, crenellated openings for archers command the approach from the North whence the invading Scots came. Close to the tower is an arched gateway with the portcullis grooves still intact. In 1391 Sir Henry Fitzhugh had licence to impark (enclose) 200 acres of land around the castle. The bounds are still traceable and some of the wall remains. The surrounding marshland provides habitat for moorhen, coot, heron, oyster catcher, curlew and wintering duck such as teal and goldeneye. Mallard and snipe nest and a tawny owl roosts in the ruins.

WHASHTON

25. The 'Hack and Spade' public house on the green was converted from cottages, probably by Christopher Blenkiron, in 1857. It is thought to be the only public house of that name. It is also the village shop. On the corner stands a large erratic boulder of Shap granite, deposited in the ice-age. Above this, set in an old window, is a Victorian letter box.

26. Three cottages—the row of three cottages have heavy stone door-cases topped by delicate flagstone porch hoods. Notice the roofing flags, pantiles and high gable copings indicating that the roof was thatched.

27. Whashton Grange Cottage is a single storey stone cottage and was a hind's house for the farm-worker at Whashton Grange. Note flagstone roof and gable copings, also the original tooled stone gateposts.

28. Whashton Grange is a fine old farmhouse built in the 18th century on the site of a toft and croft which, in 1270, was presented to Marrick Priory with 60 acres of land.

29. Joiner's Shop and Saw Pit—the cottage on the east end with high gable coping and freestone window retains its original fireplace and bressumer beam. The adjoining building was a joiner's shop and the undulations in the hillside mark the site of the saw pit.

30. The second cottage, known as York House, was used as a police house many years ago, hence the name "Bobby's Bank" for the hill approaching Whashton.

31. The cave—the small entrance is about three feet wide and two feet high, expanding to five feet by three feet. It slopes downwards for about 30 feet to a water filled gulley at the bottom. Exploration is *not* recommended.

32. The Blacksmith's Shop retains many original features with an earth floor, hearth, bellows, anvil and a king post roof. The building, with a fireplace and external chimney was possibly a dwelling which was extended to house the blacksmith's hearth.

33. Notice, in the field adjoining the Blacksmith's Shop, humps, bumps and foundations suggesting mediaeval house plots, possibly the site of the village of Whassyngton in the 12th century.

34. Hill House possesses the finest view in Whashton, standing at the highest point of the village green. The blocked-in archway was once the entrance to a butcher's shop.

35. From Whashton Village Green one has a very good view of the surrounding countryside. Notice the rock face of a former quarry from which limestone was dug for roadmaking and limeburning in a sow kiln.

36. Chapel House—the chapel was built in 1861 as a Temperance Hall and was purchased by the Methodists for £80 around 1885. The chapel was closed for worship in 1969 and converted into a private dwelling.

37. Whashton Farm is the oldest documented house in Whashton and was the birthplace of Plantagenet Harrison, the author of *The History of Gilling West*, in 1817. The main part of the house is 17th century, with a grander part, containing a fine stone doorway added in the 19th century. It has an external chimney stack on the west gable, remains of a mullioned window and wonderful views of Hartforth Wood to the east.

38. The green hut situated in the farm garth was last used as a shepherd's hut at Hartforth Grange but was possibly at the turn of the century, a play house for the children of the Straeker family at Hartforth Hall.

39. Box Hedge Cottage has a date stone JCF 1790. It was built as two reflecting hind cottages but has recently been converted into one detached house. The old pantiles have been replaced by modern red tiles.

40. Whashton Lodge is a good stylish 18th century house with fine stone architraves. Nicholas Allen ran a so called London School in Whashton for a few years until his death in 1749. There appears to be no further reference to a school here until 1840 when Whashton Lodge Academy was founded for boys and girls, day pupils and boarders, by Thomas Wallis. He remained as principal until 1873.

KIRKBY HILL

41. The Vicarage—built in 1868 this imposing house with its impressive views across the valley replaced the old vicarage which stood in the churchyard. It has magnificent windows and chimneys.

42. The Green—dominated by the church, Kirkby Hill forms a square, enclosed on the North West corner by the Inn. The chestnut tree pre-dates 1927. Until 1965 the trough provided the village water supply.

43. The Church—according to the Domesday Book a church and priest existed here in 1086. The present building dates from the 14th century and is dedicated to St. Peter and St. Felix. Mediaeval gravestones and decorated stones have been re-used externally and in the Tower steps. Two Norman windows in the nave, a leper squint, font, two piscinas in chancel and vestry and carved woodwork are of interest. The tower houses two bells, one dated 1664 and the clock, circa 1921.

44. The Dakyn Trust—in 1556 Dr. John Dakyn, Rector of Kirkby Ravensworth, founded a Grammar School and Almshouses beside the church. This Trust is administered by the Vicar and six Wardens each elected for two years by named scrolls sealed in wax, drawn from a water pitcher.

45. School House—the Master's House is dated 1556, the front with the sundial was added in 1803. The adjoining Schoolroom, closed in 1957, has round headed mullioned windows, a massive chimney and a bell. Mathew Hutton, later Archbishop of York and Primate of all England, was perhaps the School's most famous scholar.

46. East Cottage, formerly accommodating the Assistant Master, has traditional white weatherproofing and local pantiles. East Farm, once single-storey, was extended and re-roofed in Welsh slate and has a moulded 18th century doorcase.

47. Kirkot, dated 1678, has random rubble walls, kneelers, fine mullions and label moulding. Holmegarth, once the 'Pig and Whistle Inn,' stands beside the old drove road which cuts across the Green. It has a 17th century doorway, a massive chimney and early windows.

48. On the South side the three-storey dwelling of Rose Cottage has an attractive stone porch and flat-arched windows. Two adjoining cottages, dated 1703, are believed to have housed a wheelwright. Grey flags cover the roof.

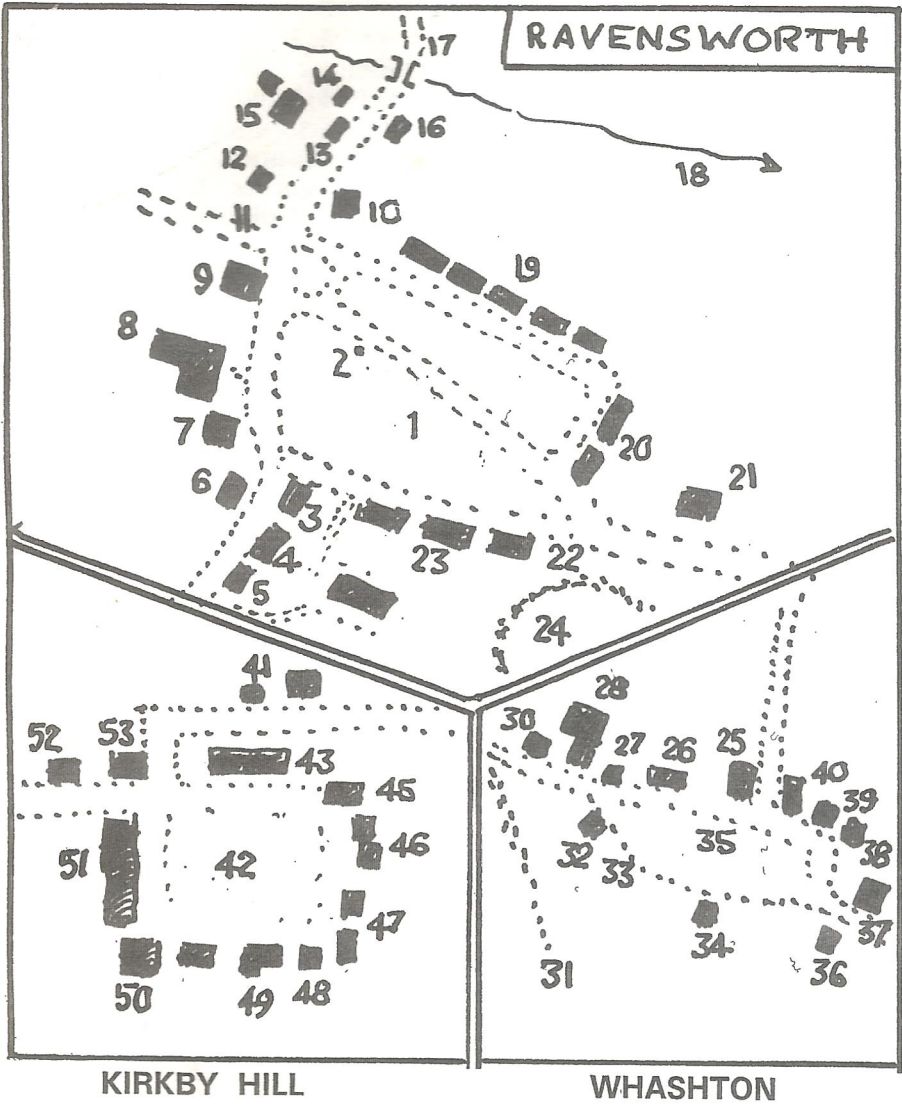
49. Manor House—"A boarding school of some repute" (1823 Baines Directory and Gazetteer) existed at the Manor from circa 1700—1840. Fees were 22 guineas per annum, "no extras and no vacation." This is one of several London Schools in the area immortalised by Dickens. The house has fine detail, stressed quoins, kneelers and gable coping. The adjoining cottage has a heavy keystone over the doorway.

50. Dakyn House is the almshouse or hospital founded by John Dakyn. Originally accommodating 27 aged persons of the Parish it is now converted into six flats. The plaque records rebuilding in 1954.

51. All the buildings on the West side of the Green were, until 1980, West Farm, home of the Johnson family since the 17th century. West Cottage, with massive chimney is possibly the parent house—West Hall and Chaytor Cottage accommodating later generations. The farm buildings, pleasantly converted, end with the Round House, a former horse gin.

52. Moonraker was originally a good stone built barn with a hipped roof and three entrances. It may have been the tithe barn and was converted to a dwelling about 1950. The small building nearby with a flag roof and oak lintel was the parish hearse house.

53. The Shoulder of Mutton Inn—A. Cuthbert is noticed as landlord here in 1823, Christopher Bulmer had it in 1841 and Mrs. Mabel Bulmer in 1857. The Inn has a fine view over Ravensworth to Teesdale and beyond. The visitor might return to Ravensworth by quiet lanes or field paths.



We thank all those who have given us access, lent us photographs and documents, or offered help generally. Also thanks to Pat Baker and Richard Wiseman for preparing illustrations and maps.

Compiled by members of Ravensworth W.E.A. Local History Class.