

WENNINGDALE"

Clubs & Societies – Agricultural, Horticultural, Farmers', Free Masons, Historical, Photographic, Folk Club, Phoenix Players, Round Table, Womens' Institute, Playing Fields, Youth Club, Toddlers' & Play Groups, Brownies & Guides, etc.

Church Groups – Mothers' Union, Wesley Guild, Bright Hour, Sunday Schools.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Evidence of the antiquity of Bentham abounds. Remains of a Roman Road which ran from Ribchester to Burrow and Casterton can be seen near West End Farm, Low Bentham. In the Parish Church, dedicated to St. John the Baptist stands a fragment of a crucifix, apparently of Saxon origin, thus at least a thousand years old. The church itself was recorded in the Domesday Survey, though nothing of the original building now exists, it having been destroyed by the marauding Scots in the 14th century. In 1306 a charter was granted to John de Mowbray for a market and fair to be held at Bentham. This market flourishes today. Thirteen years later, because of the destruction of the church, Edward II granted a remission of taxes. In 1513 the yeomen of the town fought at Flodden Field.

A 'Plague Stone' between High and Low Bentham is a grim reminder of the pestilence of 1597 and 1598, which played havoc in the district. Stonegate House bears the date 1609, and many houses and farms are of Tudor or early Stuart origin. Just south of Low Bentham stands that fine old mansion, Robert Hall, now a farmhouse. It had strong religious connections, and it is said that an underground passage led to the Parish Church.

Bentham, like many isolated communities, has known hard times, and the two mills by the river-side in High and Low Bentham stand empty. The farmers too have passed through periods of depression. Now the town thrives, the farms are in good heart, and the main industrial complex, Angus Fire-Armour, has won the Queen's Award for Industry, witness the flag proudly flying above the tower.

Public Buildings

The Town Hall – Erected 1877 by public subscription – clock tower added in 1902 – modernised in 1940. Seating capacity 400 – full size stage, finest ballroom in the district.

St. Margaret's Church – Opened in 1837, restored and enlarged in 1901. Beautiful East Window of four lights, depicting the Last Supper. Massive brass lectern and fine oak pulpit to be noted.

Methodist Church – Erected 1904, replaced Wesleyan Chapel which originated in 1820. Beautiful Sunday School attached to the rear.

St. Boniface's R.C. Church – Built in 1959 on site adjoining original church erected in 1866, and now demolished.

Friends' Meeting House, Calf Cop – First record of Quaker Meeting in Bentham in 1650. A Meeting House, a converted barn at the top of the hill on the Low Bentham-Burton Road mentioned in 1680. Calf Cop replaced earlier building, over 200 years ago. Date on lintel, '1710,' probably from previous building. A typical Quaker Meeting House of that era was completely refurbished in 1975, but the character of the original was maintained.

Parish Church, Low Bentham – The present building except for West Tower, was built in 1822, and completely restored in 1877 and 1878. The interior is beautiful, and the ancient arches well preserved.

The Grammar School – Originally on School Hill. Little remains except part of the west wing which became the Master's house. The first move was to Moon's Acre, now Collingwood House. In 1948 the school was re-established in the old Rectory at Low Bentham. After many vicissitudes during its long history it is now a fine Grammar School.

Leisure Time in Bentham

Angling – Angling Association, founded in 1875. Covers 4½ miles of water – trout and sea trout – no Coarse fishing. Seasonal, weekly and daily licences obtainable.

Golf – 9 hole golf course in Robin Lane – new Clubhouse, well kept greens, professional employed. Bracing air and wonderful views. Large membership. Visitors' tickets obtainable.

Bowls – Pye Busk, Clapham Road. Good green. Strong membership. Visitors welcome.

Tennis – Two hard courts on the Playing Fields.
Cricket & Football – Teams in the Lakeland and North Lancashire Leagues.

Badminton – The Wenning Badminton Club is renowned throughout Britain. Seven local players have been 'All England' champions.

Walking, Rambling and Hiking – Bentham caters for all, from a quiet ramble along the river-side to the formidable task of the 'Three Peaks,' Ingleborough, Wharfedale and Pen-y-ghent in one day.

All the local walks through the lanes and fields, 28 in all, are well sign-posted, and those prepared to obey the *Country Code*, will find farmers and landowners co-operative.