Grinton, the old ecclesiastical centre for the whole of Swaledale, lies on the south bank of the River Swale at the point at which the main road up the valley from Richmond turns north to cross Grinton Bridge. It is perhaps testimony to the strength of nonconformity hereabouts that Grinton has never really developed beyond being a small village, whilst Reeth, a mile to the north-west, has grown into a far larger settlement.

St Andrew’s Church (sometimes termed ‘The Cathedral of the Dales’) and its attendant Blackburn Hall stand to the south-west of the bridge. Village development extends a short way eastward along the main road, and also out along two minor roads, one that rises south to climb over the fells to Wensleydale, and a second, on the south of the churchyard, that runs west along the south side of the valley.

St Andrew’s is the northernmost of the so-called ‘Pennine Perpendicular’ churches, low and spreading buildings largely of late medieval appearance, with a fine west tower. Its architectural detail is relatively simple and cut in millstone grit. Like other churches of the type, notably in West Yorkshire, the interior retains evidence of a 12th-century origin. Blackburn Hall stands close to the church and seems to have early historical connections with it as well. Parts of the building may be medieval.

Elsewhere in the village, the counterpoint to the presence of an important Anglican church is seen in the absence of the nonconformist buildings - chapels and schools - prominent elsewhere in the dale. In fact the only public building is a humble Literary Institute dated 1903. Neddy House is a good 17th-century building. Of the same date but rather more altered are East View/Virginia House (1648) and, outside the village proper, the Manor House (1670) which despite its name is quite a simple building. Manor Farm House and the former Post Office (1762) are 18th century buildings, which display some degree of refinement in features such as cut quoins, moulded kneelers, and the surrounds to their window and door openings.

There are also a number of humbler cottages probably of the late 18th or early 19th century, with little in the way of architectural detail, groups of two or three now conjoined into single residences. The rendered ‘Greystones’ opposite the churchyard entrance is a typical example. As with most Swaledale villages, there has been a degree of later 20th-century gentrification, with some older buildings being heavily altered, or new ones built on infill sites. Some either copy traditional styles, or actually re-use features from older buildings. One attractive 20th-century contribution is the 1951 ‘Festival of Britain’ bus shelter.

For a more detailed discussion of churches in the Dales see the essay titled ‘Places of Worship’ in the Themes/Religion section of the website www.outofoblivion.org.uk. Grinton parish also contains important archaeological remains such as Grinton Iron Age ‘hillfort’ and the Dark Age Grinton-Fremington dyke system. Type ‘Grinton’ in the Keyword Search box of the Out of Oblivion website and follow the links.
1. GRINTON BRIDGE
This bridge is at an important early bridging point over the River Swale. The present bridge has three semi-circular arches and is built of rubble and ashlar stone and is of three different phases, late 17th, late 18th and 19th century. The late 17th-century bridge is on the upstream side and of rubble construction. The northernmost arch is of irregular shape, the other two having added late 18th-century voussoirs and cutwaters. The downstream half of the bridge is of late 18th-century construction. Both sides have a plain string course below parapets of coursed rubble of 19th-century date.

2. BRIDGE INN
The main part of this public house is made up of two buildings, probably of later 18th-century date although the canted bays on the ground floor look late Victorian. At the south end is a lower block set at right angles. The door and window openings in its side suggest that at one stage it formed a pair of south-facing cottages, but in the west gable end is a blocked two-light mullioned window in a moulded surround that must be of the earlier 18th century.

3. BLACKBURN HALL
Largely screened by trees this building is listed Grade II*. It is a compact T-plan house with its hall block set north-south and a cross-wing at the south end. In the east end of the wing the three-light mullioned windows to the first floor and attic both have their hoodmoulds carried up in a triangular pediment-like form. The south side of the wing, visible from the churchyard, has a number of plain mullioned windows. The hall block is dated ‘1635’ (twice) but the wing is thought to be medieval and to represent a house used by the Augustinian canons of Bridlington Priory who administered the church.

4. ST ANDREW’S CHURCH
The Grade I listed parish church at Grinton is the most important medieval building in Swaledale. It retains only fragments of its Norman beginnings including a circular 12th-century font with a chevron design, a window in the tower and part of the chancel arch. The rest of the building’s fabric dates to the 15th and 16th centuries. The church belonged to Bridlington Priory at that time and fragments of 15th-century stained glass in the east window carry the words ‘Maria Bredlingtone’ along with a possible representation of St George. The nave contains a late Jacobean pulpit and a sounding board dated 1718. The church was restored in 1896 by Searle Hicks of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The church stands in a long churchyard, the rather overgrown western section of which is probably a 19th-century extension. The monuments in the older part have been thinned, only one, the 18th-century headstone of Richard Clarkson is listed (Grade II). Grinton served a huge medieval parish and, until the consecration of the graveyard at Muker in 1580, it provided the only burial ground in the whole of Upper Swaledale.

5. MILL HOUSE
With its thick walls and heavy roughly-shaped quoins this building may have a 17th-century origin, although all its door and window openings are more recent. The old mill tail race runs under the paving alongside its west wall. The mill itself (some overgrown remains of which survive) was set into the rising hillside and stood a little to the south-west. It was pulled down around 1950. The water for the mill was supplied by an aqueduct running round the hillside from Cogden Gill to the south-west, and carried on a bridge across the nearer Grinton Gill (which flows through the village) which could not offer an adequate supply itself.

6. MANOR FARMHOUSE
A Grade II listed building looking out across the churchyard. It is a late 18th-century house, of standard two-storey three-bay type, but betraying a slightly superior status by its rusticated quoins, moulded kneelers and ashlar architraves to its door and window openings.

7. NEDDY HOUSE
The name of this building is perhaps a corruption of ‘Nether Hall’. It is a well-preserved Grade II listed 17th-century house dated ‘1663’ over the door, which opens into a lobby beside a chimney stack. The stack itself has a weathered inscription commemorating the Restoration (1660). A farm building at the south end was formerly an attached cottage, with a blocked doorway of the same form as that of the house, and remains of mullioned windows.
This leaflet and others in the series were produced by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority as part of the Private Spaces Public Places project. This European Union funded project was undertaken during 2003-5 in selected villages in the Richmondshire area of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The project’s aim was to enable communities to take a more active role in the management and enhancement of the historic character of their villages, and to promote a common outlook on their future development. An Historic Environment Consultancy firm was appointed by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority to complete character appraisal documents in consultation with each community. The documents include an appraisal of the historic character of the village, and form the basis for the development of an agreed action plan targeting specific enhancement projects.

Electronic versions of the village character appraisal documents, along with a copy of this leaflet are available on www.yorkshiredales.org.uk from the Understanding/Historic Environment page.

**PARTICIPATING VILLAGES**

**WARD: Aysgarth:**

**VILLAGES:**

- Carperby
- West Burton
- Thornton Rust
- Aysgarth
- Thoralby
- Newbiggin

**WARD: Grinton and Upper Swaledale:**

**VILLAGES:**

- Grinton
- Muker
- Gunnerside
- Low Row
- Keld
- Grinton

**WARD: Hawes and High Abbotside:**

**VILLAGES:**

- Gayle
- Burtersett
- Sedbusk
- Hardraw
**Architraves**  
A characteristic moulded surround to a doorway or window typical of the 18th century.

**Ashlar**  
Good quality cut stone with a smoothly-tooled surface.

**Cut quoins**  
Quoins that are neatly squared rather than just being roughly shaped or unshaped.

**Cutwater**  
A buttress-like feature, usually with canted sides, often formed by the face of the pier of a bridge.

**Hoodmould**  
A projecting course, usually either chamfered or moulded, above a doorway or window.

**Kneelers**  
The overhanging shaped stones at each end of the coping of a gable, very typical of the late 17th and 18th centuries.

**Mullioned window**  
A window divided into a series of lights by vertical stone mullions.

**Quoin**  
Large corner stone located at the right angle of two external walls, the finish of which may differ from the main wall.

**Rusticated quoins**  
Quoins, usually of ashlar, in which the edges of the individual blocks are bevelled or chamfered. Typical of good-quality Classical buildings of the 17th century onwards.

**String course**  
A horizontal projecting course in a wall, usually either moulded or chamfered.

**Voussoir**  
A cut wedge-shaped stone that forms part of an arch.